

“CHRISTMAS MEANING MERCY”

THESIS: Believe In Christmas

TEXT: Hebrews 2:5—3:2

OPEN: (Video from sermons spice.com “Christmas Epic” by Seek First Media)

In **Hebrews 2:5—3:2** let’s discover the meaning of Christmas through the mercy of God in our Savior Jesus.

Mercy (Greek: *eleos*) signifies compassion, kindness, or the outward manifestation of pity. It indicates emotion aroused by someone in need and the attempt to remove his or her trouble.

Matthew 1:20-23 “An angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, ‘Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give Him the name Jesus, because He will save His people from their sins.’ All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: ‘The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call Him Immanuel’—which means, ‘God with us.’”

Since Jesus died, resurrected, and ascended to Heaven—is the Lord still with us? If so, how?

BELIEVE IN CHRISTMAS—MEANING THE MERCY OF GOD THROUGH CHRIST JESUS.

A. **Hebrews 2:5-8a** “It is not to angels that God has subjected the world to come, about which we are speaking. But there is a place where someone has testified: ‘What is man that you are mindful of him, the Son of Man that You care for Him? You made Him a little lower than the angels; You crowned Him with glory and honor and put everything under His feet.’ In putting everything under Him, God left nothing that is not subject to Him.”

1. *Jesus is the mercy of God in human form—the Heavenly Father puts everything under Him for us.*

a. **Ephesians 1:9-10, 19b-23** “God made known to us the mystery of His will according to His good pleasure, which He purposed in Christ, to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment—to bring all things in Heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ... That power is like the working of His mighty strength, which He exerted in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. And God placed all things under His feet and appointed Him to be head over everything for the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills everything in every way.”

1. The mystery of God’s will—revealed here in the NT—is that the times will have reached their fulfillment (the very end comes) when He places all things in Heaven and on earth under the feet of Christ. Everything will be subject to Him.

a. **1 Corinthians 15:22-28** “For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. But each in his own turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when He comes, those who belong to Him. Then the end will come, when He hands over the kingdom to God the Father after He has destroyed all dominion, authority and power. For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death. For He ‘has put everything under His feet.’ Now when it says that ‘everything’ has been

put under Him, it is clear that this does not include God Himself, who put everything under Christ. When He has done this, then the Son Himself will be made subject to Him who put everything under Him, so that God may be all in all.”

1. **Historical:** “Under His feet” is a figure of speech signifying complete conquest. The monuments of ancient Egypt, Assyria, and Persia give numerous illustrations of the custom of conquerors trampling on the vanquished. In the cave at Beit el Walley in Nubia is a hieroglyphic description of Rameses II trampling on his enemies. It reads: “Kol, the strange land, is beneath thy sandals.” At the foot of a wooden mummy case in the British Museum are painted the soles of two shoes, and on each is the figure of a man with his arms and hands tied behind him, and his feet tied at the ankles. In this helpless state he is supposed to be trampled on by the wearer of the shoes. It was a very expressive illustration of mingled triumph and contempt.

B. **Hebrews 2:8b-10** “Yet at present we do not see everything subject to Him. But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and honor because He suffered death, so that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone. In bringing many sons to glory, it was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, should make the author (pioneer) of their salvation perfect through suffering.”

1. *Jesus is the mercy of God in human form—the Heavenly Father makes Him perfect by suffering for us.*

a. **Perfect** (Greek: *teleioo*) means complete, make legal or official, to qualify.

1. **Hebrews 5:8-10a** “Although Jesus was a son, He learned obedience from what He suffered and, once made perfect, He became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey Him...”

b. Jesus had not been morally or spiritually imperfect, but His incarnation was completed (perfected) when He experienced temptation, suffering, and death without sin. Thus, He is mankind’s qualified, official, complete, and only Savior.

1. **John 14:6** “Jesus says, ‘I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.’”

c. **Insight from Rogers/Rienecker:** “To make Jesus fully qualified as the ‘pioneer (author) of their salvation,’ the training required involved passing through suffering. Jesus identified with us on the deepest level of anguish, and so became qualified in the flesh to pay the price for our sins and to become our sympathetic high priest or intercessor (*Linguistic Key To Greek NT*, p. 669).

C. **Hebrews 2:11-13** “Both the One who makes men holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers. He says, ‘I will declare Your name to My brothers; in the presence of the congregation I will sing Your praises.’ And again, ‘I will put My trust in Him.’ And again He says, ‘Here I am, and the children God has given Me.’”

1. *Jesus is the mercy of God in human form—the Heavenly Father entrusts Him to make holy us.*

a. **Holy** (Greek: *hagios*) means to set apart or dedicate. It also indicates purity and innocence which is separation from sin and therefore devotion to the Lord; God likeness.

1. **Col 1:21-23a** “Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. But now He has reconciled you by Christ’s physical body through death to present you holy in His sight, without

blemish and free from accusation—if you continue in your faith, established and firm, not moved from the hope held out in the gospel...”

- b. **Insight from W.E. Vine:** “Since every believer is set apart or dedicated in Christ Jesus, a common New Testament designation of all believers is ‘saints’ (Greek: *hagioi*), which means ‘holy ones.’”
 1. All Christians are saints because through faith in Christ Jesus, believers have been set apart through the Holy Spirit as belonging to God—His chosen ones.
 2. Everyone is a sinner and in need of God’s mercy and grace. One must be holy to make it to Heaven. On our own—we’re not holy and thus cannot make it to Heaven by ourselves. Anyone wanting to make it to Heaven needs to be made holy by Jesus Christ to be in God’s presence.
 3. Jesus is not made holy—He Himself is holiness because He is God in human form.
- D. **Hebrews 2:14-18** “Since the children have flesh and blood, He too shared in their humanity so that by His death He might destroy him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil—and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death. For surely it is not angels He helps, but Abraham’s descendants. For this reason He had to be made like His brothers in every way, in order that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that He might make atonement for the sins of the people. Because He Himself suffered when He was tempted, He is able to help those who are being tempted.”
 1. *Jesus is the mercy of God in human form—the Heavenly Father makes Him suffer to atone for us.*
 - a. How may we be Abraham’s descendants?
 1. **Galatians 3:27-29** “For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.”
 2. **Insight from Sean McDowell** from his article “Do All Roads Lead To God?”

CONCLUSION: What is to be our response as believers in Christmas—meaning the mercy of God through Jesus?

Hebrews 3:1-2a “Therefore, holy brothers, who share in the heavenly calling, fix your thoughts on Jesus, the Apostle and High Priest whom we confess. He was faithful to the One who appointed Him...”

CLOSE: Let’s be faithful to the Lord – believe in Christmas – meaning the mercy of God through Christ Jesus.

Sean McDowell: *“Do All Roads Lead To God?”*

“On a subway in London I met a woman of the Bahai faith. She proceeded to tell me that she embraced all religions, and that as long as people held their beliefs with sincerity their religion was true for them. Despite her attempt to be inclusive, she was just as exclusive as any other religion or belief, for even she excluded the exclusivists. Philosopher Ravi Zacharias notes: All religions are not the same. All religions do not point to God. All religions do not say that all religions are the same. At the heart of every religion is an uncompromising commitment to a particular way of defining who God is or is not and accordingly, of defining life’s purpose. Anyone who claims that all religions are the same betrays not only an ignorance of all religions but also a caricatured view of even the best-known ones. Every religion at its core is exclusive. Jesus did not come down to earth to exclude anyone but to lead as many people as possible to the knowledge of God. Unlike some religions that exclude females, those in poverty, or people of certain races, the message of Jesus is inclusive for all. Colossians 3:9-11 (KJV) says, “Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him: Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all.” Christ makes no human distinctions—he died and rose again so that all people (may be saved) and have a relationship with the living God.”