

Why Did Jesus Come?

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- [0 : 0 0] Okay, we're looking at Christianity Explored, and at our first meeting we sought the answer to the question, who is Jesus Christ?
- If Christianity is all about Jesus, who is he? And Luke's gospel is one of the four gospels that's answering that question. And that question is not just a question for theologians, it's a question for all of us.
- Indeed, as we saw in Luke's gospel, Jesus put it to his own twelve disciples. He asked it about the people. What do the people say about me? Who do they think I am?
- And then he asked them, well, who do you say that I am? And it's really a very personal matter. We all have to do with this Jesus, and so we all must answer that question.
- Who do you say that I am? Now, many today reject Jesus' claim to be God and would say we'll accept him as a good man, even a great man, a good teacher.
- [1 : 0 3] But they will not accept his claim to be God. And so we finished our meeting last time with that interesting quote by C.S. Lewis, who said that that's the one thing you must not say.
- Do you remember that quote? I put it for you on the back of your handout. Many people would say that he's not God, but he's a good man, a good teacher.
- Why can't that be true? You can believe he's a poached egg, he's a madman, he's a devil, but why can't you believe that he is a good teacher? Remember it?
- Because of the things he claimed. So like what? What did he claim that would make him no good man if it wasn't true? To forgive sins.
- He won with his father. Okay, so he made claims of deity to do what only God can do. And so if that's not true, then we can't honor him as a good man.
- [2 : 0 7] He's a liar. Or he's a lunatic. Or he is who he says he is. Our Lord and God. So I trust you'll deal with that paragraph.
- It's an interesting one and it takes right away from many people their view of Jesus because of the things that Jesus has said. Now, if we have understood anything or really the nub of who Jesus is, if that first night we came to see Jesus is more than man.
- He is man, but he's also God. Then the question that should immediately follow is what is someone like that doing in a place like this?
- This world with all of its problems and troubles. Why is he here? This God man. And that's precisely the second question that we want to see answered in the gospel of Luke.
- Luke, who checked out the facts and verified them so that we can know of certainty these things about Jesus of Nazareth, what he said and what he did. So tonight we're looking at why did Jesus come.
- [3 : 2 1] The who question begs the why question. And both are central to why Luke is writing. So very often these questions are answered by preconceived ideas floating around about Jesus.
- But we saw with relation to the first question, those ideas can be so wrong. So we want to come to the Bible to consider what Luke found.

Why did Jesus come? Well, he came from God the Father in heaven on a mission. What was it? Well, let's go back to the message that the angels gave to the shepherds at Jesus' birth.

We saw this verse in chapter 2 and verse 11 earlier. But let's turn to it for this question as well. When we were studying who is Jesus, we saw this verse.

Chuck, would you read that for us, please? Chapter 2 and verse 11. Today, in the town of David, a Savior has been warned you. He is the Messiah, the Lord.

[4 : 38] Okay, we found that one of his titles is Messiah or Christ. Christ, that anointed one that was promised to come. That's who he is.

But there's another important title given to him that points to his mission, why he came. Do you see it there? Can someone? Savior. Savior. So that's another title that's given to him.

A Savior has been born. Why do you suppose he's been given the title Savior? Not a difficult question. Saviors save people.

Why would he be called the Rescuer? Because he rescues people. So he's here on a rescue mission. And that is also something seen in the personal name, Jesus.

You know that names have meanings. I suppose you know what your name means. Your mother perhaps taught you the meaning of your name. Well, the name Jesus also has a meaning.

[5 : 43] And it means the Lord saves. So the very name of Jesus points to his mission. And the title that's given to him as Savior also points to his mission.

So the Savior, the Rescuer, his title, immediately begs some other questions. If he's called the Savior, the Rescuer, what are some other questions that immediately come to your mind that you'd like answered?

Who needs to be saved? I'm sorry? Who needs to be saved? Saved from what?

How does this work, this Savior? All right, good questions. Those are the kinds of things that ought to come to our mind. And Luke's going to answer them. And we'll see the answers to that question.

Let's begin with the question, whom does Jesus save? Who do you think? What kind of people does he save? Good people or bad people? Bad people.

[6 : 51] Yeah, those bad guys. Is that the only kind of people he saves? Lost people. One of the most common misconceptions about Jesus, it was alive and well in his day and it still lives in our day, is that Jesus saves good guys but not the bad guys.

And that's something that Luke is going to deal with in his gospel very pointedly. Who are some of the worst bad guys in our world today? What kind of people are the bad guys today?

Politicians. Anyone else? Larry Nassar. Pardon? Nassar or whatever? Nassar. Nassar.

Okay. Just watch the news. ISIS. ISIS. Terrorists. What other kinds of people?

Homeless. Homeless, perhaps. Murderers. Murderers. What's got the headlines right now? Sexual abusers.

[8 : 05] Predators. Rapists. These are the bad guys. And these are some of the people who clearly deserve damnation in hell.

Now, in the first century Palestine, tax collectors were also high on this bad guy list. They're a little bit different from IRS employees.

So don't think of them in that light so much as the situation as it was. The nation of Israel was under the rule of the Roman Empire.

And one of the stipulations was that they had to pay taxes then to Rome. And they hated that. It was bad enough when you had to send money to your own leaders.

But can you imagine what it would be like to have to send money to China or to Russia to take the first 20% of your income and send it to ISIS, to an enemy nation that was ruling over you?

[9 : 08] Well, tax collectors were Jews who collected taxes from their own countrymen to hand over then to their oppressors, the Romans. So they were viewed as traitors.

They're serving the cause of the enemy. But they were also thieves because everybody knew that they were taking more from you than what they really were authorized to do.

So these tax collectors were right down at the bottom rung of society. These are the scum of the earth, along with all these other scum that we've just mentioned in our own day.

Surely God, Jesus, hasn't come to save them. Or has he? That's the question. Turn to Luke 19, chapter 19, and let's meet one of these guys.

And, chapter 19, the first 10 verses. Roger Michaud, you got that?

[10 : 18] Jesus sat there at Jericho and was passing through. A man was there by the name of Zacchaeus. He was a chief tax collector and was wealthy.

He wanted to see who Jesus was, but being a short man, he could not. Because of the crowd. So he ran ahead and climbed to six more fig trees to see him, since Jesus was coming that way.

When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and said to him, Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today. So he came down at once and welcomed him gladly.

All the people saw this and began to mutter, Zacchaeus, come down immediately. He is going to be the guest of a sinner. But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, Look, Lord, here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor.

And if I have cheated any... That's fine. No, thank you.

[11 : 21] So he came eating and drinking, welcoming sinners. And they turned that into a slander. As if he's a drunkard. He's a glutton. And so Jesus is such a friend of sinners that that becomes a slander of him.

Now, we met this chief tax collector, Zacchaeus. Turn to chapter 5 and we'll meet another one. He goes by the name of Levi.

He also goes by the name of Matthew. He's the author of our first gospel in the New Testament. And he was called to be one of Jesus' disciples.

Mark Aikens, would you read that? 27 through 32 of chapter 5. After this, Jesus went out and saw a tax collector by the name of Levi sitting at his tax booth.

Follow me, Jesus said to him. And Levi got up, left everything, and followed him. Then Levi held a great banquet for Jesus at his house.

[12 : 34] And a large crowd of tax collectors and others were eating with them. But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law who belonged to their sect complained to his disciples.

Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners? Jesus answered them, it is not the healthy who need a doctor but the sick. I have not come to the right.

Category of the righteous. And so when they see Jesus, this moral teacher, hobnobbing with tax collectors and sinners, they're offended and they ask the disciples about this and Jesus answers for them.

And again, he shocks their sensitivities and their ideas about salvation. That he's not come to call the righteous, but to call sinners to repentance.

That's his mission. He came to earth to save sinners. To call them back to God whom they've rebelled against. And then he uses this familiar comparison of a doctor and the sick.

[13 : 45] Who needs the doctor? The healthy or the sick? Well, we have wellness checks. I'm not talking about that.

But it's the sick, isn't it? So what would you think of a doctor who stayed aloof from sick people? He just always stayed away from sick people. You see, not much of a doctor.

And Jesus is saying, what would you say of a savior who always stayed away from sinners who need saving? You'd say, not much of a savior. And he's saying, that's right.

You've understood then. Just as a doctor is there to help the sick, so the savior is there to save the sinner. The rescuer is there to rescue rebels.

And in this way, Jesus, again, is underscoring why he has come. So whatever men think about his mission, when we read the accounts of the gospel, we find that, as for Jesus, he tells us why he, the God-man, is here.

[14 : 50] It's to save sinners. Now, the question then comes up, as someone mentioned, well, who are these sinners then that he came to say? Who are the rebels? Is it just those on our list of bad guys?

And the shocking thing that Jesus taught is that it's all of us. It's all of us. Even those who think of themselves as righteous good guys.

The fact is that their righteousness is only in their own eyes. They are not righteous before God. It's just something that they think about themselves.

They were self-righteous. But in God's sight, they were really great sinners. In fact, they were the very ones who were plotting to murder Jesus.

Even as they're criticizing him for eating and drinking with sinners. They are just as much in need of being rescued from their sin as anyone else, even though they don't see it and they don't think it.

[15 : 55] So, what is a sinner? A sinner is one who sins. And what is sin? What do you think sin is?

What is sin? It's a Bible word. We find it all over the Bible. What is sin? Disobey the Ten Commandments. Okay.

Just the Ten Commandments? Can we go any further than that? Those would qualify us in. But any commandment that God has given us, when we disobey, we are rebelling against Him.

You see, God claims as our maker the authority to give us commands, to tell us how to live. And so He says, don't do this and we do it. And He says, do this and we don't do it.

That's rebellion. That's sin. It's just like a child. A rebellious son. And you tell Him to do something and He won't do it. He's a rebel. He's rebelling against the authority over Him.

[17 : 05] Well, that's a sinner. They're a rebel against their maker. And not only has God the Father given commandments, we see that Jesus claimed the same authority, didn't we?

In our first meeting, the first night, one of the evidences that Jesus is God is that He spoke with authority. And His words were the very words of God. And so Jesus gave commandments as well to be obeyed.

And to break His commands is to sin. So let's look at a sampling of some of Jesus' commands. If He's come to save sinners, we must know, well, who are these people?

And what defines them as sinners? Well, as sinners, they're in the category of sinner if they sin. That's what puts them in the category of sinner.

If they break one of God's commands. So let's look at a sampling of Jesus' commands from Luke. And as we do, I want you, as I'm going to do, see if you belong in this category of sinner.

[18 : 17] One who has broken His law. Alright, let's start with chapter 4 and verse 8. Dennis Beery, would you read that for us, please?

The commands of Jesus. Chapter 4 and verse 8. And Jesus answered him, It is written, Worship the Lord your God and serve Him only. Okay, we are commanded to worship the Lord our God and to have no other gods but Him.

To serve Him only. Alright? If we don't do that, it's a sin. Chapter 6. Chapter 6 and verses 27 and 28.

Billy, would you read us those two verses? I say to you, hear, love your enemies. Do good to those who hate you. Bless those who curse you.

Pray for those who abuse you. Anyone find themselves in the category of sinners? No? Do any of us not find ourselves thrown into the category of sinners with that command of Jesus?

[19 : 27] To do good to those who hate us. To pray for blessing. For God to bless those who curse us. Well, those are commands that Jesus gives. And to break them is to be in the category of sinner.

Chapter 6 and verse 31. 6. 31. Kayla, do you have that? Well, that's an interesting command.

Because we know what we would like. But do we always do to others what we would like to have done to us? If not, it puts us into the category of sinners.

Chapter 6 and verse 37. Verse 37. Ron Reynolds, you got that one? Yes. Yes. Do not judge.

And you will not be judged. Do not condemn. And you will not be condemned. Forgive and you will forgive. Forgive. Okay. Anybody ever done something wrong to you?

[20 : 32] And you held a grudge and you refused to forgive them? Well, that was a sin. That was enough to throw you into the category. Ever judge and look down your nose at someone and say, well, that guy's down to hell?

Or even tell someone to go to hell? That's a sin. As defined by Jesus' commands. Let's go down to chapter 10 and read verses 25 to 28.

We're having to jump over many of these commands, but our time is limited. Chapter 10, verses 25 to 28. Becky Webb, would you read that for us, please?

And Paul, a certain lawyer stood up and testified, saying, Teacher, what shall I do to an heir of eternal life? He said to him, What is written in the law?

What is your meaning of it? So he answered and said, You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself.

[21 : 37] And he said to him, You have answered rightly. Do this and you will live. What's the word that's repeated more than any others in that command of God?

It's a little word. Will? Okay, love is in that. Twice. That's right. But I believe there's a word that's in there even more than twice. Yes, Will? All.

What does all mean? The whole thing. So we're to love God with the whole thing. Our heart, our soul, our strength, our mind.

There's no part of us but that is to be given over to loving God. That's a big command. That's a lot that's being asked of us. There's to be no part of our lives that we reserve to ourselves.

But that we give over to the love of God in every area of our life. And if we've kept back any area from God, we're in the category of sinners.

[22 : 38] And then how do we treat our neighbor? Do we love them as we love ourselves? And he goes on to tell the Good Samaritan parable.

It's not just loving with our lips, is it? He spent money on that poor man that was beaten along the side of the road. He went out of his way. He broke into his schedule to stop and to help someone else along the way.

And it cost him. And it wasn't even someone that was of his same ethnic background. He was a Samaritan and the Jew was the one in need.

Well, go and do likewise. Do we do that? That's to not do so is to sin. A couple more. Chapter 12 and verse 22.

12, 22. Nate, if you've got that. Then he just said to his disciples, Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat, or about your body, what you will wear.

[23 : 44] For life is more than food. And the body is more than clothes. Okay. Do not worry. Anybody worried this week?

Well, that puts you over into the category of sinners. Chapter 16 and verse 18. Stand. You've got that one. 16, 18.

16, 18. 16, 18. 16, 18. 16, 18. Anyone who divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery.

16, 18. 16, 18. 16, 18. 16, 18. So we're seeing that some of the common conceptions of men as to what sin is, is not always the way that Jesus sees it.

Adultery is more than just sleeping with someone that's not your wife. It can even be divorcing her in order to marry someone else. So, again, we're seeing that these categories of sin are wide.

[24 : 54] The last is chapter 18 and verse 20. I'll just read it briefly where this rich ruler came and wanted to know what he must do to inherit eternal life.

And Jesus says, well, you know the commandments. Do not commit adultery. Do not murder. Do not steal. Do not give false testimony. Honor your father and your mother.

Well, there are many more commands of God. Commands of Jesus. These are sampling. So, how are you doing with the test? When we talk about the category of sinners, is it just the tax collectors?

Is it just the prostitutes? Is it just the abusers of men? Who all is in that category? Did you see yourself like I saw myself as we measure ourselves against Jesus' standard?

Well, Jesus exposes sin in our hearts, in our lives, in our mouths, our thoughts. And he did that with this religious group who thought of themselves as righteous and not in the category of sinners.

[26 : 07] Look at chapter 11. And verse 37. He's got a word for these guys. These Pharisees. This sect.

This religious sect of the Jews that thought of themselves as cut above the sinner. Not belonging in the same category. Where are we at?

Tom. Tom Heaney. You got that for us. 37 to 41. When Jesus had finished speaking, a Pharisee invited him to eat with him. So he went in and reclined at the table.

But the Pharisee, noticing that Jesus did not first wash before the meal, was surprised. Then the Lord said to him, Now then, you Pharisees cleaned the outside of the cup and dish.

But inside you were full of greed. The thoughts. The intents of the heart. The motivations.

[27 : 03] And inwardly, these men were full of greed. And that put them in the same category of sinners.

Inwardly, they had wickedness. Though outwardly, they were covering it up with a respectable life. Verse 42. Brian, if you've got that.

But woe to you, Pharisees. For you tithe mint and rue and every herb and neglect justice and the love of God. These you ought to have done without neglecting the others.

So they were very persnickety about tithing everything right down to their garden herbs. But Jesus says, but you have neglected justice. You're not treating people with justice or with God's love either.

And you see, when we fail to show love and justice to people, we're in the category of sinners. Verse 43. Verse 43.

[28 : 02] Dave Richards, you got that? Quote to you, Pharisees. For you love the best seed in the synagogue and the greetings in the market places. What's the sin he's putting his finger on there?

Pride. Arrogance. Wanting people to think well of me. You see, that's the way Jesus commands.

They not only make demands of our outward man, but they actually make demands of our hearts. And in so speaking to these religious people, Jesus exposes them and shows them, you're as much in the category of sinners as anyone else is.

So, we're all swept into this one category of sinners. Rebels. Chapter 8 and verse 17.

Kevin. James, would you read that for us? 8:17. For nothing is secret, but shall not be made manifest.

[29 : 14] Neither anything hid, but shall not be known and come to all. So, God not only knows our outward actions, but he knows what's secret and inward in our hearts.

And it will be brought out into the open in the day of judgment, if not sooner. What if this was a theater? And the show today is all the sins of your life.

All the things you ever said. All the things you ever did. That were wrong in God's sight. They would break one of God's commands. But not just those things.

But also your bad thoughts. Your selfish motives. And also the things you should have done. But that you left undone.

It's all there. The days of your life. Not one missing. Perhaps things that nobody here knows about. And it's all to be put on the screen.

[30 : 18] This week it's your life. And next week it's mine. Well, I'm not going to be here next week. And I'm going to be on the other side of the earth. Living incognito the rest of my life.

Because I don't want my sin put up on the screen. To see what I am. And neither do you. But that's how God sees us, you see.

And he's doing this. Jesus is doing this to us. To bring us over into that category that defines us. We're sinners. Now why do you think he wants us over in that category?

Is he just a mean guy? And he's just wanting to poke the finger at us. And just put us down? Why do you think Jesus wants us to see ourselves in the category of sinner? That's who he saves.

That's right. Until you see yourself as such. You won't come to the doctor to be healed. You won't come to the Savior to be saved. And that's why Jesus is so intent on moving everybody that he meets into the category of sinner.

[31 : 28] To see themselves for who they are. Because that's the first thing that we need to see if we're to seek him.

So we're all sinners. That's the second point. First point, Jesus came into the world to save sinners. Second, we're all sinners against God.

And we need this Jesus then to save us. That's the bad news. But the good news is that this is why Jesus has come. To save sinners.

Let's close with a parable Jesus told. And it's just interesting that in his parable he's got two people. One happens to be a Pharisee. A very religious man that we've studied.

And the other just happens to be a tax collector. It's chapter 18. And it's verses 9 through 14.

[32 : 27] 18, 9 through 14. Remember what we've seen about these Pharisees? They don't think they belong to what category? Sinner.

And as for the tax collectors, everybody knows where they belong, right? So here's the story. A parable is a story that Jesus told. He made up the story. But it comes with a spiritual lesson.

And so Jesus takes real groups of people. And he plugs them into his story. 18, verse 9.

To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everybody else, Jesus told this parable. Two men went up to the temple to pray. One a Pharisee and the other a tax collector.

The Pharisee stood up and prayed about himself. God, I thank you that I'm not like other men. Robbers, evildoers, adulterers, or even like this tax collector.

[33 : 27] I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get. But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven. But beat his breast and said, God have mercy on me, a sinner.

I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled. And he who humbles himself will be exalted.

Only one of the two men saw himself in the category of sinner. And that's the one that went home right with God.

Because he came as a sinner. And he threw himself upon the mercy of God. And God will save all sinners who trust in his mercy. So, as you have time to think, think of that parable.

And think, which am I? Do I see myself as the tax collector? Or do I see myself as the righteous one? Not deserving of hell. Not deserving of God's judgment.

[34 : 36] Not needing to be saved. Well, we'll pick up where we leave off here next week. We're dismissed. Yes. Yes.