“The Covenant of Christmas: A Promise Made”

Genesis 3

(Notes based on the sermon by Pastor Steve Massey, Hayden Bible Church, 12/11/22)

The whole of the Bible is about Jesus the King. Genesis, God’s book of beginnings, shows us not only the inception of sin, but the birth of grace. Jesus is the one who sets us free from sin’s curse. Christmas proclaims the promise of everlasting life, lost in the garden, and then restored for all who believe in this King.

In the beginning, God made a perfect world, built for His glory. Adam and Eve were created to know God, love God, and trust God. Tragically, that fellowship was broken by sin. They failed to obey God, forfeiting blessing not only for themselves, but for all they represented… including you and me. Sin still reaches into all of humanity. Now read Gen. 3:15 again. Imbedded in the darkness of God’s curse upon Satan, there is good news about our Savior’s grace toward us. Do you see it? Jesus, the One who will “bruise” Satan’s head, is our eternal hope.

Some say, “Well, I haven’t done anything bad like Adam and Eve!” Oh really? Would you do any better? Read Rom. 5:18-19. Some say, “Aren’t most people basically good?” No. Gen. 3 exposes that lie. Adam and Eve’s beginnings were purely holy, yet they still sinned. Instead of living and working wholly for God’s glory, they stepped outside of His design. Here’s the kicker: **our nature makes us inclined to disobey**. God sent the flood (the ultimate mulligan!), but man continued to sin. How about you? Have you broken the boundaries that God, in His goodness, has set for you? A right understanding of Christmas includes a right understanding of Adam’s sin and your own sin.

Gen. 3:16 describes the curse of sin. It’s more than just the pain of childbirth; any parent knows that there is pain in parenting as well. Let’s face it, it’s hard to raise kids in this sin-stained world. The sin nature within them expresses itself from a very early age, doesn’t it?

Gen. 3:16-19 speaks of a world far from God’s original blueprint. We were originally made for eternal life. Now physical death and eternal death have entered the picture. Originally, we were made for true union with God (and with one another), but now we are alienated from God… and we can’t fix it on our own!

When God calls out, “Where are you?” (Gen. 3:8-9), it’s not like He can’t see them. He’s giving Adam and Eve the opportunity to repent. But in sin, God’s image-bearers hide. Even today, man’s fallen nature leads him to hide: by lying, pretending, being caught up in career or busyness or religion or ??? We try to manage what others think of us, all while hiding our shame. “Where are you?” is a gracious call, a call for Love’s sake. Have you heard God’s call? Have you proclaimed His call lately? All who believe in Him will never be put to shame. NEVER!

Read Gen. 3:21. Adam and Eve could not cover their own sin. Today we try to do the same thing by changing the definition of words or by blaming others. But God covers our sin through Jesus’ sacrifice for us (John 3:16). Friends, look beyond the Christmas baby to see the Savior on the cross.

Read Gen. 3:22-24 again. God didn’t want Adam and Eve to live forever under sin’s consequences, so He sent them from His presence. Neither they nor we can get back to perfect fellowship with Him by our own efforts. Every manmade religion tries to get right with God based on good works, but it can never be enough. But God promises a glorious future where sin’s curse is obliterated from all of creation. His covenant of grace makes it possible for us to live and serve Him forever. The gospel has all to do with what Jesus has done for you. Salvation is a gift to receive, it’s not a work for you to do. (1Cor. 15:22; Rom. 5:18-19) Have you received it?

In Eden, Adam and Eve were not perfect: they could still choose to sin… and did. But Jesus had no sin nature. And if you are in Him, YOU have a new nature! His Spirit, living within you, wars against your old sin nature. There will come a day when sin’s curse within us and sin’s curse outside of us will be removed completely! (2Cor. 5:17). As we see in Rev. 2:7, this covenant of grace comes full circle. We have a renewed possibility of eternal life through the amazing work of Jesus. May we always remember the surety of His promise to His people.

**QUESTIONS**:

1. What, specifically, was God’s purpose for Adam and Eve (and their descendants)?
2. Pastor Steve said, “A right understanding of Christmas includes a right understanding of Adam’s sin.” What does this mean?
3. Adam and Eve tried to hide their shame. People today try the same thing through lies, pretending, busyness, religion, and even shame’s twin: blame. Like the Pharisees of old, people even try to cover their sins by changing the definition of words. Can you think of any examples?
4. My friend Virgil said that accepting God’s grace through Jesus frees us from the **punishment** of sin, His Holy Spirit within us progressively frees us from the **power** of sin, and one day, when we stand before Him, we will be free from the **presence** of sin. How would you explain each of these concepts to a nonbeliever?
5. Pastor Steve talked about “the sin within” and “the sin without”. Which is harder to deal with? Why?

“Hark! the Herald Angels Sing” (Wesley)

Hark! The herald angels sing,

“Glory to the newborn King;

Peace on earth, and mercy mild,

God and sinners reconciled!”

Joyful, all ye nations rise,

Join the triumph of the skies;

With th’angelic host proclaim,

“Christ is born in Bethlehem!”

Refrain:

Hark! the herald angels sing,

“Glory to the newborn King!”