

Why did Jesus Come To Us?

Supplementing the talk by Gladys Bland

Why Did He Come?

– the simple answer: because he loved us.

How Did He Come?

– by God becoming Man in the ‘Incarnation’, the taking of human flesh.

What was his Nature?

- A He was fully God
- B He was fully Man.

The Creeds and the Seven Ecumenical Councils

spell out what this means:

- only as God can He save us
- only as Man can He reach us.

How Did our Salvation Come About?

Through the Virgin Birth

- where, by the Power of the Spirit, God is joined to Man
- Mary is called the ‘Mother of God’ because her Son is God
- Though born like us with ‘original sin’, she was obedient to the Spirit and so did not sin
- She models our final destiny, when God shall be all in all to us.

Through the earthly life of Christ

- A Christ lived a perfect example of life on earth
- B He loved and cared for all people, especially the outcasts of society
- C He showed his authority by many miracles, including raising three people from the dead
- D Though immensely popular, he never abused his power.



The Nativity
Mosaic (c.1143), Martorana, Palermo, Sicily

Through the Cross

- A Christ's death, like his birth, was human
- B Christ suffered spiritual as well as physical pain
- C He descended into hell to rescue the human race
- D By his ‘life-creating death’ he conquered all evil.

By the Resurrection

- A Christ rose from the dead on the third day
- B It was a bodily resurrection – the tomb was empty.

By the Ascension

Christ ascended bodily into heaven,
taking our humanity into the holy of holies.

By the Return of Christ – his Second Coming

- A Christ is coming again to judge the world
- B We do not know the date or time – but we know He will come.

How should we respond?

- A We must accept our need to be saved – we have all fallen short of God's purposes for us
- B Salvation means Christ's life, or living for ourselves and the world.

The choice before us

God has given us freedom:

- 1 To choose Christ or not
- 2 To believe or not to believe
- 3 To change direction or to stay the same.

The double-action

- A God will act – if we ask
- B To respond always requires faith
- C Maintaining faith is hard: 'Lord, I believe; help my unbelief'
- D 'The Way' is a life-long journey, in company with Christ and one's fellow-Christians.

**The goal is 'deification', being like God:
'When he appears we shall be like him,
for we shall see him as he is' (1 John 3:2).**

'Christ's birth was the birthday
of the whole human race.'

St Basil the Great

Your notes:



Anastasis or The Harrowing of Hell
Icon, School of Aleppo, Monastery of our Lady
of Balamand, Lebanon

Recommended Reading

- i Bishop Kallistos, *How are we saved?*
(Light and Life Publishing, Minneapolis,
1996) ISBN 1-880971-22-4, and Chapter
4 of his *Orthodox Way* (revised edition,
2002) ISBN 0-913836-58-3.
- ii St Athanasius, *On the Incarnation*
(St Vladimir's Seminary Press, Crestwood,
New York, 1996) ISBN 0-913836-40-0.

'Loving humility is a terrible force,
it is the strongest of all things
and there is nothing else like it.'

Fyodor Dostoyevsky