

“THINK ON THESE THINGS”

Philippians 4:8

Because Jesus Was Born

By Doy Moyer

“But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons” (Gal. 4:4-5).

While the Gospels of Matthew and Luke give considerable space to the birth of Jesus and the surrounding events, the rest of the New Testament shows us what His coming into this world really means. He came into this world not merely to be born and be a man, but with a greater purpose of bringing redemption and salvation. Both Matthew and Luke highlight this purpose.

Paul points out in Galatians 4 that Jesus was born at the right time and with great purpose. The phrase, ***“born of a woman,”*** may seem obvious as a physical fact, but I believe it underlines the connection back to Genesis 3:15 where the promise was made to the woman that her seed would bruise the head of the serpent (a fatal strike). In other words, as John would put it, ***“The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil”*** (1 John 3:8). The Hebrews writer shows that Jesus partook of flesh and blood ***“that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and might free those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives”*** (Heb. 2:14-15). The serpent’s head is crushed by the Seed of woman who also is the one true Seed of Abraham (Gal. 3:15-18).

Though Jesus was ***“born under the Law,”*** His purpose was to fulfill the Law (Matt. 5:17) and thereby ***“redeem those who were under the Law.”*** The Law could not do what Jesus came to do. The Law accomplished what God intended for it, but it was never meant to be the end goal of God’s plans. It was a vehicle through which God would bring about the ultimate fulfillment of His plan in the Son (cf. Gal. 3:23-25). This would make it possible, then, that those who are in Christ would be set free from sin and death:

“Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh...” (Rom. 8:1-3).

Because Jesus was born into this world to die and rise again, we can live confidently in Him knowing that there is no condemnation. We are forgiven, redeemed, and sanctified unto Him. ***“But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you”*** (Rom. 8:11).

Further, because Jesus was born, Paul writes, we may ***“receive the adoption as sons”*** (Gal. 4:5). Salvation is more than forgiveness of sin. It is more than being spared from condemnation. Salvation is a complete change of status. We are adopted into God’s family with all of its rights of inheritance. ***“Because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, ‘Abba! Father!’ Therefore you are no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, then an heir through God”*** (Gal. 4:6-7).

“Abba, Father!” is the cry of Sonship. It is what Jesus cried out in the garden as He yielded Himself to the will of the Father in going to the cross (Mark 14:36). Because Jesus did this, we become God’s children in a special way that will provide the inheritance of life. We have been ***“born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you...”*** (1 Pet. 1:3-4). Because Jesus was born, we may be born again to

hope, life, and the inheritance that belongs to the children of God. ***“See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called children of God; and such we are”*** (1 John 3:1).

When Mary was expecting, she praised God for His mercy which is ***“upon generation after generation toward those who fear Him”*** (Luke 1:50). Because Jesus was born, we are the recipients of His great mercy shown throughout the generations. We receive salvation and redemption by His grace, and more, we receive the adoption as sons and the grand inheritance provided by Him. The blessing of being able to cry out, ***“Abba, Father!”*** is beyond words.

Thank God for His great gift of Jesus, the true Seed ***“born of a woman”*** to redeem us all from the curse of sin and provide the means of adoption through which we become God’s heirs! ■

Attend If Convenient

By Paul Sain

Attendance on Sunday morning worship is so encouraging, especially at times. Sunday evening and Wednesday evening attendance is so discouraging and depressing. Many tragically forsake the Lord, coming only on Sunday morning or when convenient.

Service and faithfulness to Almighty God is NOT something that we can “put on” or “take off” as a piece of clothing. Worship is not an optional matter (John 4:24). Loyalty to God is not a seasonal involvement. Neither is our worship to Him to be a matter of “if convenient” or “if nothing else comes up or prevents us.”

Tragically some who profess to be dedicated and loyal allow visitors in their homes to keep them away from worship on the Lord’s Day. Others allow hunting season, football games, golf trips, vacations or whatever comes along to divert their attention and supposed faithfulness to their Lord.

Do not fool yourself! Do not be so blind as to think that others do not see your actions for what they are – neglect, unfaithfulness and sinful action.

Your children learn that God is important ONLY IF nothing else more important comes along. They grow up to believe that “God will understand” if we are not there since we are traveling, company came unexpected, or this is a very special game. The facts are – God does not understand, accept nor tolerate such “second place action” from His servants. He demands first place and will not be second, third or forty-second (Matt. 6:33).

Your friends see your actions and know that God really is not that important to you—as much as other things. You may have invited them to worship, encouraged them to become a Christian, talked to them about going to heaven—but by your actions they learn you are mostly TALK and very little WALK.

Folks, “if the shoe fits, wear it” – change, stop, no longer forsake the assembling – Sunday morning, Sunday evening, Wednesday evening – or whenever the elders (God’s overseers) have designated the saints to assemble. God said, ***“Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls...”*** (Heb 13: 17).

Your failure to attend worship shows where your priorities reside, where your true love is and where you are setting your affections (John 14:15; Col. 3: 1-4). ■

“And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching” (Hebrews 10:24-25, KJV).

Service Times — Sunday: 9:00 & 10:00 AM; 6:00 PM — Wednesday: 7:00 PM

Tommy Glendol McClure, Editor and Evangelist - 925-759-4357

Web Site: www.lodicachurchofchrist.com — Email: lodicachurchofchrist@gmail.com — Phone: 209-365-9250