





DAY II

## Why Jesus Came

Hebrews 2:14–15, I think, is my favorite Advent text because I don't know any other that expresses so clearly the connection between the beginning and the ending of Jesus's earthly life—between the incarnation and the crucifixion. These two verses make clear why Jesus came, namely, to die. They would be great to use with unbelieving friends or family members to walk them step-by-step through your Christian view of Christmas. It might go something like this, a phrase at a time:

Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood . . .

The term “children” is taken from the previous verse (Hebrews 2:13) and refers to the spiritual offspring of Christ, the Messiah (see Isaiah 8:18; 53:10). These are also the “children of God” (John 1:12). In other words,

in sending Christ, God has the salvation of his “children” especially in view.

It is true that “God so loved the *world*, that he gave [Jesus]” (John 3:16). But it is also true that God was *especially* gathering “the children of God who are scattered abroad” (John 11:52). God’s design was to *offer* Christ to the world and to *effect* the salvation of his children (see 1 Timothy 4:10). You may experience adoption by receiving Christ (John 1:12).

. . . he himself likewise partook of the same things [flesh and blood] . . .

This means that Christ existed before the incarnation. He was spirit. He was the eternal Word. He was with God and was God (John 1:1; Colossians 2:9). But he took on flesh and blood, and clothed his deity with humanity. He became fully man and remained fully God. It is a great mystery in many ways. But it is at the heart of our faith—and what the Bible teaches.

. . . that through death . . .

The reason he became man was to die. As God pure and simple, he could not die for sinners. But as man he

could. His aim was to die. Therefore, he had to be born human. He was born to die. Good Friday is the purpose of Christmas. This is what most people today need to hear about the meaning of Christmas.

. . . he might destroy the one who has the power of death,  
that is, the devil . . .

In dying, Christ de-fanged the devil. How? By covering all our sin. This means that Satan has no legitimate grounds to accuse us before God. “Who shall bring any charge against God’s elect? It is God who justifies” (Romans 8:33)—on what grounds does he justify? Through the blood of Jesus (Romans 5:9).

Satan’s ultimate weapon against us is our own sin. If the death of Jesus takes it away, the chief weapon of the devil—the one mortal weapon that he has—is taken out of his hand. He cannot make a case for our death penalty, because the judge has acquitted us by the death of his Son!

. . . and deliver all those who through fear of death were  
subject to lifelong slavery.

So we are free from the fear of death. God has justified us. Satan cannot overturn that decree. And God means for

our *ultimate* safety to have an *immediate* effect on our lives. He means for the happy ending to take away the slavery and fear of the now.

If we do not need to fear our last and greatest enemy, death, then we do not need to fear anything. We can be free. Free for joy. Free for others.

What a great Christmas present from God to us! And from us to the world!