

Christmas 2020

12/20/2020

Sunday Morning

1. When God created man, He created him in His image

**Genesis 1:27** God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

i. He did not create anything else in His image

2. Scripture indicates that one reason God did this was, to have fellowship w/ man

a. And apparently, before the fall, God did have fellowship w/ man on a regular basis

**Genesis 3:8** They heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden.

3. We also have other verses that corroborate God's continued desire to have fellowship w/ man

**1 Corinthians 1:9** God is faithful, through whom you were called into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

4. He wanted the fellowship to be voluntary – it isn't real fellowship, if it isn't voluntary – it's robotics

5. So, man was given one command to voluntarily follow

**Genesis 2:15** Then the LORD God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to cultivate it and keep it.

<sup>16</sup> The LORD God commanded the man, saying,

"From any tree of the garden you may eat freely;

<sup>17</sup> but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die."

6. This gave man a "choice" – to obey or not obey

a. Man chose to disobey

b. The fellowship God wanted to have w/ man was destroyed by disobedience

7. God is, a God of love – He still loved man, even though man had sinned
8. But God isn't just a God of love; He is the God of holiness, righteousness, justice – He can't ignore that man voluntarily disobeyed
9. If God was to have fellowship w/ man – someone would have to pay for the sin man committed
10. Since the conception of sin, God has made it clear that there is a penalty for sin
- a. Starting w/ Adam & Eve – God promised that a Savior would come  
**Genesis 3:15** And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, And you shall bruise him on the heel."
  - b. God also promised that a kingdom, that would allow God to fellowship w/ man, would come  
**Jeremiah 23:5** "Behold, *the* days are coming," declares the LORD, "When I will raise up for David a righteous Branch; And He will reign as king and act wisely And do justice and righteousness in the land.
  - c. This kingdom is eternal  
**Daniel 2:44** "In the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed, and *that* kingdom will not be left for another people; it will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure forever.  
**Daniel 4:3** "How great are His signs And how mighty are His wonders! His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom And His dominion is from generation to generation.
  - d. He promised it would be ruled by a Righteous King  
**Psalm 72:1** Give the king Your judgments, O God, And Your righteousness to the king's son.  
<sup>2</sup> May he judge Your people with righteousness And Your afflicted with justice.  
<sup>3</sup> Let the mountains bring peace to the people, And the hills, in righteousness.  
<sup>4</sup> May he vindicate the afflicted of the people, Save

the children of the needy And crush the oppressor.

- e. God promised that evil men who opposed this King would be destroyed

**Psalm 2:1** Why are the nations in an uproar And the peoples devising a vain thing?

<sup>2</sup> The kings of the earth take their stand And the rulers take counsel together Against the LORD and against His Anointed, saying,

<sup>3</sup> "Let us tear their fetters apart And cast away their cords from us!"

<sup>4</sup> He who sits in the heavens laughs, The Lord scoffs at them.

**V.9** 'You shall break them with a rod of iron, You shall shatter them like earthenware.'

<sup>10</sup> Now therefore, O kings, show discernment; Take warning, O judges of the earth.

- f. But – before the Kingdom comes – there is a fellowship problem to be solved
- i. There can't be fellowship between God & man until the sin issue is dwelt w/
  - ii. Someone had to pay for man's disobedience
- g. Israel was looking for the King & a kingdom posed in Scripture
- h. But they didn't see the need for a Savior – they had the Mosaic Law
- i. They ignored the Scripture that spoke of a Savior
    - i. They just wanted "their" kingdom & a King

11. At the end of the O.T. – God was silent for 400 years

12. What did man do when there was no communication from heaven?

- a. Many simply forgot about God
- b. Others, kept looking for a King to set up a kingdom
- c. Few, looked for a Savior & a King

13. Then God broke the silence

**Luke 1:5** In the days of Herod, king of Judea, there was a priest named Zacharias, of the division of Abijah; and he had a wife from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth.

V.6 They were both righteous in the sight of God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and requirements of the Lord.

V.7 But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and they were both advanced in years.

V.8 Now it happened that while he was performing his priestly service before God in the appointed order of his division,

**V.11** And an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing to the right of the altar of incense.

V.12 Zacharias was troubled when he saw the angel, and fear gripped him.

V.13 But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your petition has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will give him the name John.

**V.15** "For he will be great in the sight of the Lord; and he will drink no wine or liquor, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit while yet in his mother's womb.

V.16 "And he will turn many of the sons of Israel back to the Lord their God.

V.17 "*It is he who will go as a forerunner before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah,* TO TURN THE HEARTS OF THE FATHERS BACK TO THE CHILDREN, and the disobedient to the attitude of the righteous, so as to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."

1. "It is he who will go as a forerunner before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah"
  - a. The pious Jews knew what that meant – THE KINGDOM WAS COMING!
  - b. This would start a chain of events, in which, God was intimately involved w/ mankind

**Luke 1:26** Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city in Galilee called Nazareth,

V.27 to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the descendants of David; and the virgin's name was Mary.

V.28 And coming in, he said to her, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you."

V.29 But she was very perplexed at this statement, and kept pondering what kind of salutation this was.

V.30 The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; for you have found favor with God.

V.31 "And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus.

V.32 "He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David;

V.33 and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end."

1. "His kingdom will have no end"
  - a. It was clear, the King Himself was coming!

V.34 Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?"

V.35 The angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy Child shall be called the Son of God.

V.36 "And behold, even your relative Elizabeth has also conceived a son in her old age; and she who was called barren is now in her sixth month.

V.37 "For nothing will be impossible with God."

V.38 And Mary said, "Behold, the bondservant of the Lord; may it be done to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.

1. "may it be done to me according to your word"
  - a. Approx. nine months later – Luke 2

**Luke 2:1** Now in those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus, that a census be taken of all the inhabited earth.

V.2 This was the first census taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria.

V.3 And everyone was on his way to register for the census, each to his own city.

V.4 Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the city of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David,

V.5 in order to register along with Mary, who was engaged to him, and was with child.

V.6 While they were there, the days were completed for her to give birth.

V.7 And she gave birth to her firstborn son; and she wrapped Him in cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

1. "she gave birth to her firstborn son"
  - a. Can you imagine?
  - b. God had made man in His image & in His likeness
  - c. Now God made Himself into the image of man
    - i. God the Son denied Himself of all the prerogatives of being God & became a man

**Philippians 2:5** Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus,  
<sup>6</sup> who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped,  
<sup>7</sup> but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, *and being made in the likeness of men.*

d. We will never grasp the greatness of this event

V.8 In the same region there were some shepherds staying out in the fields and keeping watch over their flock by night.

V.9 And an angel of the Lord suddenly stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them; and they were terribly frightened.

V.10 But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which will be for all the people;

V.11 for today in the city of David *there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.*

V.12 "This will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."

1. "there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord"

a. They were looking for a King – but a Savior was born

b. What Israel didn't understand & still doesn't understand is, mankind needs a Savior & a King

c. The birth of Christ brought the Savior – He comes as King next!

**Philippians 2:6** who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped,

<sup>7</sup> but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, *and being made in the likeness of men.*

<sup>8</sup> Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

V.13 And suddenly there appeared with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying,

V.14 "Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased."

V.15 When the angels had gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds began saying to one another, "Let us go straight to Bethlehem then, and see this thing that has happened which the Lord has made known to us."

V.16 So they came in a hurry and found their way to Mary and Joseph, and the baby as He lay in the manger.

V.17 When they had seen this, they made known the statement which had been told them about this Child.

V.18 And all who heard it wondered at the things which were told them by the shepherds.

V.19 But Mary treasured all these things, pondering them in her heart.

1. "Mary... pondering them in her heart"

a. This is worth pondering – that God would become a man

b. From eternity past, He had been God – worshipped, adored, praised by all creatures

c. He left all that glory behind

**Hebrews 12:2** fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

1. "who for the joy set before Him endured the cross"

2. It is more easily translated –

"who instead of / "displacing" the joy set before Him endured the cross"

15. What would motivate God to become a man

a. Love – for whatever reason God loves us more than we can comprehend

b. The emotion of love is unexplainable, indefinable

c. What we know is that God is love

**1 John 4:8** The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love.

d. Love cannot be explained – it can only be exhibited

**1 John 4:9** By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him.

e. The closest thing to a definition of love is – 1 John 4

**1 John 4:10** In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins.

- f. God's love compelled Him to show mercy to fallen man
- g. Mercy is the act of compassion that motivated God to send His Son
  - Titus 3:5** He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit,
  - 1 Peter 1:3** Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,
- h. But His love doesn't save us – His mercy doesn't save us
- i. It is His "grace" that saves us
  - i. Grace is – all God can do for you (including salvation) b/c of what Christ has done
    - Ephesians 2:8** For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God;
- j. It is summed up for us in one passage in Ephesians
  - Ephesians 2:4** But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, <sup>5</sup> even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved),

16. This is why God emptied Himself of all the prerogatives of Deity

V.20 The shepherds went back, glorifying and praising God for all that they had heard and seen, just as had been told them.

- 1. "The shepherds went back, glorifying and praising God"
  - a. The shepherds went back to work praising God
  - b. We are to go back to living life celebrating b/c we have a Savior!
  - c. We are also to be celebrating b/c – there is a kingdom coming !

d. We will be in God's presence forever!

**Isaiah 9:6** For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.

<sup>7</sup> There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, On the throne of David and over his kingdom, To establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness From then on and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will accomplish this.

**MERRY CHRISTMAS!**