

Why Christmas? What is Sin?

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Gen 3:1-13; Matt 1:18-21

Dr. Jeff H. McCrory Jr.

Synopsis:

We celebrate Christmas in a number of ways that have little to do with the biblical understanding of Jesus' birth. God the Father sent Jesus to die for our sins that we might be saved. This is why we celebrate Christmas.

I.

Visions of Christmas

Matt 1:21 “for he will save his people from their sins”

Visions of Christmas:

Clement Moore “Night Before Christmas”

Charles Dickens “A Christmas Carol”

Santa Claus

“Up on the housetop”

“You’d better watch out”

“Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer”

*What’s your vision of Christmas?

Ken Bailey’s comment:

East celebrates Easter not Christmas as primary

Why do we celebrate Christmas?

II.

What Does Christmas Do?

Gen 3:1 “Did God say?”

Matt 1:21 “for he will save his people from their sins”

Raymond Brown comment:

Passion stories with long introductions

Birth stories came later, e.g. Mark

This week's readings: Luke passion, Judges

-Passion amidst Christmas

-Judges "right in their own eyes" amidst Christmas

Jesus will save us from our sins? What sins?

Genesis 3: story of snake, woman, and man

Snake?

Not was there a snake, but what did he say

Story:

Law already present to guard us (2:17)

Snake: challenges God's command for good

Scenario:

Choice

against God (disobey)

to be autonomous (go beyond creature)

makes us less human

Result

Shame

Hiding

Blame: woman, snake, God

*You and I made and make a choice against God and to be autonomous. We fall short/miss mark of humanity = sin.

III.

What Should We Do About Christmas?

Matt 1:21 "She will bear a son; you are to name him Jesus"

Confession: Not them but us

Sin/Evil runs through the middle of each of us

Evil Empire cuts through us all

Pogo "I have found the enemy and he is us"

Repentance and Acceptance of Gift of Christ

Imagine opening a Christmas stocking

Broken relationships healed: lonely
Missing loved ones: death this year

Paul Moon

Jane Baker

Jim Bronn

Hal's Mother in Law

Gerald Ford

War: Somalia, Iraq

Christmas is not about commercial gratification, it is about God in the flesh
come to break the power of sin and death. This is the good news.