

Advent 2 2014

Last week I began our Advent devotions by considering Man's greatest need:

- I read a survey this week that said the greatest need this Christmas expressed by 6-12 year old boys (86%) was also the greatest need expressed by 26 - 30 year old men and that is the need for a new video game system. (it does take longer for guys to grow up)
 - Of course that wasn't the need I was thinking of last week.

If you were here last week you remember the gift of God that was given to meet man's greatest need: **"while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."** Ro 5:8

- The Father who sits enthroned in heaven out of his limitless resources met our greatest need HE **"gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life."** (John 3:16)

Last week I introduced the 3 points that we will be reviewing as we prepare our hearts for the celebration of Christmas. The three topics for our study are:

1. Man's Greatest Need
2. God's Promised Seed
3. Christ's glorious Deed

As I shared with you last week, the Bible clearly shows that man's greatest need is a Savior, someone who is able to deliver him from the bondage of sin and restore him to a right relationship with God.

Genesis chapter 6 gave us a vivid picture of man's desperate condition:

Genesis 6: 5 **The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.**

- We saw the frightening reality of God's intervention as he worked his justice out on corrupt man.

Genesis 6: 7 **So the LORD said, "I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, man and animals and creeping things and birds of the heavens, for I am sorry that I have made them."**

- BUT we also saw a beautiful image of the GRACE that was able to deliver man from the impending doom brought on by the wrath of God.

Genesis 6: 8 **But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD.**

- Do you remember WHY God saved Noah from the destruction that consumed the rest of humanity?
 - It was NOT because Noah was a righteous man, NOT because there was anything uniquely PIOUS about Noah.
 - BUT by GRACE and for his own glory, GOD revealed himself to Noah, warning of the coming judgment and providing a way of escape.
 - Noah believed God and built an ark for the saving of his household. (Heb 11:7)

So we see from the story of Noah:

- God Chose Noah - out from among a corrupt civilization
- God Called Noah - communicating his plan to judge the world and save those who believed
- God Justified Noah - (Heb. 11:7) **Noah became an heir of the righteousness that comes by faith.**

Just imagine how Noah felt as God closed the door of the ark.

Imagine the chaos that took place when the thunders cracked, the earth shook and the torrents of liquid judgment began to assault the earth.

Imagine the fear and awe that gripped the heart of Noah as the ark lifted him and his family above the watery judgment of God.

- Actually we don't have to imagine how Noah felt. All of us who have been born of God, all of us who have heard the call of God and repented of our sin, have been delivered from the wrath of God through faith in Jesus Christ.
- And now the Bible says that we are seated in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. He has become the ARK of our salvation.
- It is through Christ that God met man's greatest need.

That brings us to the second point in our Advent devotion: God's Promised Seed:

The unfolding of God's gracious plan to meet man's greatest need actually begins in the very first book of the Bible, the book of Genesis.

- As soon as Adam fell into sin (that same day) God communicated his plan of salvation to the man and his wife and that plan involved a promised seed.

In the Garden of Eden, when deception first twisted the minds of our original parents, the very day that they rebelled against their creator, God proclaimed the Gospel.

- Having fallen in sin, God speaks to Adam, (toil) Eve (labor) and the Serpent. (on belly) Hidden in God's judgment on the serpent is a great word of hope for fallen man.
- Just to be clear: Who is the serpent? He is the deceiver the devil and Satan.

NKJV - Genesis 3: 15 God said: **And 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."**

- Enmity - (*what is it?*) Enmity is a deep hatred, the underlying hostility that would exist between the serpent and the woman, between Satan and the seed of the woman.

So that we understand, the "**Seed of the woman**" throughout the Bible represents a promised descendant, a child who would uniquely be born of a woman without the natural assistance of a man.

- Of course this is the first prophecy speaking of the Advent of Jesus Christ who would be born of a virgin, conceived by the Holy Spirit. This is what the Prophet Isaiah foretold Isaiah 7: 14 **Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.**
- Miraculously a virgin would conceive a child who will be Immanuel (God with us)

The prophecy uttered by God in the Garden warned of an ongoing hostility, enmity that would exist between the woman and the Serpent.

- Certainly this would include but not be limited to the natural abhorrence that women have for snakes. But it is much more than that.
- There is a cosmic hatred, a struggle for supremacy, an ongoing enmity between the forces of darkness and the chosen people of God.

We see this ENMITY expressed throughout the Bible as that ancient serpent continually seeks to destroy the promised seed of the woman.

- This hatred shows itself right away in Adam's descendants:
- The hatred of Cain for his brother Abel reveals this enmity at its beginning stages.
- Later: at the tower of Babel: man aligns himself with the powers of darkness and builds a tower to overthrow the rule of God.
- IN Egypt Pharaoh was moved by the prince of darkness to destroy the deliverer God sent to the nation Israel: the Baby Moses.
- In the Book of Esther, Haman manifested this enmity when he sought to destroy Mortachi and all of the Jewish people.

As a matter of fact the whole Bible is the record of this spiritual conflict for the salvation of God's chosen people between the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman.

- Of course this conflict reaches a grand crescendo at the glorious Advent of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- The Apostle John witnessed this great struggle in a vision that was given to him by God. In Revelation Ch 12 John describes this great spiritual battle like a Sci-Fi Movie:

Rev 12:1 **And a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars. (Jewish woman: Joseph's dreams)**
 2 **She was pregnant (seed) and was crying out in birth pains and the agony of giving birth.**
 3 **And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great red dragon, with seven heads and ten horns, and on his heads seven diadems. 4 His tail swept down a third of the stars of heaven and cast them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to give birth, so that when she bore her child he might devour it.**

- What is John seeing?
- I believe John is seeing the demonic influence behind King Herod when he decreed the death of every male child under the age of 2 in the region where Christ was born.
- But God warned Joseph in a dream to take baby Jesus into Egypt for his safety.

The Gospels records what seems to be a heightened level of demonic activity during the days when Jesus walked the streets of Galilee:

- This is evidence of the hostility against the seed of the Woman.
- Coming up out of the waters of Baptism, Jesus was driven by the Spirit into the wilderness where he came face to face with Satan's destructive deceptions and the Seed of the Woman overcame him.
- There were multiple occasions when demons surfaced as Jesus was teaching.
- The violent Storms that arose on the Sea of Galilee.
- The legion of demons who greeted him as he exited the boat in the region of Gadara.

- Satan would even employ one of Jesus' best friends to distract him from obedience to the Father... Simon Peter rebuked Jesus when he spoke about the cross and Jesus responded, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me. For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man." Matthew 16:23

The whole of the Bible, Genesis through Revelation bear witness to the fact that Jesus Christ is the promised seed of the woman.

- It is entirely possible that Jesus was alluding to this fact when he called his mother "Woman" in 2 places in the Gospel of John.
 - John 2:4 (wedding at Cana) "Woman, what does this have to do with me?"
 - John 19:26 at the cross: "Woman, behold, your son!"

When the Apostle John describes the ultimate purpose of Christ's Advent he points back to the prophecy of God from the Garden and writes:

1 John 3:8B **The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil.**

- In order for US to benefit from Jesus' victory over Sin and Satan it was necessary for him to become fully human. So he who lived eternally in the presence of the Father became the Seed of the Woman.

Hebrews 2:14 **Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil,**

- Through his passion on the cross Jesus crushed the head of the serpent.
- Paul describes his victory this way to the Colossian believers:

Colossians 2: 15 **He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.**

- Everyone who repents of their sin and believes on the Lord Jesus Christ will share in his victory over death.
- ALL who believe now enter into a living UNION with Christ.

Ephesians 1: (We are now) **seated** (with Christ) **at right hand** (of the Father because he has been seated) **in the heavenly places, 21 far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come.**

What are the benefits of His victory?

Peace with God:

Romans 5:1, **Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.**

Access to the Father:

Ephesians 2:18, **For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father.**

We are free from Guilt and Condemnation:

Romans 8: 33 **Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies.**

34 Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us.

There is absolutely NO spiritual force that can separate us from the love of God:

Romans 8:37 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.

38 For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, 39 nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

As you can see our celebration of Advent is MUCH more than a baby in a manger...

- We celebrate a conqueror that has liberated his people from oppression.
- A Sovereign King who rules in righteousness.

The Word of God calls all men everywhere to repent of their sin and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.

- The Seed of the Woman... Given to man.... Victorious over sin and death.