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Text: John 1:1-18

Date: December 25, 2016

Setting: Our Redeemer Lutheran Church (Christmas Day)

His own people did not receive Him...but He came anyways

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

John 1: 11-13 states “He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. <sup>12</sup> But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, <sup>13</sup> who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God” Thus far our text.

Imagine going to see family and friends for Christmas. They know you will be coming. They don't know exactly when you will be coming but they wait in constant expectation of your arrival. When you show up at the door and ring the doorbell. The door swings open and smiles appear from ear to ear and arms are extended for joyful hugs. It is a happy welcome to your arrival. Anticipating someone's arrival can be exciting, but also time consuming.

Throughout Israel's history, the people waited. The people remembered the promise made to their first parents, Adam, and Eve. They remembered the Garden of Eden when Adam and Eve disobeyed the rules God set for them regarding the tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. They disobeyed the guidance that God gave and did their own thing. They rejected what God had to say and brought sin into the world when they ate of the forbidden fruit. We also disobey what God says for us to do. We sin against one another and go our own way. We fail to love our neighbor as ourselves. We fall short of God's Law, just like the Israelites did.

Israel waited, and they waited and waited for the coming Messiah, the anointed one. Israel was God's chosen people. His people that he delivered from Egypt. His people who went into the promised land. His people who were carted off to Babylon and then returned. Through thick and thin, God was with them. Many times, God's chosen people didn't want to hear what God had to say, and we are no different. They wanted to go their own way. Through all of it, the people waited. Numerous prophecies were foretold of the coming savior. Christ was foretold all the way back to the Garden of Eden when God said "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel." Centuries later, King Herod connected the dots of where the king foretold would be born, in Bethlehem. He set out not to worship him but to kill him. He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him.

Then he came. He was born of the virgin in Bethlehem for you and for me. He was born, not in a palace surrounded by royal attendants. He was not received in a kingly manner. He was not born in a booming metropolis but in the quiet town of Bethlehem. Born to heal the sick. Born to heal the lame. Born to cause the blind to see. Born to cause the deaf to hear. Ultimately born to die for you and for me. The Messiah that was to come, the Christ, had come. He came to his own, and His own people did not receive Him. On Calvary's mountain we see Christ die. He died for the sins of the whole world. He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him.

But wait, there is more. The rest of the story.

John 1: 12-13 states: "But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, <sup>13</sup> who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God."

This was why Christ was born. He was born on Christmas morning for you and for me so that we could be forgiven of our sins. Forgiven of all the sins when we don't follow the Law that God gave. Forgiven when we fail to love our neighbor as ourselves. Forgiven when we don't put God first in our lives.

The Israelites were the children of God. God's chosen people. But when he came, the people did not receive Him. Fortunately for us, the story doesn't end with, "But his people received him not." It continues with, "But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God,<sup>13</sup> who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God."

He gave them the right to become Children of God. God's chosen people were not only the Jews any longer, but also the Gentiles. He was born for you and for me. Christ stayed the course and went to the cross so that we could be His Children. Not only for his people, but for all people. He came to have all people.

Knowing that there would be those that would not receive Him, Christ came regardless. He came to be born. He came to do wondrous things for His people. He came to save people from their sins. He came to die for you and for me. That is what we celebrate at Christmas. As we look at the manger and behold the Word made flesh, we look forward towards the cross, then to the empty tomb of our Risen Savior. This is the reason he was born.

The second verse of "What Child is This?" phrases this beautifully:

Why lies He in such mean estate,  
Where ox and ass are feeding?  
Good Christians, fear, for sinners here  
The silent Word is pleading.

Nails, spear shall pierce Him through,  
The cross be borne for me, for you.  
Hail, hail the Word made flesh,  
The Babe, the Son of Mary.

The Babe, the Son of Mary; was born in Bethlehem, for you. Amen.

"Now to Him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine... to him  
be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever! Amen."

Ephesians 3:20-21