

## THE TWO PURPOSES OF CHRISTMAS

At this time of the year, I like to recall the purpose of **why we do what we do**. It is so easy after we are Christians for a while to take our blessings in Christ for granted. We often hear the Christmas story from the gospels, but I would like to look at a neglected book of the Bible when it comes to the purpose of the incarnation – of Jesus in the book of 1 John.

First John will help us understand the **first** coming of Christ. Some claimed that Jesus did not come in the flesh but was only an aberration or appearance of a physical person. That is why John opens with the first two verses:

1 John 1: 1 “That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have **looked upon**, and our hands have **handled**, concerning the Word of life— <sup>2</sup> the life was **manifested**, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was **manifested** to us— ”

The word “manifested” means that the life that God gives to us was revealed **historically** in Jesus. The apostles physically handled the incarnate Christ.

1 Tim 3: 16 “God was **manifested** in the flesh, Justified in the Spirit, Seen by angels, Preached among the Gentiles, Believed on in the world, Received up in glory.”

Jesus came the first time for **two purposes**: 1) to take away our sin and 2) to destroy the work of the devil.

The **first** purpose of Christ’s coming is to take away the sins of the world.

1 John 3: 5 “And you know that He was **manifested to take away our sins**, and in Him there is no sin.”

The reason Jesus “was manifested” was to “take away our sins.” The word “manifested” in the Greek is point action – at the physical appearance of the Messiah. God judges our sins **once**. That judgment of our sin took place at the cross. God judged Jesus for sin so that He will never judge us for our sin. In law, the principle of double jeopardy says that we cannot punish a man for the same crime twice. Jesus took our punishment so there is no further punishment needed.

To “take away” our sins means that Jesus *carried away* our sins. God put our sins on Jesus, and He carried them away. God poured out the judgment of our sins on Christ. Jesus did all the suffering that needed to be suffered for our sins. We do not need to suffer for our sins. All we do is **receive** what He did. We can do nothing for forgiveness.

The **second** purpose for the first coming of Christ is to destroy the works of the Devil.

1 John 3: <sup>8</sup> “For this purpose the Son of God was **manifested**, that He might destroy the works of the devil.”

Jesus, as the Son of God, “was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.” Jesus manifested Himself to destroy the devastation the devil caused in the Garden of Eden. The work of the devil was to go independent from God. He caused Adam and Eve to go independent from God.

Satan is in the business of **slandering the saints** (Re 12:9,10). This insidious work of Satan sow’s suspicion. Christ takes away any question mark on our souls.

That is why Luke can say through the Holy Spirit, “...that through this Man is preached to you the forgiveness of sins” (Acts 13:38). The author to the Hebrews can also say, “Their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more” (He 10:17). Our sins no longer haunt us nor hound us.

If Jesus went to the extent of humiliating Himself into becoming a human being and dying with that humanity, should not we give our lives for Him?

1 John 3: 16 “By this we know love, because He **laid down His life for us**. And we also ought to lay down *our* lives for the brethren.”

1 John 4: 9 “In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has **sent His only begotten Son into the world**, that we might live through Him. <sup>10</sup> In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and **sent His Son** *to be* the propitiation for our sins.”