

WHY



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**By the Honourable
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Writing to his young companion Timothy, the Apostle Paul penned these words in I Timothy 1:15 – *"This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief."*

That Jesus Christ walked across the path of history is an irrefutable fact. Not only the sacred Scriptures, but the secular record confirms the impact He had and continues to have on human history. It has rightly been said of Him, "All the armies that ever marched, all the navies that ever sailed, all the kings that ever reigned, all the parliaments that ever sat have not changed the course of history as much as He."

No intelligent person can deny that Jesus Christ once lived on this earth and that He left an indelible imprint on the pages of human history. When He was here, people debated two questions (and they've been debating them ever since): Who was He? and Why did He come?

Now in a sense those questions are related. You'll never know or understand why Christ came unless and until you know who He was. He said He was the Son of God.

The religious leaders of His day rejected His claim and charged Him with blasphemy. When they sought the consent of the Roman authorities to put Him to death, their argument was 'we have a law' and by our law He ought to die because He, being a man, maketh himself God.

Their rejection of His deity is hard to understand. There was so much evidence supporting His claim. Why their own prophets for years had foretold that a virgin would conceive and bear a Son and call His name Emmanuel which means God with us.

When the angel told the virgin Mary that she was to be the mother of the Christ child, he said, "*the Holy Ghost shall come upon you and the power of the highest shall overshadow you. Therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of you shall be called the Son of God.*" Luke 1:35

Nine months later when the Christ child was born in Bethlehem, the Judean hills echoed the celestial voices of angels proclaiming peace on earth "*for unto you is born this day in the City of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.*" Luke 2:11

Now, these happenings were common knowledge throughout Palestine and there was much more. When Christ began His ministry by being baptized by John the Baptist in the River Jordan – when He came up out of the water, God spoke from heaven in an audible voice saying, "*This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.*" Matt. 3:17

Three years later when Christ stood with three of His disciples on the Mount of Transfiguration, God again spoke from heaven in an audible voice saying, "*This is my beloved Son. Hear ye Him.*" In the hour of His public crucifixion, even the infidel Roman centurion in charge of His execution was overcome with fear – and beating his chest, cried out, "*Truly, this was the Son of God.*" Matt. 27:54

The miracles He performed during His ministry likewise confirmed His deity. He made the blind to see and the deaf to hear and the lame to walk. He raised dead people back to life. He walked on the sea, and He stilled the waves and winds with a word of command. These are not the works of finite men. They were acts which only an omnipotent God could perform and that's precisely who Jesus Christ was – eternal, omnipotent God, incarnate in human flesh.

But there remains the other question – Why did God come to this earth in the divine person of Jesus Christ? Those who regard Him as just a great religious teacher say He came to teach mankind fundamental truths we need to know and practice to lead a meaningful and successful life and to make the world a better place. Now certainly His teachings are in a category by themselves. Those who heard Him came away shaking their heads and saying, "*Never man spoke like this man.*" Even those who reject His deity still quote His golden rule from His Sermon on the Mount as a key to human survival.

Yes, Christ was the greatest teacher that ever lived. But this isn't why He came to this earth. Nor did He come merely to set mankind a noble example of self-sacrificing love. He didn't come to usher a new social order, end war and violence and poverty and exploration. Oh some day when He comes back a second time to take on the management of this earth, He'll do all those things and much more; but that wasn't the purpose for which He came nearly two thousand years ago.

Our text says, "*Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners.*" Paul preceded this declaration with two statements that underscore its accuracy. First he says, this is a faithful saying. That is, it is a statement that you can depend on. It is and always will remain true. You can rely on it without re-

servation. And secondly, he says, it is a statement worthy of acceptance. *This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation.* I Timothy 1:15.

Now there are many things said and claimed that are unworthy of acceptance. For example, it is an insult to your intelligence when someone asks you to accept as true their claim that you are nothing more than a highly developed form of animal life and that your ancestors were apes or blobs of slime in a primeval sea. The Scriptures say that God created man in His own image and any statement to the contrary is untrue and unworthy of acceptance. But the statement that Jesus Christ came into this world to save sinners is a faithful and true statement worthy of all acceptation. There's no one single truth more important for you to accept and understand. Now the Scriptures tell us that God created man sinless and perfect in every way. His desire was that men and women would share His love and fellowship and the bounties of His providence forever in the perfect environment of the Edenic paradise He prepared as their home.

But our first parents by their wrongful exercise of freedom to choose brought that glorious state to a disastrous end. They chose to disobey God's explicit instructions by eating the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil which He had commanded them not to eat. Their sin immediately alienated them from God. They died spiritually. The virus of sin infected their natures. They became unacceptable and at enmity against God. Their sin infected natures were transmitted to their offspring. That's why all members of the human race are sinful by nature; and consequently, all sin by choice. As a result, all are guilty of sin before God and under divine condemnation. No one can deliver himself or herself from that guilt and condemnation. Those who are thinking otherwise

are deceiving themselves. But there is good news. *"God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."* That's why He sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to this earth to accomplish man's redemption to save sinners. Jesus Christ came into this world to save sinners – sinners who otherwise face eternal condemnation from which they are powerless to save themselves.

The glorious Good News of the Gospel is that Christ, who came into the world to save sinners, has already done everything necessary to save sinners from the present and eternal consequences of their sins and their alienation from God. His marvelous work of redemption required Christ to make atonement for our sins. Now we don't hear much about atonement and its necessity in these days. It's a mystery we cannot fully understand. In Leviticus 18 God said to His people, Israel, *"The life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you from the altar to make an atonement for your souls. It is the blood that maketh atonement for the soul."*

In the New Testament in Hebrews 9:22, we're told that it is a stipulation of God's divine law that *"without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin."* Christ made that required atonement for our sins by shedding His divine blood on the Cross. His work of saving sinners likewise required that He become their substitute sinbearer and bear the penalty of their sins in their place. That's precisely what He became when He died for our sins in our place on the Cross. The Scriptures say, *"God commendeth his love toward us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. He was wounded for our transgressions. He was bruised for our iniquities. All we like sheep have gone astray. And the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all."*

The full extent to which Christ became our substitute sinbearer is revealed in that marvelous verse of Scripture, II Corinthians 5:21 says "*God's son, Jesus Christ, who knew no sin was literally made to become sin for us.*" Think of the magnitude of that statement. All the sins, all the evil, all the corruption committed by all people who ever lived since time began, were laid on Christ's sinless head. They were taken into Christ's sinless body when He hung on the Cross where He was made sin for us. In our stead He bore all the penalty for all our sin that we might be spared and forgiven and restored to eternal fellowship with God.

Yes, Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners and God accepted the blood atonement Christ made for us. He accepted Christ as our substitute sinbearer and He paid in full the price of our redemption.

Listen, my friend, you may know about Christ as a historical figure. You may respect His teachings and try to follow His example; but if that's the extent of your relationship with Him, your sin problem that separates you from God remains unsolved. Your eternal salvation depends wholly on you knowing Christ as your personal Saviour who came into this world to save you, who purchased your redemption by becoming your substitute sinbearer and dying for your sins in your place.

Now have you ever really asked Him to become your personal Saviour? That's why He came into this world. You have no other hope apart from Him. He will never force Himself on you. He requires your consent to become your Saviour. He waits today to hear if you'll say yes as He knocks at the door of your heart and life and ask you to let Him come in to be your Saviour and your Lord.

May God give you wisdom to open your heart and life to Jesus Christ today, God bless you. □



The Honourable Ernest C. Manning served as Premier of Alberta from 1943 to 1968.

During his term as Premier, he also held the portfolio of Minister of Mines & Minerals, Provincial Treasurer and Attorney General.

Following his Premiership he was appointed to the Canadian Senate in Ottawa.

Canada's National Bible Hour was founded in 1925 by William Aberhart in Calgary, Alberta. Ernest C. Manning assumed the directorship in 1948 and continues as one of the Bible teachers today.



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