

# Matthew 1:18-25 the Reason for the Season

by Carl Carmody

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*Jesus is the reason for the season, and His birth, death, and resurrection provide a means of salvation for humanity.*

**Scripture:** Romans 3:23

**Topics:** "Christmas Message", "Salvation Through Faith"

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## Description

Carl Carmody preaches about the true reason for the Christmas season, emphasizing that amidst the commercial hype, the focus should be on celebrating the birth of Jesus, the most important person in human history. He explains that Jesus came down to earth due to mankind's rebellion, to embark on a rescue mission to save humanity, and to provide a way back to God through His death and resurrection. The sermon highlights the importance of accepting the gift of Jesus Christ by faith, acknowledging sin, confessing it, and allowing Jesus to lead towards a new relationship with God.

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## Transcript

During the Great Depression that hit Australia in the 1930's, a family, like many families during this time, was struggling to put food on the table. Certainly luxuries were considered a very distant dream.

One day posters were pasted up all over town announcing the arrival of a circus. Admission was advertised at \$1. A big sum in the depression years. One of the boys in the family was really keen to go, but his father told him that he would have to earn the money to pay for his ticket.

The young boy had never seen a circus in his lifetime, so he worked feverishly doing all sorts of jobs to get enough funds to purchase his ticket.

On the day the circus arrived, he went to see the performers and the animals parade through town. As he watched, a clown came dancing over to him, and the boy put his ticket in the clown's hand. Then he stood on the curb and cheered as the rest of the parade moved by.

The youngster rushed home to tell his parents what he had seen and how exciting the circus was. His father listened, then took his son in his arms and said, "Son, you didn't see the circus. All you saw was the parade".

This story is very much a picture of what happens at Christmas. The commercial hype has so clouded the reason for the season, that one could be forgiven for thinking that Christmas has nothing to do with

Christianity, rather than seeing Christmas as the momentous fact of history that it is. But because the emphasis on the commercial aspect of Christmas many people miss the main event.

Put simply the reason for the season is Jesus. When we celebrate Christmas we are celebrating the birthday of the most important person in human history and in human existence.

Ironically many people who celebrate Christmas, celebrate something they don't believe in, or never experienced the reality.

But this evening you might be asking yourself a very important question in your mind right now. Why would Jesus come down from heaven and take on human, flesh and frailty to be born in a stable and laid in a feed trough to grow up and die on a cross, to rise again on the third day?

You might not be asking the question in quite that way, but nonetheless you are asking why would Jesus bother to come down to earth? Especially when there is so much He left behind in Heaven. Well there are three reasons.

Firstly Jesus came because of mankind's rebellion. This rebellion goes right back to the garden of Eden where Adam and Eve chose to rebel against God by eating of the forbidden fruit. Genesis 3: 6-7 "When the woman saw that the tree was good for food and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her and he ate. Then the eyes of both of them, were opened and they knew that they were naked."

What was the evidence of their sin?

Note their response when they heard the sound of God walking in the garden; "...and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden." Adam and Eve knew they had sinned, their action in hiding revealed their guilt. We all want to hide our sin, excuse our sin, cover our sin or just pretend it's not there.

This is why we read in the N.T. in Romans 3:23 "For all have sinned and fall short of God's glory." The word 'glory' the sum total of all God is, infers that because of sin we are not what God intended us to be. That means that we are unable to keep God's perfect law -- the 10 commandments -- in our own strength. In fact, we have a natural talent in disobeying them..

Now you might think that God is a little strange setting up a standard not one human being can keep. I think if we are honest with ourselves, we would recognize that the idea of acknowledging that we are sinners doesn't exactly thrill us to pieces. So God needs to reveal this to us in Romans 3:20 "...for by the law (God's perfect standard) is the knowledge of sin." Now whilst the law acts as a mirror in showing us that we are sinners, it has no power to deliver us or save us from the consequences of sin.

This is why Jesus is the reason for the season. He came because of our rebellion. Think for a moment you who are parents. Did you ever have to teach your children to throw a tantrum, to lie or to steal. No because as David put it in Psalm 51 "Behold I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me."

Secondly Jesus came at Christmas on a rescue mission. This time of the year welfare organizations are working overtime to bring joy into those families that are struggling and less able to meet their needs. Which is great and in a way points to the rescue mission of Jesus.

This rescue mission goes right back to Genesis 3:15 when the serpent (Satan) had successfully tempted Eve and then Adam into eating the forbidden fruit. Right back then God was planning Christmas. Jesus was to be the executive arm of the trinity. He was to be >THE greatest gift of all to a lost mankind. Jesus is God's rescue plan for mankind.

Jesus came at Christmas in order to die our death, suffer our punishment and pay for our forgiveness. Matthew 1:21 states clearly Jesus' purpose in coming; "and she(Mary) will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His Name Jesus (Saviour) for He will save His people from their sins." Luke 2:11 "For there is born to you this day in the City of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord."

Jesus, by his birth at Christmas, death and resurrection at Easter has opened the way back to God. This is why Jesus says in John 14:6; "I am the way, the truth and the life, no one comes to the Father except by me."

This is why religion doesn't save, good works don't save, being a nice person doesn't save, reading your Bible, going to church, praying or being baptised don't save. Until you come to Jesus there is no salvation. During WWII a platoon of soldiers was in retreat, with enemy tanks close behind. Their only means of escape was across a narrow bridge, which was being constantly raked by enemy machine gun fire. Crossing the bridge meant death, to stay still would inevitably mean death also. So the sergeant of the platoon pulled the pin on a hand grenade and ran towards the bridge and threw the grenade at the enemy machine gun position. Just as he let go of the grenade he was cut down by the machine gun fire, but the grenade hit its mark and destroyed the machine gun post. Then his men were able to run to safety across the bridge.

In the same way, Jesus has laid down his life on the cross to reopen the bridge to God. The machine gun fire that had closed the bridge is our rebellion against God. But the good news this Christmas is that Jesus was God's perfect gift to a lost rebellious mankind. Jesus is the Son of the living God, and death and hell could not hold him, and He rose again from the dead to lead us personally across the bridge to safety. Thus achieving what Luke 2:14 states, "And on earth peace, and goodwill toward men."

Well what is the significance of all this at this particular festive time of the year?

Thirdly, how should we respond to God and the gift of His Son?

Well all this is meaningless unless we are willing to accept this gift. Imagine if you gave a gift to a member of your family this Christmas. Imagine if you came back to the Christmas tree to discover that the family member had not bothered to open it. A gift is not something we have to work for, otherwise it is not a gift. I am sure you would feel hurt to find that your gift had not been accepted. Ephesians 2:8,9; Titus 3:4-7. Sadly many people have chosen not to accept the gift of Jesus Christ, which saddens God enormously.

Read Isaiah 61:1-3.

To accept the gift of Jesus Christ you need to accept it by faith, by asking God in prayer. Salvation is not achieved but received. Maybe you are one of those people who has never accepted the gift of salvation Jesus Christ offers. Well this Christmas can be the most momentous Christmas you have ever had, but you need to acknowledge the sin(rebellion) that keeps you on the wrong side of the bridge, confess it and turn from it. Then allow Jesus to take your hand and lead you safely over the bridge to a new right relationship with God. Have you done it yet? If you haven't you can pray with me now to receive the gift of

eternal life.

2 Peter 3:9 "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance." (A true sorrow for sin.)

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