



gracefellowship

Series: Rescue+Mission
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Title: The Savior of the World
Passage: Matthew 1:21

Advent Reading: Peace

As we celebrate Christmas it is easy for us 2,000 years after the birth of Jesus to understand why we hold fast to things like joy, peace, hope and love. So much of the work Jesus came to accomplish has spread through the world today. We are blessed to have a pretty strong understanding of the reasons Jesus was born and the benefits we gain from His birth. But that wasn't true in the beginning- and it's still not true for billions of people around the world today. There are people who are clueless as to why Jesus came to earth. So, today we are going to go back and look at another reason Jesus left heaven to join His creation.

Last week we looked at 1 John 3:8b, which says, "...the reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the work of the devil." Then we talked about how one of Satan's major weapons against humanity is deception. Satan is a liar and seeks to deceive people to either doubt the existence of God, or doubt the goodness of God.

Today we are going to look at another weapon Satan uses against people and how the birth and death of Jesus destroys that weapon.

:: Matthew 1:18-21

18 This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit.

19 Because Joseph her husband was faithful to the law, and yet did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.

20 But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.

21 She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."

When we found out Heather was pregnant the first time we did what a lot of people do, we bought three books of baby names! We would sit and laugh some of the names in the books, but the ones we liked we would highlight or circle and then we

would fight over them! There were many votes that received a veto but there were several we really liked. Ultimately we ended up choosing the name, Josiah for our first baby. The name Josiah means, "Yahweh will support and will heal, or, will save."

We named our youngest child, Grayson. It's not as spiritual! It literally means, "Son of the gray haired man." That's a prophecy we hope to hold off as long as possible!

When Mary and Joseph found out they were going to have a baby they didn't have any of the fights over names and they didn't have to go buy any baby books because they got some angelic help in naming their child!
"You will give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."

Immediately, we are told what this child is coming into the world to do: to save! He is coming on a rescue mission! He's not just another child- He's the Savior of the world that was promised to Eve in the garden. This is the offspring of the woman that would crush the head of the enemy. But that leads us to the question:

What does Jesus save us from?

Jesus saves us from the curse of sin.

The angel says, "...He will save His people from their sins."

Sin is rebellion against God. Satan deceived Adam and Eve to go against the one command God had given them and that rebellion entered into the spiritual DNA of humanity and was then passed down from Adam and Eve to every person on the planet. Because Adam and Eve were our representatives, we inherit their sin nature. We are born carrying the burden of sin's guilt. But God would not leave us to linger in sin, so He sent His Son into the world to save us from our sins. Now, when we trust in the saving work of Jesus and ask for forgiveness for our sins, accepting His grace, the reverse effect from the Garden happens spiritually- the righteousness of Jesus is placed on our ledger and the sin is taken off of us and placed on Him. At the cross Jesus became sin, absorbing the wrath of God, so that we might become the righteousness of God. (2 Corinthians 5:21)

We need to recognize sin is not just some ethereal thing that is out there. Sin is a daily reality of our lives. Sin may manifest itself differently in each of us, but we all struggle with sin on a macro level as well as a micro level. Yes, sin is part of the DNA of mankind, sin is at work in your life to cause you to rebel against God.

- Pride
- Hate
- Greed
- Lust
- Fornication
- Theft
- Murder

- Lying
- Envy
- Cheating

The list could go on and on! The point is, you need a champion. You need someone who can save you from your sins.

Let's talk about the weapon Satan wields against us and how the cross and resurrection eliminate the power of this weapon. Remember, we have an enemy who is hell-bent on destroying us. He wants nothing more than to separate you from God. How does he do that? First through deception that leads you to sin, but sin leads to death.

Satan's second weapon in spiritual battle is death.

When we go back to the Garden of Eden where Satan instigated war against God's creation, what does he make light of? Death.

:: Genesis 3:2-4

² The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden,

³ but God did say, "You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die."

⁴ "You will not certainly die," the serpent said to the woman. ⁵ "For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

Satan essentially says, "There's nothing to fear in disobeying God. You won't die! In fact, you'll be like God when you eat the fruit." Satan convinced Eve that disobedience wouldn't cause her harm, but would actually make her better! Her life would be enhanced through disobedience.

But guess what happens? Death becomes the greatest fear of mankind throughout history. In fact, the Bible talks about death as if it is a king of sorts- death reigns over mankind. Again, we think about the sin of Adam and Eve being put on our ledger. Paul talks about it this way in Romans 5:

:: Romans 5:17

¹⁷ ...by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man..."

We all experience death because Adam and Eve chose death for us rather than remaining faithful to God. Now Satan uses that as a weapon to hold us in bondage through fear. The first thing Satan wants to do is separate you from God today. The second thing Satan wants to do is separate you from God for eternity.

Sin leads to separation from God in the physical world; death leads to separation from God in the spiritual world.

Satan hates you so much that he wants you to experience multiple forms of death!

This is why Jesus comes to save us from our sins! He came to destroy the work of the devil.

:: Romans 6:23

²³ For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Yes, sin brings death, but God is able to reverse the curse by experiencing death Himself. The cross is the final battlefield where God declared victory sin and its effects. Jesus died on the cross to pay for our sins, but then was raised to life once again to declare victory over death. When Jesus rose from the grave the sting of sin lost its power for all who trust in Jesus. Do we still die? Yes! But death isn't the end. In fact, for the believer in Christ we find out that what Jesus accomplished on the cross and by returning to life is a foretaste of what we will experience when we die. The resurrection of Jesus is evidence to His children of a resurrection to eternal life for all of us.

:: 1 Corinthians 15:21-26

²¹ For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man.

²² For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive.

²³ But each in turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him.

²⁴ Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power.

²⁵ For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet.

²⁶ The last enemy to be destroyed is death.

When we celebrate Christmas and Easter we are really peering into major battle zones. The cradle, the cross and the empty tomb show God's power over death. It's through these things that He gives life to all who believe in Him and place their faith in Him for salvation. And in the end, Jesus will destroy all the power and work of Satan and will remove them permanently. But did you notice the last enemy to be destroyed? Death! Up until his last breath, Satan will fight to kill people. It's his nature.

:: John 10:10

¹⁰ The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

Satan knows he is fighting a losing battle, so his objective has become to take as many people down with him as possible. In fact, in the book of Revelation we are told about a one thousand year reign of Christ where Satan will be bound and locked away. Then for reasons I can't understand, but that fit the plan of God, Satan

is going to be released for a short season. And do you know what he does in that season? He musters an army to fight against God! He wants more death and destruction. Killing is what Satan knows to do. But God is the author of life, so in the final battle He has Satan captured and thrown into the lake of burning sulfur where they will be tormented forever and ever. (Revelation 20:7-10)

We have to understand what Christmas really is all about. In modern warfare one of the strategies that is employed is to parachute troops in to enemy territory behind enemy lines. The birth of Jesus was essentially a rescue mission where Jesus was dropped behind enemy lines to fight on our behalf. Jesus left the glory of heaven and clothed Himself with human flesh so He could fight as our champion!

God can't stand for His children to live in captivity and fear. He is compelled to act on our behalf. When Satan declared war on humanity God didn't just sit back and sit back in defeat. He sent Jesus to save us!

:: Hebrews 2:14-18

¹⁴ Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might break the power of him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil—

¹⁵ and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.

¹⁶ For surely it is not angels he helps, but Abraham's descendants.

¹⁷ For this reason he had to be made like them, fully human in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people.

¹⁸ Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.

Who does this passage say holds the power of death? The devil! What does he do with it? He enslaves us with fear of death. This is why Jesus came to break the power of death. When Jesus rose from the grave it was a signal to Satan that death would no longer hold the power of fear over God's people. For children of God, death is just an exit ramp from physical life to spiritual life! Death is not something to fear because death ushers us into the presence of God!

When we go back and think of the Christmas story, that name Mary and Joseph were told to give their newborn, Jesus (Yeshua), held significant meaning:

Jesus (Yeshua): The Salvation of Yahweh

The most common baby names in the United States this year were Olivia for a girl, and Noah for a boy. It's true, Yeshua was a common name in Israel when Mary and Joseph were given that name. Many people were looking for the salvation of God to come. But this specific Jesus was different. In fact, in the book of Acts when the earliest followers of Jesus are put on trial for doing miracles and preaching in the name of Jesus, they say this:

:: Acts 4:9-12

⁹ If we are being called to account today for an act of kindness shown to a man who was lame and are being asked how he was healed,

¹⁰ then know this, you and all the people of Israel: It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you healed.

¹¹ Jesus is

**“the stone you builders rejected,
which has become the cornerstone.”**

¹² Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved.”

This is the name- this is the man- who brings us salvation. There is no other name that saves. This name- Jesus- brings life!

If you're trusting in anyone or anything else to give you eternal life, you are missing the mark of God's glory and living in sin. This Christmas give yourself the best gift you can ever imagine by receiving Jesus as your Savior and committing to live for Him the rest of your life.