

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, 12-18-11 PM NOTES
"JESUS WAS BORN TO DESTROY THE DEVIL"
HEBREWS 2:14-15
#3 in Series, "Connecting Bethlehem and Calvary"

"The important issue of Christmas is not so much that Jesus came, but *why* He came. There was no salvation in His birth. Nor did the sinless way He lived His life have any redemptive force on its own. His example, as flawless as it was, could not rescue men from their sins. Even His teaching, the greatest truth ever revealed to man, could not save us from our sins. There was a price to be paid for our sins. Someone had to die. Only Jesus could do it."
- John MacArthur

*Bearing shame and scoffing rude,
In my place condemned He stood,
Sealed my pardon with His blood;
Hallelujah, what a Savior!*

- Phillip P. Bliss (1875)

"There are two equal and opposite errors into which our race can fall about the devils. One is to disbelieve their existence; the other is to believe and to feel an unhealthy interest in them! They themselves are equally pleased by both errors, and they hail a materialist or a magician with the same delight."
- C. S. Lewis

"If the believer could see all that happened to Satan at Calvary, he would be moved to ceaseless praise."
- Jack Taylor

I. What Jesus Accepted (v. 14a)

John 1:14a (NKJV) "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us..."

Philippians 2:5-7 (NASB) "⁵Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, ⁶who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, *and* being made in the likeness of men."

II. What Jesus Accomplished (V14b-15)

A. He Destroyed the Devil (V14b)

Romans 3:31 (NKJV) "Do we then **make void** the law through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish the law."

2 Timothy 1:10 (NKJV) "but has now been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, *who* **has abolished** death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel."

Colossians 2:15 (NIV) "And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross."

"He is both a defeated foe and a dominated foe. He is vanquished but not vanished, present but not prevailing, active but not able to overcome."
- Jack Taylor

Revelation 20:10 (NKJV) “The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.”

Ephesians 4:27 (ESV) “and give no opportunity to the devil.”

1 Peter 5:8 (NKJV) “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.”

John 17:17b (NKJV) “Your word is truth.”

2 Corinthians 10:5b (NKJV) “...bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.”

B. He Delivered the Captives (v. 15)

Romans 6:23b (NKJV) “...the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

1 Corinthians 15:56a (NKJV) “The sting of death is sin...”

Philippians 1:21 (NKJV) “For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain.”

1 Corinthians 15:55 (KJV) “O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?”

“Death is only the grim porter to let us into a stately palace.”

- Richard Baxter

Question 1: What is the only comfort in life and in death?

Answer: That I, with body and soul, both in life and in death, am not my own, but belong to my faithful Savior Jesus Christ, who with His precious blood has fully satisfied for all my sins, and redeemed me from all the power of the devil; and so preserves me that without the will of my Father in heaven not a hair can fall from my head; yea, that all things must work together for my salvation. Wherefore, by His Holy Spirit, He also assures me of eternal life, and makes me heartily willing and ready henceforth to live unto Him.”

- Heidelberg Catechism (1563)

*And though this world with devils filled,
Should threaten to undo us,
We will not fear for God hath willed
His truth to triumph through us:
The Prince of Darkness grim,
We tremble not for him;
His rage we can endure,
For lo, his doom is sure,
One little word shall fell him.*

*That word above all earthly powers,
No thanks to them, abideth;
The Spirit and the gifts are ours
Through Him who with us sideth:
Let goods and kindred go,
This mortal life also;
The body they may kill:
God's truth abideth still,
His kingdom is forever.*

- Martin Luther

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Listen to this quote from John MacArthur: “The important issue of Christmas is not so much that Jesus came, but *why* He came. There was no salvation in His birth. Nor did the sinless way He lived His life have any redemptive force on its own. His example, as flawless as it was, could not rescue men from their sins. Even His teaching, the greatest truth ever revealed to man, could not save us from our sins. There was a price to be paid for our sins. Someone had to die. Only Jesus could do it [John MacArthur, *The Miracle of Christmas*, Page 116]. In no way do I want to minimize the wonderful things that Jesus did when He took on human flesh and was born in Bethlehem’s manger. He revealed God to man; He and He alone kept the law perfectly (in letter and spirit); He taught us so much; He set an example of ministering to those in need and having compassion on the sheep without a shepherd. However, all of those really important things pale in comparison to the primary purpose for His incarnation. He could have done all those things without becoming a man. There are multiple instances of “The Angel of the Lord” appearing in the Old Testament and then disappearing. He appeared to Jacob, Joshua, Gideon, and others. Most Bible scholars call these appearances a “Christophony” – a pre-incarnate appearance of Christ for a specific purpose. There is one thing that the Angel of the Lord could not do; He could not die as man for man’s sin. Sinful man could not be forgiven and set free from the slavery of sin and Satan and the bondage of the fear of death by great teaching or a perfect example. Sinful man needed a substitute who could take the wages of sin in our place and defeat the one who had the power of death.

*Bearing shame and scoffing rude,
In my place condemned He stood,
Sealed my pardon with His blood;
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The primary reason that Jesus became man was to die! That is why when we speak of and celebrate His birth, we must never see His birth as an end in itself; we must connect His birth to the cross and all that He accomplished there. We must connect Bethlehem and Calvary.

In this message, we are going to focus on what was accomplished at Calvary concerning our perpetual enemy, Satan. When it comes to this real spiritual enemy and his demonic army, we must avoid two extremes. C. S. Lewis voices these two extremes in his classic work, “The Screwtape Letters”. “There are two equal and opposite errors into which our race can fall about the devils. One is to disbelieve their existence, the other is to believe and to feel an unhealthy interest in them! They themselves are equally pleased by both errors, and they hail a materialist or a magician with the same delight” [Quoted in Corrie Ten Boom, *Defeated Enemies*, Page 3-4]. In our culture and even in our church, I fear that we have gone to the extreme of acting like we disbelieve their existence even though we may say the right Biblical things about them. Jesus Christ was born and 33 years later He went to Calvary and was crucified on a rugged cross. In His death, He destroyed the devil who had the power of death. The text we are looking at in this message tells us that the death of Jesus was the death blow to the devil. Jack Taylor said, “If the believer could see all that happened to Satan at Calvary, he would be moved to ceaseless praise” [*Victory over the Devil*, page 25].

Our text doesn’t tell us everything that happened to Satan at Calvary, but it tells us enough to cause us to rejoice for the rest of our days.

I. What Jesus Accepted (V14a)

The One who existed with the father and Spirit from eternity past in the fullness of time took on “flesh and blood”. That phrase “flesh and blood” speaks of humanity with all of its frailty, its dependence, and its mortality. The words that translate “have partaken of” and “shared” are similar, but there is a

difference. The phrase “have partaken of” refers to “the children” which is humanity. The word translated “shared” refers to Jesus. The word translated “have partaken of” is the same root as the word often translated “fellowship”. It means to have something in common. All human beings have flesh and blood. We are all alike in that. It is common to all human beings. The word translated “shared” is a completely different word. It refers to taking hold of something not natural to oneself. We were by nature flesh and blood; Jesus was not. It was something that He took on. Jesus is referred to as the Word in **John 1:14a (NKJV)** “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us...” In other words, at the incarnation, Jesus willingly took hold of something that did not naturally belong to Him. What condescension that the eternal God the Son who was the image of God (Hebrews 1:3) and indeed was God (Hebrews 1:8) shared in flesh and blood since the children whom he loved and wanted to save were flesh and blood. We see that condescension to stoop so low from the heights of glory detailed in **Philippians 2:5-7 (NASB)** “⁵ Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷ but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, *and* being made in the likeness of men.” Oh glorious truth that He who was God shared in flesh and blood that He might save and deliver those who were created flesh and blood.

Let’s be clear that Jesus did not just appear to be human; He was human, missing only the Adamic sin nature (that is why He had to be born of a virgin – to escape the curse of Adam’s sin passed to all of his descendents). It is just as much a doctrinal error to deny Jesus’ humanity as it is to deny his deity. There was an ancient heresy called “Doceticism” that said that Jesus only appeared to be human. No, He was fully human without ceasing to be God. As a man, He emptied Himself of the outward display of glory and the arbitrary exercise of the attributes of Deity. He submitted Himself to His Heavenly father and did the will of the Father and did the works of the father in the power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus knew that before we could be made like Him, He had to be made like us. That is why He took on flesh and blood. Before we could become partakers of the divine nature (2 Peter 1:4), He had to become a partaker of flesh and blood.

II. What He Accomplished (V14b-15)

This text gives us two things that His death accomplished.

A. He Destroyed the Devil (V14b)

This is one of the richest verses in the Bible! To dig out its riches, we need to make sure that we understand some key words. The first word is the word “destroy”. This verse clearly tells us that when Jesus died, He destroyed the devil. We know that this could not mean to annihilate the devil. The devil is still very alive and active and commanding his demonic army quite effectively. The word “destroy” is translated “render powerless” in the NASB. That is a little better than “destroy”, but it still doesn’t get all the meaning of this word. There are several Greek words that are translated “destroy” in English. One example is the word *diaphtheiro* which means to mar or corrupt thoroughly. It is used in the book of Revelation to depict complete destruction. There are other words that have similar meaning. The word used in our text is quite different. The word used in our text means to make of no effect. The same Greek word is used in other places in the New Testament. **Romans 3:31 (NKJV)** “Do we then make void the law through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish the law.” In His death, Jesus “made void” the devil. **2 Timothy 1:10 (NKJV)** “but has now been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, *who* has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel”. Jesus has abolished the devil. Jesus did not annihilate the devil when He died as our substitute. He abolished his authority, his hold on us; He made void the devil’s authority. He made the devil of no effect. The devil was made impotent to do anything in the life of one in Christ except what that believer allows him to do. Satan has now become like a cobra that has his fangs removed, like a deadly scorpion who has had its stinger removed. We see the implications of what Jesus accomplished in **Colossians 2:15 (NIV)** “And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.” These powers and authorities are the devil and his demons. There is much material for praise in this little verse! The word “disarmed” means to strip. The devil was stripped of his authority over those

who are in Christ. The word translated “made a public spectacle” means to expose like a victor displays his captives or trophies. The word translated “triumphing over them” means a wondrous victory over. When Jesus died on the cross, He stripped the devil of his authority, He exposed the devil for what he is as a defeated foe, and he triumphed once for all over this original rebel.

What does what Jesus did on the cross mean for today? The devil’s defeat did not remove him from the earth. He is still very much with us. The devil’s past defeat assures Christ’s present dominion of him. Jack Taylor said, “He is both a defeated foe and a dominated foe. He is vanquished but not vanished, present but not prevailing, active but not able to overcome” [Jack Taylor, *Victory Over the Devil*, page 29]. Because of Christ’s death, there are results in the past, results in the present, and there are some glorious truths for the future. The devil’s future is determined. **Revelation 20:10 (NKJV)** “The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet *are*. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.”

What is our response to what Christ accomplished in regard to the devil at Calvary? **Ephesians 4:27 (ESV)** “and give no opportunity to the devil.” One translation says “do not give the devil a foothold” (NIV). Make no compromise in our thoughts or actions. His only means of carrying out his hurtful plans is to deceive us and bully us. We have won! **James 4:7 (NKJV)** “Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.” When we resist the devil and refuse to be deceived and refuse to yield to him, we are enforcing what Christ accomplished at Calvary.

Let me emphasize that the devil is liar, a bully, and a deceiver. He is still very active. **1 Peter 5:8 (NKJV)** “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.” He is not a lion; he just roars like one to deceive people and bring them into bondage. Because he is such a deceiver, we are to be filled with the truth and have on the armor of the belt of truth and the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God of which **John 17:17b (NKJV)** says “Your word is truth.” Because of his deceit and constant attacks we are told in **2 Corinthians 10:5b (NKJV)** to be “casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ”. The devil must be the most frustrated being in the universe. God takes the devil’s efforts against God’s children and turns them into avenues to glorify God and mature the saints.

When Jesus died on the cross, He destroyed the devil.

B. He Delivered the Captives (V15)

Satan’s primary weapon against man is the power of death. Unforgiven sin gives the devil this power. **Romans 6:23a (NKJV)** “For the wages of sin *is* death...” We read in **1 Corinthians 15:56a (NKJV)** “The sting of death *is* sin...” The devil can do only that which is permitted by God, but because the devil is the author of sin and sin brings death, it is in this sense the devil exercises power in the realm of death. The way to defeat an enemy is to have a more powerful weapon than he has. Christ came to die on Calvary’s cross to provide the payment, the wages of sin. Those who repent of sin and believe on Him are forgiven of sin and given the greatest gift ever given – eternal life. In reality, eternal life is simply Christ’s life. Death is the power of Satan’s dominion, and when Jesus shattered Satan’s power of death, He shattered Satan’s dominion also. Because Jesus Christ took on flesh and blood and took the wrath of God on the cross that was payment for our sin, we who repent and believe on him are forgiven and have eternal life and death holds no more fear for us. When I talk about death, I am talking about all kinds of death – physical death, spiritual death, and eternal death. In Christ, instead of eternal death we have eternal life. Instead of Spiritual death, we have spiritual life. Even though physical death still takes the body, it holds no fear for those in Christ because it serves as the door that leads us into the presence of the one who has set us free and given us His eternal life. We look at physical death with not dread, but anticipation of being ushered into the Savior’s presence. **Philippians 1:21 (NKJV)** “For to me, to live *is* Christ, and to die *is* gain.” We can look physical death in the eye and say with Paul in **1 Corinthians 15:55 (KJV)** “O death, where *is* thy sting? O grave, where *is* thy victory?” The Puritan Pastor, Richard Baxter said, “Death is only the grim porter to let us into a stately palace” [*A Puritan Golden Treasury*]. Jesus took on human flesh, died in our place that the devil might be destroyed. His sacrifice on Calvary

took away Satan's strongest weapon which was death. In Christ we now have power over this defeated deposed enemy and we have been set free from the bondage of the fear of death. One of the best Catechisms (statements of Biblical truth in a question and answer format) is the Heidelberg Catechism from 1563. The Catechism begins this way:

Question 1: What is the only comfort in life and in death?

Answer: That I, with body and soul, both in life and in death, am not my own, but belong to my faithful Savior Jesus Christ, who with His precious blood has fully satisfied for all my sins, and redeemed me from all the power of the devil; and so preserves me that without the will of my Father in heaven not a hair can fall from my head; yea, that all things must work together for my salvation. Wherefore, by His Holy Spirit, He also assures me of eternal life, and makes me heartily willing and ready henceforth to live unto Him."

CONCLUSION

Jesus Christ was born to defeat the devil. The devil wasn't defeated by Christ's birth. The devil was defeated by His death on the cross at Calvary. Because He died for us, death has no more hold on us to keep us in the bondage of fear. I am reminded of the last two verses of Martin Luther's greatest hymn, *A Mighty Fortress Is Our God*.

*And though this world with devils filled, should threaten to undo us,
We will not fear for God hath willed His truth to triumph through us:
The Prince of Darkness grim, we tremble not for him; his rage we can endure,
For lo, his doom is sure, one little word shall fell him.*

*That word above all earthly powers, no thanks to them, abideth;
The Spirit and the gifts are ours through Him who with us sideth:
Let goods and kindred go, this mortal life also; the body they may kill:
God's truth abideth still, His kingdom is forever.*

- Martin Luther (2844)