



Sermon – December 17, 2017

Verses Covered

Romans 10:20 – 21

Romans 11:1 – 6

Revelation 7:4, 9 - 10

So you have a name and a title. Jesus Christ. It's not two names. It's a name and a title. Greek word, *lésous*, comes from the Hebrew word, *Yeshua*, it means Savior. Christus comes from the Hebrew word, *Mashiach*, from the Greek word, *chrió*, which means the One Anointed or the Messiah. So we have a name and a title that drives everything from Christmas to today.

So 2,000 years ago there are some shepherds out in the field. It's late at night. They're worn out. Other than slavery, the worst job you could have in the first century is being a shepherd. I mean it was really, really hard. So these guys are sitting there. They're on this hill. They're enjoying life. They're talking about how bad ESPN is. They're having a great time. And all of a sudden an angel appears. Now I'm willing to bet they've never seen an angel before. So this angel appears and says, right, "I've got good news for you. There's a savior who is a Messiah, who's the Christ, born to you in the city of David." Then the heavenly hosts come, now I love the phrase, most of your translations are going to say they were terrified. The greatest translation of any Bible ever for their reaction is the King James. It says, and I quote, "They were sore afraid." That would be the correct statement. They were sore afraid. They're terrified. But the heavenly hosts come sing and so they decide to make the trek. It's about four miles from where they are. They've got to go down a little hill and go up to the city of Bethlehem. So they go there. They find the Messiah child, the Christ child. They find Him there. They come back they're all excited.

You fast forward two years later. You're in the city of Jerusalem which is the area where they were when they were talked to by the angel. Three men show up, astrologers, garbed differently than everybody else. It's obvious somebody new is in town. Everybody's discussing it. And these guys come in and their question is, "Look we saw the Messiah's star in the East. We're just wondering where He is. It got us here; that's all we know." So Herod the Great, who has built the second temple for Israel, first one's destroyed by Babylon, but Herod built a second one for Israel. It's magnificent. He sets the inquire in, they bring in the seminary profs and they said, "Oh yeah, He's born in Bethlehem, Micah 5, He's in Bethlehem." So these guys, now there are two things that are said after this in this story. Number one: it says all, I'm sure hyperbole, but it says, "All Jerusalem was troubled by these guys being there and what they're asking about." They leave

Jerusalem and walk the five miles to Bethlehem with nobody. Not a single Jew who are troubled by these guys being here and hearing that the Messiah they're dreaming of is born five miles from them. It's a nothing walk. Not a single Jew goes with these guys. They go down, they're warned not to come home. Herod, who's built the Jews a temple, was an extremely paranoid man. As a matter of fact, the emperor said it would be better to be Herod's pig than to be his son. Herod was a vile man and so he does the only thing he can do out of his paranoia. He sends orders that every male child in Bethlehem, two and down, kill them all. Joseph and Mary are warned. They leave town. Off they go. They come back. They don't go in the area. They raise Him in Nazareth.

And now we fast forward to 27 A.D. Pilate's on the rostrum. Jesus is here, actually Jesus and Barabbas. You have a man who's perfect, healed thousands, loved everybody, spoken God's truth completely, clearly, authoritatively, and perfectly. You've got this guy who's sexually assaulted, murdered, done everything you can do. And the nation that had the shepherds and the announcement decides, "Nah, I'll tell you what. Kill Jesus. But let Barabbas go." And they kill Jesus with mockery and laughter and having fun. As a matter of fact, they yell at Him on the cross, "Hey! If you're the Messiah, prove it, why don't you come down and get off the cross and we'll buy into it." I mean they mock Him the whole time. They strip him completely unclothed on the cross. They absolutely demean Him.

So you fast forward, 27 A.D., 43 years to 70 A.D. The Jews have, en masse, rejected Jesus Christ. As a matter of fact, they're so sick and tired of not having the Messiah they want, that they take matters into their own hands. They rebel against Rome. Romans are sick of them. So they do two things. They come down and they slaughter Jerusalem. They destroy Herod's temple. They level it. They destroy the walls. There are a group of about 900 Jews that head off from Jerusalem and go down to a fortress that Herod built, a really great place. It's way up, you can't get to them, there are 900 there. The Romans are so mad with the Jews that they go all the way down there, take's them a year to build a ramp, and when they get up there all the Jews have committed suicide except a couple of women and three or four children. That is the end. The Jewish nation is dispersed. They go up into Europe primarily, but they're dispersed. The Gentiles, us, are now given the task of taking the message of Jesus the Messiah to the world. That's what happens in the book of Acts. It starts out with Peter in Jerusalem and ends up with Paul in Rome. We become the people that are supposed to do the preaching.

Now that was not God's intent for Israel. Now I want you to listen to me carefully. In the Old Testament there's a weird story that always bothers a lot of us. But it's what I would think is an anticipatory metaphor. It is the story of Abraham offering up Isaac. God actually coming to Abraham and saying, right, "I want you to kill your son." Now I even had an Old Testament professor at college that told us, "God didn't tell him that. God would never tell him that. He just misunderstood." Absolutely God told him that because He was trying to make a point for Israel in their day. He tells Abraham, he says, "Look here's what I want you to do. I want you to take your son up on," now watch, "up on Mt. Moriah." Which is the mountain that Solomon's temple is built on. He says, "I want you to take him up on that mountain and take his life." Now the Bible says, in the book of Hebrews, that Solomon, I mean, that Abraham was willing to do that because he believed that since Isaac was the child of promise that God would raise him from the dead. He believed that and so he's willing to take his child's life because he believes that he'll resurrect.

Now if you're Abraham, if you've got a child, and you're Abraham, what do you feel walking up that mountain? Even if you're thinking resurrection, you're not elated. You love your child. What would the phrase be? My gosh, I can't even think of it: soul-anguish, sorrow, pain, fear, trepidation, what if He doesn't raise him? I mean every kind of painful emotion is going in Abraham's heart as he walks up and his little boy says, "Hey, dad, we've got the wood. Where's the offering?" What do you think that did to him? Crushed him. And we all know the ending of the story. He gets up, top of Mt. Moriah, and God provides the sacrifice. I believe that story was for the Jews to understand what they should've done. They're in Jerusalem, here comes Christ, He's the Messiah, He's demonstrated it, He's proved it. If, when Pilate says, "I'm going to give you a choice: Barabbas or Jesus." They're going to ask for Barabbas to be killed. But they're also going to ask if they accept Christ as Peter, James, John, and the others do, now listen, if they accept Christ, He still has to die on a cross for six hours. That's why on the Mount of Precipice when He walked, they were going to throw Him off the mount, and he walked through them. God didn't let them kill Him. Why? Because Jesus can't just roll off a mountain. The Bible says in Galatians 3 that cursed is every man that hangs on a tree. He has to endure God's curse for our sin. So He has to hang there on a cross for six hours. Because it's going to take time for Him to be cursed by the Father. That's why in the middle He says, "My God, my God, why have You forsaken Me?" So there's got to be this six-hour crucifixion. But now instead of the Jews having the Romans take Him out of town on the outskirts by a hill that looks like a skull and dropping Him in the ground where people walk back and forth leaving town in the middle of nowhere, now, and by the way, laughing, what they were meant to do, He still has to die on a cross and he still has to hang for six hours, but what He was meant to do is now they take the Savior they love into the Holy of Holies, in the temple, they open the veil, they hang the cross in there, they leave Him for the time until they hear Him say, "It is finished. Father into Your hands I commit my Spirit." When they hear that, then they pull Him out and they bury Him with the same belief of Abraham. We had to kill Him. We love Him. Our soul's in anguish. We are in intense pain. But we believe God's going to raise Him from the dead. That's what was meant to happen.

But that's not what happened. And a change was made. A shift. Now listen to me carefully today. The purpose of God creating the Jewish nation was so that He could send them His Messiah, they could offer the sacrifice in the temple. What did John the Baptist say, as a matter of fact, when they saw him? Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the; Israel? The sin of the world so that they were to, with great anguish, offer up their Savior as a sacrifice, wait for the resurrection, now listen. Their job then was to go to the Gentiles and say, "Our Christ is your Jesus. Our Messiah is your Savior." That was their calling. But they missed that. They lost it and things shifted. Where today we are going to Israel saying, "Our Savior is your Messiah." A total shift. You say, "So God's done." Nah. He's never done. Listen to this; Romans 10:

²⁰Isaiah says boldly, "I was found by those who were not looking for me." That's us. "I've revealed myself to those who are not asking for me." That's us. ²¹But to Israel He says, "All day long, I've spread out my hands to a disobedient and defiant people." ¹I asked then, has God rejected His people? Absolutely not. For I too am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham from the tribe of Benjamin. ²God has not rejected His people whom He foreknew. Or don't you know what the scripture says in the passage about Elijah, how he pleads with God against Israel? ³"Lord, they've killed your prophets, torn down Your altars, I'm the only one left, they're trying to take my life." ⁴But it was God's reply to him,

“I have seven thousand men for myself who have not bowed down to Baal.” ⁵In the same way then, there is also at the present time a remnant chosen by grace. ⁶If by grace, it is not by works, otherwise grace ceases to be grace.

He's not done. He's still chasing. Interesting book I picked up in Israel. Read it on the plane coming home. Anyone remember the raid on Entebbe? How many of you remember that? Wow! We've got a bunch of old people in the church. So there was a plane hijacked from France. And that plane was taken to Entebbe, the capital of Uganda. Idi Amin was, whatever he was there, he was a vile horror. So these terrorists let everybody go off the plane except the Jews. And they were obviously going to, they were trying to use the Jews to barter for some release of some terrorists. And Ugandan soldiers were in there with them. In about a four-day plan, they set in motion, the government of Israel, a way to get them back. And so the guy that led the raid was a man named Yonni Netanyahu. He is the brother of the present Prime Minister. This guy Iddo Netanyahu wrote the book and then they have another brother Bibi. But Yonni was the guy that led the raid. At the raid he was the only Israeli commando killed. He was killed right at the beginning when they stepped into the place where the hostages were. They got all the hostages back out, two or three were killed, couple of them, because they didn't obey commands, but they got the bulk of the hostages home. Years later they are celebrating, just honoring a better word, this guy's death, Yonni Netanyahu. So they're at Entebbe in Uganda. I want to read you, this really kind of blew me away, but it's where we are. The guy that wrote this book about his brother is sitting with, Bibi Netanyahu is off with the president. But he's sitting with one of the president's advisors, and if you know anything, Christianity has really swept through Africa en masse form. Now listen to this:

“How is it that you don't believe in Jesus and His resurrection?” the president's aide suddenly asks me. “You who live in the land where Jesus walked and breathed and died. How is it that you of all people don't believe in Him?”

Now I want you to listen to the answer. This is the Prime Minister of Israel's brother. Listen to his answer.

“I ask myself how I can possibly explain the Jewish people to him. There's no way. Here in Africa as everywhere else in the world, we are a mystery. Strangers to all.”

That's his answer. Which is basically, “I don't know why. It's a mystery.” No. It's not a mystery. It's the fact that God has chased them and chased them and chased them and they've said no, and no, and no. But this is the great beauty of Christmas. He doesn't quit chasing because there's coming a day, and I have no time to go into this, but there's coming a day when He pulls the church out and then two things happen when He pulls us out, actually several things, but two things in particular. Listen to this (Romans 7:4).

⁴I heard the number of those who were sealed, a hundred and forty-four thousand sealed from every tribe of the Israelites:

He lists all the tribes sealed. And then it says (Romans 7:9 – 10):

⁹After this I looked and there was a vast multitude from every nation, tribe, people, and language which no one could number standing before the throne and the Lamb, they were robed in white with palm branches in their hands; ¹⁰and they cried out in a loud voice, “Salvation belongs to our God who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb.”

Here's what's going to happen. He's going to pull us out. Anti-Christ is going to arrive. He has to arrive. Everything's being orchestrated for God's chasing of the nation of Israel. They were nowhere and he brought them home in 1948. He gave them back Jerusalem in 1967. We're in Jerusalem the other day when the President of the most powerful nation in the world made that their capital. He agreed to that. And then I read the other day, first time I've seen it, I read the other day, I don't remember where I read it on the internet, but I read there's talk of a third temple. They can't sacrifice where they are. The third most holy Muslim shrine is sitting on top of Herod's temple. So there'd have to be a third temple built by the Anti-Christ with an agreement, that Israel buys into, he says, "I'll give you peace." We're gone. When he makes that agreement with Israel, there'll be seven years left on this planet. In the middle of that 3 ½ years, he will go into that temple and he will desecrate it. At which point the Jewish nation will say, "He's the Anti-what? Christ." He's the Anti-Messiah. And now we know who the legitimate Messiah is. They will embrace Jesus as an entire nation. They will witness for 3 ½ years, a multitude nobody can number will come to Christ. And then at the end of seven years, He comes, He sets up His kingdom for a thousand years, banishes Satan, at the end of a thousand years, releases Satan, Satan gathers everybody together under Mt. Carmel to kill, it's over, and then we go into the marriage supper of the Lamb.

You say, "If we're gone, it we're gone, who tells them about Jesus?" I don't know why it didn't hit me until this year. Do you know what the number one industry in Israel is? Tourism. It's not exporting dates or olives. It's tourism. Why do people go to Israel? They don't go to see Jewish antiquities. Why do they go? They go to see where Jesus walked. God, in His sovereignty, has not only brought them home in '48, given back their capital in '67, honored it in 2017, talk of a third temple, but He sovereignly orchestrated that the number one business for this secular nation would be the Messiah they rejected. So that when we are gone, it won't matter because they've been making money off Jesus and now they'll finally surrender to His holiness. Christmas is about Jew and Gentile. Right now it's us going to Israel and telling them our Savior is their Messiah. One day when we're gone, they will tell the world their Messiah is their Savior. And then when all this is finished, the Bible says we're going to step into the marriage supper of the Lamb, Jew and Gentile. We go into the room, the Jews are going to see Jesus and say, "Christ." Gentiles look at Him and say, "Jesus." But when we finish eating, we're going to leave and everybody is going to say, "Father."

Let's pray.

Father, thank You that You've called me to surrender to the truth about the blood of Your Son so I could call You that. Thank You that You chase us all the time. You chase the Jews, You chase the Gentiles, it's the whole point of Christmas. You chase us with Your love and Your grace and Your forgiveness and Your mercy. Whether we're defiant or disobedient, doesn't matter, You still chase us. Just pray, Father, that today would be a day that we get caught for Your glory and our forgiveness. In Jesus Christ name.