

The First Promise of Christmas

Genesis 3:15, Galatians 4:4

Introduction:

- This morning, I'd like for us to consider the first promise of Christmas. You see, God is sovereign in control, and He always has a plan!
- The events around that first Christmas in Bethlehem were a fulfillment of God's plan. See Matthew 1:20-22. Mary and Joseph were surprised, but God wasn't.
- I want us to see that the Bible is the word of God, Jesus is the only Savior, and that God is a God who is worthy of our loyalty and faithfulness
- The very first promise of Christmas in the Bible actually goes all the way back to the Garden of Eden in the book of Genesis
- Genesis has been under attack by religious liberals, and even many professed Christians who struggle to give God credit for creating our world has He told us.
- Speculation vs. Revelation
- See Genesis 3:15

I. God's promise in response to Man's need

- a. What happened in the Garden- the Fall of man
- b. Romans 5:12- The Bible tells us that the sin in the Garden affects all of humanity
 - i. We think that we are so sophisticated, and righteous, and honorable- when God says we are just the opposite!
 - ii. Even good things that sinners do, are tainted by the sin nature
- c. Man has had many failed attempts to please/reach God
 - i. Man has always tried to make attempts to be right with God- and failed- Rom 3:23- illustr- Grand Canyon
 - ii. Fig leaves were man's best attempt in the Garden- temporary; unsatisfactory, lacking

- d. I believe everyone one of us is born with a God-sized hole in our spirit, that only God can fill!
- II. God's promised solution to our need
- a. God promised the Messiah, a deliverer for His people (divine interventinon)
 - b. He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel: Guzik notes, In this, God prophesies the doom of Satan, showing that the real battle is between Satan and the Seed of the Woman.
 - c. You shall eat dust all the days of your life: This was true of the serpent as an animal, but it is also true of Satan. To eat dust has the idea of total defeat
 - d. There is no doubt this is a prophecy of Jesus' ultimate defeat of Satan. God announced that Satan would wound the Messiah (you shall bruise His heel), but the Messiah would crush Satan with a mortal wound (He shall bruise your head)- at the Cross!
 - e. Guzik notes: The heel is the part within the serpent's reach. Jesus, in taking on humanity, brought Himself near to Satan's domain so Satan could strike Him.
 - f. This prophecy also gives the first hint of the virgin birth, declaring the Messiah – the Deliverer – would be the Seed of the Woman- interestingly not of the man.
 - g. Genesis 3:15 has been called the proto-evangelium, the first proclamation of the gospel. Right there at man's darkest hour, God opened a door of hope!
 - h. At the appointed time-Gal 4:4
 - i. The idea behind the phrase the fullness of time is "when the time was right." Jesus came at just the right time in God's redemptive plan, when the world was perfectly prepared for God's work.
 - j. Consider the fact that the events of the O.T. and man's history set the stage for the Incarnation. The OT tells the story of the Jewish People, God's chosen nation to bring blessings on the whole world (Gen 12:18). God used Egypt to feed and protect them before allowing them to leave and go to their own land promised to them. God used nations like Assyria and Babylon to judge Israel for the sins. Eventually Persia allowed the Jews to return back to their land. The Jewish

people would soon be scattered all over the world, and begin to assemble in synagogues which would be excellent venues for Paul and other Christians to preach the gospel

- k. God allowed the Greek conqueror Alexander the Great to not only conquer and unify many nations and advance the Greek Empire, but he helped spread the Greek culture, including its language. So much so that when the Roman Empire took over, the Greek culture was still dominant.
 - l. When the Romans did take over, they truly took over. They conquered just about all of the known world at that time! They also emphasized law and order all throughout the Empire. All of the empire was under the protection of Roman law. Christ was born during the Pax Romana- a period of unprecedented peace throughout the Roman Empire, allowing the Gospel to spread easily.
 - m. The Romans built roads all over their empire in order to quickly transport their troops from one place to another. The apostles of Christianity used these roads to easily take the gospel to the four corners of the empire, and they were able to do it fairly safely as the roads were protected by Roman troops.
 - n. And so we see God's providential hand at work putting all the pieces together and preparing the world for the coming of Christ, 'In the fullness of time.'
 - o. All because God always has a plan! He has a plan for your life too, you know! Stop resisting and fighting what God wants to do in your life!
 - p. The time was also right because the 483 years prophesied by Daniel were drawing to a close (Daniel 9:24-26).
 - q. God Himself would step in to meet our need!
 - i. God sees our need- God is a personal God, who watches over us!
 - ii. Only He can meet our need
 - iii. He desires to meet the need, if we will trust Him!
- III. God's plan of salvation
- a. The need for the Virgin Birth (seed of the woman)
 - i. Christ is both God and man!- Col 2:9

- ii. The seed of the woman- the uniqueness of Jesus. Sinless sacrifice
 - iii. To redeem those who were under the law: The Virgin Birth is essential to the Gospel- If Jesus was not both God and man, he could not take our place and satisfy God's wrath, and His death could not be sufficient for all!
- b. Christ alone is our Savior

Conclusion:

- Several years ago Larry King, the well-known television talk show host, was asked who he would like to interview if he had his pick from all of history. His answer was Jesus Christ. The questioner paused and said, "What is the one question you would like to ask Him?" Larry King answered, "I would ask Him if He indeed was virgin born, because the answer to that would define history for me."
- Jesus certainly does define history, and He defines our eternity too!
- Friends, the Bible is the Word of God- how else can these prophecies have been fulfilled?
- So, Jesus is God's only solution to our sin problem. Will you turn to Him today?
- If our greatest need had been information, God would have sent us an educator; If our greatest need had been technology, God would have sent us a scientist; If our greatest need had been money, God would have sent us an economist; If our greatest need had been pleasure, God would have sent us an entertainer; But our greatest need was forgiveness, so God sent us a Savior.
- We need to trust, not only in His birth, but in His death, burial and resurrection for our sins.
- Christian- Understanding all that God has done makes us realize that He is certainly a God worth serving, He is worthy of our faithfulness and devotion to Him. Too many Christians are holding back on God, when God has over and over proved his faithfulness to us! He has a plan for your life if you will surrender all to Him!