

Series: Seeing Christmas as it really is (3)

Why was Jesus born?

Message Notes

Text: Matthew 1:18-21

18 *This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit. 19* *Because Joseph her husband was faithful to the law, and yet did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.*

20 *But after he had considered this, 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. 21* *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."*

Wordplay in Hebrew: Yesua / yasa

*"You are to give him the name **Yesua**, because he will **yasa** his people from their sins."*

It's important at this point to understand the context of this statement and the nature of the society and times into which Jesus was born...

Israel had been under foreign rule and oppression for centuries

- 586 BC – Babylonian Empire
- 536 BC – Persian Empire
- 332 BC Greeks (Alexander the Great)
- 166 BC Maccabean revolts led to independence for about 80 years
- 63 BC – the Roman General Pompey captured Jerusalem. Rome ruled Israel until 313 AD.

It was into this oppression that Jesus was born...

"At the time of Jesus much of the land was owned by foreigners who controlled huge estates. Local farmers were obliged to rent land and were often treated unfairly" (Kenneth Bailey, Jesus through Middle Eastern eyes, P. 48).

Jesus was born into an economically and politically oppressed people who were looking for a Saviour to deliver them and to rejoice in the pain and destruction of the oppressors.

Jesus' message and ministry disappointed many because He hadn't come to set people free from Roman oppression, He came to set them free from their own sins...

The last thing you want when you're oppressed is for someone to point out your faults and failures...

Sin is what the oppressors are doing to us (**our** sins are not worth noting compared to **their** sins against us)

Salvation is what **we** need – to be set free from **them**

But Jesus didn't speak about the oppressors or the political life of Israel and Rome...

Jesus faced opposition and was ultimately crucified because He challenged the sins of His own people rather than the sins of the oppressors – many did not appreciate this...

Luke 13:1-3, *"Now there were some present at that time who told Jesus about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mixed with their sacrifices. 2 Jesus answered, "Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans because they suffered this way? 3 I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish."*

I.e. don't worry about the sins of others, what about your sins?

The message Jesus gave: *"You are all sinners; you all need to repent and receive God's forgiveness and grace. You need salvation from your own sins and I am here to provide it for you."*

That is the Christmas story and that is why Jesus was born!