

**Grace Bible Church**  
**Pastor Teacher**  
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**Sunday, December 20, 2015**  
**Christmas Special: The paradoxes of Christmas. Part 1.**

This is a short series of the Paradoxes of Christmas. It can also be called the contradiction or better yet “the seeming contradictions” of the Christmas story. First of all, I would like to begin with definition of the word paradox. A paradox can be a statement that sounds like one thing but many times it reveals the opposite and then leads to a conclusion that seems senseless, logically unacceptable, or self-contradictory.

Sometimes a paradox sounds like one thing but when explained it reveals just the opposite of what it says or seems to say. In other words, when we deal with some of the paradoxes that go along with the Christian Holiday or “Holy Day” we will also see the principles of how opposites attract as also found in the satanic counterfeits that take place. Sometimes in a paradox you can also say two totally opposite things but there’s some truth to both of them.

Let me give you some examples of a paradox, “If someone says to you “I’m a compulsive liar,” what do you believe about what they are saying?

That statement in itself is a paradox, because it is self contradictory, which is precisely what a paradox is.

In the statement I just gave you “Can someone be both a compulsive liar yet telling the truth at the same time?”

**In other words, Is he lying or telling the truth when he says it.**

If I am a compulsive liar or a habitual liar then is the statement I just made true or a lie?

At the most basic level, a paradox is a statement that is self contradictory because it often contains two statements that are both true, but in general, cannot both be true at the same time.

One of the most well known examples that teachers frequently use to introduce the idea of a paradox is a “jumbo shrimp.”

Certainly, “jumbo” and “shrimp” are contradictory statements.

However, that is merely an introductory example, since a shrimp can certainly be jumbo sized in comparison to other smaller shrimp.

Here are some more examples of paradox in simple forms in order to further define the term “paradox”:

You can save money by spending it.

Or “I’m Nobody.” If a nobody is a nobody then that makes him a somebody who is called nobody --- so in reality he or she is a somebody!

Because when one says “I am” they are saying that they exist and therefore in reality, they are somebody.

Another paradox is “What a pity that youth must be wasted on youth.” - George Bernard Shaw

Another paradox is A Wise fool

Bittersweet

“I can resist anything but temptation.”-Oscar Wilde.

Nobody goes to that restaurant because it is too crowded.

You shouldn’t go in the water until you know how to swim.

If you didn’t get this message, call me.

If you’re not here, raise your hand.

You see these are statements that seem to contradict themselves and as opposites, they also do attract at times!

The point of a paradox is to point out a truth, even if the statements contradict each other.

Now, our attention, of course, is drawn to Christmas.

As I was thinking about what I might share with you, I was struck again with the dichotomy between Christmas for the Christian and Christmas for the world when I saw two Christmas cards that contradicted the other.

One of them has a fat man with a white beard on and a couple of little elves and it says, “Ho, ho, ho.”

The other had a manger with a star and a baby and it said, “Thou shalt call His name Emmanuel.”

For we read in MAT 1:18-23, Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows. When His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit.

MAT 1:19 And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man, and not wanting to disgrace her, desired to put her away secretly.

MAT 1:20 But when he had considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for that which has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit.

MAT 1:21 “And she will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for it is He who will save His people from their sins.”

MAT 1:22 Now all this took place that what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet might be fulfilled, saying,

MAT 1:23 “Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and shall bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,” which translated means, “God with us.”

And so during the past few days, I began to think about the paradox of Christmas.

What is Christmas?

Amidst of all the decorating, and the shopping, the traveling, the cooking, and the cleaning, most of us are prone to lose our focus.

Many people gather this week to eat and drink and be merry but in their celebrating they do not celebrate what the real meaning of the what Christmas celebration is all about.

Many are so wrapped up in the giving of gifts and the receiving of them that they miss out on the greatest gift all!

And by the greatest gift of all, of course I mean 2CO 9:15 Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift! TLJC.

And not only is the person whose birthday it truly is ignored but also the gifts He gives are ignored as well.

For example, salvation; EPH 2:8 For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God;

JOH 10:28 and I give eternal life to them, and they shall never perish; and no one shall snatch them out of My hand.

The apostle to us gentiles put it like this in ROM 5:15 But the free gift is not like the transgression. For if by the transgression of the one the many died, much more did the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abound to the many.

ROM 5:16 And the gift is not like that which came through the one who sinned; for on the one hand the judgment arose from one transgression resulting in condemnation, but on the other hand the free gift arose from many transgressions resulting in justification.

ROM 5:17 For if by the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.

ROM 5:18 So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men, even so through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men.

ROM 5:19 For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous.

ROM 5:20 And the Law came in that the transgression might increase; but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more,

ROM 5:21 that, as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

In ROM 6:23 For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

And it doesn't stop there, we also have the gifts from the Spirit, 1Co 12; and the over 40 things that God the Father gives to every believer at the moment of their first spiritual birthday, the day that they were born again.

So many of us miss out on the greatest gifts of the Christmas season.

Of course the greatest being from God the father in Joh 3:16.

Here's a Christmas paradox - For some Christmas is peace toward men of good will. For the world it is mass confusion, furious rushing around, and a rising suicide rate.

Both talking about the same event but a paradox where the opposites attract in the sense that they both of them are mentioned, even though they are opposites and true statements, they do both exist at the same time.

Think about it, that lovely night over 2,000 years ago when one star lit the Heavens and marked the spot where the Christ was born where God was become flesh.

For in back in MAT 2:1 Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, saying,

MAT 2:2 "Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we saw His star in the east, and have come to worship Him."

2,000 years ago one star, literally a bright light in the night-time sky, lit the heavens and marked the spot where the Christ was born where God was made flesh, a member of the human race.

But now, this great has been eclipsed by material lights, neon signs that lite up in the sky Merry Xmas.

In our world Christ has been replaced by Santa Clause;

Angels replaced by reindeer;

Mary and Joseph replaced by elves;

And the ugly filth of a dirty of an animal stable replaced by the pristine beauty of whites and snow.

The glory of God and the star of Bethlehem has been reduced to twinkling lights and cheap toys for adult girls and boys.

Indeed the holy awe of God becoming human has been pushed aside for political correctness as the miracle of miracles is rejected by a Christ-less partying spirit.

We celebrate but what do we really celebrate?

And this is not just those who live in the cosmic system and are of this world but unfortunately it is also for those found in the Christian church today!

And the paradox today is that a million bright lights or neon signs mark the spot where the sale begins, or where you can throw away your money buying what isn't needed sometimes for people you don't like, and probably don't like you as well, for clothes that won't fit them anyway.

What a paradox!

What a contradiction!

What a lie!

The first Christmas was a poor one, with a manger and a stable.

The paradox is that Christmas today has become a dazzling display of wealth beyond belief as millions spend millions of dollars to ignore the true meaning of what Christmas should be all about.

Once wise men came to worship Jesus, and today fools have parties of wickedness, ignoring all that TLJC came to accomplish.

The babe of Bethlehem who was born a Savior to give to men all that they need has been replaced by a huckster named Santa Claus who takes what is valuable and gives tinsel in return.

That's another part of the paradox of Christmas.

Who does it belong to?

As I thought further about the paradox of Christmas, I thought about the great paradox of Christmas which is “Who is Jesus Christ?”

And I began to look at some of the prophecies and I asked myself, what prophecies might be exciting for us to study and look at the birth of Christ?

I came across the idea of the paradoxical prophecies.

Did you know that the Old Testament is loaded with apparently contradictory prophecies about Christ?

Did you know that?

Did you know that there is no way that Old Testament prophets could ever have understood the fullness of the coming Messiah, just on the virtue of the apparent contradiction in their own prophecies.

For example, a prophet, namely Isaiah, would sit down and the Holy Spirit would inspire him and he would write that there was coming a conqueror who would rule the world, who would be the Savior and deliverer of men; Isa 9:6-7.

ISA 9:6 For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.

ISA 9:7 There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, On the throne of David and over his kingdom, To establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness From then on and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will accomplish this.

And then that same prophet would sit down later and write about a Messiah who would be a man of sorrows who was lonely and rejected, Isa 53:3-7.

ISA 53:3 He was despised and forsaken of men, A man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; And like one from whom men hide their face, He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.

ISA 53:4 Surely our griefs He Himself bore, And our sorrows He carried; Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, Smitten of God, and afflicted.

ISA 53:5 But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; The chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, And by His scourging we are healed.

ISA 53:6 All of us like sheep have gone astray, Each of us has turned to his own way; But the Lord has caused the iniquity of us all To fall on Him.

ISA 53:7 He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He did not open His mouth; Like a lamb that is led to slaughter, And like a sheep that is silent before its shearers, So He did not open His mouth.

That must have been like a paradox, written by the same hand from the same man!

The prophet would write about a king of glory and a king of Heaven, an eternal Savior, the desire of all nations, and then a prophet would sit down and write that there was no beauty that men would desire Him, and that He was a servant - bloody, suffering, crucified and dead.

How do you resolve these things?

Another prophet, (Jeremiah) would write that He would come in flaming fire to take vengeance on His enemies. The other prophet (Isaiah) would write that He would come preaching peace.

So it seemed like even the prophets themselves couldn't even understand what they themselves wrote about Christmas.....or did they as one of my granddaughters like to say.

One of her favorite statements is, or did they or did they not!

Or if you ask her a question like did you that? She'll say "Yes I Did" or "Did I?"

I mean I'll make a statement and she'll say, "Papa, that's right.....then she'll or "Is it?"

So I get her back at her every now and then and I'll say such things like, Papa's going to buy you a great present for you at Christmas, or "Is He?"

I don't think she likes that one.

Anyway back to the prophets of the Old Testament, there were a lot of things they taught that seemed like a paradox to them.

I mean think about the paradoxes:

That the who is called the great counselor would be rejected by men.

That the who is the mighty God was the same one crucified in weakness.

That the prince of peace must suffer Himself the Divine indignation and wrath of God.

That the one who created all things occupied an infant's cradle.

That He who is holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners was made to be sin on behalf of all of us.

That He who was the bread of life was Himself hungry.

That He who was the giver of the super natural water of life, was Himself thirsty.

That He who was dead is alive forevermore.

In [JOH 1:3](#) “All things came into being by Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.”

Yet in [JOH 1:10](#) “He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him.”

One of the greatest paradoxes is the fact the one, Jesus Christ, who had glory with the Father before the creation, would strip Himself of that glory to become a servant, Phi 2:7.

Perhaps it's time for us all to wake up and realize how much He loves us and how much God values our soul.

You were the joy set before Him that allowed Him to endure the Cross and despise the shame, Heb 12:3.

Your soul was so valuable to Jesus Christ that He did not consider the use of His Deity a treasure to be retained, but instead He added on this human nature and voluntarily restricted the independent function of His attributes of Deity during His First Advent.

### **So what do you think of Jesus Christ? Who is He?**

This is the most important question you will ever face.

It is important because it is inescapable.

You will have to answer it sooner or later in this world or in the world to come.

Who is Jesus Christ?

If He was only a man, then you can safely forget him. If He is God, as He claimed to be, then you should do everything in your power to yield your life to Him.

Every Christmas season we stop and rather mindlessly acknowledge the birth of Christ!

The real issue is not that He **came**, the real issue is **why** He came!

Most people stop and think about Christmas just as the fact that He came, but they never bother to find out the real reason why He came!

Why did He come?

Why was He born?

There is really only one primary reason that Jesus Christ came into the world on that first Christmas for this one major reason: To suffer and to die for you!

For in 2CO 8:9 For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich.

By doing what?

By fulfilling the paradox of though He was rich He became poor and therefore in LUK 19:10 “For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.”

By doing so, He received being even richer as Paul states in PHI 2:9 Therefore also God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name,

PHI 2:10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those who are in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth,

PHI 2:11 and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

He gave us the paradox that we saw in the four Gospels last time which says MAT 10:39 “He who has found his life shall lose it, and he who has lost his life for My sake shall find it.”

There's the great paradoxes of the sermon on the mount!

MAT 5:3 “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

MAT 5:4 “Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

MAT 5:5 “Blessed are the gentle, for they shall inherit the earth.

MAT 5:6 “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

MAT 5:7 “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.

MAT 5:8 “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

MAT 5:9 “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.

MAT 5:10 “Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

MAT 5:11 “Blessed are you when men cast insults at you, and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely, on account of Me.

MAT 5:12 “Rejoice, and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

And there is the paradox with opposites attracting for on the day of His birth the only blankets that Joseph and Mary could find were swaddling clothes which were towels that they would wrap the dead in before burying them.

So in a way on the day of His birth, where Heb 10:5 was fulfilled, there would also be a sign of His death where the Gospel was fulfilled, birth and death, the paradox of Christmas.

Now, when we think of Christmas, we think of giving!

However, do we actually think about the real gift that God the Father gave to everyone of us?

Joh 3:16 is the plan of God in miniature, “God loved the world so much that He gave His uniquely-born Son, that whosoever believes in Him should never perish but have eternal life.”

The point once again is that there were a lot of paradoxes to the Old Testament prophets.

In fact, the last of all the Old Testament prophets was trapped in the paradox. His name was John the Baptist.

John the Baptist was so confused at one time that when he was a prisoner he sent some of his disciples to Jesus.

The record of that encounter is in the 11 Chapter of the gospel of Matthew.

You see, everything that John had said about the Messiah, he received from God; when Luk 3:2 was fulfilled and “The word of God came to John.”

So when John proclaimed the Messiah, it wasn't his opinion.

It was revelation.

John was declaring that Messiah had come and he was saying certain things about the Messiah.

Now, “What was he saying about the Messiah?”

Well, he was saying that the Messiah was going to be a judge, that when the Messiah came terrible things would happen.

For example in LUK 3:7-8, He therefore began saying to the multitudes who were going out to be baptized by him, “You brood of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Therefore bring forth fruits in keeping with repentance”

This was his message.

John said there was coming a Messiah and He would be a terrifying judge.

In MAT 3:7 But when he [the Baptist] saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said to them, “You brood of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?”

In other words, John was saying the Messiah was coming and who told you to flee from the wrath to come”?

He said the same thing and in Verse 10 he said,

MAT 3:10 “And the axe is already laid at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

Then notice in MAT 3:12 “And His winnowing fork is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clear His threshing floor; and He will gather His wheat into the barn, but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.”

That was all John’s Message about the coming Messiah.

Forbidding. Judgmental. Damning. That’s the Messiah that John anticipated.

Then Jesus came.

You know what He did? Mostly deeds of mercy. He healed the sick. He gave sight to the blind and hearing to the deaf and voices to the dumb and life to the dead.

For example, when they didn’t understand John the Baptist they said, he must be demon possessed, LUK 7:33 “For John the Baptist has come eating no bread and drinking no wine; and you say, ‘He has a demon!’

They said he doesn't eat normal food,

He doesn't drink,

He's always fasting,

He lives alone in the wilderness,

He doesn't have women;

He's antisocial,

He must be sociopathic,

He's demon possessed!

And then here comes this guy name Jesus, and "We don't understand Him.

He eats good food and He drinks wine.

He hangs out with prostitutes and publicans and sinners, the so-called unholy crowd; Mat 9:10.

He goes to the best homes to eat; Luk 14:1.

He takes money from women, Luk 8:3.

He even wore a fine garment that the Roman soldiers waged bets for; Joh 19:24.

Therefore, they said He must be a glutton and an alcoholic, Luk 7:34.

So that in LUK 7:34 “The Son of Man has come eating and drinking; and you say, ‘Behold, a gluttonous man, and a drunkard [an alcoholic], a friend of tax-gatherers and prostitutes!’

You see, not only couldn't John really figure all the different aspects of TLJC but the Pharisees couldn't figure out John and TLJC.

And the Lord said in LUK 7:32 “They are like children who sit in the market place and call to one another; and they say, ‘We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we sang a dirge, and you did not weep.’

You see, John comes and they played a happy tune and they said he didn't dance, he acts like he is at a funeral!

Then they played a funeral dirge, and the Jesus Christ is filled with happiness and joy.

And so the Lord said, you know what, you can never ever scrutinize, figure out, and appraise and judge a spiritual man!

Especially, when that spiritual man is busy appraising all the things of God in his heart, 1Co 2:15-16.

The point is our Lord was enigma to them at times, he was like a riddle.

He would speak some of His important messages in parables so that the arrogant could not understand them, and therefore He would not

cast His pearls before wine.

However, there were times that the prophets had to coincide or match up the paradoxes or the seeming contradictions in the word of God.

So that even John the Baptist didn't understand some of them, because either John didn't understand that that was also part of the prophecy, or he had forgotten.

So he sends his disciples from his prison to inquire of Jesus.

John was taken prisoner, you remember, by King Herod Antipas.

He was locked in the gloomy fortress of Machirus Dungeon which was the most bleak and desolate place imaginable.

So things didn't seem to be going the way he had anticipated because Messiah was to come and to judge and set up His kingdom and there wasn't any judgment and there wasn't any Kingdom as of yet.

Here was John the Baptist, the greatest who ever lived according to MAT 11:11, who was having problems with paradoxes of Christ; “Truly, I say to you, among those born of women there has not arisen anyone greater than John the Baptist; yet he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.”

Here he was in verse 1 of Matthew 11.

MAT 11:1 And it came about that when Jesus had finished giving instructions to His twelve disciples, He departed from there to teach and preach in their cities.

And notice in verses 2 and 3, when John had heard in the prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples and said to Him, “Art Thou He that should come, or do we look for another?”

MAT 11:2 Now when John in prison heard of the works of Christ, he sent word by his disciples,

MAT 11:3 and said to Him, “Are You the Expected One, or shall we look for someone else?”

John is saying “Are there two Messiahs?”

When John heard the things that Jesus did, he couldn't justify those with what he had said Jesus would do.

Why?

Now listen to me, John was trapped in the paradox of prophecy.

He was confused.

His faith was growing thin.

He failed to see how the resolution of such a conflict existed.

Notice the reply of Jesus to the messengers from John.

MAT 11:4 And Jesus answered and said to them, “Go and report to John what you hear and see:

MAT 11:5 the blind receive sight and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them.

MAT 11:6 “And blessed is he who keeps from stumbling over Me.”

Jesus answered them and said, “Go. Show John again those things which you do hear and see.”

The blind received their sight.

The lame walked.

The lepers were cleansed.

The deaf heard.

The dead were raised up.

The poor had the gospel preached to them.

Now why did he do that?

Why didn't He give John some more specific answer?

Why didn't He say, "You go remind him of those Old Testament prophecies?"

Now watch.

Because in the words that He used in Verse 5. They are really a paraphrase of Isa 35:3-6 and Isa 61:1.

Look at ISA 35:3 Encourage the exhausted, and strengthen the feeble.

ISA 35:4 Say to those with anxious heart, "Take courage, fear not. Behold, your God will come with vengeance; The recompense of God will come, But He will save you."

ISA 35:5 Then the eyes of the blind will be opened, And the ears of the deaf will be unstopped.

ISA 35:6 Then the lame will leap like a deer, And the tongue of the dumb will shout for joy.

But then again when he first came remember what He said in Temple when He quoted the prophet ISA 61:1 The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, Because the Lord has anointed me To bring good news to the afflicted; He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to captives, And freedom to prisoners;

Notice the passage in Luke's Gospel, ever since I saw the movie Jesus of Nazareth, this passage gives me goose bumps.....

LUK 4:16 And He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up; and as was His custom, He entered the synagogue on the Sabbath, and stood up to read.

LUK 4:17 And the book of the prophet Isaiah was handed to Him. And He opened the book, and found the place where it was written,

LUK 4:18 "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, Because He anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent Me to proclaim release to the captives, And recovery of sight to the blind, To set free those who are downtrodden,

LUK 4:19 To proclaim the favorable year of the Lord. "

LUK 4:20 And He closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant, and sat down; and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed upon Him.

LUK 4:21 And He began to say to them, "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing."

LUK 4:22 And all were speaking well of Him, and wondering at the gracious words which were falling from His lips; and they were saying, "Is this not Joseph's son?"

The Lord told the disciples of John to go back and remind John of some other prophecies that I have to fulfill first.

The problem John had was the problem that all the Old Testament prophets had.

They didn't see any distinction between the First Coming and the Second.

And they didn't seem to take into consideration the doctrine of dispensations.

So the Lord says in effect to the messengers, "You tell him to hang in there."

I've got some other things to do that are also recorded prophetically."

The very words that He gave were almost right out of Isaiah.

And Mat 11:6 is a gentle rebuke when our Lord says - MAT 11:6 "And blessed is he who keeps from stumbling over Me" or shall not stumble because of what I am doing."

What is he saying?

Hey, Blessed is the man who trusts me.

You haven't seen it all yet.

Trust me.

So you see, John had that problem.

There is no way that an Old Testament prophet could ever understand all of the resolution of these things.

The New Testament commentary makes sense out of all the paradox.

One of the greatest verifications of the Christian faith are the diverse and apparently contradictory prophecies.