

**Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time***

**I've celebrated Christmas all my life, but still don't understand why Jesus came. Can you tell me?**

Scripture: Romans 6:23; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Colossians 1:17

Code: QA71

Who was that child in the manger? God. We see that clearly now. But why would God become a man, be born in such a lowly manner, and let men treat Him the way they did? Why would Jesus, while existing "before all things" (Colossians 1:17) and holding "first place in everything" (v. 18), agree to come to earth as a baby, suffer the abuse He suffered, and die such a painful death? The apostle Paul is clear: "It was the Father's good pleasure ... through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross" (vv. 19-20).

He did it to make peace between God and man. God is justifiably angry at humanity's sin. All of us have sinned--and done so repeatedly. Yet He loves sinners enough that He gave His own Son to live on earth, die on a cross, and bear sin in His own body, suffering the full weight of God's wrath--wrath deserved by sinners. He paid the penalty to restore peace between God and sinners. It could not have been done any other way.

So Christmas is primarily a celebration of God's love toward mankind. The babe in a manger is more than just a tender child. He is the express image of God. He took on a body of human flesh so He could bear in that body the sins of the world. He made possible the gift of God--eternal life (Romans 6:23). That is the sum of the Christmas message.

Don't get lost in the wide scope of it all. The incarnation of God in Jesus Christ is nothing if it is not personal. This is the message of Christmas for you: He who entered this world and took on human flesh died on a cross to bear sin, to pay the penalty for iniquity, to remove guilt.

That pardon from guilt He offers to you. Jesus came to forgive sinners and bring them into His presence by virtue of His own sacrificial death. Do you desire His forgiveness and long to know God's loving embrace?

You must respond.

Specifically, God calls you to respond in faith. Turn from your sin to follow Him. Believe He has forgiven your sin and trust Him with your life (John 3:18, 36). Follow Him without reservation. Jesus Christ must take His rightful place as Lord--first place in everything (Colossians 1:18). Submit to Him and He who created everything will make you a new creature, remolded in His image, with new

desires and a new heart (2 Corinthians 5:17).

Should you respond to God's offer of forgiveness in Christ, this Christmas will truly be a time to celebrate, for you will have the greatest gift you can ever receive, "being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus" (Romans 3:24).

We want to help you know more about life in Christ. Read John's transcript, "Confessing Jesus as Lord and Glorifying God".

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