

Unto Us
Luke 2:1-14

Genesis 3:1-15

Revelation 5

Responsive Psalm 33:1-9

This morning, being the Sunday before the observed celebrated day of the Birth of Jesus, I thought that we would have a Christmas message this week. But, my goal is to bring such a message in a way that is maybe not the traditional Christmas message, instead of focusing on the story of the birth of Jesus, I want to focus instead on Jesus himself, and what this birth truly meant for mankind. As we have been going through the book of Hebrews, the Author has kept pointing out the superiority of Christ over all things, and that Christ himself is the culmination of all that which came before, he is the culmination of the prophets, and of the law. And here, at this time of the year we take this moment to celebrate his birth, his coming in the flesh, which is the beginning of God's sovereign redemptive work.

So turn with me to Luke chapter 2, and we will read this account of the birth of Jesus this morning, which is something that I know we are all very familiar with, and have heard countless times around this time of year, but my goal today is to fight against that familiarity, and hopefully we can see this event in history, the birth of this child, with sort of a new set of eyes. (read Luke 2:1-14) Often times we talk of Christ's death being the culmination, and the fulfillment of the prophesies, and while that is true, it is only one part, the birth of Christ is just as important and was prophesied as well. The Israelite's understood this, and were awaiting the arrival of the Messiah, they understood that God had promised to send one who would set up his kingdom, and make Israel a mighty nation. The problem, was that when he did come, he came at night, born to a poor family in a barn with the only fanfare of that being surrounded by shepherds.

This was not the Messiah they were waiting for, they were awaiting a mighty king, a warrior who would free them from the bondage of the Roman empire, one who would establish Israel among the nations as in the days of King David, but instead of this expected king, Jesus was born, this unassuming birth of a child who they reject even yet to this day. But not only did they reject him as the messiah, they saw him as a blasphemer, as a threat to their belief, so they had him put to death, the Messiah they awaited, the seed to whom was promised Abraham to bring peace, they sought to kill, they called him a blasphemer, and they persecuted his followers.

The problem, was that they missed the entire point of the prophesy's, they missed the gospel story, they hardened their hearts to the signs and in anger lashed out against the very one who was sent to indeed bring peace upon the earth. But as we have talked about over and over again, even this which was meant for evil, their rebellion and rejection of Christ was still a part of God's redemptive plan, working through the hearts of evil men God enacted his plan to provide for the true Israel, the promised Messiah, a savior, a mediator, and a high priest.

So, this morning, I want to go back and look at a few passages in scripture of these prophecies foretelling of his birth, and we shall see in this passage we read this morning in Luke, the fulfillment of them.

First is what we read this morning in Genesis chapter 3:15 God said to the serpent, “I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.” The birth of Christ's which we are celebrating this week, ushered in the defeat of Satan, the seed of the woman will rise up and crush the head of the serpent. The apostle Paul uses this language in the book of Romans when talking to faithful obedient believers, he says, “And the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly.”

Satan has no power over those of us who are in Christ, for God has already defeated him. While Satan may bruise our heel in a manner of speaking, while we may fall into sin...ultimately Christ will destroy him, for Satan is powerless against God, and we, through this child which was born in Bethlehem, also have power over Satan, to resist his temptations, for we are no longer enslaved to sin, for we have been set free from that bondage, in the blood of the redeemer, who is Christ Jesus.

The next old testament prophesy is that which was given to Abraham, Genesis 12, God says to Abraham, “I will make you a great nation, I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and curse those who curse you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.” This blessing is the promised seed, that through Abraham the Messiah will come, the one in whom will bring redemption to the world, and peace between God and man. Which is a blessing for all peoples, for every nation, every tongue, every walk of life.

Each of these prophecies give a bit more information, and in Isaiah chapter 7 verse 14, says “Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign; Behold the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son and shall all his name Immanuel.” In Micah, we are told that he will be born in Bethlehem, Chapter 5, says, “But you Bethlehem, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from old, from ancient times.”

All of these prophecies were given hundreds of years before Jesus was born, foretelling of this night spoke of in Luke chapter 2. I think that often times we look at God's redemptive plan in pieces, focusing on each section and in doing so I think we lose a bit of the larger picture. Christ's birth was a fulfillment of a promise all the way back to the days of Adam and Eve, this was something that mankind had been waiting for, and when he did finally arrive it was for the most part, quiet, humble, and unassuming, yet with it was power beyond our understanding. God, taking on flesh, to make for himself the necessary mediator between us and him so that we may be reconciled to him, so that we may be redeemed through him.

To Israel this was a stumbling block, but to God's people a sanctuary. Israel was awaiting a glorious king, a warrior, a mighty ruler, so when the promised Messiah came who was not what they were waiting for, they rejected him. For this one, born of Mary was this king who is mighty, and glorious but not in the way they expected. he was, the true king, the high king, the king of kings. The verse that comes to mind as to why God designed his salvation plan this way, why the Messiah would be born in such a lowly estate, is also for the very reason that he works salvation in those that he does,

1 Corinthians:27 “God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty, and the base things for the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are.” It is God's way, God has chosen his redemptive plan to be such so that no man would believe outside of God first enabling. How absurd it is, that this child born from a virgin, in Bethlehem would be the Messiah, the one who would crush the head of Satan, and bring salvation to God's people.

This is not for the wise to find, for it is not found through wisdom. Really, If there were any who should have believed it would have been the Israelite's, for they had the prophecies, they were told how the Messiah would come, even Herod himself was so afraid that he ordered every first born killed so that this promised king would not arise and take power. Yet, when he was born, it was foolishness to them, Christ's birth was a stumbling block, not having faith, not being a part of the true Israel of God they were unable to see it. And this was by design, for as I mentioned earlier, God used this in his redemptive plan and it is by this rejection Jesus was crucified and salvation was brought to all peoples.

Jesus quoting the book of Psalms and equating it to himself said, “Have you never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone, This was the Lords doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes.” Jesus was rejected by the religious leaders in Israel, having knowledge of the laws and prophecies which pointed to him, yet they rejected him, the one who God had set as his corner stone to build his holy nation, the true Israel, the offspring of Abraham not by flesh, but by faith.

This promised child who was born is the one in whom this salvation was given. It is amazing to me, that the God who created the universe would take on flesh, become one like us to redeem us. This speaks of his love, and his mercy for God would have been justified in the destruction and punishment of this world, and indeed he is not only justified, but glorified in the punishment of the wicked. Yet, he loved us, with a personal love that sent his son to die to take that punishment for us. I know that this is all stuff that we all already know and are aware of, but I think at times we can get bogged down in the traditions, or family obligations especially this time of year that in a sense we can lose focus as to what is really being celebrated here.

Having grown up in the church, this time of year is always focused on the story of the birth of Christ, and I think rightly so but it is so much more than that which is what I am hoping to capture today. This time that we are celebrating this week, is a celebration of the culmination of 1000's of years of prophesy being fulfilled, it is a time that we take to celebrate that God has brought the means of peace between man and himself on the earth, it is the time that we celebrate God's love and faithfulness in keeping those promises to provide that peace, and to provide a means of redemption and reconciliation.

And this was his plan from the start, this was not a reaction to anything as some may say. A friend once told me, that Christ's coming and dying on the cross was because his previous plan of providing righteousness through the law had failed. But look at scripture, look at what we have read today....that is not the case, for as we see the coming of Christ into this world was planned from the beginning, it was foretold and revealed throughout scripture and here we read in Luke 2 this culmination. It is no wonder that angels were singing, peace on earth, good will toward men. For this was the time that was spoken of, and the time that was being waiting for.

Even Abraham and all those who came before were awaiting this day, just as we read in chapter 11 in Hebrews in the list of the faithful it said, " These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth."

This even, this birth of Jesus, which happened in a barn, with little fan fare except that which we see where the angels appeared to shepherds, was a cataclysmic event that changed the world. The redeemer has come, the time of God's redemptive work has come, this is what we celebrate, that our sovereign holy father has given us his son so that we may be reconciled to him, so that by his blood the wages of our sins are paid in full. Unto us, a child is born, unto us a savior is given, Joy to the world, for now there is a way of peace between God and man.