

50-02-04.wpd --The Human Meaning of Christmas
 Incarnation, Advent, the Cross, human condition, peace, human destiny
 Phil 2:5-11
 Advent marks the beginning of a new human destiny.

INTRODUCTION: (Text as Scripture Reading)

--Handel's *Messiah* is said to be the epitome of the Gospel Message.
 This **text** is also the epitome of the Gospel Message.
 --The Advent of Jesus Christ is nothing less than revolutionary for
 humanity. **HOM.idea**. The 1st Advent brought God into our presence.
 The 2nd Advent will bring us into His presence.
 --My message **title** is "*The Human Meaning of Christmas*." Christmas
 gave us a fully human Savior whose identity is the God who made us.
What did this mean? It meant...

I. A New Companion for the Human Journey (re-read v.5-7)

- A. In the Garden of Eden, God was a walking and talking Companion
 for the journey humanity was just starting. When Adam and Eve
 fell, they lost that divine presence, but humanity continues to long
 for it, and you hear that longing in the Christmas carol "O Come,
 O Come, Emanuel"..."O come, O come, Emmanuel // And ransom captive
 Israel, // That mourns in lonely exile here, // Until the Son of God appear. // O
 come, Thou Dayspring, come and cheer // Our spirits by Thine advent here; //
 Disperse the gloomy clouds of night, // And death's dark shadows put to flight.
 Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel // Shall come to thee, O Israel!"
- B. A familiar passage read at Christmastime tells of Joseph's dream
 that convinced him to take Mary as his wife even though she was
 already pregnant-- Mat 1:20b-23, ...an angel of the Lord appeared to him in
 a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as
 your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will
 give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will
 save his people from their sins." All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had
 said through the prophet: "The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a
 son, and they will call him Immanuel" --which means, "God with us."
1. The 1st Noel gave us the divine Companion humanity longed for.
 2. The presence of *Emmanuel* - "*God with us*" - was the end of
 humanity's cosmic loneliness.

TRANS: Loneliness is the plight of world where sin alienates us from

our Maker and from each other. Christmas has tremendous human
meaning, because it says that "God is with us." [Late in time behold Him
 come, // Offspring of the Virgin's womb. // Veiled in flesh the Godhead see; // Hail
 th'incarnate Deity, // Pleased as man with men to dwell, // Jesus, our Emmanuel. //
 Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King."] Christmas brought...

II. A New Champion for the Human Condition

- A. What is the *human condition*? It has some positive aspects, but we
 usually describe it in terms of its drawbacks.
1. In the physical dimension, there is *weariness, disability, pain, disease,* and finally *death*.
 2. In the emotional dimension, there is *fear, sorrow, regret, disappointment, anger,* and sometimes *resentment*.
 3. In the spiritual dimension, there is the *guilt, emptiness, lostness,* and **a relationship gap between us and our Maker in whose image our true humanity finds its real meaning**.
- B. The original *human condition* in the paradise of Eden became
 what it is today through humanity's devastating fall into sin.
1. The remedy for this now deadly condition was foreshadowed on
 the very day of the Fall when God slew animals to symbolically
cover humanity's sin with their skins-- Heb 9:22b, ...without the
 shedding of blood there is no *forgiveness* (NKJV, *remission*, "sending away").
 2. The foreshadowing awaited the real sacrifice, which had to be *a*
human substitute, one that could touch the whole human race the
 way Adam's sin did. Bethlehem's Baby was that long awaited
 sacrifice-- Rom 5:12, 15. Therefore, just as sin entered the world through
 one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men,
 because all sinned But the gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died
 by the trespass of the one man, how much more did God's grace and the gift
 that came by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, overflow to the many!
- C. The human meaning of Christmas can never be disassociated from
the Cross of Calvary
1. This is the reason for the 1st Advent, the purpose for God's Son
becoming human: to fulfill the needed human sacrifice for the
remission of sins and the restoration of the human condition--
v.8, And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and
 became obedient to death-- even death on a cross!
 2. "Give him the name Jesus," God told Joseph, "because he will save his
 people from their sins." (**Never forget** the meaning of His human

name **JESUS**: *Jehovah saves, Jehovah heals*. Of all the names He could have had, this one describes Him perfectly.)

TRANS: Jesus came as our Champion to save lost humanity, to restore the fallen *human condition*! We hear this in George Sweeting's hymn:

God incarnate, Jesus came,	Paid the sin-debt so that we
Sinful mankind to reclaim;	Could be pardoned full and free.
Born to save us from our sin,	God incarnate, Christ arose,
Born to give us life within.	Conquered death and all our foes;
God incarnate, Jesus died,	Banished all our fear and dread, Gave us
On the cross was crucified;	peace and hope instead.

Advent marks the beginning of a new human destiny. In Christ's rising again and returning to Heaven, we now await...

III. A New Commander for Humanity's Future

- A. The 1st Advent initiated the Kingdom of God on earth in the hearts of those who believe in Christ and follow Him as their Lord.
(Believers already own Jesus as our "*New Commander*")
- B. Someday humanity, in a resurrected and glorified state, will know the fullness of that Kingdom's universal and eternal impact.
(Because of what Jesus accomplished as a human during His 1st Advent, **v.9-11** says that "God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.")
- C. Angels predicted that 1st Christmas, "Peace on earth, goodwill to men."
 1. Right now God's promised peace indwells the hearts of believers within a world still hostile to peace-- John 16:33, "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."
 2. Ultimately all enemies of human peace will kneel before the One who defeated sin's power by His death and resurrection, "For lo, the days are hast'ning on, // By prophet bards foretold, // When with the ever-circling years // Comes round the age of gold; // When peace shall over all the earth // Its ancient splendors fling, // And the whole world give back the song // Which now the angels sing."

CONCLUSION: Advent marks the beginning of a new human destiny. Celebrate it, and by faith in Jesus Christ, be a part of it!

Phil 2:5-11 (NIV) Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: {6} Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, {7} but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. {8} And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death-- even death on a cross! {9} Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, {10} that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, {11} and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.