

CHRISTMAS IN EDEN

(Genesis 3-4:1)

Series: The Wonder of Christmas (Part 1)

...If the birth of Jesus Christ, together with His death and resurrection, is the most important event in history and the very heart of the Bible, then we should expect to find it in the Old Testament as well as the New, in Genesis and Revelation. And we do. The last Christmas story given is in Revelation 12, the first is Genesis 3:15. ...Yet, Christmas in Eden is surprising. Not because it is the first announcement of it, but because the context is that of God's judgment upon Adam and Eve for their sin. ...Quite surprisingly, God extended grace to them. Rather than immediate death, He punished them with only a token judgment, and amazingly, He promised a Deliverer who would come and conquer. This is totally unexpected, as GRACE always is and CHRISTMAS is the most surprising GRACE of all.

THREE OBSERVATIONS UPON THE HOSTILITY ESTABLISHED BY GOD AT THE FIRST ANNOUNCEMENT OF CHRISTMAS.

I. **Spiritual Warfare: Hostility Is Gracious...Keeping Us From Satan and Sin.**

..."and I (God) will put enmity (hostility) between you (Satan) and the woman."

- A. Remember Satan had rebelled against God and was defeated and cast down from his exalted position by God. Now he appeared on earth to do two things:
 - 1. He sought to draw Adam and Eve away from God through sin and judgment. (success)
 - 2. He sought to get them to follow him. (He failed)
- B. The new thing here: God created enmity between Satan and the woman.
 - 1. This meant that Adam and Eve and their offspring would have a hatred of Satan.
 - 2. Suppose this hostility had not been created, Adam and Eve would have increasingly become like Satan, not God, with a warped perspective thinking Satan was god...
 - 3. Romans 1 reveals the picture of the inevitable outcome of suppressing the knowledge...
 - 4. Though the human race is corrupted, nevertheless there is the retention of some idea of right and wrong. There still is an approval of the right, and opposition to evil.
- C. This is what Genesis 3:15 speaks of as the first great blessing of God to fallen humanity: "When we sin, we find that we like sin and only want to escape its consequences. But God has so ordered things that sin brings misery and we are unable to lie down in it and love it completely." ...God in His grace, does not let this happen. God limits the hold of sin on us and makes it possible for us to hear God's voice and respond to Him, in spite of our misery.

II. **Two Humanities: Hostility Between Men Drives Us To God And His Care For Us.**

..."Enmity...between your offspring and hers..." (Genesis 4 and 5)

- A. This second antagonism is not between Satan's descendants and Eve's. The conflict is between the godly descendants of the woman, who follow her and Adam in believing God, and the unbelieving descendants of the woman who do not submit to God and continue to be influenced...
- B. The warfare between those who are attempting to follow God and those who are following Satan cause the godly to draw close to God and depend upon Him...which is a blessing. It is grace!

III. **Christ The Victor: Hostility Resulted In Satan's Defeat At The Cross.**

..."Enmity...He (Jesus) will crush your head, and you will strike his heel."

- A. God promised a Deliverer to provide the death-blow to Satan. "A fight to the finish."
 - 1. This is Christmas, because this One would be born of woman. Virgin Birth!
 - 2. The birth of Christ seemed to play into the Devil's hand...now he could get to Him.

3. Satan often engaged in the struggle to destroy Jesus. Think about the many times...
 - B. Finally, Satan penetrated the inner circle and moved in Judas' heart to betray Jesus, which led to His arrest, trial, crucifixion and death. Satan won the battle at last!!! Or, so it seemed.
 1. At first Satan must have been filled with glee, and realized too late that though he won the battle, in it he had lost the war. He was now defeated through the Atonement.
 2. He realized too late that in his evil, he was actually carrying out the purposes of God.
 - C. Both Adam and Eve believed God's promise as seen in the names given: "Eve," means "Life-giver" and in Genesis 4:1 "Cain" means "Here he is." (She thought Cain was that promised Deliverer.)
- ...Christmas is not about trees or tinsel, gifts and angels. Christmas is about a Deliverer from sin promised to our first parents by God thousands of years ago in Eden.

SO WHAT? WHAT DIFFERENCE SHOULD THIS MAKE IN MY LIFE?

1. Marvel at the grace of God shown to Adam and Eve at humanity's first sin. They deserved immediate death, but God not only postponed it, but would send the conquering Deliverer, the Lord Jesus, to destroy death all together. Marvel at God's grace for you, knowing that you too have sinned and deserve death, but Jesus came and died in your place so that you might live forever.
2. Sin has consequences that often lead us to sorrow and tears. Marvel again at the grace of God to design such a world. See His grace in this, or we would be tempted to live in sin "up to our ears" and never feel the need to repent. Thank Him for this moral law of life, it is designed to help us on to joy that comes through obedience.
3. Remember we live in a world that hates Christ and His followers. Don't be surprised. Resist loving the world...for it is, at its core, hostile to Jesus. The world may hate you, because it hated Jesus. If so, you are in good company.
4. This Christmas celebrate Jesus, the One promised by God to come through a woman, to provide for our salvation. Don't be so caught up in all the festivities that you lose Him. Be amazed, "At the exact right time, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman..." Galatians 4:4-5
5. Today, God commands all people everywhere to repent and believe upon the Lord Jesus as Savior and Lord. Will you do so today?

LIFE GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. How have you experienced the spiritual warfare of life since becoming a Christian? Have you felt the hostility of the world? How?
2. Satan tempted Eve by causing her to doubt God's goodness to her. Have you been tempted to doubt God's goodness to you? How did you respond? Why is doubt a very dangerous place to be?
3. Psalm 76:10 tells "The wrath of man shall praise you (God)." In your own words, how did God receive the praise from Satan's wrath displayed in killing Jesus?
4. How do you strive to keep Jesus as the center of your Christmas?