

Title: The Reason For Christmas - Part 2

Text: Various Scriptures

Introduction: Lets consider these verses first by way of our introduction, Luke 1:26-38; Isaiah 7:14; 9:6-7. It is clear that we find in Scripture, God's plan to save man, by offering an atonement for sin, by giving His Son as a gift.

Point 1 - Why God's Gift Is Needed (Ephesians 2:1-3)

The first thing we see is that dead men can't do anything. The spiritually dead state that we're in is defined in vs. 1, clearly, and without ambiguity. We are by nature, slaves to sin and the devil. We know this because we "walked" according to the prince and power of the air. John 8:44 *"You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies."* This same spirit which now is in the unbelievers of the world. Many don't like to acknowledge they are followers of Satan, but they are. And so were we, as we did according to him. We are guilty before God. We have violated all His commands. We are rebellious.

We lived in a state of fulfilling the desires of the flesh and mind. The mind creates wicked schemes. This describes both evil schemes and desires designed by the mind and fulfilled by the flesh. Paul commands the church at Corinth to do the opposite of this, 2 Corinthians 7:1 *"Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."* Furthermore, we are by nature children of wrath. And by that nature we do wrong, rebel, and satisfy the flesh. As Matthew Henry notes, *"Our state and course are such as deserve wrath, and would end in eternal wrath, if divine grace did not interpose."* Herein we find the reason Paul describes the natural state of man in his no hope condition, carnal, evil, wicked, fleshly and no hope for him as he is.

Application: Apart from the reaching grace of God you do what's natural, sin.

Point 2 - The Transition From Hopeless To Hope

We see the most pivotal conjunction in history. Vs. 4 changes the tone of mans desperate condition of eternal damnation to eternal hope. We begin to see the glorious change from deadness to life. And it's not a work of man. It's a work of God, a gift of God. Vs. 8 *"And that not of yourselves"* our faith, our conversion, and our eternal salvation, are not the mere product of any natural abilities, nor of any merit of our own. *There is no room for any man's boasting of his own abilities and power; or as though he had done any thing that might deserve such immense favors from God.*¹

¹ <https://www.biblegateway.com/resources/matthew-henry/Eph.2.4-Eph.2.10>

Now we see from negative to positive, man's helpless condition, God's mercy to save man. Notice God is "rich in mercy." The word rich is an adjective (which modifies the noun) and the noun here is mercy. So God is rich in mercy. Also, the mercy of God is inexhaustible, thus no matter the depths of your condition, it's enough. Easton's Bible Dictionary defines mercy as "kindness or good will towards the miserable and the afflicted."

Why is this such a marvelous gift? Because we are saved from the death of sin. We now have the implanted grace of God in us. He did it. *As death locks up the senses, seals up all the powers and faculties, so does a state of sin, as to any thing that is good. Grace unlocks and opens all, and enlarges the soul.*² Furthermore, vs. 5 shows us that even in our state of sin, God had mercy upon us. He was long suffering with us. Romans 5:8 "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." While you were lost and wondering, doing your own thing, prideful and rebellious, Christ laid down His life for you. Now define mercy.

Not only is His grace beyond measure, He performed a resurrection of a dead spiritual life, and made you alive (vs. 5). Dead people can't do anything, but God can take your dead old body and make it alive. He will do so in the resurrection, He will make a new body. Not only did He make us alive, He raised us up with Him, when Christ arose from the grips of death and hell, which He defeated, we arose with Him. And we are seated with Him, cf. 1 Corinthians 15:50-58.

Point 3 - What We Are Because Of His Gift

We are His workmanship (vs. 10). And those who belong to Christ, walk in them, in good works, in righteousness. We are a new man. We don't walk how we used to walk. This gift of salvation was prepared by God. We are reminded of who we were, vs. 12, strangers, separated from God. And in that state we had no hope and were running wild and helpless in the world.

Again in vs. 13 "But now" another conjunction, clearly defining the before and after, first we see this in vs. 4, now applying it to how we are to live in vs. 13. We who were afar, lost and wondering, have been brought back into the fold by Christ and His gift of salvation.

The gift of God is reconciliation. Romans 5:10 "For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life." Colossians 1:22 "yet He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach."

Point 4 - Where We Are Because Of His Gift

We are no longer strangers and aliens to God (vs. 19). We aren't orphans anymore. We are citizens of heaven, of the family of God. But what we are strangers to is the world now, 1 Peter 2:11

² <https://www.biblegateway.com/resources/matthew-henry/Eph.2.4-Eph.2.10>

“Beloved, I urge you as **aliens** and **strangers** to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul.” Hebrews 11:13 “All these died in faith, without receiving the promises, but having seen them and having welcomed them from a distance, and having confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth.” Romans 8:15-17 “For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, ‘Abba! Father!’ The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ.”