

The Advent Of Christ

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[0 : 0 0] You may think that it's odd for us to begin a Christmas or Advent sermon in this particular spot. And so let me just take a moment to explain why we're here and why we need to consider this text, at least at the beginning of our time together.

The first reason for starting here in Mark 8 is the immense importance of the question that is asked. There's two questions actually in the first paragraph.

The first one, the initial question, who do people say that I am, was Jesus' way of drawing out in a moment of teaching. He's drawing out to the disciples the fact that everyone basically has an opinion on who he is.

And that those opinions are actually quite varied. And what you'll find in all of the responses from the disciples is none of them are negative. If we were to ask that question today, we were to say, who do people around us say that Jesus is, we would get some negative answers to that if we got any answer at all.

That's not really what we see in the answers that the disciples give. However, they give only positive answers. In other words, the people in Israel are holding Jesus in tremendously high esteem.

[1 : 1 3] They're saying you must be John the Baptist come back from the dead, or even better, you must be Elijah come back from the dead, which were, there's some prophetic implications to that.

And the coming of the kingdom. And some of them we read in other places. Some people had mentioned Jeremiah and some of the other prophets. Well, that was an important question that Jesus asked.

But he's drawing something out. He is drawing out with his disciples the fact that everyone has a thought on who he is and that those thoughts are actually quite varied. But the most important question, the critical question, is the second one.

The more direct one. When he turns to his disciples and he says, but who do you say that I am? Who do you say that I am?

In other words, Jesus was communicating that what ultimately matters is not the opinion of other people or institutions or cultures.

[2 : 1 5] What matters is your personal confession of who he is. So he draws out the fact there's lots of opinions here, but what actually matters is who do you say that I am?

And traveling on vacation back in May, Julie and the girls and I had gone to the Cincinnati area. If some of you will remember, we got stuck in the airport coming back.

And we met a young lady there in the process of that who was traveling alone and didn't really know what to do and handling some of the issues. And we just got to know this young girl.

And come to find out in speaking with her, she was raised as a Roman Catholic, but her family had left the church eventually. But due to some abuses of her family and some things that weren't done right, they just basically left the church altogether and left Christianity altogether.

And she basically spent the rest of her life up to that point, she's in her early 20s now, just simply irreligious. She had no religious affiliation at all and didn't really care to have any religious affiliation until she met this young man who she was seeing, who she was hoping to soon be engaged to.

[3 : 30] The problem was the young man, and he had convinced her to join the church of Latter-day Saints. But what was fascinating in the process of our conversation is she didn't really care about it.

She had no real conviction of her own. She was kind of smitten by this guy that she found attractive, that treated her nicely, and she was just kind of happy to go along with whatever it was that he held as a conviction religiously.

But she wasn't really all that interested herself in any of those things. She was just kind of going along with it. In other words, she was willing to entrust her spiritual life to someone else's convictions without ever being concerned to personally think it through herself.

Now, we would all sit back and recognize that anecdotally, and looking at that in someone else's life, we would say that's a huge problem. You need to know what you believe.

You need to develop your own convictions. You don't just need to go along with the whims of culture or what anybody else says. But most of us do that all the time. In Mark chapter 8, this passage is what came to my mind in the midst of that conversation.

[4 : 48] The fact is that the Roman Catholicism and Mormonism and Baptist and friends and family, they all have their views, varying thoughts on Jesus' identity.

But at the end of the day, it's a very personal question that each of us have to wrestle with. Not who does my husband or who does my parents believe that Jesus is.

What does my church believe Jesus is? But who do you say that he is? And Peter's answer to the question is actually quite monumental.

In fact, it's the climactic moment in the first half of Mark's gospel. There's this huge buildup to this particular moment. And notice what he says in verse 29.

Peter answered him, you are the Christ. Now that loses a little bit of luster for us because we're used to that kind of terminology. And if you're here today, chances are you probably believe that Jesus is the Christ in whatever way that you understand that term.

[5 : 58] But this is a bigger deal than you might think for Peter to say this. He confessed that he believed that Jesus was not just a prophet from God.

That's what most people had determined. But he says, no, Jesus is more than that. He says, I believe that you are the one that all the other prophets were talking about, that all the other prophets were pointing forward to.

This one that would come sent from God in order to redeem his people. People conquer God's enemies and then rule on an eternal throne.

That's what Peter is saying in this moment. And that's a big deal for Peter to say. It was no ordinary confession. It wasn't flippant at all. And if you take the time to read through Mark's gospel, you'll see that there is this buildup under the surface in the first eight chapters that kind of erupts here in this one verse, in this one conversation.

But why did Peter think that? What was it about Jesus that gave Peter such confidence to say that this is the most important person to have ever lived?

[7 : 15] That he matches all the things. That he's the one. Well, we'll get to that in just a moment. But I pointed out to you now, because in the course of our time together, I want you to consider that question as if Jesus is asking it to you directly.

Who do you say that he is? And does it matter even if you have the right confession? That's the first reason.

Second reason we start here in Mark chapter 8 is because it immediately clarifies for us what Jesus's purpose was as Messiah.

Okay? That's what we get to in the second paragraph there in verses 31 through 33. You see, Peter has the right confession, but he completely misunderstood why it mattered.

And even momentarily positions himself as an enemy of God. As an enemy of God's eternal plan of salvation. That's what's happening in 32 and 33.

[8 : 20] So what then was the purpose of the Christ? Why does the advent of the Christ matter according to Jesus? Well, he tells us right here in verse 31.

And he began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things, be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes and be killed.

And after three days, rise again. Well, why does any of this matter? What was the purpose of the Christ? It was to suffer for our sins. To die our death.

To rise from the dead. So that he might bring us life. That's the purpose. Okay? So we have this juxtaposition here in Mark chapter 8.

We have the identity of Christ being brought together with the purpose of the Christ. And that's why we begin here. Because it matters so much how we judge this. Now, what I want to suggest to you this morning is that the goal and intention of the four gospel authors, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, these four men, I want to suggest that their entire purpose in writing these gospel books is to convince us that both Peter's confession and Jesus' messianic purpose, as stated here in these verses, that their whole purpose is to convince us that those things are true and that they must be believed for salvation.

[9 : 51] Okay? This is the whole point of these books. And you've heard me say this many times before. Many people view the four gospels as if they're these little miniature biographies, but even though they contain biographical information about Jesus, we do not study them as merely tellings of the events of Jesus' life.

That's not what they are. Gospel, in this case, is a genre. We don't read them as narratives. We read them as arguments.

These four men are making arguments here. They're not seeking just to inform you about Jesus. They are endeavoring through that information to persuade you to believe something specific about Jesus.

That's the point of the four books. And what is it that is their argument? What are they seeking to persuade us to believe about Jesus? It's very simple. They are arguing that Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ.

That Jesus of Nazareth is Messiah. And their intention in making that argument is that we might come to believe in him as such and thereby receive forgiveness of sins and eternal life.

[11 : 11] You say, what does this have to do with Christmas and Advent? Well, at Christmas, we aren't celebrating the unique birth of a remarkable child.

That is not what we're doing today. At Christmas, we are celebrating the coming, the advent, the arrival of the long-awaited Savior and King.

It's the advent of the Christ, the coming of the one. That's what this is about. And what I want to do this morning is examine just a handful of text from the four Gospels as we consider the fact that the Christ has indeed come.

And then I want to take up the task of these four men. Not just in proving to you my thesis, but I want to persuade you to believe that Jesus is actually the Christ.

So that as they say, you might have life and peace and hope and joy and all the things we've talked about this month, that you may have those things in his name.

[12 : 23] Okay? That's the goal for today. But before we get to those four texts in the four Gospels, there's one more thing that we must do. And we have to ask ourselves a question. This is an important question.

What is Messiah? Messiah? What does that even mean? And why was anyone expecting one? So let's start there and let's get to that first.

The term itself, Messiah. We use the term Christ in the New Testament, would be the Greek term that we use for that. It simply means anointed one or Savior, King.

And in one sense, the Jews had all kinds of Messiahs. In fact, if you just reflect on our study of the book of Judges for just a moment, the book of Deliverers as the Hebrews understood it to be, every one of the judges that we read about in that book, we could call them Messiahs.

They're simply anointed individuals, anointed by God, sent by God in order to redeem his people in some way. That's really what Messiah means and Christ means.

[13 : 27] And the Jews have had all kinds of Messiahs through the millennia. Technically speaking, we could point to many of them in the Scripture. But the idea of this messianic figure, this one individual who would stand above the rest, has a very specific usage in the Scriptures.

Speaking of a royal figure, this king-like figure sent from God who would save his people and exert his righteous rule on an eternal throne.

And the entire Old Testament is full of these prophetic utterances that this one individual would come that led the people of Israel to expect him to one day come.

Let me just give you a handful of them. The earliest promise of a deliverer comes at the very beginning of the Bible. Now, Genesis chapter 3, in the context of Adam and Eve's sin, Jesus, or God says, I will put enmity between the serpent and the woman, between your offspring and her offspring.

He shall bruise your head and you shall bruise his heel. It's the earliest moment. And we don't get much from that, okay? There's not much for us to take from that, except that God made a promise from the very beginning that despite the tragedy of sin, that one day he would send an offspring of the woman who would be victorious in delivering his people and restoring mankind back to God.

[15 : 02] It continues on from there. Remember, when God chose and made a covenant with Abraham, he promised that his future progeny would be used to bless the entire world.

That's Genesis chapter 12. Now, the Lord said to Abram, Go from your country, your kindred, your father's house, to the land that I will show you. I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you.

I will make your name great so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse. And then here's a massive part of the covenant.

In you, in this great nation, in this progeny of yours, Abram, in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed, okay?

So we're getting hints. Okay, one is going to come. We were told one was going to come in human form. That's the seed of the woman. Now we're told more narrowly this one is going to come from the seed of Abraham.

[16 : 03] He will be an Israelite. And we fast forward a little bit more. God made a covenant with David that someone in his lineage would sit on an eternal throne.

That's 2 Samuel chapter 7. God tells David, When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom.

He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom. Here's the important part. Forever. Forever. This is not just going to be any king that comes from David.

This is an eternal king who will reign forever and ever. So it gets narrowed even further. Then the prophets pick up on this. And they tell us how God would raise up this Messiah from David's line.

Are you still with me? Hang with me. You recognize this text from Isaiah 9? Unto us a child is born. Unto us a son will be given. The government shall be on his shoulders.

[17 : 08] That's eternal rule. No rule. His name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Of the increase of his government and of peace, there will be no end. On the throne of David and over his kingdom. To establish it. To uphold it with justice and with righteousness.

From this time forth and forevermore. And who will do this? The zeal of the Lord of hosts. The zeal of God will do this.

Now that's important. We take that as a prophecy of Jesus' birth. That's not a prophecy of Jesus' birth. That's a prophecy of Jesus' eternal reign. That's the second advent we're looking for there.

The first advent. Still, we're constantly told one is going to come. One is going to come and here's what he's going to do. Isaiah said he would be born of a virgin.

[18 : 04] Isaiah chapter 7. Therefore, the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son and shall call his name Emmanuel.

God with us. Micah declared he'd be born in Bethlehem. But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel.

Whose coming forth is from old, from ancient days. Malachi and Isaiah both said that there would be another prophet who would go before him to prepare the way of the Lord.

Daniel wrote that the ancient of days, a euphemism for the eternal God, will give him a cosmic rule that will never end. And again, Isaiah declares that the way this Messiah will save his people is through his own death and resurrection.

That's Isaiah 53. Over and over and over and over. This is just a sampling of the many prophecies in the Old Testament that led the Jews to believe beyond a shadow of a doubt.

[19 : 10] That though we have lots of deliverers that God uses, there is a single one that is coming. And when he comes, it will be unlike any of the others. And he's going to rule and he's going to reign and he's going to provide eternal salvation for God's people.

But there was a lot of confusion, as I said before, about what exactly that meant and how he would do this. So that when Jesus comes, John says, he came into his own, but his own knew him not.

And they rejected him. Well, why? If this is what they were waiting on for so long and finally it comes, why was it so easy to reject him? Well, their hearts were hard and their eyes were blind and they misunderstood.

They had in their mind what they wanted the Messiah to be rather than what God said he would be. Nevertheless, the Messiah did come.

And he fulfilled all of those prophecies in the meantime. And what these four gospel authors wanted to do was help us make those connections. To look back at the Old Testament and say, this is what God said the Messiah is and will do.

[20 : 22] And let us show you how Jesus perfectly fulfills it. So that's what I want to show you now. Okay. Let's look at the Christ in the gospels. Number one, Jesus is the Christ because he is the son of Abraham and David.

Jesus is the Christ because he's the son of David and Abraham. All right. Flip to Matthew chapter one. This is where we're going to look at Matthew's gospel. Matthew chapter one.

You still with me? I haven't put you to sleep yet. Okay. Good. Good.

Matthew one. Jesus is the Christ because he's the son of Abraham and of David. Now it's important for us to recognize as you're turning to Matthew one. I want you to think for just a moment.

That to claim to be the one to claim to be the Messiah. Messiah was virtually impossible. Okay. This is not a claim that just anybody could make.

[21 : 32] It would not be that easy to do, which is why not many people ever did it. Okay. It's important to remember. One of the primary reasons for this is because there are so many prophecies in the Old Testament that speak of this coming Messiah.

There's just far too many facets of who the Christ is and what the Christ would do for any one person to perfectly match them all is virtually impossible.

And one of the most important of these facets has to do with the Messiah's lineage, which is the first argument that Matthew takes up.

Look at verse one of chapter one. Matthew plainly tells us this is the book of the genealogy. This is the book of new beginnings, essentially, is what he's saying.

This is the book of the genealogy of beginnings of Jesus Messiah. That's his purpose statement. Jesus is the Messiah. I'm going to prove it to you. And he says, adds to it, because he's the son of David and son of Abraham.

[22 : 40] So in the very first line of Matthew's gospel, what's he doing? He's declaring the purpose of his writing. He wants to argue that Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ, partly because he's the true descendant of David and Abraham.

And then he walks us through, all through chapter one, he walks us through the bloodline. The bloodline of Joseph and Mary proving that Jesus is the rightful, legal heir to the covenant promises to both Abraham and David.

Now, of course, Matthew's not only concerned with this part of the prophecy. He's not only concerned with matching Jesus as a descendant of Abraham and David.

Thousands of people could make that claim. So that's not all that important at first until you start to piece it together with other things. Throughout Matthew's account of the birth of Christ, he routinely makes these necessary connections to other prophecies.

You can read it later on your own, but he directly quotes Isaiah, Micah, Hosea, and Jeremiah in the first two chapters. Then he quotes Isaiah again in chapter three regarding John the Baptist being this prophet that would go before the Messiah.

[24 : 01] Indeed, one of Matthew's favorite phrases to use is some variation of what we see in chapter one in verse 23 when he says, All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophets.

This is so important. What's Matthew doing? He's saying by virtue of his lineage and then starting there and looking at all these other prophecies, we can say with certainty that Jesus of Nazareth, he's the one.

He fits the description. This description that's virtually impossible to assume in one person. Jesus does it. And here's all the ways that Matthew begins to connect the dots for us.

He gives us at least six of them just in the first two and a half chapters that says, This is why we know Jesus is the one. But it wasn't just Matthew. All the gospel authors make these connections.

All the apostles make these connections. So that the apostle Paul, who was an expert in the law, concludes this in 2 Corinthians chapter one. All the promises of God find their yes in him, in Christ.

[25 : 11] Which is why through him, Paul says, we utter our amen to God for his glory. So why is Jesus the Christ? Well, Jesus is the Christ because he's the son of Abraham and David.

He fulfills the prophecies perfectly. In their entirety. He fulfills them. Number two.

Jesus is the Christ because he's the son of God. He's the Christ because he's the son of Abraham and David. He's the Christ because he's the son of God. Flip to Mark now.

We're going to look at Mark's gospel for just a moment. And then. Mark chapter one. Now Matthew's audience was primarily made up of Jews.

Which is why he focuses so much on Jesus's genealogy and his birth narrative. Mark doesn't do that. Mark was writing Peter's eyewitness account on Peter's behalf.

[26 : 11] And his audience was not primarily Jews. His audience was primarily Romans. So rather than focus on Jesus's human genealogy. He spoke directly of his deity.

And I want you to notice his opening statement. Mark chapter one, verse one. This is what he says. Here's my purpose. This is the beginning of the gospel of Jesus. Messiah.

Jesus the Christ. That's what I'm arguing for. Except he doesn't say son of Abraham and son of David. He said something way worse. He says son of God.

Son of God. Matthew wrote of new beginnings that arrived with the birth of Abraham and David's descendants. Mark wrote of the good news that Jesus is the Christ and the son of God.

And first century readers and listeners would have understood this to be a direct claim of deity. Mark does not mean here that the one true God had some type of conjugal visit with a human woman and produced this mixed offspring that was part deity and part humanity.

[27 : 27] That's not what Mark is saying by this. That's not how they would have understood this statement. When he makes this claim to be son of God, when Jesus makes these claims, it's a direct claim of divinity, of deity.

And many people have tried to reject this notion. They claim that Jesus never explicitly said that he was God. But one only needs to look at the vehement reaction of the Jews around Jesus to know that everyone knew what Jesus was saying when he said things like, I have come from heaven.

Or I am the bread of life. Or I and the Father are one. They knew what he meant by that. They knew that was a claim of deity, which is why many of them hated him so much and rejected him.

But how can we know that any of that is true? What does Mark do other than just making this statement that Jesus is the son of God? What does he do to convince us that that's actually true?

Well, he does all kinds of things, actually. He goes to great lengths to tell us about all the many ways Jesus demonstrated his divine power.

[28 : 42] Let me give you just a handful. Chapter 1, he heals a leprous man by touching him. Something no one else would do. In fact, it was illegal in some cases to even touch one, to touch a leprous man.

Jesus not only touches him, but his touch cleanses him from this leprosy. Then immediately after, we've got the story of the four friends who tear up the roof of Peter's house, and they lower their paralytic friend down.

Jesus forgives his sins first. It's an amazing story. And then he just tells him. He doesn't even touch him. He just says, just get up and walk. Why don't you? And this man who's been a paralytic for however long, maybe his whole life, just gets up and walks.

Now, why do you think Mark was concerned to tell us that? Because he's told us in the very first verse, my purpose is to tell you that Jesus is the Christ and the Son of God, that he's God in the flesh.

And that because he's God in the flesh, we know he's the Christ. He's the Messiah. But he doesn't leave it there. He tells of Jesus calming a storm on the Lake of Galilee with just three words, peace, peace, still.

[29 : 50] And suddenly the storm just completely goes away. He has this power over creation, over nature. Then he tells us that Jesus went with his disciples to Gennesaret, and there was this man who was filled with demons.

And he shows that Jesus had this power over demonic powers, over spiritual forces that are unseen, but are deeply felt and experienced. Jesus has power over those.

Then he tells us that Jesus actually has power over death. There was this young girl. Her father's name was Jairus, and she was dead. And then Jesus made her live again.

And then he tells us that there were 5,000 people who were hungry, and Jesus took a little boy's lunch, and he fed all of them with just this little boy's lunch, so that they had food even left over.

He tells us of Jesus walking on water. He goes on and on and on and on and on. Why? So that we might believe that Jesus is the Son of God, and that since he's the Son of God, he must be the Messiah too.

[30 : 56] You say, well, how can we know any of those stories are true? Not a single one of those stories was done in a vacuum. Not a single one was done in private. They had eyewitnesses.

And those eyewitnesses were still living at the time that Mark was writing this, and all the apostles were sharing it verbally as they were preaching from city to city and in the middle of Jerusalem. And the very reason that some of these gospel authors even wrote about it is because they went and they interviewed the eyewitnesses to find out, now, is this really true?

Is this what happened? Tell me what happened with this. At least 5,000 of them could have been interviewed for just the feeding one. I think we can trust that. Now, Mark's judgment that Jesus is deity doesn't just come out of thin air.

The prophecies of the Old Testament point us to this. Take Isaiah's prophecy, for example. He said that the virgin-born child would be called what?

What was the name? Emmanuel. Emmanuel. Well, that's Isaiah saying that. What does Emmanuel mean? God is with us. And what do we find in the person of Jesus, as the gospel authors tell us?

[32 : 08] That quite literally, God is with us in flesh. This explains the unprecedented displays of power.

It also shows how his death could truly provide a sufficient atonement for our sins. Which brings us to the next point.

Number three. Jesus is the Christ because he died for our sins and rose from the dead. Okay? So we're on number three now. The first one was Jesus is the Christ because he's the son of Abraham and David.

Which is just our way of saying he fulfills all the prophecies. Like, it's easy. You can piece it together. You can figure it out. Number two. Jesus is the Christ because he's the son of God. And we know that because of all of these other things that he did.

And if he's God, then that must mean he's also Messiah. Number three. He's Christ because he died for our sins and rose from the dead. For this, we go to the gospel of Luke.

[33 : 04] Okay? The gospel of Luke. But we're not going to start at the beginning. We could do that. We see that in the birth narrative of Luke's gospel. I want you to go to the end. To Luke chapter 24.

Luke chapter 24. Now, the gospels are keen on arguing not only for Jesus' messianic identity, but also his purpose.

Why did the Christ come? Like I said, during Jesus' own time, there was a lot of confusion about this, even among his own disciples. Despite clearly teaching, they seemed to have no intellectual capacity for a Messiah who would suffer.

They just, they couldn't comprehend that. Which is why the disciples struggled over and over and over, despite Jesus' clear teaching, to grasp what it was that he was actually getting at.

It's why they all ran and were devastated at his death. They just didn't understand. Again, which tells us something. That it ultimately took Jesus going through it before anyone could actually begin to grasp the significance of his purpose.

[34 : 22] And what that does is it makes Jesus' resurrection in particular the strongest possible evidence that he is indeed the Christ and the Son of God.

So look with me at Luke 24. Look at verse 44. This is after Jesus' resurrection. He is appearing to his disciples, many of them for the first time now.

And this is what he says to them. Verse 44. Then he said to them, These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you.

That everything written about me in the law of Moses and the prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled. Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures.

And he said to them, Thus it is written that the Christ should suffer. Notice what Jesus does.

[35 : 35] Jesus could have simply appealed to the experience they were having in that moment. Of witnessing a man who three days before was dead.

And now suddenly he's alive. Not in spirit, but in bodily form. And that's the paragraph before he explains that. And they explain that. They see that. He could have just appealed to that experience and said, Look, based on just how can you not trust me after seeing me right now?

Let me just tell you all this stuff. That's not what he does. What does he do? He says, Let me tell you what the scriptures say again. And he says, This was necessary that the Christ, The one that the scriptures are speaking of, Had to go through this in order for forgiveness of sins to actually come.

According to the scriptures, Christ had to suffer. He had to die. He had to rise. Before he could ever establish a kingdom over which to rule.

Then Jesus explained that it was all necessary In order for people of all nations, Including Israel, To have their sins forgiven. You know, what is this all about?

[36 : 51] You see, God required a perfect, sinless sacrifice To atone for our sins. To appease God's wrath against our sins.

That took a very specific kind of atonement. No created being would ever be able to do that. Because every one of us is born in sin.

Meaning that our death is a payment for our own sin. This required that God himself be born as a man.

Perfectly fulfill the law that all of us have broken. And give his life as a ransom for those of us. Who have broken it.

And it was his resurrection from the dead. That proved the effectiveness. Of his death as an atonement. On the cross.

[37 : 57] So according to the resurrected Christ. His crucifixion and resurrection. Are the most important evidences. Of his messianic identity.

Why do we believe Jesus is the Christ? First. Because he rose from the dead. If Jesus rose from the dead.

It literally changes everything. And he did rise from the dead. Without the cross. And the empty tomb.

There would be no reason for us to believe that Jesus was Messiah. Because even according to Jesus. The Christ had to do this. If he was going to truly be the Christ. There would be no way for us to have forgiveness of sins.

If this didn't happen. There would be no way for us to have eternal life. If there wasn't someone who proved. That they had power over death and life. And this was the message.

[38 : 56] That the apostles began to preach. After this moment of resurrection. Listen to part of Peter's sermon in Acts chapter 2. Jesus of Nazareth. A man attested to you by God.

With mighty works and wonders and signs. That God did through him. This Jesus delivered up. According to the definite plan. And foreknowledge of God.

In other words this was God's doing. God did this. He planned it. He performed it. From beginning to end. You crucified according to God's plan.

And killed him by the hands of lawless men. And then he says. God raised him up. Loosing the pains of death. And then there's this really important phrase. That Peter uses.

Because it was not possible. For him to be held by death. Why was it not possible for Jesus to be held by death? Like I said.

[39 : 54] You and I die. Because we're sinners. Jesus has no sin. His death therefore pays for no sin of his own. But for the sins of others.

Death has no claim on him. Why? Because he's the Christ. The son of God. Number four.

And we're finished. Jesus offers you life. And forgiveness. In his name alone. Jesus offers you.

You and me. People of all nations. Life. And forgiveness. In his name alone.

And for this final note. We move to. John's gospel. I feel like I've done a really cheap presentation. Of these gospels. Only looking at a verse at a time. I hope you'll go read them.

[40 : 56] Go read these gospels yourself. You'll see there's so much more here. But I want you to turn to John chapter 20. John chapter 20. John has so much to say.

About the identity of the Christ. If you just read the prologue. In the very first chapter. He gives us this amazing. Amazing look at the incarnation. Not from a birth narrative perspective.

But that. That wonderful passage. The word became flesh. And dwelt among us. And we have seen his glory. Glory as the only begotten from the father. It's an amazing passage.

And statement of Jesus's identity. But I want you to see here in chapter 20. Look with me at verse 30. This is John speaking to the reader now.

Remember the thesis. The thesis is that what these gospel authors are doing. Is trying to convince us of something specific about Jesus. So that we'll believe him. Okay. And John tells us straightforwardly.

[42 : 03] Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples. Which are not written in this book. I didn't write them all. But these things are written. Why?

So that you may believe. That Jesus is the Christ. The son of God. And that by believing. You may have life. In his name. Let's read it one more time. This is so good. Verse 31.

I have written these things. So that you will believe. Believe what? That Jesus is the Christ. The son of God.

And why should I believe that Jesus is the Christ. The son of God? Because by believing. You will have life. What life?

[43 : 02] His life. In his name. Now what would be the purpose. Of Jesus' death and resurrection. If he didn't bother to offer us anything.

In response to it. But it had a purpose. He didn't just do it. Just to do it. There are weird people who do stuff. Just to do it. Right? A few years ago.

I got this weird idea. That I was going to run a marathon. For no reason. That was dumb. Jesus didn't just wake up one day.

And say you know what? Father God. I think I'm going to become a man. And I'm going to suffer. And I'm going to die. And I'm going to race from the dead. Just because I want to do it. And there's a purpose to it.

Isn't there? And what is the purpose? So that we might have salvation. Eternal salvation. And that's precisely John's point here. He wrote all of these things about Jesus.

[43 : 59] Not so that you would have some interesting stories. About the life of a first century rabbi. But that you might be convinced. That Jesus is the Christ and son of God. And he wants you to know this truth.

Has immediate relevance for your life today. That if you will just believe. That Jesus is the Christ and son of God.

Turning from sin. And trusting wholly in his person and work. You will have eternal life. In his name. That's the whole point.

Why do we celebrate Christmas? That's why. That's why. What is the advent about? Well yeah. It's about hope and peace and joy. And love. And all the things that we've talked about.

But it's only because of those things. Because of this thing. That the Christ has come to give us life. These gospel authors. They had so much more to say.

[44 : 55] About Jesus. Than the very little bit. That we've covered this morning. But they didn't say anything less about him. Than what I've shared with you this morning. This is the baseline.

And they had a very distinct purpose. In doing it. Guided by the spirit of God. They wrote. So that we might be forgiven. And reconciled to God.

God. And this is the message. That the apostles preach. From the very beginning. Why? Because there's salvation. In no other name. No other way.

This is just a matter of days after his death and resurrection. Peter preaches this gospel message. And they say, we messed up.

Why? For the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you.

And he says, this promise is for you. And it's for your children. And it's for all who are far off from here. Everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself.

[47 : 27] And you're wondering, well, what do I do now? Okay, I see that these things make sense according to the scriptures at least.

Abandon it. Forsake it. Your idolatry. Your sexual sin. Your interpersonal sin. False sin.

That's what you must do. That's what you must do. So do it. Turn. Believe. And make the same confession that Peter made.

That's the Advent portion, right? Now it's time for you to come to Him. In faith. Thank you.