

CCC WHATS SO SPECIAL ABOUT Part 1

CHRISTMAS? Christmas Series 2008 Part 1 Philippians 2:5-11

In 25 days the whole world will focus on one event – and that event of course is Christmas. Everything else will become secondary for one 24-hour period while we celebrate Christmas. I find it amazing that an event that happened over 2000 years ago can still cause traffic jams, businesses to close down and schools to close. What is so special about Christmas? I think Philippians 2 answers it for us. Read Philippians 2:5-11 What so special about Christmas:

1. THE RELEVANCE OF CHRISTMAS: GOD CAME TO EARTH We have had a lot of big news over the years, but nothing compares to the news when God invaded earth. It was big news when man landed on the

moon and walked there. But it was even bigger news when God landed on the earth and walked upon the earth. See, Jesus Christ is God Himself. It was God that came to earth. We just read it; "*Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: who being in very nature GOD...*"

Jesus was God. God invaded earth and that is the relevance of Christmas. That is what is so special.

There are people who would say that Jesus was a great man, there are those who would say he was a great prophet.

There's only one problem with that: Jesus Himself, never claimed to be either. He claimed to be one thing, God.

Jesus repeatedly said, "I am God." And he didn't just say that but He also said, "...he had always been God by nature..." See Jesus didn't start at the stable in a manger.

He's existed even before creation. It's called the preeminence of Christ. God's word, the bible says, "*Christ*

is the exact likeness of the unseen God. He existed before God made anything at all, and in fact, Christ himself is the Creator who made everything in heaven and earth..." Col. 1:15-16a. He is the exact likeness of the unseen God.

God's word, the Bible says, if you've seen Jesus, you've seen God. John 1 "*In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him and there was not anything made... In Him was life and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in darkness but the darkness did not understand it.*" Jesus said "If you've seen me, you've seen the Father." If Jesus really was God and God came to earth, then Christmas is the most relevant event of history. God coming to earth. Jesus said, "Before Abraham existed, I AM."

II. THE REALITY OF CHRISTMAS: GOD

BECAME A MAN This is even more difficult to understand I think. Why, because if I were God and were going to come to earth, of all the ways you could choose to reveal yourself, would you come as a baby? Would you even come as a human being? v. 7-8a "*He made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness and being found in appearance as a man ."*

The reality of Christmas was that Jesus Christ was a real man, real flesh and blood, bones, and hair. He was a real person, not a myth, not a fable, not even some a nice story. In the Encyclopedia Britannica there are more pages on Jesus Christ than anybody else. The reality is that God came to earth and God became a man. But, why would he? Here my common sense explanation to you... If God had wanted to communicate with dogs, He would have become

a dog. If He wanted to communicate with birds, He would have become a bird. But God wanted to communicate with people... He wanted to communicate with you and I so He became a person. That is what the Bible calls the incarnation. God came to earth but He came as a human being, a person like us.

How is Jesus like us?

1) He was born like us. He made himself nothing. He came into the world like billions of other babies. But the whole history of the world rest in that one fragile infant. That must have blown the minds of the angels -- "What is God doing?" No flashy entrance to let the whole world know He's there. He just comes in the middle of the night in a stable in Bethlehem. Jesus didn't stop being God when He became man. He was 100% God and 100% man. He was God in human form. He was born like us.

How is Jesus like us?

2) He grew like us. Luke 2:52 "*Jesus increased in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man.*" He grew and developed and had growth spurts. Can you imagine what it would have been like to have gone to school with Jesus? You would know that He was a little bit different but would you believe that He was God. He did not parade the fact that he was God. He was a human being and grew like us. He looked every inch a carpenter and a Jew from Palestine. He was a real man. That's the reality of Christmas.

How is Jesus like us?

3) He was tempted like us. Hebrews says "*He was tempted in all points like as we, yet without sin.*" Jesus experienced the same pressures that you and I do, the same temptations, desires, drives. The same temptations to lie,

to cheat, to steal. He had the same drives but He never gave into them. This is important because He can relate to you when you're struggling.

How is Jesus like us?

4) **He suffered like us.** He felt pain, disappointment. He got tired, fatigued. He felt lonely at times. He grieved, He cried, He was human. In Gethesemane (Matthew 26:38) He said, "*The sorrow is so great it almost crushes Me.*" He knew what it was like to feel pain. He can relate to your pain, problems, pressures. He was God but He became a man. Jesus became what we are so we can become what He is. That is the reality of Christmas. What so special about Christmas:

III. THE REASON FOR CHRISTMAS: **JESUS**

CAME TO DIE v. 8b "*...He humbled himself and became obedient to death -- even death on a cross!*" Jesus didn't

stay in a crib in a manger. He went to a cross and voluntarily laid down His life for you and I. Why? He didn't have to. He was God. He could have called 10,000 angels and stopped the process at any point. He did not have to go to the cross. Nobody put Him there without His permission. Why did He allow Himself to go to the cross? The Bible says He did it for two reasons:

1) **To demonstrate God's love.**

Romans 5:8 "*God showed His great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners.*" His motivation was love. If you want to know how much God loves you, look at the cross. The Bible says, "*Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.*" A lot of people may give their life for their friend or family or children. But the Bible says that God gave His life for us when we were rejecting Him, before we even

knew Him, before we were even born. He gave His life for us. That's love.

That is the reason for Christmas -- to demonstrate His love for me. "*God so loved the world that He gave His life...*"

2. To pay for my sins.

When you break a law you've got to pay a penalty. When you break man's laws you pay man's penalties. When you break God's laws you pay God's penalties. The Bible says, "*The wages of sin is death.*" But "*... the gift of God is eternal life.*"

I Peter 2:24 (LB) "*He personally carried the load of our sins in his own body when he died on the cross, so that we can be finished with sin and live a good life.*" Somehow what He did over 2000 years ago can make a difference in yours and my life right now. I can be completely forgiven for everything I've ever done wrong or will ever do. That's

the reason for Christmas. The angels said, "*For unto you this day is born a Savior, which is Christ the Lord.*" What does it mean to be a Savior?

A lifeguard is taught that when they swim out to a person who is drowning usually you will not grab them right away. You tread water and wait. They are in a panic. If you grabbed them immediately, they would most likely grab onto you and pull you down. You've got to wait until they are going under for the last time. When they become limp and have given up, you help them back to shore. As long as a person is trying to save themselves you cannot save them.

Jesus came to be the Savior of the world. As long as you think, "I'm OK. I'm not that bad." You are the person in the most danger, like the drowning swimmer trying to save themselves. That's the reason for Christmas.

IV. THE RESULT OF CHRISTMAS: JESUS IS

LORD v. 9-11 "*Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue _confess that JESUS CHRIST IS LORD ...*"

The cross is not the end. Why, because Jesus is alive! And that's what Easter is all about.

What does it mean to say "Jesus is Lord"? It means that I ...

- a) I acknowledge that He really is God. He was more than a man or a prophet. He really is God. He is the Lord. It is a test of my commitment to Him.
- b) I believe that He has everything under control. Since Jesus is God then God has everything under control, Jesus has everything under control. To say Jesus is Lord is a

statement of comfort and encouragement. Although everything looks bleak, Jesus is Lord and I know He's got everything under control. I may not see it, the pattern and what is happening, but Jesus is Lord and I recognize the fact that He has everything under control. Nothing escapes His care or concern. Because He is Lord. To say Jesus is Lord is to say I don't know what the New Year holds but I know who holds the future, because Jesus is Lord.

- c) I commit all of my life to Him. He calls the shots because He is God, has come to earth, died for me and rose again. Because He has done those things He has the right to determine what's right in my life and to direct me. I'm seeking to live according to His plans.

Don't use the word Lord lightly.

"If you confess with your mouth, 'JESUS IS LORD', and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved." Romans 10:9

What does it mean to be a Christian, to be a believer, to be saved? It means to say, Jesus is my Lord. I acknowledge the fact that He is God, I believe that He has everything under control; I commit everything I have to Him.

God word, the bible says, One day every knee will bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord and He will be given His due honor. All of the arrogance in this world that puts itself up against Christ and all of the denial and pseudo scientific and psychological and philosophical arguments that are put up will fall by the wayside one day, and every knee will bow and every tongue confess that Jesus is Lord. The Judgement Day. Everyone stands there throughout history, everyone will acknowledge it is true.

Every nationality, every age group, every male, every female, every religion will say "Jesus is Lord." All of the politicians, George Bush, President Elect Barrack Obama , John McCain, Ghandi, Mohammid, they will all be there and say "Jesus is Lord." All of the rock stars will say "Jesus is Lord." All of the scientists, professors, business men, homemakers will say "Jesus is Lord." Everyone will admit it.

See I want you to understand this... the issue is not, will you admit that Jesus is Lord? You will one day. The issue is simply, when? You will either admit it now in love and honor and respect or you will admit it later and find you have been wrong and you've made a big mistake. Every knee will bow, every tongue will confess that Jesus is Lord. That is the result of Christmas.

The greatest need in American Christians is the need to rediscover the phrase used for centuries as the test of a believer: JESUS IS LORD. It may look like the other side is winning right now, but it don't change things Jesus is alive and Jesus is Lord. You may think you cannot cope any more, you may think there is too much pressure, but Jesus is Lord. You may think your problems are too great and you can't handle them, but Jesus is Lord.

Circumstances may pile up against you and people may thwart you and fight you, but Jesus is Lord.

Say that phrase when you're discouraged -- Jesus is Lord.

When you're tired, when you're worried, afraid -- Jesus is

Lord. Say it when you don't think you can go on another

mile, Jesus is Lord. Say it when you're grieving and you

don't know why somebody has died -- Jesus is Lord. Say it

when you're lonely. And say it this Christmas, Jesus is

Lord. Make it the theme of your life. That's what it means to be a believer. *"If you confess with your mouth, 'JESUS IS LORD', and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you shall be saved.."*

Let us Pray: