

COME, THOU *UNEXPECTED* JESUS

Luke 2:1-20

INTRODUCTION

- To meet a king and fail to recognise him would a demonstration of utmost folly and ignorance
- How much more ignorant then would it be to encounter God Almighty and fail to realise it?
- Yet this has happened many times over (See Genesis 28:16; 1 Samuel 3:4-7; Job 33:14)
- It continues today, as men reject God's revelation to them through creation and the word (Romans 1:21)
- But the greatest proof of man's wilful spurning of God was when the Lord himself came into this world in human flesh and walked among us
- "The world knew him not...his own received him not" (John 1:10-11); he was "despised and rejected of men...we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not" (Isaiah 53:3)
- There was a small number of God-fearing men and women who looked expectantly for his coming, and rejoiced to see it
- But most were not looking or waiting for him, so that when he came, he was an intruder to them

- For many, the problem was not that they didn't expect the Messiah; their problem was that they did not expect *this* Messiah
- Charles Wesley in 1744 wrote the Advent hymn, "Come, thou long expected Jesus"

*Come, thou long expected Jesus,
Born to set thy people free;
From our fears and sins release us,
Let us find our rest in thee.*

- But for most of humanity, it is more appropriately, "Come, thou *unexpected* Jesus"
- Relatively few expected his coming, and it is this unexpected nature of his coming into the world, the manner of his life, his death and resurrection, that we will examine today

I. HE IS UNEXPECTED IN HIS NATIVITY

A. The prophets foretold details of Christ's birth

1. Micah specified the birthplace of the Messiah (Micah 5:2)
2. Daniel indicated the timeframe of his coming (Daniel 9:24-26)

B. Yet his birth was largely ignored

1. Bethlehem afforded the newborn Saviour no house or room, only a manger (Luke 2:7)
2. The only visitors at his birth were shepherds (Luke 2:16)

3. Some time later wise men from the east paid homage to him (Matthew 2:1-12)
4. Yet his own people gave no regard to his birth
5. Herod *did* regard his birth, but sought to kill him (Matthew 2:16)

C. During his ministry, his origins were continually questioned

1. The people who knew his parents and siblings reasoned that he could not be the Messiah (Matthew 13:54-58; Luke 4:22)
 - a. They rejected his claims to have come down from heaven (John 6:41-42)
 - b. They reasoned that the Messiah's origins would be unknown (John 7:25-27)
2. The Jews claimed that he was an illegitimate child (cf. John 8:41)

II. HE IS UNEXPECTED IN HIS HUMILITY

- A. The humble circumstances of his birth
- B. The poverty of his upbringing
 1. His family were poor (cf. Leviticus 12:8; Luke 2:24)
 2. He had no residence of his own (Matthew 8:20)
 3. He relied on the hospitality of others (Luke 8:2-3)

4. At his death, the only earthly possession of value he left behind was his raiment (Luke 23:34)
5. For our sakes, he became poor (2 Corinthians 8:9)
6. The poor and lowly are despised by this world (1 Corinthians 1:25-29)

C. His ministry as a servant

1. He is “Jehovah’s Servant”, described in detail in Isaiah 42-53
2. He took upon him the form of a servant (Philippians 2:6-7)
3. Though a King, he came not to be ministered unto, but to minister (Matthew 20:28)
4. At the Last Supper, he washed his disciples’ feet (John 13:4-5)
 - a. Peter’s response shows how Jesus shattered the disciples’ preconceived notions of how the Messiah should act (John 13:6-8)
5. As the Servant-King, he utterly repudiated the manner of this world’s kings who exalt themselves by force and “exercise dominion over them” (Matthew 20:25)

D. The meekness of his conduct

1. He is meek and lowly in heart (Matthew 11:29)
2. He showed mercy to his enemies (Luke 22:50-51)

3. He prayed for his persecutors (Luke 23:34)
4. He suffered patiently (Isaiah 53:7; 1 Peter 2:23)
5. This world exalts the proud, haughty and selfish, while disdaining meekness as *weakness*
6. Yet meekness is not weakness, but strength under control

III. HE IS UNEXPECTED IN HIS AUTHORITY

A. The manner of Christ's teaching

1. He taught as one having authority (Matthew 7:28-29)
2. Wherever he taught, the people were astonished, including his enemies (Matthew 13:54; John 7:15)
3. He repeatedly confounded his enemies with his words (Matthew 21:27; 22:46; Luke 13:17; 14:6)
4. "Never man spake like this man" (John 7:46)

B. The matter of Christ's teaching

1. His doctrine was not his own, but the Father's (John 7:16)
2. He showed the people the true, spiritual nature of God's law (Matthew 5:21,27,33,38,43)
3. He taught that salvation was by faith alone (John 5:24)
4. He taught that he was the only way to heaven (John 14:6)

5. He taught that man must be born again (John 3:3)

IV. HE IS UNEXPECTED IN HIS DIVINITY

A. Christ is both fully man and fully God in one Person

1. The word was made flesh (John 1:1,14)
2. Though equal with God, he was made in the likeness of men (Philippians 2:6-8)
3. This is the “mystery of godliness” (1 Timothy 3:16)
4. He had no earthly father, but was born of a virgin (Isaiah 7:14)

B. He declared himself to be the Son of God

1. While he is David’s son according to the flesh, yet as God he is David’s Lord (Matthew 22:42-46)
2. The Jews delivered him to death because he claimed to be the Son of God (John 19:7)

V. HE IS UNEXPECTED IN HIS MORTALITY

A. The Scriptures clearly foretold of Christ’s suffering and death (Psalm 22:1-21; Isaiah 53:5-9)

B. Yet few believed that the Messiah would be brutally executed

1. Peter rebuked the Lord for saying he must soon die (Matthew 16:21-22)

2. When Christ was taken to be tortured and killed, the disciples fled in fear and confusion (Matthew 26:56)
3. The Jews taunted the Lord on the cross, saying that if he were the Son of God, he would come down from it (Matthew 27:40)
4. The rulers crucified Christ in ignorance, not realising he was the Lord of glory (1 Corinthians 2:8)
5. After the Lord's death, his disciples' hopes were dashed (Luke 24:21)

VI. HE IS UNEXPECTED IN HIS VITALITY

A. Christ's resurrection came as a shock to his enemies

1. The Romans thought they had made the tomb impenetrable
2. The Jewish leaders thought they had finally eliminated a threat to their power

B. Christ's resurrection came as a shock to his disciples

1. Despite repeated prophecies that he would rise again, they did not believe (Psalm 16:10; Matthew 16:21; 20:19; 26:32; Mark 9:9; 14:28; John 2:19)
2. The first reports of the resurrection were dismissed by the apostles as "idle tales" (Luke 24:11)
3. Jesus upbraided his disciples for their unbelief (Mark 16:14; Luke 24:25)

CONCLUSION

1. Just as Jesus in his coming was regarded by man as an unexpected and unwelcome intruder, so today, Christ and his Gospel message are seen as an unwelcome intrusion into their ungodly lives (John 3:19-20)
2. Nevertheless, it is the believer's duty to "preach Christ crucified", though he be to some a "stumblingblock" and to others "foolishness" (1 Corinthians 1:23)
3. Countless people have created "another Jesus" (2 Corinthians 11:4), who tolerates sin and makes no demands of his professed followers
4. This is a false Christ, and on the day of judgment such idolaters will be cast into hell (Matthew 7:21-23)
5. Many professing Christians take objection to certain teachings of Scripture which go against their sinful behaviour
6. Rather than conform their lives to the word of God, they treat the Lord Jesus Christ as an unwelcome intruder into their self-ruled lives
7. Such professors should refrain from calling Jesus "Lord" (Luke 6:46)
8. But the true believer welcomes the long-expected Jesus into every part of his life, and sings with Wesley:

*By thine own eternal Spirit
Rule in all our hearts alone;
By thine all sufficient merit,
Raise us to thy glorious throne.*