

THE PROMISE OF CHRISTMAS

- * I love Christmas! It is my absolute favorite time of year!
 - * I have such fond memories of wonderful Christmas's with family getting special gifts! One of my favorites was a midivil jouster with full armor!
 - * I loved coming home from school on cold afternoons, sitting in front of a roaring fire, eating pinto beans over cornbread and watching Santa Claus from WOWL Studios!
 - * I loved going to my Grand Daddy's house on Christmas Eve and watching the gifts pile up around his chair and him refusing to open them while we were there. One year we fixed that, we stopped wrapping his gifts!!
 - * The best gift we ever got for Grand Daddy Hayes was a small wooden box. It had hay in the bottom on which lay chocolate fudge that looked just like a cow patty! He was quite taken aback that year!
 - * I remember Mom and Dad would always hide our presence in the highest cabinets in the kitchen. The one's that was never used because they were out of reach! We only told them about our discoveries until after my sister and I left for college!
 - * Later in life, after my sister and I moved from home, the traumatic adjustments of our Christmas scheduling began. We were faced with "melting together" different family traditions as marriages took place and other peoples traditions had to be considered. It was hard!!
 - * Then the shake ups really began as children grew and other marriages took place! Children start their own traditions and ways of celebrating Christmas!
 - * **So.....as wonderful as all of those memories and traditions are, what is this season really about?**
- 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.

3. **BUT**, they decided they knew better and went against the Lord’s plan for them!

Genesis 3:6-8(NIV)

6 When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. **7** Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

8 Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden.

4. They stepped out from under God’s covering and **exposed themselves** to a **fallen world**.

Genesis 3:9-11 (NIV)

9 But the Lord God called to the man, “Where are you?”

10 He answered, “I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid.”

11 And he said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?”

5. The entire purpose of redemption is **cleansing and covering!** Getting back to the garden of **protection, provision and fellowship!!**

6. This is the **Promise of Christmas!!!!!!!!!!!!**

B. The **Promise of Christmas** is that we can live a life of
PEACE AND FREEDOM!!

1. Inner peace rather than the inner turmoil of **sin and separation** from God!
2. Inner freedom from the **effects of slavery to sin** in our lives and behavior!!
3. **Being able to walk out from “behind the bush” and stand with God without shame or guilt!!**

C. Walking with God again has always been the desire of Man!!

Isaiah 7:14 (NIV)

14 Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him **Immanuel. (Which means God with us!)**

1. The **restoration of Christmas** is amazing!!

Isaiah 9:6 (NIV)

For to us a child is born,
to us a son is given,
and the government will be on his shoulders.
And he will be called
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

2. God has always been very intent about this restoration!!

Isaiah 9:7 (NIV)

Of the greatness of his government and peace
there will be no end.

He will reign on David's throne
and over his kingdom,
establishing and upholding it
with justice and righteousness
from that time on and forever.

**The zeal of the Lord Almighty
will accomplish this.**

3. A new governance, a new kingdom and a new purpose
and a strong desire and intention is the Lord's will!!!!
4. Remember, **Jesus is our PEACE!!**
5. We are **no longer separated from God!**
6. GET OUT FROM BEHIND THE BUSH!!!!!!!!!!!!!!
7. Embrace God and His presence in you life!
8. There is no need for shame and guilt!
9. The Father has given Jesus everything as an inheritance!

Psalm 2:7-8 (NIV)

7 I will proclaim the Lord's decree:
He said to me, "You are my son;
today I have become your father.

8

Ask me,
and I will make the nations your inheritance,
the ends of the earth your possession.

10. YOU are part of His inheritance!!

D. Remember, Jesus came as **Prince of Peace!**

1. Paul describes Jesus as our Prince of Peace!

Ephesians 2:17-18 (NIV)

17 He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. **18** For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit.

2. Because of that peace, we can continually walk in peace...
DAILY!!

Philippians 4:6-7 (NIV)

6 Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. **7** And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.