

Our Great Salvation

THE MEANING OF CHRISTMAS IN THE BOOK OF HEBREWS

Isaiah 7:10-14 Hebrews 1:1-4, 2:1-4 John 1:1-18

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Advent begins our preparation for the upcoming Christmas season! *Advent* is a word that means *arrival*; it's a time when the Holy Christian Church prepares for the *arrival* of Christ; we remember His birth in Bethlehem after centuries of promises in the Old Testament. It's a *joyous* and *expectant* time in the Church Year; it's a time to *remember* those promises of the Old Testament and their *fulfillment* in the New Testament. It's a time to *hear once again* those precious and treasured stories that surround the birth of Christ!

This year for our *Advent* preparation, we will certainly remember the stories that surround the birth of Christ; but we will also look at the **theology and doctrine** of the birth of Christ according to the **Book of Hebrews**.

It may surprise you that we are looking at the Book of Hebrews during this *Advent* season, but Hebrews will give you an unique perspective, and a deeper understanding of why Christ was born in Bethlehem for us. Hebrews teaches us the depth and significance of the birth of Jesus!

Let's start our *Advent* preparation with this verse:

[Our Great Salvation] was declared at first by the Lord, and it was attested to us by those who heard, while God also bore witness by signs and wonders and various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to His will. Hebrews 2:3-4

There are three witnesses to the *Great Salvation* God has provided for us in His Son: (1) the Lord Jesus Himself, (2) the Apostles as official witnesses, and (3) the Holy Spirit with His various gifts¹.

The *Great Salvation* is Jesus, and the work that Jesus came into the world to do for us. Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, the One *anointed* by the Holy Spirit to be the Savior of the world. In His office as “*Christ*”, the Son of God will live a perfectly obedient life for you; and He will carry your guilt to the cross and pay the penalty for your sin. The life, death, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ is the *Great Salvation* of all people! This is why Jesus was born in Bethlehem! He came into the world to bring life instead of death; He brings God's grace rather than God's wrath. He is the Light of the world who rescues you from the darkness of sin. In Christ, and in Him alone, do you find this *Great Salvation*!

This *Great Salvation* is the most important thing in the world and in our lives. Hebrews teaches us that this *Great Salvation* in the Lord Jesus Christ is far superior to the Law of God, to all the events at Mount Sinai, to the great people of the Old Testament like Moses and the Prophets; it's greater than all the angels in Heaven; it is greater than the Temple, the OT Priesthood, and all the sacrifices put together. The *Great Salvation* of the Lord Jesus Christ is **A BIG DEAL**, and we are to *pay ever increasing attention* to it! The *Great Salvation* of the Lord Jesus is something that you hear and continually learn more about throughout your lifetime; this is something that defines your life and guides how you live!

Advent is a time when we remember the beginning of our *Great Salvation* in the Lord Jesus Christ!

¹ In this context, Hebrews 2:1-4, we are being warned **not** to drift away from “Our Great Salvation” --> the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. We are not to ignore it, get bored with it, nor neglect it. If you do not pay diligent attention to your faith, you can lose it; you can drift away from Christ like an unanchored boat drifts away from the shore. You can shipwreck your faith. It is a serious warning. But in order to encourage us to remain faithful, the book of Hebrews reminds us of the eternal significance of our Great Salvation in the Lord Jesus Christ!

Our *Great Salvation* begins with Jesus, the one born in Bethlehem! In Hebrews, we learn that Jesus is the all-powerful, mighty God of Heaven! The book of Hebrews begins by telling us **10 significant things** about Jesus, the One who does the work of our *Great Salvation!* I printed a summary handout of these 10 things for you – remember that all of this is in the first 4 verses of Hebrews! WOW!!

1. Jesus is the last, great *Prophet* who speaks the very words of God -- as God Himself! He reveals God the Father to us and the depths of His love. Jesus speaks with full divine authority because He is God Himself!
2. Jesus is the very *Son of God*, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity. He is conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. As the Son of God, He will earn our *Great Salvation!* Because the Son of God, born in Bethlehem, does the work of our salvation; it is sure, and certain, and completely finished!
3. The One born in Bethlehem is the *Heir* of all things. God the Father will put all things under His feet and He will reign forever and ever as the Lord of Lords and the King of kings. The Heir of all things gives you an inheritance when He dies on the cross: you get the forgiveness of sins!
4. Jesus is the *Creator* of the heavens and the earth and everything in them; and He was born in Bethlehem to bring about a New Creation where you are made whole and new again, and will not die in Adam's sin, but you will live in Christ's righteousness and perfect obedience!
5. Jesus is the *Radiance of God's glory*; He is the Light of the world; He is God of God, *Light of Light*, very God of very God; His Light shines on you and rescues you from the darkness of sin, guilt, death, the world, and the evil one. In Him and in Him alone do you find the Light of truth and eternal life. You live every day in the Light of God's presence and power!
6. Jesus is the perfect *Image* of God; *one substance* with the Father, fully divine and all powerful. He is equal to the Father and equal to the Holy Spirit. This God became flesh and was born in Bethlehem in order to save us from our sins.

7. Not only is Jesus the Creator of the world, but He *Sustains* all things by His powerful Word. The entire earth, including every single detail of your life, are squarely and safely in His hands. He promises to use His mighty power to make everything work for the good of His Church and the benefit of His people... that includes you!
8. Jesus made *Purification* for your sins in His suffering and death. His blood was shed as a sacrifice and He took your place under sin and guilt so that you are pure and holy in God's sight; your conscience is cleansed, you have peace with God, and direct access to the Father in Heaven. You have been set free from sin and guilt!
9. Jesus, the One born in Bethlehem, fulfills His mission as the Savior of the world by His death and resurrection. In His Ascension, He returns to the *Right Hand of God the Father Almighty*. From there He powerfully rules all things, and He faithfully serves as our eternal Great High Priest.
10. The *Name of Jesus* will forever be the greatest Name in heaven and on earth; it is the Name of our Savior; and *at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, those in heaven, and those on earth, and those under the earth, and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father!*

Our *Great Salvation*, Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection that sets us free from our sins, is why Jesus was born in Bethlehem! As we begin our *Advent* preparation, we learn from the book of Hebrews Who was really in that manger; we learn from the book of Hebrews Who Mary's child is, and of Whom the angels sang!

Spend some time learning these **10 descriptions of Jesus** from the book of Hebrews, and it will deepen your understanding of the significance of the Advent and the magnitude of Christmas.

Amen!