

# Born to Die – Christmas 2020

We don't often think of being born to die much. But really, it happens all the time.

There are millions of animals specifically born and raised for food. They live until they're at the perfect stage for eating and then they're slaughtered.

The specific animals used depends a bit on what part of the world you're in. Most common would be sheep, goats, pigs, cows, fish – and I'm sure there are others I'm missing.

And of course all over the world wild animals are harvested – all the way from grubs, snakes, alligators, and fish to most mammals including deer, antelope, bear, squirrels, rabbits, and the list goes on.

In our imperfect world it's not just limited to animals.

When I was in college, my parents attended a little church in Los Altos Hills. The pastor had been converted out of the hippie and drug scene earlier in his life and ministered to many people in that crowd.

One person starting coming who had been a part of one of the many cells of Satanist groups that dotted the mountains around Santa Cruz. As Halloween drew closer that year, he became frantic.

He and his partner had a baby off the record. It was dedicated to Satan and was going to be sacrificed in a special ritual on Halloween. Something, it appears, which happens more often than we would think.

His baby had been born to die as a sacrifice to appease Satan. The guy disappeared just before Halloween trying to find and rescue his baby. I don't recall ever hearing from him again. Child sacrifice is not just an ancient practice or something that happens in deep dark jungles.

## Born to Die

The truth is, because of sin, we're all born to die. It's simply the natural consequence of sin. Paul said:

*No one can ever be made right with God by doing what the law commands. The law simply shows us how sinful we are. (Romans 3:20, NLT)*

This has nothing to do with how good the law is. In fact Paul mentions many times the law is good. The problem is, you and I are not.



Paul spent most of **Romans 1 – 3** making the point there is *no one* who has ever lived (other than Jesus) who has any natural goodness and has had any success at keeping the law. Notice that *no one* is rather inclusive – there are no exceptions, not even your favorite pastor or your godly grandmother.

And Paul makes clear what our sinfulness earns us:

*For the wages of sin is death ... (Romans 6:23, NLT)*

Jesus knew we are all born to die. It is our lot in life. He also knew He would rather die with all the risks of failure than to live for eternity without us.

So, He voluntarily came to this earth allowing Himself to become an embryo, a baby wrapped up inside a mother's body.

He was born into a poor family into poor conditions in what we would rate as a 3<sup>rd</sup> world country.

He poured His life out in ministry to His disciples and to His people who then rejected Him.

He allowed Himself to become the Passover Lamb, dying the equivalent of the second death on our behalf, ransoming anyone who would accept it from the claims and power of Satan.

As beautiful as the Christmas story is, it's only the prelude. It is the first act in the most important story in history.

It takes us from where we are, destined to die, to a place where we can really live – forever!

In the passage we just looked at in **Romans 3**, Paul continues:

*But now God has shown us a way to be made right with him without keeping the requirements of the law, as was promised in the writings of Moses and the prophets long ago. We are made right with God by placing our faith in Jesus Christ ...*

*For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard. Yet God, in his grace, freely makes us right in his sight. He did this through Christ Jesus when he freed us from the penalty for our sins. For God presented Jesus as the sacrifice for sin. People are made right with God when they believe that Jesus sacrificed his life, shedding his blood ...*

*Can we boast, then, that we have done anything to be accepted by God? No, because our acquittal is not based on obeying the law. It is based on faith. So we are made right with God through faith and not by obeying the law. (Romans 3:21-28, NLT)*

In **Romans 6**, Paul is a bit more concise:

*For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord.*  
(Romans 6:23, NLT)

## The Promise

This is something Jesus reminded the disciples about on the last night He spent with them prior to His arrest and death.

There at the table, after washing their feet, exposing Judas, and eating the Passover meal together, Jesus gave them what He referred to as a “New Commandment” – we’ve read it several times, but have often not talked about His lead in to it:

*“Dear children, I will be with you only a little longer. And as I told the Jewish leaders, you will search for me, but you can’t come where I am going. So now I am giving you a new commandment ...”* (John 13:33-34, NLT)

Peter focused on this part of Jesus’ statement. He wanted to know why he couldn’t come with Jesus because he was willing to die for Him. The others agreed.

Jesus responded by telling Peter he would deny Him three times before the rooster crowed in the morning.

And then, Jesus shared this beloved promise reminding them of why this was taking place – why He would be leaving them for a little while. He was telling them the deepest desire of His heart while giving them comfort they could have counted on, had they remembered it:

*“Don’t let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God, and trust also in me. There is more than enough room in my Father’s home. If this were not so, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? When everything is ready, I will come and get you, so that you will always be with me where I am.”* (John 14:1-3, NLT)

Jesus came here – He was born to die – because He wants you and me to always be with Him, wherever He is.

Of course we don’t have to wait for eternity for this to happen. Through the Holy Spirit it can happen right now as day by day as we live with Jesus.

It happens every time we spend some quiet moments listening to Jesus through the Bible and sharing our hearts with Him in prayer. It continues throughout the day as we listen for His voice to guide us and respond as He prompts us to engage with people we come across.

Heaven is intended to simply be an extension of what God has started with us right now.

Jesus then added this seemingly cryptic statement:

*“And you know the way to where I am going.” (John 14:4, NLT)*

To which Thomas immediately replied – with words that seem filled with frustration:

*“No, we don’t know, Lord ... We have no idea where you are going, so how can we know the way?” (John 14:5, NLT)*

I can imagine Jesus pausing here and looking around at each of the disciples. Maybe with a sad smile. And then, after a few moments of absolute silence and anticipation, saying:

*“I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me.” (John 14:6, NLT)*

Better than just a set of directions, we are given a Person to follow. It is always much easier to follow someone Who know the way than to decipher a set of complicated instructions:

- Someone Who has successfully completed life without sin.
- Someone Who has been ridiculed, scorned, tortured, and rejected to a far greater degree that we will ever be – He understands pain and suffering
- Someone Who has come out on the others side victorious!
- Someone Who offers to take our sinfulness and give us His purity!
- Someone Who already died for our sins and now offers us His life instead!

As the Way, Jesus is big enough to accommodate every person who has ever lived, who is alive now and who will ever live in the future.

But He is the only Way, because human effort is simply not adequate. Obtaining salvation by your own efforts are about as likely as getting to the moon by simply trying to get better at jumping higher.

Jesus was born to die, because there was no other way for Him to save us.

And because He wants you and me to always be with Him, wherever He is, He was willing to do whatever was needed to make it happen.

This says a lot about His love for you and me!

---



## Notes

Text you find in **this color** is a link to more information. It may take you to the Bible verse in context and/or in several different translations utilizing [BibleGateway.com](https://www.biblegateway.com). In some cases, it may take you to a website where there is additional information. And, it may take you to a PDF copy of previous sermons in this series.

## The Messages in this Series

- Nov. 28, 2020 – [Zechariah](#) (presented by Calvin Tuel, [click here](#) to watch it on YouTube)
- Dec. 5, 2020 – [Mary & Elizabeth](#) (presented by Brenda Eitel, [click here](#) to watch it on YouTube)
- Dec. 12, 2020 – [the Magi](#) (presented by Trey Wisecup, [click here](#) to watch it on YouTube)
- Dec. 19, 2020 – [Immanuel](#) (Christmas Program, [click here](#) to watch it on YouTube)
- Dec. 26, 2020 – [Born to Die](#) (presented by Pastor T., [click here](#) to watch it on YouTube)

## Scripture References

**Isaiah 52:13 – 53:12 (NLT):** *See, my servant will prosper; he will be highly exalted. <sup>14</sup> But many were amazed when they saw him. His face was so disfigured he seemed hardly human, and from his appearance, one would scarcely know he was a man. <sup>15</sup> And he will startle many nations. Kings will stand speechless in his presence. For they will see what they had not been told; they will understand what they had not heard about.*

**53** *Who has believed our message? To whom has the LORD revealed his powerful arm? <sup>2</sup> My servant grew up in the LORD's presence like a tender green shoot, like a root in dry ground. There was nothing beautiful or majestic about his appearance, nothing to attract us to him. <sup>3</sup> He was despised and rejected – a man of sorrows, acquainted with deepest grief. We turned our backs on him and looked the other way. He was despised, and we did not care.*

<sup>4</sup> *Yet it was our weaknesses he carried; it was our sorrows that weighed him down. And we thought his troubles were a punishment from God, a punishment for his own sins! <sup>5</sup> But he was pierced for our rebellion, crushed for our sins. He was beaten so we could be whole. He was whipped so we could be healed. <sup>6</sup> All of us, like sheep, have strayed away. We have left God's paths to follow our own. Yet the LORD laid on him the sins of us all.*

<sup>7</sup> He was oppressed and treated harshly, yet he never said a word. He was led like a lamb to the slaughter. And as a sheep is silent before the shearers, he did not open his mouth. <sup>8</sup> Unjustly condemned, he was led away. No one cared that he died without descendants, that his life was cut short in midstream. But he was struck down for the rebellion of my people. <sup>9</sup> He had done no wrong and had never deceived anyone. But he was buried like a criminal; he was put in a rich man's grave.

<sup>10</sup> But it was the LORD's good plan to crush him and cause him grief. Yet when his life is made an offering for sin, he will have many descendants. He will enjoy a long life, and the LORD's good plan will prosper in his hands. <sup>11</sup> When he sees all that is accomplished by his anguish, he will be satisfied. And because of his experience, my righteous servant will make it possible for many to be counted righteous, for he will bear all their sins. <sup>12</sup> I will give him the honors of a victorious soldier, because he exposed himself to death. He was counted among the rebels. He bore the sins of many and interceded for rebels. (Isaiah 52:13 – 53:12, NLT)

**Matthew 1:18-25 (NLT):** This is how Jesus the Messiah was born. His mother, Mary, was engaged to be married to Joseph. But before the marriage took place, while she was still a virgin, she became pregnant through the power of the Holy Spirit. <sup>19</sup> Joseph, to whom she was engaged, was a righteous man and did not want to disgrace her publicly, so he decided to break the engagement quietly.

<sup>20</sup> As he considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream. "Joseph, son of David," the angel said, "do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife. For the child within her was conceived by the Holy Spirit. <sup>21</sup> And she will have a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins."

<sup>22</sup> All of this occurred to fulfill the Lord's message through his prophet:

<sup>23</sup> "Look! The virgin will conceive a child! She will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel, which means 'God is with us.'" (Isaiah 7:14, 8:8, 10)

<sup>24</sup> When Joseph woke up, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded and took Mary as his wife. <sup>25</sup> But he did not have sexual relations with her until her son was born. And Joseph named him Jesus. (Matthew 1:18-25, NLT)

**Matthew 16:21-28 (NLT):** From then on Jesus began to tell his disciples plainly that it was necessary for him to go to Jerusalem, and that he would suffer many terrible things at the hands of the elders, the leading priests, and the teachers of religious law. He would be killed, but on the third day he would be raised from the dead.

<sup>22</sup> But Peter took him aside and began to reprimand him for saying such things. "Heaven forbid, Lord," he said. "This will never happen to you!"

<sup>23</sup> Jesus turned to Peter and said, “Get away from me, Satan! You are a dangerous trap to me. You are seeing things merely from a human point of view, not from God’s.”

<sup>24</sup> Then Jesus said to his disciples, “If any of you wants to be my follower, you must give up your own way, take up your cross, and follow me. <sup>25</sup> If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake, you will save it. <sup>26</sup> And what do you benefit if you gain the whole world but lose your own soul? Is anything worth more than your soul? <sup>27</sup> For the Son of Man will come with his angels in the glory of his Father and will judge all people according to their deeds. <sup>28</sup> And I tell you the truth, some standing here right now will not die before they see the Son of Man coming in his Kingdom.” (Matthew 1:18-25, NLT)

**John 13:31 – 14:14 (NLT):** As soon as Judas left the room, Jesus said, “The time has come for the Son of Man to enter into his glory, and God will be glorified because of him. <sup>32</sup> And since God receives glory because of the Son, he will give his own glory to the Son, and he will do so at once. <sup>33</sup> Dear children, I will be with you only a little longer. And as I told the Jewish leaders, you will search for me, but you can’t come where I am going. <sup>34</sup> So now I am giving you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other. <sup>35</sup> Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples.”

<sup>36</sup> Simon Peter asked, “Lord, where are you going?”

And Jesus replied, “You can’t go with me now, but you will follow me later.”

<sup>37</sup> “But why can’t I come now, Lord?” he asked. “I’m ready to die for you.”

<sup>38</sup> Jesus answered, “Die for me? I tell you the truth, Peter – before the rooster crows tomorrow morning, you will deny three times that you even know me.

**14** “Don’t let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God, and trust also in me. <sup>2</sup> There is more than enough room in my Father’s home. If this were not so, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? <sup>3</sup> When everything is ready, I will come and get you, so that you will always be with me where I am. <sup>4</sup> And you know the way to where I am going.”

<sup>5</sup> “No, we don’t know, Lord,” Thomas said. “We have no idea where you are going, so how can we know the way?”

<sup>6</sup> Jesus told him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me. <sup>7</sup> If you had really known me, you would know who my Father is. From now on, you do know him and have seen him!”

<sup>8</sup> Philip said, “Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied.”

<sup>9</sup> Jesus replied, “Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and yet you still don’t know who I am? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father! So why are you asking me to show him to

you? <sup>10</sup> Don't you believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words I speak are not my own, but my Father who lives in me does his work through me. <sup>11</sup> Just believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me. Or at least believe because of the work you have seen me do.

<sup>12</sup> "I tell you the truth, anyone who believes in me will do the same works I have done, and even greater works, because I am going to be with the Father. <sup>13</sup> You can ask for anything in my name, and I will do it, so that the Son can bring glory to the Father. <sup>14</sup> Yes, ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it!" (John 13:31 – 14:14, NLT)

**Romans 3:19-31 (NLT):** Obviously, the law applies to those to whom it was given, for its purpose is to keep people from having excuses, and to show that the entire world is guilty before God. <sup>20</sup> For no one can ever be made right with God by doing what the law commands. The law simply shows us how sinful we are.

<sup>21</sup> But now God has shown us a way to be made right with him without keeping the requirements of the law, as was promised in the writings of Moses and the prophets long ago. <sup>22</sup> We are made right with God by placing our faith in Jesus Christ. And this is true for everyone who believes, no matter who we are.

<sup>23</sup> For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard. <sup>24</sup> Yet God, in his grace, freely makes us right in his sight. He did this through Christ Jesus when he freed us from the penalty for our sins. <sup>25</sup> For God presented Jesus as the sacrifice for sin. People are made right with God when they believe that Jesus sacrificed his life, shedding his blood. This sacrifice shows that God was being fair when he held back and did not punish those who sinned in times past, <sup>26</sup> for he was looking ahead and including them in what he would do in this present time. God did this to demonstrate his righteousness, for he himself is fair and just, and he makes sinners right in his sight when they believe in Jesus.

<sup>27</sup> Can we boast, then, that we have done anything to be accepted by God? No, because our acquittal is not based on obeying the law. It is based on faith. <sup>28</sup> So we are made right with God through faith and not by obeying the law.

<sup>29</sup> After all, is God the God of the Jews only? Isn't he also the God of the Gentiles? Of course he is. <sup>30</sup> There is only one God, and he makes people right with himself only by faith, whether they are Jews or Gentiles. <sup>31</sup> Well then, if we emphasize faith, does this mean that we can forget about the law? Of course not! In fact, only when we have faith do we truly fulfill the law.

(Romans 3:19-31, NLT)

**Romans 6:15-23 (NLT):** Well then, since God's grace has set us free from the law, does that mean we can go on sinning? Of course not! <sup>16</sup> Don't you realize that you become the slave of whatever you choose to obey? You can be a slave to sin, which leads to death, or you can choose to obey God,

which leads to righteous living.<sup>17</sup> Thank God! Once you were slaves of sin, but now you wholeheartedly obey this teaching we have given you.<sup>18</sup> Now you are free from your slavery to sin, and you have become slaves to righteous living.

<sup>19</sup> Because of the weakness of your human nature, I am using the illustration of slavery to help you understand all this. Previously, you let yourselves be slaves to impurity and lawlessness, which led ever deeper into sin. Now you must give yourselves to be slaves to righteous living so that you will become holy.

<sup>20</sup> When you were slaves to sin, you were free from the obligation to do right.<sup>21</sup> And what was the result? You are now ashamed of the things you used to do, things that end in eternal doom.<sup>22</sup> But now you are free from the power of sin and have become slaves of God. Now you do those things that lead to holiness and result in eternal life.<sup>23</sup> For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord. (**Romans 6:15-23**, NLT)

**Philippians 2:3-11 (NLT):** Don't be selfish; don't try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves.<sup>4</sup> Don't look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too.

<sup>5</sup> You must have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had.

<sup>6</sup> Though he was God, he did not think of equality with God as something to cling to.<sup>7</sup> Instead, he gave up his divine privileges; he took the humble position of a slave and was born as a human being. When he appeared in human form,<sup>8</sup> he humbled himself in obedience to God and died a criminal's death on a cross.

<sup>9</sup> Therefore, God elevated him to the place of highest honor and gave him the name above all other names,<sup>10</sup> that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,<sup>11</sup> and every tongue declare that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (**Philippians 2:3-11**, NLT)

## E.G. White References

**Steps to Christ, pages 62-63:** The condition of eternal life is now just what it always has been – just what it was in Paradise before the fall of our first parents – perfect obedience to the law of God, perfect righteousness. If eternal life were granted on any condition short of this, then the happiness of the whole universe would be imperiled. The way would be open for sin, with all its train of woe and misery, to be immortalized.

It was possible for Adam, before the fall, to form a righteous character by obedience to God's law. But he failed to do this, and because of his sin our natures are fallen and we cannot make

*ourselves righteous. Since we are sinful, unholy, we cannot perfectly obey the holy law. We have no righteousness of our own with which to meet the claims of the law of God. But Christ has made a way of escape for us. He lived on earth amid trials and temptations such as we have to meet. He lived a sinless life. He died for us, and now He offers to take our sins and give us His righteousness. If you give yourself to Him, and accept Him as your Saviour, then, sinful as your life may have been, for His sake you are accounted righteous. Christ's character stands in place of your character, and you are accepted before God just as if you had not sinned.*

*More than this, Christ changes the heart. He abides in your heart by faith. You are to maintain this connection with Christ by faith and the continual surrender of your will to Him; and so long as you do this, He will work in you to will and to do according to His good pleasure. So you may say, "The life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me." [Galatians 2:20](#). So Jesus said to His disciples, "It is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you." [Matthew 10:20](#). Then with Christ working in you, you will manifest the same spirit and do the same good works – works of righteousness, obedience.*

*So we have nothing in ourselves of which to boast. We have no ground for self-exaltation. Our only ground of hope is in the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, and in that wrought by His Spirit working in and through us. ([Steps to Christ, pages 62-63](#))*