

# The Genesis of Christmas

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Preacher: Riaan Boer

[ 0 : 00 ] O Father in heaven, we thank you that on this day we are able by your grace, O God, to celebrate and commemorate the birth of your son, the Lord Jesus Christ of the Virgin Mary.

We give praise to you, O Lord, for sending your son into this world to save us from our sins, Lord, to restore, to redeem, to deliver, and to reconcile us unto you.

O God, we ask now as we find ourselves in the scriptures, we pray and we ask now that you would bless this time, Lord, that you would open our eyes, that we'd see wonderful things in your word, and we ask that you would be pleased and that you'd be glorified.

Father, these mercies we ask in Jesus' name. Amen. And so the Bible, as we begin to read, especially in Genesis, Genesis chapter 3, the Bible from beginning points us to the coming of a Savior.

The coming of a Savior, and if we mean by Christmas the coming of Christ to save, to deliver, and to rescue His people, then the whole Bible to an extent is about Christmas.

[ 1 : 15 ] Christmas is a rescue story because there is a lost people. Christmas is a love story because there is a loving God.

Christmas is a hopeful story because even as we read here in Genesis chapter 3, hope seems to fade, darkness seems to enter.

Christmas is a hopeful story because of the promise that it holds for all of us. Christmas is a love story because of the promise that it is a love story. What we see in the Gospels, when we read the birth of Christ in Matthew, Luke, and to a certain extent John, what we see in the Gospels with the birth of Christ is not some special insertion or sideshow to the story of the Bible.

Oh, yeah, we've got, you know, biblical narratives, and here's Jesus out of the blue. No, the whole Bible points and is about and follows the plot that God will send His Son to save us from our sins. Therefore, we need to go to the beginning, and this morning, I want us to think on the subject of the genesis of Christmas. Where did the need, the cause for Christmas come from? Where did the need for Jesus' birth and coming into this world come from?

[ 2 : 35 ] The answer, I think we find right here. And so I want to raise a few points as we walk through this chapter and see exactly just that, the genesis of Christmas. Firstly, note, I want you to see the abundant goodness of God.

Genesis 3 is a story about how mankind fell from the goodness of God. A sin is just that, our deprivation and our abandonment, our falling away from the goodness of God.

Sin entered and has distorted in the hearts of mankind the goodness of God, and so that it now calls evil good and good evil.

It has made us apprehensive for the good, for the good that God is. It has made us excited for the evil that God forbids.

What we need to recapture really is a sense of God's goodness, which is why the psalmist invites us to taste and see that the Lord is good. And so as we begin to tell the story of Christmas, the beginning of Christmas, we must start with God who is good.

[ 3 : 45 ] God is the essence of goodness. The 17th century Presbyterian writer, William Bates, he writes and he says, infinite goodness shined forth in creation.

He says, this is the leading attribute of God that calls forth the rest to work. It is goodness that excites in the mind of this Puritan author as he looks at the scriptures.

It is the goodness of God that excites the other attributes of God to come to work in creation. It is the goodness of God that is the leading attribute, as it were.

It is therefore solely to the goodness of God that we owe creation, the heavens and the earth. God's goodness is not only seen in that he created a good world, but also in the motive to create, the

reason he created, the intent to create, the determination to create.

God signals his goodness in the first work that he goes about doing. This is why, for example, the author we just quoted, he continues and he says, it's evident therefore that only three, and I like the way he puts this, only three and unexcited goodness moved God to create all things, that he might impart being and happiness to the creature.

[ 5 : 08 ] God created so that he might impart and give life. It wasn't just a creation for creation itself, but it was creation to display his goodness in imparting and giving life so that he might be cherished, so that he might make happy.

These are the motives behind creation. Again, God did not create us just to have us wander aimlessly. God did not create us and give us life for us just to place burdens upon us and to make us miserable beings in this fallen world living under the sun.

Instead, God's creation, God's good intent in creation is to give us life, to cause us to flourish, to help us to find joy and happiness in him. Now, the opening of Genesis 3 continues to remind us of the fact that God created the world and everything in it.

We read, for instance, that even the serpent, one of God's creations, he was more crafty than any of the other beasts of the field that the Lord God had made. And so it carries the theme of God's good creation intent.

He created man in his image. He gave him dominion over the earth. Adam came from nothing. He was given everything. Not only everything, but everything good.

[ 6 : 28 ] God made him a fruitful and producing earth. And on top of that, God gave him a helper and a wife in Eve.

Together they were to be fruitful and multiply and rule the earth. That's God's creation intent. Create a good world. Fill it with all goodness. Create man in his image to reproduce that goodness on the earth.

Bless man with all that is good. Psalm 101 reads, Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth.

Serve the Lord with gladness. Come into his presence with singing. Know that the Lord, he is God. It is he who made us and we are his. We see the creation intent throughout the scriptures.

And what we find in Genesis 1 and 2 is a God who gives, who creates, who bless, who encourages. In fact, the New Testament book of James reminds us that all that is good and perfect comes from God.

[ 7 : 33 ] So then God is the seat of goodness. And from him all goodness comes and flows. Again, the word good is often downplayed and we call many things today good.

But here we must understand when we speak of God as good, we are speaking of his moral perfection. We are speaking of his unblemished majesty.

We are speaking of his untainted excellency. So we read in Genesis 1 verse 31 that God saw everything he had made and behold, it was very good.

It was very good. This is what one commentator calls a divine evaluation of all of creation. God's evaluation of what he had done. It was good.

Genesis 3 begins with that idea. God calls what he has made very good. Now, there's one thing that God had said was not good while he was busy making all things in Genesis chapter 2 verse 18.

[ 8 : 39 ] It is not good for man to be alone. So God created woman. But I want you to see that what God created, he created because he was good out of his goodness and it is thus good.

God sought, we could even say, man's goodness in creation. He was created fearfully and wonderfully. He placed on man good, placed man in a good and abundant earth and intended for him and for her, Adam and for Eve, to obey him and thereby flourish.

So that's where we start the story of Christmas with the abundant goodness of God in creating the world, in creating all that we see and creating us for that excellent good, for that majestic good.

That is the object of our, that ought to be the object of our lives and our affections and our will, the goodness of God. That ought to be the direction that our lives point to, the goodness of God.

That ought to be what we seek in our life, that which God created, which was good. We ought to be striving after the good. However, as you've read Genesis chapter 3, there's a problem.

[ 9 : 51 ] So I wanted to quickly see the diabolical plan of Satan. We are introduced to a crafty serpent in Genesis chapter 3 with diabolical intentions. The contrast could not be more stark.

The perfection of goodness and the epitome of evil. Here we find, as opposed to what God had set out to do, here we find Satan seeking to destroy, to kill, and to ruin.

Destroy, to kill, and to ruin. His strategy, let's follow along his strategy. We'll read in chapter 3 verse 1. His strategy is to twist God's word.

Notice chapter 3 verse 1. He said to the woman, Did God really say you must not eat from any tree in the garden? His strategy is to twist God's word.

It is to bring to our, it's to cause, to enter into our hearts a distrust of what God has said in the scriptures. Notice what God had exactly said in chapter 2 verse 16.

[10:16] We read, And the Lord God commanded the man, You are free to eat from any tree in the garden, but you must not eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Notice what Satan says. Did God really say you must not eat from any tree in the garden?

And then we begin to see a twist on God's word. Satan distorts God's word, focusing on the prohibition instead of the provision.

God says you are free to eat of anything. There's free goodness available for you, Adam and Eve. Satan said, Did God really say you can't eat of anything? Did God really say you shall not?

Instead of God said you shall eat of every tree. Satan wants God's word to appear harsh and restrictive, to appear burdensome, to appear cold, and to appear unconcerned.

We see a strategy also, dispute God's judgment. Satan. Chapter 3 verse 4, You will not certainly die, said the serpent. You will not certainly die, disputing the judgment of God, calling into question, again, the word of God.

[12:10] God said, In the day you will eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, you will surely die. Satan said, You will surely not die. A complete denial, rejection, dispute of God's judgment.

Satan continues. We see a strategy, twist God's word, dispute God's judgment. Then we also see, contest God's goodness. Challenge God's goodness. Notice verse 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.

God doesn't want you to have that, Satan is implying. Whatever good intention God had for you to refrain from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, there's no good in that.

He's contesting the good intentions, the goodness of God. And He does this not only in the garden, He's probably doing it today in our lives as well.

Contesting the goodness. Surely that, what God said in you doing it that way, it's not best for you. It's not good for you. And so we see, He twists God's word, He disputes God's judgment, and He contests, He challenges the good intentions of God.

[13:29] God doesn't mean this for your good. He wants us to doubt whether God is good, or whether God intends good. The whole plot and plan were to cast man into ruin.

Satan's objective was to lure man away from the goodness of God and cause man to enter into fellowship with misery, fellowship with darkness, fellowship with sin.

He himself had fallen, himself fell from the goodness of God. Satan fell from the goodness of God as God created him, as this angelic being, in all splendor, glory, magnificence, as an archangel, as an angelic being can possess.

And he fell from this. And so now he's seeking company. He's seeking companionship in his misery, companionship in his doom. And so we see the abundant goodness of God, the diabolical plans of Satan, and unfortunately we see the miserable fall of man.

Man entertains the devil. That's where our problem starts when we start questioning God and giving voice and giving ear and giving attention to that which is opposed to God.

[14:42] To that which seeks to challenge God. And so Eve, Adam and Eve, both responsible, they start entertaining the devil.

In fact, it's not advisable for us to engage in conversations with that old serpent, the Lucifer, the devil himself.

Even the archangel Michael, when he was disputing over the body of Moses, the book of Jude teaches us, he said, the Lord rebukes you. We may not have the strength and the capacity to engage on that level of a fight.

Which is why the book of Ephesians tells us that we stand firm in the Lord and in the strength of His might. And so we see the miserable fall of man by entertaining the devil, allowing for that conversation, allowing for the seed of doubt to be planted through entering into the conversation with the serpent.

And so we see man entertains the devil. We see in verse 6, man is tempted by his lusts. 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.

[16:01] We see the progression of this fall, entertaining the devil, leads to being tempted by lusts, by our desires. The devil doesn't cause us and make us to sin, but he sets the context and he sets the right conditions that causes our hearts to be conducive to temptation and provokes lusts in our hearts, desires for things that are not pleasing to God.

Man entertains the devil, man is tempted by his lusts. And then verse 6, man sins against God by doing exactly what God said he must not do. By doing exactly what God prohibited him against. And so we see verse 6, she also gave, undesirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate, she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate.

But God had established the covenant here in the garden with Adam and Eve, that if they are obedient, that if they listen to him, if they follow his commandment, that there's goodness for them in store, there's flourishing for them in store, there's literally heaven on earth and glory for them in store, but if they break his commandment, if they eat of the tree that he prohibited them to eat from, they will die.

That promise of life will be, will cease, that promise of life will be turned to death. They will die. The continuation to enjoy the goodness of God will end.

[17:38] Right here, the test is for us, for mankind, for human beings, our first parents, Adam and Eve, put in a garden, tested, that if they obey God, that there will be glory, there will be wonder, there will be joy, there will be goodness, forevermore, everlasting for them in the garden.

The test is set before them. It's not about an apple, it's not about a fruit, it's not about a tree, but it's about breaking the law of God, it's about disobedience to God, it's about violating a covenant that God had brought about here in the garden.

It's about failing, as God had set up the conditions for our flourishing, it's about being tempted away from that.

And so we see the miserable fall of man. Man's eyes are open, open to evil, open to sin, guilt, previously only knew the goodness of God, but now his eyes are open to good and evil.

We see in verse 7, man stands in shame. We see Adam and Eve hides from God. And we see in verse 8 to 12, he's a sinner. And that's the progression of the fall of our first parents, Adam and Eve.

[18:55] Entertained the devil, tempted by lust, sinned against God, eyes were open to evil, sin and guilt, stood before God in shame, hid from God and now sinners.

Sinners. This leads to the second last point for our time this morning, the terrible judgment of God. The terrible judgment of God. Well, what's God's response to this?

Sweep it under the carpet? What's God's response to this? Turn a blind eye to it? What's God's response to the first two human beings that he had created? Giving them a probation?

Giving them a trial? Giving them a test? They failed it miserably? God who is righteous, just, holy? What's his response to this? Well, firstly, they remained in a state of sin.

There was no immediate change in that. They remained in a state of sin. Naked, afraid, hiding, full of shame. They remained in that state.

[19:56] That's God's judgment to give us over to our natural impulses. to allow that. And then we see God coming and interrogating them, asking questions.

They hide from God. He seeks them out. And God engages in dialogue with Adam, with Eve, and with the serpent.

And we see the judgment of the serpent. We see the judgment of the woman. And then we see the judgment on Adam. Sin, at least the wages of sin the Bible teaches us, is death.

The reason this world is dark, violent, the reason this world is full of evil, the reason we hear just of the most heinous of crimes when we switch on the news, and listen to it, is because of what happened and transpired in the garden.

When what God intended was discarded for man's own lusts and desires. And God, because He's righteous and just, cannot sweep it under the carpet, cannot look away and just ignore it, but brought upon judgment.

[21:23] so we have this sorry state of affairs that we still feel today. Our lostness of former glory, our estrangement from God's goodness, the hardships of this world and the conflict, the strife and the suffering that followed.

Genesis 3 starts with the world full of God's goodness, God's abundant goodness, but Genesis chapter 3 ends with the world stained by the fall from that goodness.

My friends, that's not where the story ends. And this is where the Genesis of Christmas comes in. Notice chapter 3 verse 15, as God addresses the serpent, He says, There's hope for us there. If nothing else is understandable in that section, there's at least hope in this that the serpent's head will be crushed. The serpent's head will be crushed.

God says to the serpent, I will put enmity between you, and between your offspring and her offspring. Now what is meant here by the seed of the serpent is of course all those who follow in the like evil and unbelief as the serpent did.

[ 22 : 53 ] And they are contrasted with the seed of the woman, those who follow after God. There's going to be enmity between the godly and the ungodly. Enmity between evil and good.

There's this battle that we see between righteousness and unrighteousness. The contest, the moral contest. But now it moves from the collective to the singular.

Notice chapter 3 verse 15, it moves from that collective to the singular, from the many to the one, when God says, he shall bruise your head, the serpent, and you shall bruise his heel.

God is promising that there will come a seed of the woman who will bruise the head of the serpent. That is to say, deal a fatal blow to the devil.

Deal a fatal blow to darkness, to evil, to wickedness, to unrighteousness, to all that which thought a triumph in the face of goodness.

[ 23 : 59 ] this will come about also through the woman's seed. Notice the woman's seed's suffering. You, that's the devil, that's the serpent, you shall bruise his heel.