

CHRIST CAME TO SAVE.

March 21, 2008.

Introduction.

Please turn with me in your Bibles to *1Tim.1:1-17*. (**read**). This first epistle from Paul to Timothy was written after Paul's first imprisonment and sometime before his second imprisonment and execution. The approximate date for this first epistle is **AD.61 – 63**. Paul had left Timothy in Ephesus to continue dealing with the church regarding the problem of false teachers and their heresies. He wrote this letter to give him counsel. As he said in *3:15*, "I write so that you will know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God." In *1:12-17* Paul shared some personal testimony about his own conversion to Christ. This evening I want to focus your minds on *vs.15*.

For the purposes of study this verse can be broken down into various parts. It will be impossible to study each part in isolation without making reference to the other parts. The overlapping is unavoidable. We can divide the verse as follows :

- 1). "It is a trustworthy statement."
- 2). "*Deserving full acceptance.*"
- 3). "Christ Jesus came into the world."
- 4). "*Christ Jesus came ... to save sinners.*"
- 5). "I am foremost of all" or among sinners.

1). Christ Jesus Came Into The World.

I want to begin our study with the third statement : "Christ Jesus came into the world." The name "**Jesus**" is our Lord's given name, given to Him by His Father. In

Matt.1:21 the angel said to Joseph, “you shall call His name Jesus.” In **Lk.1:31** the angel said to Mary, “you shall name Him Jesus.” In **Lk.2:21** we read, “before His circumcision, His name was then called Jesus, the name given by the angel before He was conceived in the womb.” The name “**Jesus**” means “*Jehovah saves.*” The name points to our Lord’s calling, to what He will do.

The name “**Christ**” means “*Anointed One*”. **Spurgeon** noted that the Father sent Jesus anointed by the Holy Spirit, prepared, fitted, qualified, and endowed for the work of saving. When Jesus went into the synagogue at Nazareth, He applied to Himself the words of the prophet Isaiah, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor.” (**Lk.4:17-18**). We are told in the gospels that the Holy Spirit came upon Jesus after He was baptized by John the Baptist. **Lk.3:21-22** tells us that after Jesus was baptized He was praying and the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in bodily form like a dove. In **Lk.4:1** we read, “Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan”, and He went into the wilderness to face the devil. **Lk.4:14** describes for us the beginning of Jesus’ preaching / teaching ministry. **Vs.14** says, “Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit.”

“Christ Jesus came into the world” points to the **incarnation** of our Lord. But at the same time it also points to His **pre-existence**. In **Jn.16:28** Jesus said, “I came forth from the Father and have come into the world; I am leaving the world again and going to the Father.” **Jn.13:3** says Jesus “had come forth from God and was going back to God.” In **Jn.8:42** Jesus said, “I have come from God.” In **Jn.6:38** Jesus said, “I have come down from heaven.” In **Jn.3:13** Jesus told Nicodemus that He descended from heaven.

The pre-existence of Jesus points to His **divinity**. The One who came into this world was no ordinary human being. He was man, fully man but He was no ordinary man. He was fully man and fully God. Let us note a couple verses that demonstrate this truth. John said, “the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.” (**Jn.1:14**). The

Word, who is the eternal One (*Jn.1:1*), entered time and became a flesh and blood human being. John the Baptist was six months older than Jesus and yet John declared twice, “He existed before me.” (*Jn.1:15, 30*).

In *Jn.8:58* Jesus said to the Jews, “Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am.” “**Truly, truly**” or “*Amen, Amen*”, is the solemn formula which a person used to confirm a covenant or an oath. When Jesus used it, it emphasized the solemnity, importance and authority of His statements. The choice is very simple in *Jn.8:58* : either Jesus told the truth that He is the eternal I AM who was revealed to Moses or He is a recklessly daring blasphemous liar. The Jews picked up stones to stone Him because as far as they were concerned Jesus was blaspheming.

It is important to be noted also that Jesus did not come into this world of His own accord. He came because it was His Father’s will. He came because His Father sent Him. *Jn.3:17* informs us that God sent His Son into the world. In *Jn.5:36* Jesus said, “the Father has sent Me.” In *Jn.6:38* Jesus said, “For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.” There are several other verses that can be quoted from the gospel of John. I will mention one more. In *Jn.7:28-29* Jesus declared to the Jews at the feast of Booths, “I have not come of Myself, but He who sent me is true, whom you do not know. I know Him, because I am from Him, and He sent Me.” Finally, in *Gal.4:4-5* we read, “But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.”

It is an indisputable historical fact that Jesus was born into this world just over two thousand years ago. Early historians, be they Jewish, Greek and Roman, bear testimony to this fact that One called Jesus lived in the time of Pilate, the Roman governor of Judea. These historians bear testimony to the fact also that Jesus was tried by Pilate, sentenced and executed by crucifixion. In recent times an ongoing barrage of attacks has been

launched against the historicity of Jesus. People from various quarters have become desperate to prove that the Jesus of the Bible is not a historical figure.

Have you ever noticed that over the last few years the dating system has been changed from **B.C.** to **B.C.E.**, that is, from “Before Christ” to “*Before the Common Era*”? Why the change? To have Christ’s name in our dating system is to acknowledge that He is a historical figure and more than a historical figure. It is to acknowledge that His entrance into this world loomed so large and created such an impact that history itself was divided. Those who hate Jesus and Christianity are determined that the world must not acknowledge these established facts about Jesus.

In response to these many and ongoing attacks on the historicity of Jesus, several Biblical scholars have written well-researched and well-documented books affirming and proving the historicity of Jesus and the historical reliability of the Biblical accounts and the early secular historical accounts concerning the life of Jesus. But here is the fact : denial of a truth does not turn that truth into a falsehood. Hiding a truth or pretending it does not exist does not make that truth disappear. This is the lesson the communists learned after fifty plus years. The truth is : Christ Jesus came into the world.

II). Christ Came To Save Sinners.

This brings us to our second major point seen in our text : “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.” The word “**sinners**” tells us that human beings are in a condition from which they must be saved. The word “**sinners**” is used to describe human beings as disobedient to God, unrighteous, alienated from God and lost. The Bible presents to us a consistent picture of fallen man’s condition before God. Consider with me the following sampling from Old & New Testaments.

Ecc.7:20 says, “there is not a righteous man on earth who continually does good and who never sins.”

1Kings 8:46, *“there is no man who does not sin.”*

Psa.14:3, *“There is no one who does good, not even one.”*

Prov.20:9, *“Who can say, ‘I have cleansed my heart, I am pure from sin’?”*

Isa.64:6, *“all of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment.”*

Jer.17:9, *“The heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick; who can understand it?”*

Rom.3:9, *“both Jews and Greeks are all under sin.”*

Rom.3:23, *“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”*

Gal.3:22, *“The Scripture has shut up everyone under sin.”*

Eph.2:1, *“You were dead in your trespasses and sins.”*

What is sin? The Biblical definition of sin is found in **1Jn.3:4**. This verse says, “sin is lawlessness”, that is, sin is breaking law, God’s law or God’s revealed word. **Why do we sin?** We sin because we are sinners. Paul tells us in **Rom.5:12** that sin entered the world through one man’s disobedience. That one man is Adam. But sin did not come alone. Death came through sin. Adam’s sin infected the entire human race yet to be born. For this reason every human being born into this world is born a sinner. David recognized this fact when he declared in **Psa.51:5**, “Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity.”

The Bible does not teach that every child is born innocent and sinless. The Bible does not teach that this innocent sinless child becomes a sinner only after committing its first sin. The Bible teaches that every child born into this world is born a sinner, is born infected and corrupted by sin. You do not have to teach a child to sin. **Psa.58:3** says, “The wicked are estranged from the womb; These who speak lies go astray from birth.” **Isa.48:8** says, “you have been called a rebel from birth.” The child does not sin to become a sinner. The child sins because he is already a sinner.

What is the divine penalty for sin, for breaking God's Law? The divine penalty is death. This death is described in three ways in the Bible : spiritual death, physical death, the second death. *Ezek.18:4* says, "The soul who sins must die." *Vs.20* repeats, "The person who sins will die." *Rom.6:23* says, "the wages of sin is death." Let us consider this three-fold description.

The Bible makes it clear that because we are born as sinners, we are born **spiritually dead**. It is for this reason Paul said to the Ephesians, "you were dead in your trespasses and sins." (*Eph.2:1, 5*). *Col.2:13* says, "you were dead in your transgressions." *Rom.8:6* says, "the mind set on the flesh is death." The verse does not say, "*the mind set on the flesh will die.*" The verse says, "the mind set on the flesh is death", death itself. To be spiritually dead is to be separated from God and to lack the ability to respond to the things of God. (cf. *Eph.2:12; 1Cor.2:14*). To be spiritual dead is to be hostile to God and to refuse to obey God's word. (*Rom.8:7*).

Secondly, because of sin, we will all **die physically**. *Heb.9:27* says, "it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes the judgment." In a world that is fast approaching a population total of seven billion people, people are dying at the rate of two per second. On the other hand the birth rate is averaging four per second. Every human being has an appointment with physical death because of sin. Some die at birth. Some die as youths. Some die as young adults. Some die at middle age. Some grow old and then die. Paul wrote in *2Cor.4:16*, "our outer (**physical**) man is decaying", that is, growing old, and this decaying leads to death. And sin is the cause.

Thirdly, when sinners die they come face to face with what the Bible describes as **the second death**. This second death is the sentence the Divine Judge passes on sinners during the final judgment. *Rev.20:14* says this second death is the lake of fire. In *Matt.25:41 & 46* Jesus described this as eternal fire and eternal punishment. This second death is what we commonly describe as "**hell**". An eternal hell is waiting every sinner in this world. And eternal hell is waiting for you if you are not saved. When *Rom.6:23* says, "the wages of sin is death", this is the death that is being primarily

emphasized. We know this because this death is contrasted with eternal life in **Rom.6:23**.

As a sinner you are facing an indescribable peril. That peril is an eternal hell. You cannot save yourself from the peril of hell. As a matter of fact there is absolutely nothing you can do to save yourself from the peril of hell. If you are to be saved from the peril of hell, someone will have to save you. That is exactly what Jesus came to do. "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners."

I want you to clearly understand something. **Ezek.18:4** says, "The soul who sins will die." **Rom.6:23** says, "The wages of sin is death." The penalty God has set for sin is death. Let me repeat that : the penalty God has set for sin is death. The penalty is not good works. The penalty is not charity. The penalty is not religious works and sacrifices. There is only one penalty God has set for sin and that is death. And that death is the second death of the lake of fire. Herein lies the very reason why you cannot save yourself and you need someone to save you.

"Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." Let us note the following. **Firstly**, Jesus is the only Savior of sinners. The angel said to Joseph, "you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins." (**Matt.1:21**). The literal emphasis may be paraphrased as follows : "*you shall call His name Jesus, for He Himself will save His people from their sins*", or, "**for it is He alone who will save His people from their sins.**" In **Lk.5:32** Jesus said, "I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance." In **Lk.19:10** Jesus said, "For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost."

In **Lk.24:47** Jesus said that repentance for forgiveness of sins must be proclaimed in His name. In **Jn.10:27-28** Jesus said, "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; and I give to them eternal life." The literal emphasis is : "*and I, and I alone, give to them eternal life.*" In **Acts 4:12** Peter declared concerning Jesus before the Jewish religious court, "there is salvation in no one else; for there is no

other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved.” And in *Acts 10:43* Peter declared to the Gentiles gathered in the house of Cornelius that everyone who believes in Jesus receives forgiveness of sins.

Secondly, why is it that Jesus alone is the Savior of sinners? The simple Biblical answer is that Jesus died for sinners. *Rom.5:8* says, “while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” *1Cor.15:3* says, “Christ died for our sins.” *Gal.1:3-4* says, “the Lord Jesus Christ ... gave Himself for our sins.” The Lord Jesus Christ came into this world and lived a perfectly sinless life. And then He took the place of sinners, took their sins upon Himself, took their penalty of death upon Himself and died in their place. The Law of God demands death for sin. If the sinner is to be saved, someone must take his place and died in his stead. That someone must be perfectly sinless. Only one person was qualified to do this and that person is the Lord Jesus Christ.

No one else in this world was qualified to do what Jesus did on behalf of sinners. Noah could not do it because he was a sinner. Abraham could not do it because he was a sinner. Moses could not do it because he was a sinner. Joshua could not do it because he was a sinner. Samuel could not do it because he was a sinner. David could not do it because he was a sinner. We can go on and on with the list but we will never find one man who was qualified to die for sinners. We could search the world with utmost care, we will not find one man who was or is qualified to die for sinners. The world had only one perfectly sinless person and that is the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God. He was born without sin. He lived a perfectly sinless life. And this qualified Him to take the place of sinners and die on behalf of sinners.

Thirdly, the verse says, “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.” Note carefully, Jesus did not come to help sinners save themselves. Jesus did not come to show sinners how to save themselves. Jesus did not come to give sinners a half salvation and then leave the rest up to them. When it comes to their soul’s salvation, sinners are helpless (*Rom.5:6*) hopeless (*Eph.2:12*) and lost. (*Lk.19:10*). Jesus came to save sinners. Jesus came to rescue them from God’s eternal wrath in hell. Jesus came to

deliver them from the penalty and power of sin. *Jn.3:17* says, “God did not send His Son into the world to judge (**condemn**) the world, but that the world might be saved through Him.” Sin condemns the sinner. Jesus came to save sinners.

III). I Am Foremost.

This brings us to our third point. Paul said, “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.” And then he added, “among whom I am foremost of all.” Paul’s testimony is, among sinners, he is the foremost one. But Christ Jesus showed mercy to him and saved him. Why would Paul describe himself as the foremost among sinners? Was Paul exaggerating? Let us see.

Paul was a Jew and a Pharisee. He descended from a line of very strict and devout Pharisees. (*Acts 23:6*). The Pharisees were those who kept the Law given to Moses very strictly. Paul said in *Acts 26:5*, “I lived as a Pharisee according to the strictest sect of our religion.” In *Gal.1:14* we discover that Paul was a brilliant young man who was advancing in Judaism by leaps and bounds and he was extremely zealous for the Jewish faith. In *Acts 22:3* we learned that Paul was educated under Gamaliel, one of the leading rabbis of his day.

From *Phil.3:5-6* we discover that according to the standards of Paul’s Jewish faith and Pharisaical beliefs, Paul had seven great points in his favor. But national and religious heritage, religious training, good works and great zeal for one’s religion do not save. Paul discovered one day that God sees all these things as rubbish (*Phil.3:8*), as filthy rags (*Isa.64:6*) and utterly useless for his soul’s salvation. Paul discovered that instead of having seven great points, he had less than zero points before God. He was in the red when it comes to his soul’s salvation. At that point Paul came to realize that he was in great trouble.

As a devoted, strict, extremely zealous Pharisee, Paul hated Jesus and Christians. He saw Christianity as a threat to the survival of his ancient Jewish faith. And so Paul set about to destroy Christianity as many are seeking to do today. Paul literally went on a rampage of violent persecution against the followers of Jesus as many are doing today in our world. Let us look at various passages. I want you to note carefully the descriptions as we read these passages because time will not allow me to explain the details to you : **(read) Acts 8:1-3; 9:1-2; 22:3-5; 26:9-11; Gal.1:13; 1Tim.1:13.**

Note that word **“violent aggressor”**. It is an evil word. It describes a sadistic person who took pleasure in humiliating people, in making them suffer, who took pleasure in seeing people suffer before they were murdered. Paul hated Jesus, blasphemed Jesus, did indescribable wrongs to Christians and murdered many of them. Have you ever considered why Paul was so eager and zealous to raise funds to help the widows and orphans in the church? He made far too many of them widows and orphans.

Now here is Paul’s point : I, Paul, am the very worst of sinners. And if Christ Jesus can save me and change me, He can save you and change you. This is what convinced me about the gospel. I saw Christ Jesus miraculously save and radically change my father. This is why, like Paul, I preach this gospel. Apart from the fact that Christ Jesus called me to preach this gospel, I preach it because I know Christ Jesus can save and change sinners. And I have seen this salvation miracle take place again and again over my **46** years as a Christian and my **39** years of preaching the gospel.

Are you a sinner? Christ Jesus came to save you. It does not matter what kind of sinner you are. In the church at Corinth Christ Jesus saved fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, effeminate, homosexuals, thieves, covetous, drunkards, revilers, swindlers, to name some. (**1Cor.6:9-11**). In the church at Galatia Christ Jesus saved sinners in whose lives were the following sins : immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing, and such like things. (**Gal.5:19-21.**)

Are you a sinner? Christ Jesus came to save you? Are you, according to the standards of the world, a good sinner? Are you, according to the standards of the world, a bad sinner? Are you a respectable sinner? Are you a disreputable sinner? Are you a proud sinner? Are you a despairing sinner? Regardless of what kind of sinner you are, you are on your way to hell. And Christ Jesus came to save you. Note carefully that the word “**sinner**” is unqualified because in the final analysis, sin is sin, and the wages of sin is death.

IV). It Is A Trustworthy Statement.

Well, this brings us to Paul’s opening words in the verse : “It is a trustworthy statement.” What is this trustworthy statement? “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.” The word “trustworthy” also means “**faithful**”. It means this is a statement you can put your trust in. This statement is no gossip. This statement is no old wives tale. This statement is no lie. There is no need to question the truthfulness of this statement. There is no reason to entertain any doubts about this statement. This statement is self-evident truth. This statement is trustworthy because it comes to us from the God who is faithful or trustworthy.

1Cor.1:9 says, “God is faithful.” *1Cor.10:13* says, “God is faithful.” *2Cor.1:18* says, “God is faithful.” *1Thess.5:24* says, “Faithful is He (**God**).” *2Thess.3:3* says, “the Lord is faithful.” *2Tim.2:13* says, “He (**God**) remains faithful.” *Heb.10:23* says, “He who promised is faithful.” The point here, recognized by the apostles, is that God’s faithfulness guarantees the faithfulness of God’s message. So when Paul says that the statement is trustworthy, he is saying two things : (1) the message he is presenting is a faithful presentation of God’s message; (2) the message is faithful or trustworthy or guaranteed because God is faithful.

Did the statement, “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners”, originate with Paul? No! This statement has its roots in the angel’s message to Joseph in *Matt.1:21*, “you shall call His name Jesus, for *it is He who* will save His people

from their sins.” The point of the angel’s message was repeated again and again by Jesus during His ministry : He came to save sinners. The apostles knew the trustworthiness of this statement. Peter saw **3000** sinners saved on the Day of Pentecost. The members of the early church who reeled under the onslaught of Paul’s persecution knew the truth of this statement. When Christ Jesus saved and changed Paul they rejoiced over the great miracle that took place. *Gal.1:23* says, “they kept hearing, ‘He who once persecuted us is now preaching the faith which he once tried to destroy.’”

The statement, “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners”, was the great theme in the early church. It was the great theme on the lips of the early believers. It has been the great theme of churches and Christians faithful to the gospel down through the centuries in the face of innumerable attempts by individuals, groups, mobs, and even governments to destroy Christianity. Ah, my friend, I ask you, are you a sinner? Then I want you to know : Christ Jesus came into the world to save you.

V). Deserving Full Acceptance.

We come now to the final statement in this verse : “deserving full acceptance.” “It is a trustworthy statement deserving full acceptance.” The word “deserving” is literally “**worthy**” and it means “*to balance the scales*”. The word “acceptance” calls upon you to recognize the trustworthiness of the statement and to accept it as trustworthy. But I want you to note that Paul is not calling you to make a simple acceptance of this trustworthy statement. Paul is calling upon you to make a full, a total, wholehearted, and complete acceptance of this trustworthy statement. Paul’s point is that the trustworthiness of the statement, “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners”, and your full acceptance of the statement must balance the scales.

In closing I want to briefly address those who are saved and then those who are not saved. *Firstly*, those who are saved. The statement, “Christ Jesus came into the

world to save sinners” was the great theme on the lips of the early believers and true Christians down through the centuries. This great theme was on their lips because they believed it. This great theme was on their lips because they knew it was trustworthy. They knew it was trustworthy because it had worked in their lives. They knew it was trustworthy because they saw it work in the lives of countless others.

Dear Christian, I ask you : is this great theme – “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners” – on your lips? If it is not on your lips, I ask “**why?**”. Isn’t this the message that saved you? Isn’t this the message that can save any sinner, regardless of their condition? Isn’t this the message of hope this fallen world needs. Our Prime Minister has finally acknowledged that our nation is in trouble. History will show you that this is the message that brought revival to villages, cities, and countries and saved them from being totally destroyed by that moral decay that had taken hold of them.

If this great theme is not on your lips, I ask, “Why not?” Is it because you do not believe it? Is it because you are ashamed of it? Is it because you do not care about sinners whose lives are being destroyed and who are going to a final judgment of the second death? I said to a young man a few days ago that the youths of this generation are totally self-absorbed, caught up in themselves, seeking to make a life for themselves to the exclusion of all others. No one wants to live for others. No one wants to care about others. No one wants to give their lives to help others. Yet this is why Jesus left His Father’s glory and came to this earth. And we claim to be disciples of Jesus.

Secondly, I speak to those who are not Christians. I have presented to you tonight the message of hope that you need : “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.” As a sinner you are perishing. Jesus came to save you. As a sinner you are lost. Jesus came to seek and to save those who are lost. As a sinner you are facing the second death in the lake of fire. Jesus came to save you from this second death and give you eternal life.

I want you to understand that Jesus alone is your Savior and Jesus alone is the One who can save you. Walk away from Jesus and you will be walking in spiritual hopelessness and helplessness. If I am sounding narrow-minded, I want you to understand that exclusive truth has a way of sounding narrow-minded. If I am sounding bigoted, I want you to understand that exclusive truth has a way of sounding bigoted.

Let us not play games with the exclusive claims Jesus made. Either Jesus told the truth or He was the most bigoted, reckless, bold, blasphemous liar. I know He told the truth. I know it in my head. I know it in my heart. I know in my experience. I know it in the lives of others. And this is why I am saying to you this evening, if you are a sinner and you recognize your need of salvation, then you need Jesus. Jesus does not care what kind of sinner you are. All sinners need salvation and Jesus came to save you. Come to Jesus because Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. Come to Him with humility. Come to Him repenting of your sins. Come to Him and ask Him to save you. Put your trust in Him to save you. He is trustworthy. He is worthy of your full, wholehearted, total trust. Turn to Jesus now, right now.