

Milk & Honey

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Spiritual Food and Encouragement for Believers in the Lord Jesus Christ

Christmas

Steve Hulshizer

It is the time of year when people around the world celebrate Christmas. Very few of them have any knowledge of its origin or of the spiritual significance of the birth of Christ. It is a religious time of the year with music, some of which is beautiful, the Messiah being an example, and of course decorations which run the gamut from a simple wreath with a red bow to homes being outlined in lights. In some cases it goes well beyond the lighting of the house with trees, animated figures, light posts, and perhaps even the mail box covered with multi-colored flashing lights.

It is of course a commercial time of the year as well. Retailers speak of the day after Thanksgiving (in the States) as “Black Friday.” It is the day that businesses hope to move from what would be a year in the red (a loss) to a year in the black (a gain). They count on Christmas sales for making their year profitable. Even the “on-line” stores provide “cyber-Monday” specials to compete with those offered on “Black Friday.” Many rise very early on Black-Friday morning, if they went to bed at all the night before, to rush to the stores for “specials” advertised for that day, and some for just a few hours. The crush when the doors open is like a tsunami wave carrying the shoppers along. In rare cases a few have been killed due to stampeding crowds.

Now it is also a nice time when family members, some of whom have not been home for some time, enjoy coming together and getting caught up on the latest family news. Some see newly born children and grandchildren for the first time, and observe how others have grown since they last saw them. Of course gifts and food add to the enjoyment.

Strangely, while it is a joyful time for many, it is a time of the year when many are depressed, and sadly suicides are not uncommon. Perhaps the shorter days and/or loneliness are contributing factors. It is a good opportunity for those of us who have families to invite those who do not to share in a meal together and perhaps other activities as well.

Now it is also a time when many speak of the birth of Christ. The story is told in many different languages and in many ways. However, despite this repetition the true importance is often missed by many of the people who celebrate Christmas.

Man has a way of muddying the water, no doubt with Satan’s help. Ornate buildings, large organs and choirs, pageantry, and spiritual sounding sermons and liturgy may be appealing to eye and the senses, but have actually hidden the simple message of the Gospel from those attending these religious services.

Let’s just allow Scripture to do the speaking by considering four questions related to the birth of Christ.

The first of these questions is, “**Who came?**” When we say “Who came” we are asking more than Who was “born” that day in the little town of Bethlehem. The One who “came” already existed and “came” into the world by way of the virgin birth. He is the One promised in Genesis chapter three. There a promise was given of One who would come and bruise or crush Satan’s head. “And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.” This promise has been fulfilled in Christ’s coming, and His death and resurrection.

The One that came that day was the one Isaiah spoke of when he said, “Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name **Immanuel** (God with us).” Isaiah also spoke of the Promised One when he wrote, “For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, **The mighty God**, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.” The One who will yet put down all rebellion and evil and establish righteousness and peace, the Messiah, had come.

Matthew confirms this in his gospel, “Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, **God with us.**” (1:23) John also wrote of Him when he said, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the **Word was God....** And the **Word was made flesh**, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.” (1:1, 14)

The second question is “**Why did He come the way He came?**” One reason He came the way He came was to fulfill prophecies made many years prior to His coming. We have already seen several of them in Genesis and in Isaiah. Micah also said, “But thou, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; **whose go-**

Filled Up With All The Fulness Of God

Bob Gessner

For out of His fullness (abundance)
we all received (John. 1:16)

The story of the feeding of the five thousand is the one miracle of Christ that is recorded in all four Gospels. One of the significant points of the miracle is the proof that it furnishes that Christ is able to give over and above all our needs. Therefore they gathered them up, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves which were left over by those who had eaten” (John. 6:13). Christ gives out of His abundance. His supply never runs out and that which He furnishes is abundantly superior to anything we can get here on earth.

When He spoke to the woman at the well, He said to her, “Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life” (John. 4:13,14). The water from this world never satisfies. All of its resources can never satisfy the thirsting soul. “For my people have committed two evils: they have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, and hewn themselves cisterns—broken cisterns that can hold no water” (Jer. 2:13).

I tried the broken cisterns, Lord,
But ah! the waters failed!
E’en as I stooped to drink they’d fled,
And mocked me as I wailed.

The younger son journeyed to a far country, and there wasted his possessions with prodigal living. But when he had spent all, there arose a severe famine in that land, and he began to be in want. And he would gladly have filled his stomach with the pods that the swine ate, and no one gave him anything, and he said, “How many of my father’s hired servants have bread *enough and to spare*, and I perish with hunger” (Luke. 15:13-17)! The Lord Jesus said, “I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall *never* hunger (John. 6:35).

We are thankful for the freedom that we have in this country, but that freedom fades into insignificance compared to the freedom that Christ gives. Although we might be free from the oppression of the government, we are really slaves to sin. Jesus said, “Whoever commits sin is a slave of sin” (John. 8:34). Before we came to Christ, we realized the terrible bondage of sin. It grips us like a vise and binds us in chains. But Christ gives liberty such as this world can never give. “So if the Son liberates you then you are really and unquestionably free” (John. 8:36).

Because Christ is able to give us water to satisfy our thirst forever, because He feeds us to the full to satisfy our eternal hunger, because He liberates us with a liberty that can never be removed, we enjoy in Him life to its abundance.

He said, “I came that they (My sheep) may have and enjoy life, and have it in abundance—to the full, till it overflows” (John. 10:10).

When each of us examines our life we soon become aware that when Christ forgave us and cleansed us from our sins we experienced the grace of God in its abundance. We continue to experience that grace day after day in our life. We become aware that His grace is abundant and can never be exhausted. We have learned that “by the one man’s offense (Adam) death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance or overflowing of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ” (Rom. 5:17). Summarizing his own life, Paul stated it in this manner, “Although I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man,...the grace of our Lord was exceedingly abundant (beyond measuring), with faith and love which are in Christ Jesus” (1 Tim. 1:13,14).

If His grace has been superabounding so also has been His mercy. Peter, who experienced bitter times of failure in his life, could say, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead” (1 Pet. 1:3). You and I have sinned so many times that we deserve to be without any hope whatsoever. His boundless mercy enables us to look beyond the hopeless ash heaps of this world to the bright and endless beauties of that eternal hope, made possible by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

How vast, how full, how free,
The mercy of our God!
Proclaim the blessed news around
And spread it all abroad
Blessed, blessed news; Mercy e’en for thee,
Flowing from the heart of God,
So vast, so full, so free!

In his delightful commentary on Ephesians, Bill MacDonald describes the superabundance of God in Christ as found in 3:20. He says “the extent of His ability is seen in the manner in which Paul pyramids words to describe superabundant blessings.”

Able
Able to do
Able do what we ask
Able to do what we think
Able to do what we ask or think
Able to do all that we ask or think
Able to do above all that we ask or think
Able to do abundantly above all that we ask or think
Able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think

For it pleased the father that in him all the fullness should dwell...for in him dwells all the fullness of the godhead bodily (Col. 1:19, 2:9). *

The Sin Offering

C.H. Mackintosh

We shall now proceed to compare the sin-offering with the burnt-offering, in doing which we shall find the two very different aspects of Christ. But although the aspects are different, it is one and the same Christ; and hence the sacrifice in each case was “without blemish.” This is easily understood. It matters not in what aspect we contemplate the Lord Jesus Christ, He must ever be seen as the same pure, spotless, holy, perfect One. True, He did, in His abounding grace, stoop to be the Sin-bearer of His people; but it was a perfect, spotless Christ who did so. The intrinsic excellence, the unsullied purity, and the divine glory of our blessed Lord appear in the sin-offering as fully as in the burnt-offering. It matters not in what relationship He stands, what office He fills, what work He performs, what position He occupies, His personal glories shine out in all their divine effulgence.

The truth of one and the same Christ, whether in the burnt-offering or in the sin-offering, is seen not only in the fact that in each case the offering was “without blemish,” but also in “the law of the sin-offering,” where we read,

This is the law of the sin-offering: In the place where the burnt-offering is killed shall the sin-offering be killed before the Lord: it is most holy (Lev. 6:25).

Both types point to one and the same great Antitype, though they present Him in such contrasted aspects of His work. In the burnt-offering, Christ is seen meeting the divine affections; in the sin-offering, He is seen meeting the depths of human need. One presents Him to us as the Accomplisher of the will of God; the other, as the Bearer of the sin of man. In the former, we are taught the preciousness of the Sacrifice; in the latter, the hatefulness of sin.

We shall now consider the typical act of “laying on of hands.” This act was common both to the burnt-offering and the sin-offering; but in the case of the former, it identified the offerer with an unblemished offering; in the case of the latter, it involved the transfer of the sin of the offerer to the head of the offering.

What, then, is the doctrine set forth in the laying on of hands? It is this: Christ was “made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him” (2 Cor. 5:21). He took our position with all its consequences, in order that we might get His position with all its consequences. He was treated as sin upon the cross, that we might be treated as righteousness in the presence of Infinite Holiness. He had to endure the hiding of God’s countenance, that we might bask in the light of that countenance. He had to pass through three hours of darkness, that we might walk in everlasting light. He was forsaken of God for a time, that we might enjoy His

presence forever. All that was due to us as ruined sinners was laid upon Him, in order that all that was due to Him as the Accomplisher of redemption might be ours. There was every thing against Him when He hung upon the cursed tree, in order that there might be nothing against us. He drank the cup of wrath, that we might drink the cup of salvation—the cup of infinite favor. He was treated according to our desserts, that we might be treated according to His.

Such is the wondrous truth illustrated by the ceremonial act of imposition of hands. When the worshiper had laid his hand upon the head of the burnt-offering, it ceased to be a question as to what he was or what He deserved, and became entirely a question of what the offering was in the judgment of Jehovah. If the offering was without blemish, so was the offerer; if the offering was accepted, so was the offerer. They were perfectly identified. The act of laying on of hands constituted them one in God’s view. He looked at the offerer through the medium of the offering.

But in the sin offering, when the offerer had laid his hand upon the head of the offering, it became a question of what the offerer was, and what he deserved. The offering was treated according to the desserts of the offerer. They were perfectly identified. The act of laying on of hands constituted them one in the judgment of God. The sin of the offerer was dealt with in the sin-offering; the person of the offerer was accepted in the burnt-offering. This made a vast difference. Hence, though the act of laying on of hands was common to both types, and was expressive of identification, yet were the consequences as different as possible. The just treated as the unjust; the unjust accepted in the just. *

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An excerpt from *Christ as seen in the Old Testament Offerings* – Write for a free copy of this 68 page book.

York Bible Study Program

November 2014 – February 2015

Date	Topic	Teacher
Dec 13	Winning Spiritual Battles	Mark Kolchin
Jan 10	Sanctification	Dan Weaver
Feb 14	Book of Nehemiah	Bob Spender

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**For unto you is born this day in the city of David a
Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. Luke 2:11**

December, 2014

Continued from page 1 — Christmas

have been from of old, from everlasting. (5:2) Certainly this was God Himself in the Person of His Son Jesus Christ. The writer of the epistle to the Hebrews declares this truth so clearly, “God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us **by his Son**, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;” (Read Heb. 1:1-3)

A second reason He came by the virgin birth was that it kept Him separate from the line of Adam and the sin transmitted to all those born in his line. (Rom. 5:12-14) The Promised One was “holy” (Matt. 1:35), and as such lived a perfect life which enabled Him to be a sacrifice for the sin of Adam’s race. (Heb. 12:12) Peter writes, “Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things.... But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb **without blemish and without spot:**” (1:18-19)

The third question is “Why did He come?” Matthew records the words of an angel to Joseph, “And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall **save his people from their sins.**” (1:21) Luke records the message to the shepherds, “For unto you is born this day in the city of David a **Saviour**, which is Christ the Lord.” (2:11) Luke also records, “For the Son of man is come to seek and to **save** that which was lost.”

The fourth question is, “Why must one accept Christ as personal Savior?” Christ gave us the answer when He said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.” (John 14:6) There is a judgment to be saved from. “How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?” “And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: (Heb. 2:3; 9:27) Christ is the only way to be saved.

Not only is there judgment to be saved *from*, there is heaven to be *gained*. Christ said, “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.” (John 10:27-28) John states it simply in John 3:16. “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” *

Spring Conference

April 11, 2015

Held at the North York Gospel Chapel

David Dunlap, Tom Irwin

10AM - 3PM, Lunch served

Obedience

William Lincoln

Taking from writings on Genesis 3

Obedience that may not be tested is no obedience at all. Here the question is simply one of God’s authority, and of man’s ready subjection to Him. The test was a perfect one. Had God made it to be in some question of moral evil, such would not have so distinctly asserted the authority of God. But here the partaking of the fruit was only evil, because God had forbidden it. There was no *reason* why the fruit should not be eaten, other than the plain command of God. Many now likewise judge of obedience after the flesh likewise. They can see some reason why they should live honestly; but such commands as relate to Baptism or the Supper of the Lord, for instance, are stigmatized as unnecessary. There is no real perception of God, and of His will being supreme, in such cases. *