

Series: *Colossians 2 – Truth Above All*

Title: "Do You Know Why Jesus Came?" (Luke 2:49, John 6:38-40)

Speaker: Dr. Paul M. Elliott

Original Air Date: Week of 12/23/2012

Page 1 of 12

We have come to the time of year when Christians commemorate the incarnation of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is completely appropriate that we should do this. Old Testament believers looked forward to the coming of their Redeemer for four thousand years. When Mary and Joseph presented their infant son Jesus at the temple in Jerusalem, in accordance with the law when He was eight days old, Simeon and Anna by the work of the Spirit of God recognized that their Messiah had at last come, and they praised God. We as Christians of the New Testament economy can and should do no less.

Confusion About Why Jesus Came

This is especially the case because it is a matter of witness. We live in a world in which there is much confusion on this most central question: Why did Jesus Christ come into the world?

Why did He come? Ask that question – ask it of anyone – and you will hear all sorts of answers. The sad fact is that most of them will be wrong answers. And sadder yet, if you take the time to trace these things, you will find that most of these wrong answers originated in the organized church.

Many religious leaders will tell you that Jesus Christ came onto the scene two thousand years ago in order to be a good moral teacher. They will tell you that He came to be a good moral example, an example of self-sacrifice, and so on. And, many theological liberals want to tell you that Jesus Christ came into this world to be a political liberal.

Series: *Colossians 2 – Truth Above All*

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Original Air Date: Week of 12/23/2012

Page 2 of 12

But it is sad to say that in our time things are just as bad in large segments of what is called the Evangelical church. In recent years, one candidate for president of the United States, who claimed to be an Evangelical, said that Jesus Christ was his favorite philosopher. Another candidate who ran for president in our most recent election, and also claims to be an Evangelical, wrote an article in which he said that Jesus Christ was (and I quote) "the perfect conservative" (unquote) – a political reformer; an economic reformer; a social reformer. This man on the right of the political spectrum was making essentially the same claim about Jesus Christ that politicians and theologians on the left also make. He just gave it a different "spin."

But all of these things are wrong. Why did Jesus Christ come into the world? We cannot go to the secular world for the answer. The secular world does not understand who Jesus Christ truly is. If they think of Jesus Christ at all, they think of Him only in humanistic terms.

But what about the organized church? We cannot go to the liberal churches for the answer. We cannot go to Roman Catholicism. We cannot go to the other cults. None of them truly understand who Jesus Christ is, any more than the secular world does. The false religions may tell you that Jesus was in some sense "divine." They may say that in some sense He was a man who lived and spoke on a higher plane than the common man. But a stream cannot rise any higher than its source, and so their thinking about the Christ of the Bible cannot rise any higher than the depths of the darkness of an un-regenerated heart. First Corinthians

Series: *Colossians 2 – Truth Above All*

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Speaker: Dr. Paul M. Elliott

Original Air Date: Week of 12/23/2012

Page 3 of 12

chapter two tells us that these men – the men of the secular world, the men of the false religions – are "natural men" who cannot receive the things of the Spirit of God. These things are foolishness to them. And so we cannot go to the secular world or to the liberal church for the answer to the question.

But sad to say, in our time we cannot even go to a great many of the men who call themselves Evangelical pastors. Many of these men have lost their grasp of the truth of why Christ came, if in fact they ever did grasp that truth.

Now you may think that is a very shocking statement. But turn on the radio or television today, and what will you find? You will find men who claim to be Evangelical pastors who are preaching that Jesus Christ came into the world to be your mentor or your counselor. I have heard several preachers put it this way, that Jesus Christ came to be your "life coach" – to help you to be more prosperous and successful and psychologically well-off in this life.

What is the flaw with all of these things? What is the flaw in the thinking of the secular humanist about Jesus Christ? What is the flaw in the thinking of the liberal churches and the cults about Jesus Christ? What is the flaw, even in the thinking of many who claim to be Evangelicals in our time, about Jesus Christ and why He came?

It is the same flaw – the same spiritually fatal flaw – in every case. The flaw is that all of these answers come from the wrong source.

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Speaker: Dr. Paul M. Elliott

Original Air Date: Week of 12/23/2012

Page 4 of 12

Why did Jesus Christ come into the world? We find the answer in only one place: the inspired, infallible, inerrant Word of God. The Bible alone is the place in which Christ Himself has told us why He came into this world. And so, let us go together to the Word of God today to see the answer.

Why did Jesus Himself say that He had come into the world? We find in the pages of Scripture that Christ told us that He came into the world for a number of reasons. He did not leave any question or room for doubt or debate about those reasons. And those reasons are a great comfort and encouragement to the people of God, and as we shall see they also present us with a great challenge.

He Came to Do His Father's Will

In today's message, I would like to focus our attention on one particular reason why Jesus said He came into the world. That reason is this: Jesus said that He came into the world to do the will of His Father in Heaven. This is the principal reason why Jesus Christ came into the world. This is the over-arching reason. All of the other reasons that we find in Jesus' words in the Gospels come under this one great over-arching reason.

Jesus came into the world to do the will of His Father in Heaven. And the remarkable thing is that we find our Lord not only stating this great reason for His coming when He was an adult. We find Him stating it for the first time in Scripture when our incarnate Savior is only twelve years old.

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Speaker: Dr. Paul M. Elliott

Original Air Date: Week of 12/23/2012

Page 5 of 12

In the book of Luke chapter two beginning at verse forty-one, we find that Jesus at the age of twelve had gone with his parents to Jerusalem for the feast of the Passover. After the feast was finished, Mary and Joseph were returning home to Nazareth along with other relatives and acquaintances. At first they thought that Jesus was somewhere among this large party of people who were traveling together, but after a time they realized that Jesus was not with them.

And so Mary and Joseph returned to Jerusalem to look for Jesus. And after three days they found Jesus in the temple – Luke chapter two, verse forty-six – "sitting in the midst of the teachers, both listening to them and asking them questions. And all who heard Him were astonished at His understanding and answers."

And then we read in verse forty-eight that his mother Mary asked Jesus why He had done this. Listen to Jesus' response, Luke chapter two, verse forty-nine: "And He said to them 'Why did you seek Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?' "

A Remarkable Statement

Now dear friends, this is a remarkable statement. There are those who look at this passage with un-regenerated minds, and they want to tell you that Jesus gradually began to realize that He was someone special. But this incident, early in the life of Christ on earth, is recorded for us in Holy Scripture to prevent us from making the mistake of thinking about Jesus in that way.

Series: *Colossians 2 – Truth Above All*

Title: "Do You Know Why Jesus Came?" (Luke 2:49, John 6:38-40)

Speaker: Dr. Paul M. Elliott

Original Air Date: Week of 12/23/2012

Page 6 of 12

Jesus Christ, even when He was a baby in a manger, was both fully God and fully man. Colossians chapter two verse nine tells us that "in Him [in Jesus Christ] dwells all the fullness of the Godhead in a body." Isaiah chapter nine verse six, which is part of one of the great Old Testament prophecies of the incarnation of Christ, tells us that "unto us a Child is born, [and] unto us a Son is given."

That is the distinction: a Child was born. Human flesh was born. But a Son – the eternally existing Son – was given in the body of that child. God the Son, the Second Person of the Trinity, eternally existent, came into the world in the form of a child, and that body grew to manhood.

The baby in the manger was Almighty God. The boy of twelve talking with the teachers in the temple was Almighty God. The grown man, nailed to a cross, and shouting in triumph, "It is finished!" was Almighty God.

Never forget this, dear friend. Hebrews chapter thirteen verses eight tells us that "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever." And often we stop there. But notice the verse that follows, verse nine of Hebrews chapter thirteen: "Do not be carried about with various and strange doctrines." There are "various and strange doctrines" of the incarnation of the Lord Jesus Christ in the world and even in the visible church today. Doctrines that deny that He is "the same yesterday, today, and forever." Never has it ever been more important for God's people to have and to maintain a firm grasp of the truth of the incarnation of Jesus Christ, as it is found in the pure Word of God, and to proclaim that truth clearly to

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Title: "Do You Know Why Jesus Came?" (Luke 2:49, John 6:38-40)

Speaker: Dr. Paul M. Elliott

Original Air Date: Week of 12/23/2012

Page 7 of 12

the church and to the world.

The Gospel of John chapter one tells us that "the Word became flesh and dwelled among us" – literally, He "made His tabernacle among us." Came in the tabernacle of a human body. Almighty God, the God of the universe, as Philippians chapter two tells us, condescending to come to earth in the form of a servant. Coming to do His Father's will.

What Is The Father's Will?

And what exactly was His Father's will? It was the will of God the Father to save a people for Himself through the incarnation, death, and resurrection of His Son. In Ephesians chapter one, beginning at verse three, the Apostle Paul under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit explains this to us. He writes this:

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He [God the Father] chose us [the people of God] in Him [that is, in Jesus Christ] before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved. (Ephesians 1:3-6)

The Apostle Paul here in Ephesians restates what our Lord Jesus said Himself

Series: *Colossians 2 – Truth Above All*

Title: "Do You Know Why Jesus Came?" (Luke 2:49, John 6:38-40)

Speaker: Dr. Paul M. Elliott

Original Air Date: Week of 12/23/2012

Page 8 of 12

in John chapter six, beginning at verse thirty-eight. Jesus said,

I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all He has given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day. And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day. (John 6:38-40)

Jesus came so that by giving His life on the cross, we might have eternal life. He came to die the death we deserved to die. In John chapter ten, beginning at verse seven, Jesus said,

I am the door of the sheep. All who ever came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture. The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly. I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep. (John 10:7-11)

He Came to Preach Eternal Peace

Jesus preached this message to both Jew and Gentile. He came preaching peace – peace with God the Father. The end of the warfare between depraved man and

Series: *Colossians 2 – Truth Above All*

Title: "Do You Know Why Jesus Came?" (Luke 2:49, John 6:38-40)

Speaker: Dr. Paul M. Elliott

Original Air Date: Week of 12/23/2012

Page 9 of 12

the holy God, for those who would repent of their sins and receive the gift of eternal life by faith in Christ alone. The Apostle Paul speaks of this in Ephesians chapter two, beginning at verse fourteen when he says this:

For He [Jesus] Himself is our peace, who has made both one [has made Jew and Gentile one body in Christ], and has broken down the middle wall of separation, having abolished in His flesh [the flesh of God incarnate, has abolished] the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace, and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity. And He [Jesus] came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near. (Ephesians 2:14-17)

He Came Not to Bring Temporal Peace, But a Sword

The Word of God tells us that Jesus came to bring peace. But it is not peace on the world's terms. It is not the peace of the secularists. It is not the peace of the politicians. It is not the peace of liberal religion. It is true peace with God the Father for those who are by nature at war with God because of their sin. In fact, Jesus said this, Matthew chapter ten, beginning at verse thirty-four:

Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword. For I have come to "set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her

Series: *Colossians 2 – Truth Above All*

Title: "Do You Know Why Jesus Came?" (Luke 2:49, John 6:38-40)

Speaker: Dr. Paul M. Elliott

Original Air Date: Week of 12/23/2012

Page 10 of 12

mother-in-law"; and "a man's enemies will be those of his own household." (Matthew 10:34-36)

He Came to Send You

Now if we are honest as Christians, I think many of us will admit that we have difficulty with this last-mentioned reason why Jesus came. "I did not come to bring peace [on earth], but a sword." Conflict is uncomfortable. Warfare is unwelcome. But Ephesians chapter six tells us that we Christians are in a warfare – not "against flesh and blood, but [against spiritual forces –] against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places" (6:12-13).

As God the Father sent God the Son into the world, so also God the Son sends us into the world. He sends us into that conflict. After Jesus was risen from the dead, He said to His disciples, John chapter twenty verse twenty-one, "Peace to You! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you."

This is the basis on which Jesus has commanded us to "Go into all the world and preach the Gospel" (Mark 16:15). Dear friend, if you do that, if you proclaim the truth of the Gospel that has saved our own soul, you are sure to make enemies. This cross, the cross of Jesus Christ, is an offense to most of the people you will encounter. Often that will even be true in our own families, among those who do not know Christ.

Series: *Colossians 2 – Truth Above All*

Title: "Do You Know Why Jesus Came?" (Luke 2:49, John 6:38-40)

Speaker: Dr. Paul M. Elliott

Original Air Date: Week of 12/23/2012

Page 11 of 12

Those who are in darkness hate the light. Those who have believed a lie hate the truth. Many who are still in their sins and at war with God will reject the peace that you have found in Christ. But as warriors for Christ and ambassadors for Christ we must persevere.

Just as Jesus faced rejection and persecution when the Father sent Him into the world, we will face it as He sends us into the world. In John chapter fifteen, Jesus said to His disciples,

If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. (John 15:18-19)

And there is the test, dear friend. The great preacher Charles Spurgeon put it this way. He said, "Fearless of all consequences, you must do the right....For the truth's sake to hazard reputation and affection, is such a deed that to do it constantly you will need a degree of moral principle which only the Spirit of God can work in you...Follow right manfully in your Master's steps, for He has traversed this rough way before you. Better a brief warfare and eternal rest, than false peace and everlasting torment."

Dear friend, at this Christmas season, as you remember why Jesus came to earth in the Father's name two thousand years ago, also remember why Christ has placed you here on this earth in His name today. He has given you as an individual

Series: *Colossians 2 – Truth Above All*

Title: "Do You Know Why Jesus Came?" (Luke 2:49, John 6:38-40)

Speaker: Dr. Paul M. Elliott

Original Air Date: Week of 12/23/2012

Page 12 of 12

believer, and the true church of Christ as a body, a most sacred task: The proclamation of the Gospel, and the edification of the saints.

This is the great specialist work of the true Christian and the true Church. God has given His people a work to do that the world cannot do, and no false church can do. As Jesus did His Father's will when He came to earth, we must do our Savior's will during our time on earth – the work of bringing in the harvest of souls who will be glorified with Christ when He comes the second time – not as a baby in a manger, but as the King and the Righteous Judge. His Second Coming is your great hope as a believer, and His Great Commission is your sacred task in this world.

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The Scripture-Driven Church airs each week across the United States and around the world. Our goal is that of the Great Commission: to preach the Gospel to the world, and to equip believers to stand upon and live by the sole authority of God's Word, to the glory of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

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