

THE PROMISE OF CHRISTMAS: FREEDOM

I. To fully understand and appreciate Christmas, we must revisit the **beginning!** Not in Bethlehem, **but rather in Eden!**

A. The first reference to Christmas is actually found in Genesis!

Genesis 3:14-15 (NIV)

14 So the Lord God said to the serpent, “Because you have done this,
“Cursed are you above all livestock
and all wild animals!
You will crawl on your belly
and you will eat dust
all the days of your life.

15

And I will put enmity
between you and the woman,
and between your offspring and hers;
He will crush your head,
and you will strike His heel.”

1. God said the **offspring** of the woman was coming!
2. This offspring of Adam and Eve would be the answer to the **Fall of Man!**
3. Now, **think about what just happened!**

B. God created man in His image, to govern His creation with **delegated authority!**

Genesis 1:26-28 (NIV)

26 Then God said, “Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals,[a] and over all the creatures that move along the ground.”

27

So God created mankind in his own image,
in the image of God he created them;
male and female he created them.

28 God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground.”

1. God provided **EVERYTHING** man needed!

Genesis 2:9 (NIV)

9 The Lord God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground—trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food.

2. God had the “**covered**” in every way!

Genesis 2:25 (NIV)

25 Adam and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame.

II. We have looked at the Promise of Peace, now let’s consider the Promise of Freedom!!

A. From the Genesis story we see that Man first heard the “Gospel Message” by listening to God speak to the serpent.

1. God promise the serpent that “there was One coming”!!
2. “He will crush/bruise your head”!
3. The Hebrew word for crush/bruise is *shuf*.
4. It conveys the idea of being on alert in order to attack.
5. As an animal leaping on its prey to crush its skull!!
6. In other words, Satan was promised that a person was coming to destroy his grip on fallen creation.....but he didn’t know when!!
7. I believe this is the reason for some of the responses to the Prophets in the Old Testament and the slaughter of all the two (2) year olds as Herod interacted with the Wisemen!

B. Back to the Garden: A few moments before, Man had been engulfed in guilt, shame and hopelessness!!!

1. Now he was overhearing an incredible plan of restorative hope!
2. He didn't know **how**, but he heard it from a perfect Father!!
3. It was **then** that God gave Adam and Eve **garments of skin**.
The provision of a **sacrificed animal to cover their nakedness!**

IV. Now we come to the prophecy of Isaiah 53:4-5!

Surely he took up our pain
and bore our suffering,
yet we considered him punished by God,
stricken by him, and afflicted.
But he was pierced for our transgressions,
he was crushed for our iniquities;
the punishment that brought us peace was on him,
and by his wounds we are healed.

A. The story of Christmas is truly a story of **Peace and Freedom!**

1. Freedom from shame, guilt and separation from He Who loves you most!!
2. Notice all that Isaiah says:
 - He bore our grief
 - He carried away our sorrow
 - He was wounded for our wrong doing
 - He was bruised for our iniquities
 - He provided for our peace
 - He secured our freedom and restoration

B. The Hebrew word for bruised here in Isaiah is *daka*.

1. It means "broken in pieces".
2. Considering that Christ is our substitute as He became the **Second Adam**, it seems you could describe His work as TOTAL restoration and freedom!!

Galatians 6:14

May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.

3. Paul says it this way in Romans 3:26!

He did it to demonstrate his righteousness at the present time, so as to be just and the one who **justifies** those who have faith in Jesus.

***** **Just as if we had NEVER sinned!*******

C. This is how Paul describes this blessing to the Church in Colosse!

Colossians 2:13-15

When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, **14** having canceled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us; he has taken it away, nailing it to the cross. **15** And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.

V. **How** do we live out the Freedom of Christmas?

A. We **must** learn how to **walk out** this peace and freedom!

Romans 16:20

The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet.
The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.

1. We may respond, "I thought it automatically happens"!

2. **How and when** is Satan "**crushed under our feet**"?

B. As christians, we must learn and accept **our part** in the **appropriation of our redemption!**

1. Notice the **context** of this promise in Romans 16!!

Verse 19

Everyone has heard about your obedience, so I rejoice because of you; but I want you to be wise about what is good, and innocent about what is evil.

2. Obedience, wise in what is good and innocent in what is evil.

3. Our responses to God's promises is what activates the application of those promises to our lives!

C. This is my Christmas prayer for you!!

Colossians 1:9-12

For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you. We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives, **10** so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, **11** being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, **12** and giving joyful thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of his holy people in the kingdom of light.