

## THE FATHER SENT, THE SON CAME

John 6:35-40

Intro: Next Friday is Christmas Day, and so I am turning aside from our studies in Romans to speak about the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ into the world. While Christmas has become so commercialized that very little attention is given to the birth of Christ, yet for true Christians through the world this is the time when we remember the coming of the One Who provided salvation for us. The most important events of all of human history for us have to do with the life of Christ upon the earth—His birth, His life, His death, His resurrection, and His ascension. And we are the ones who eagerly await His return.

The world cares very little about these things. Manger scenes are set up in various places, and they are displayed on Christmas cards, but the real message of Christmas is really missed by the majority of people. And it is not surprising that it should be because the Bible clearly teaches that, because we are sinners, we are also blind to spiritual truth until the Lord opens our eyes so that we can see. It is only then that we become concerned about Who Jesus Christ is, why He came to this earth, and what He did and taught while He was here. The only Book in all the world which can enlighten us on those important subjects is the Bible.

I spent some time this week going over the messages which I have brought on previous Christmas Sundays, and I was reminded that back in 1988 I brought a brief series of three messages on the birth of Christ. I spoke about the birth of Christ in prophecy. Then I spoke about the birth of Christ in history. And finally I spoke about the birth of Christ in doctrine. The birth of Christ in prophecy takes us back into the Old Testament. The OT writers looked forward to the coming of the Messiah, the Redeemer, the One Who was anticipated by all of the sacrifices which were offered by the people of Israel. The birth of Christ in history takes us to the Gospels, and especially to the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. There we learn that the Lord Jesus was born of the virgin Mary. This means that He did not have a human father. He could not have had a human father and yet have been the Son of God. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit. We learn that He was born in Bethlehem, as the prophet Micah said He would be. We learn about the message given to the shepherds about His birth. ~~We~~ we learn about the wise men who later brought Him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And then when we go on into the epistles of the New Testament we find the doctrinal significance of the coming of Christ into the world. There we have the full explanation of this very

unusual event from history. It is all in the Bible, but, as I have said, these are truths which most of the people in the world know nothing about, and they have not taken the time to find out what Christmas really means. And yet there is no subject which is more important for all of us to understand than the message about the Lord Jesus Christ.

This morning I want to ask you to turn with me to the Gospel of John. While this is a book which deals with the life and ministry of our Lord while He was here on earth, the Apostle John approached the life of Christ in an entirely different way. He gives us no record of the birth of Christ, but he immediately introduces us to Christ in the first chapter as the Word Who was with God in the beginning, Who was distinct from God as a Person, and yet at the same time was God in every sense of the word. And John simply gives us with reference to the birth of Christ this amazing statement:

And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us,  
(and we beheld his glory,  
the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,)  
full of grace and truth (John 1:14).

So the careful reader of the Gospels gets the idea right away that the Apostle John was concerned that his readers would know that Jesus Christ was more than a Man (although He was a real human being); He was the Son of God Who came to the earth, becoming through the virgin birth a Man, and yet not ceasing to be God in any way. He temporarily did not display His glory, but He lived on earth as a man, exercising from time to time His mighty power as well as His infinite wisdom.

It is hard to make a generalization about the Gospels that is completely accurate because all four Gospels deal with the humanity and the Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ. But if we could make one distinction, it would be correct to say that Matthew, Mark, and Luke have a stronger emphasis upon the humanity of Christ, while the Gospel of John has as its main emphasis the Deity of Christ.

Now I have said all of this in order to lead up to the passage that I want to deal with today in this service in John, chapter 6. I am particularly thinking of verses 35 through 40. (Read.)

This was at the beginning of our Lord's message on the Bread of Life, and that He was the Bread of Life. It followed the feeding of five thousand men plus women and children. It was spoken a day after that great miracle had been performed. The Lord did not perform another miracle of the same kind, but He began to teach them the spiritual significance of what He had done.

The verse that I want you to notice first is verse 38. Here the Lord made a statement which He had made before, and which is repeated many times in John's Gospel. It has to do with the fact that He was sent to the earth by the Father. Let us examine this statement for just a moment.

I. OUR LORD WAS SENT BY THE FATHER (John 6:38).

He repeated that expression in verse 39, and again in verse 40.

John 3:16 records our Lord's own words in which He said that "God so loved the world that he **gave** his only begotten Son." However, in verse 17 He spoke of His coming into the world using the word "sent." "For God sent not his Son into the world..."

I won't try to point out all of the times that the Lord used this expression of His coming to the earth, but look with me at just a few: John 5:23, 24, 30, 36-38. And then in addition to chapter 6 where we are today, you will find this expression in John 3, 4, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, and 20. So, if I have located them accurately, it is said in sixteen of John's twenty-one chapters that our Lord was sent by the Father. In fact, it is stated very strongly in John 8:42 where our Lord said, **...neither came I of myself, but he sent me."**

I am always reluctant to explain an expression like this because it means delving into the counsels of the Godhead. But I am sure that it does not mean that the Lord came to earth reluctantly. The Members of the Godhead never differ with each other on anything. We will see that our Lord came willingly in just a moment. I do think that the Lord was accommodating Himself to language that we would understand, but if I were to give a paraphrase of the expression, "Neither came I of myself," it would be something like this: "It wasn't my idea; it was His."

So the Lord was not saying that He and the Father had trouble over this; He was simply saying that it was the Father Who determined that He was the One Who would come to the earth. And enough is revealed to us in Scripture about salvation for us to know that this decision was made before the foundation of the world. It was then that the decision was made that the Lord Jesus should be the Savior.

The word "sent" indicates that our Lord came on a mission. And it is because He was "sent" that the writer of the book of Hebrews called our Lord **"the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus"** (Heb. 3:1b). John the Baptist

was an apostle because he is described in John 1:6 as "a man sent from God." But he was not sent from heaven. He was sent like the other apostles, chosen particularly by God and by our Lord to fulfill the place of ministry which they had. But our Lord was the greatest of all the apostles, just as He was the greatest of all the prophets, and will be the greatest of all the kings, King of kings, and Lord of lords. However, at this Christmas season we need to realize that the birth of Jesus Christ was a distinct fulfillment of the will of God. As John wrote in his First Epistle, "The Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world" (1 John 4:14).

Now let us go on to our second point.

## II. THE SON CAME (John 6:38a).

Our Lord said, "For I came down from heaven." John the Baptist never said such a thing about himself. Neither did John who wrote this Gospel. Nor did the Apostle Peter. Nor did Paul. Nor did any of the OT prophets. Only our Lord could truthfully say this!

Our existence began when we were conceived in the wombs of our mothers. The Lord's existence as a human being began when He was conceived in the womb of the virgin Mary, but as the Son of God He was and is and always will be eternal! And so we can say that our Lord "came down from heaven." And His life and His ministry on earth from beginning to end, proved it. We must have no doubt about this. You cannot believe the Bible if you do not believe that He came from heaven. If the Bible is wrong here, it could be wrong many other places. But it is not wrong; God's Word is the truth. If this is not true, then Jesus Christ was only a Man. If this is not true, then Joseph was His father. But most tragically of all, if this is not true, then you and I do not have a Savior because if Jesus Christ were just a human being then He would need a Savior just like we do.

But He did come from heaven. He is the eternal Son of the living God. And therefore we need to worship and adore Him as the wise men did so long ago. If you want to profit spiritually from the message of the Bible, then don't try to put your own interpretation on what it says. Take it like it is. This is the absolute truth about Jesus Christ. To say anything less than this is pure blasphemy.

I hope we have both of these truths clearly fixed in our minds and hearts. The Father sent the Lord Jesus, and the Lord Jesus came, came willingly, came humbly to be born in a stable, the human son of an unknown virgin. How thankful we should be for those words of our Savior, "I came down from

heaven"! If He had not come, if He did not come from heaven, then, in the words of the Apostle Paul we would be of all people the most to be pitied. But let me say again that the Father sent Him, and He came from heaven.

But I have a question as my third point:

### III. WHY DID HE COME?

The answer to this question is given to us in verses 38 through 40 as well as in many, many other verses through the Bible.

The answer to that question is very specifically, He came to do the will of His Father Who sent Him. He did not come with one purpose, while the Father sent Him to do something else. As I have said, you will never find any differences of purpose between the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. They always agree about everything. And so the Father sent the Son to do the Father's will, and that is exactly and solely why the Lord Jesus came.

But what is the will of the Father? The answer to that question is given in verses 39 and 40. And here we come to another expression that we find in the Gospel of John, a simple expression, but, oh, so important! I am referring to what the Lord said about certain people who had been given to Him by the Father. See it in verse 39, and then you will see it also if you will look back to verse 37.

Now let me ask you some questions about God the Father. How mighty is He? Is He able to do whatever He wills to do? Can any person, man or woman, successfully stand against Him? If God intends to do something, can you stop Him, or can I stop Him? We would be the greatest fools in the world to say that we can stand successfully against God. If you think you can, you need to spend some time reading the Psalms and the OT prophets. Read Psalm 2, and read Isaiah 40 for starters.

Let me ask you some more questions. Did God send His Son to the earth to save everyone? Was that His will? We have learned that God can do, and will do, whatever He wills to do. So can we then say that if it had been His will to save everyone, then everyone would be saved? Yes, we can say that. The Lord Jesus said here that the will of the Lord concerning His coming to the earth had to do with those whom the Father had given to Him. This is in the perfect tense in the Greek which means that they were given to the Son before the Son ever came to the earth, and that is was for them that the Lord came to the earth.

When we speak of those whom the Father had given to the Son, we are talking about the elect, those who were "chosen" in Christ "before the foundation of the world" (Eph. 1:4). They are also called the elect in Scripture. You see, the will of God was not a plan to be offered to men so that of their own will they could decide on their eternal destiny. All men by nature are on their way to hell, but God determined in His infinite wisdom that He would intervene for those of His own choosing. And so the Lord Jesus came to guarantee the salvation of all of those whom the Father had given to Him.

Now I want you to notice three things about the will of God which our Lord mentioned here in our text for today.

The first is in verse 37, the first part of the verse. God has guaranteed that the Son's mission on earth will not fail. Everyone who has been given to the Son will come to the Son. There will be no failures, no exceptions.

The second is in the second part of verse 37, and then repeated in verse 39. When God does a work of salvation in any person's heart, that person does not go in and out. He may have his ups and downs, but he will never be cast out, never be lost, but will be raised up in the day when the Lord returns.

The third thing is in verse 40. How do you know that a person is elect, is chosen of God, is one of those who has been given by the Father to the Son? He "seeth the Son," for one thing. "Seeth" means that he comes to perceive, to discern, to understand, who Jesus Christ is. He sees that Jesus Christ is the Son of God who became a Man that He might provide salvation for sinners. He will not question what the Bible teaches about Christ. He may have His struggles to begin with, but a true Christian has no doubt about what the Bible teaches about Christ.

But this is not all. He also believes on Him, trusts Him, puts all of His hope for salvation on the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Bible does not teach that the elect will go to heaven just because they are elect. It teaches that the two ways you can know that a person has been chosen of God is that he believes that Jesus is the Son of God, and believing this, he puts his trust in Christ, and only in Christ, for his salvation.

This is what the Apostle John said in John 20:30, 31.  
(Quote.)

Concl: God knows who His chosen ones are, but we do not

until they believe. So the question facing each one of us today is are we trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ, God's Son, for our salvation from sin? Leave the question of election with the Lord. We are told about it so that we will know that Christ's work on the Cross has not failed, and will not fail. God sovereignly works to bring His chosen ones where they will learn of Christ, and then He draws us (John 6:44) to trust in Christ for our salvation.

It is my business to tell you of Christ. It is your business to make sure that He is the One you are trusting for your salvation. You say, "But I have my own idea about salvation." Let me respond by asking you this: If you could save yourself, or if there were some earthly way that you could be saved, do you think that the Father would have sent His Son to be the Savior of the world? The very fact that God sent His Son ought to be proof enough for any of us that there was no other way that any of us could be saved. And so it is not a question of what you think. It is a matter of receiving and believing the message concerning Christ which we find in the Bible.

And so I beseech you today to turn to Christ. Put your trust in Him, and do it without delaying any longer. The promise is that if you come, you will not be cast out. Perhaps the Lord brought you here today on this Sunday before Christmas because He wanted you to hear the Gospel so you could be saved. I trust that the Father will grant you the faith to believe in Christ so that you can go home today, not only knowing that Christ came to be a Savior, but that He came to be your Savior.

THE FULLNESS OF THE TIME  
Galatians 4:4, 5

Intro: One interesting thing to me about the NT is the many ways in which the birth, or the incarnation, of our Lord is described. We have the two historical accounts given to us in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, but, while they do not contradict each other, yet they are not the same. The Apostle John simply said, speaking of our Lord, that "the Word was made flesh" (John 1:14). As we saw this morning, our Lord described His coming in various ways. God gave His Son. Or, God sent His Son. Or simply that He came. In Romans 8:3 Paul said that our Lord was sent by God "in the likeness of sinful flesh." And then we have that wonderful passage in Philippians 2 which follows Paul's exhortation that we are to have the mind of Christ. He was speaking of the incarnation of Christ when he said that our Lord "took upon him[self] the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men" (Phil. 2:7b). Paul was at least including the birth of Christ in the passage that I read to you at the close of the service this morning. He simply called it, "the appearing of Jesus Christ" (2 Tim. 1:10a). The writer of Hebrews said that Jesus was "made a little lower than the angels" (Heb. 2:9). A little later in that same chapter He spoke of our Lord as partaking of flesh and blood (cf. v. 14). In the next to the last verse of Heb. 2 (17) he said that our Lord was "made like unto his brethren." And there are other illustrations that could be drawn from Scripture.

As you read your Bible through again next year it might be a worthwhile project to be on the lookout for other expressions that are used in Scripture to describe how our Lord came to the earth.

The expression that is used here is:

I. "MADE OF A WOMAN" (Gal. 4:4).

Now, as Charles Simeon stated in his message on this passage, it would have been superfluous for the birth of any mere man to be described in this way. We are all "made of a woman." Our mothers give birth to us. We came into being through our mothers. When this expression was used of our Lord it meant that He came into His physical being "of a woman," His mother according to the flesh, the virgin Mary. This was the way that the Father sent His Son into the world. As I explained this morning, our Lord did not begin to exist when He was conceived by the Holy Spirit, but His existence as a Man began at that time.

What else did Paul state here with reference to the birth of



our Lord?

He said that it was "in the fulness of the time." When that time had come, "God sent forth his Son." What did Paul mean, "But when the fulness of the time had come"?

There have been many attempts to explain this in terms of the right period in human history. There is no question but that Israel was ready for the Messiah, ready especially in terms of need. The Roman Empire made conditions ideal for the immediate and swift spread of the Gospel. Other circumstances can be pointed out as well. And while there is certainly some truth to these, yet Gal. 4:2 gives us the real answer to the question, what did Paul mean by "the fulness of the time"? In the illustration given in verse 2, it is "the time appointed by the father." God not only determine that His Son should come, and how He should come, and where and to whom He should come, but WHEN He should come! All of this was decided and determined when our salvation was planned before the foundation of the world.

And let me say that it was decided then when the Lord would come the second time. God works according to His own schedule, and He is never forced to change because of anything, or anybody. In the Gospel of John we see that the Lord's enemies could not do a thing to Him until His time had come. When the time came for Him to die, then things moved swiftly and without interruption.

So the Lord came at precisely the very year and day and hour that had been set in eternity past. God is working all things out according to His own will, and that always includes the time, "the fulness of the time." That is one reason that we need to be careful in our lives not to run ahead of the Lord. That can only lead to trouble.

But what else did Paul tell us about the birth of Christ?

He said that He was:

II. "MADE UNDER THE LAW" (Gal. 4:4b).

The word "made" in this phrase is exactly the same as in the expression, "made of a woman."

When our Lord was born He was "made under the law," which means, among other things, that He was born a Jew according to the flesh. His Father was God, but His mother was a Jewish virgin. He had to be born a Jew because it was necessary for Him to be the seed of David and the seed of Abraham. So He could not have been a Roman, or a Greek, or a

member of any other nation on the face of the earth. The promise of salvation had been given to Abraham and from time to time renewed to His descendants until it was fulfilled in the Baby Who was born to the virgin Mary.

But this also means that He was born at a time when He was under the authority of the Law given by God to Moses. And we know that He was the only Person, including even men like Moses and David, Who kept the Law perfectly.

And yet it also means that this put Him in a position to offer Himself as a sacrifice to God which would forever deliver His people from the penalty demanded by the Law for every sinner. We have learned in Romans that the Law was given to the Jews, and only to the Jews. But what happened to the Jews under the Law was to serve as a message loud and clear for all Gentiles. The Law condemned. The Law demanded death for all violators, not just physical death, but eternal death, eternal separation from God. And so when the Lord was "made under the Law," He was in a position where He could help those who were under the Law as He was.

This leads us to see what else the Apostle Paul had to say in this particular passage about:

### III. THE PURPOSE OF THE INCARNATION (Gal. 4:5).

When we speak of the purpose of the coming of Christ, this also is expressed in different ways in Scripture. Take, e.g., John 3:16.

In John 10:10 our Lord said, "I am come **that they might have life**, and that they might have it more abundantly."

Or think of what Paul wrote to Timothy in 1 Tim. 1:15:

This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world **to save sinners**; of whom I am chief.

How is the purpose of the incarnation expressed in our text? (Read v. 5.)

There are two purposes stated here, but the second could never have taken place without the first.

What was the first?

A. "To redeem them that were under the law."

We had that expression, "under the law," in Rom. 3:19. Let me refresh your memory on what that verse says:

Now we know that what things soever the law saith,  
**it saith to them that are under the law;**  
that every mouth may be stopped,  
and all the world become guilty before God.

Those "under the law" are the Jewish people, and yet when God provided for Jewish sinners, He provided for Gentile sinners as well, and for their greater blessing.

The Lord was "made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law"--under the Law's authority, and under the condemnation imposed on them by the Law.

Now let us look at the word "redeem."

It is the Greek verb which means to buy out, or to purchase a slave with the idea of setting him free. Here it means that our Lord came to do what the Law of God required in order that it might be satisfied so that the sinner would no longer be under divine condemnation.

What did the Law require? It required death. How could our Lord satisfy that requirement? By dying--by dying in behalf of those He had come to save. And this He did when He died on the Cross. Paul had declared that earlier in this epistle to the Galatian churches. Cf. Gal. 3:13, 14. Therefore, the Word of God makes it clear that our Lord died as a substitute for sinner, for violators of the Law of God. By His death God is satisfied that His righteousness has been maintained, and so the sinner is set free from divine condemnation. Cf. Rom. 8:1a.

But, going back to our text, what else did Paul say about our Lord's purpose in coming to the earth?

B. "That we might receive the adoption of sons."

Let me call your attention to the shift from "them" in the first part of this verse, to "we" in the last part of the verse. The "them" refers to those who were "under the law." These would be the Jewish believers. The "we" refers to Jewish and Gentile believers. "That **we** might receive the adoption of sons."

This phrase, "the adoption of sons," has led to much misunderstanding about how you and I have gotten into the family of God. The Reformed men are particularly bad about saying that we are adopted into the family of God. We are not! We are born into the family of God. The Apostle John made that very clear in John 1:11-13. (Quote.) There is nothing wrong about being adopted. When I see on TV those

little children in Somalia, I would like to adopt several of them. There are thousands upon thousands of adopted children in this world who can be thankful that they have adoptive parents who love them. But that is not how we have gotten into the family of God. We are born in God's family.

What, then, does this mean?

It is point out the difference between being in the family of God "under the law," before Christ came, as compared with being in the family of God now since our Lord has come. It is the difference between being a minor in a family as compared with being a child who is of age. The people of God in the OT were saved just like we are. The people of God in the OT were in the family of God like we are. But there were some blessings which we enjoy which they did not have because those blessings had to await the coming of the Redeemer.

I will say that not as much is made of the family of God in the OT as we have in the NT, but there are enough passages to show us that they were in God's family like we are. E.g., Isaiah 63:16,

Doubtless thou art our father,  
though Abraham be ignorant of us,  
and Israel acknowledge us not:  
thou, O LORD, art our father, our redeemer;  
thy name is from everlasting.

So it is in the OT, but not as prominent as in the NT.

What special blessing is it that we have which they did not have? Read verse 6. Then read John 14:16, 17. And then John 7:39. And according to Gal. 4:7 we need to pay attention to all of the inheritance passages in the epistles. How wonderful, how amazing, it is that we are indwelt by the Holy Spirit, and that He will never, under any circumstances, leave us!

And so we can say that Christ came to die in order that we might be moved up in our place in the family of God to the full status of sons!

Concl: And so when Paul said that this was all "in the fulness of the time," he meant that it was God's time, not only to deliver His people Israel from the Law and its condemnation, but to raise the standing of all believers, Jewish and Gentile, to full sonship in the family of God.

In the light of these great truths our hearts should be overflowing with praise to our God, and to His Son, our Savior, for all that He has done for us, and especially for the gift of the Holy Spirit. What a blessing to be God's sons!