

Why? Understanding God's Motive

The Reason for the Season (Part One)

If you grew up in the church as I did, you have heard and read the “Christmas story” all of your life hundreds of times. You know that OT prophecies that foretold Messiah is coming and the two gospel accounts of the birth and all that preceded and came after from the angels to the shepherds to the wise men and their gifts. It excites me still, but, sadly, too many have become numbed by it or overwhelmed by the commercialism that pervades even our families.

First let me explain the word *Christmas*. Its origin is somewhat debated, but, basically, it grew out of just what it sounds like—*Christ* and *mass*. In the old Catholic church, saints had their days—ones in which he or she was celebrated with a mass (a service in which communion was served). It may be as simple as the contraction of those two words. Christ deserved to have a mass or celebration service to honor Him. There are many thoughts on why December 25 is the right day or not, and even the year is up to debate. We will not concern ourselves with any of that today.

What was God's motive for bringing to bear on humanity this season we refer to as *Christmas* that culminates on one day in late December. Today we are going to let Him answer that question from His Word. To do so, we must look back in His-story—all the way back to the beginning. I could give you the answer now, but we are better served by walking through time and His Word to understand why He acted in the ways He did.

Perfection. First you need to know I believe and teach the Genesis account as literal truth. At the end of Creation week, perfect, holy God, the Father Son and Holy Spirit had

set into being and order a perfect world with two humans, created in their image, to enjoy all it had to offer (save one tree) and steward its care, development and expansion. Only one thing withheld for their good-one forbidden fruit. (Genesis 2: 15-17) *Note, Eve was not yet created when God gave Adam this command.*

The Genesis 3 World

- Temptation begot pride (I want that!). (vs 1 – 5)
- Pride begot disobedience. (I will have it.) (v. 6)
- Disobedience begot sin (defiance of God's command). (v. 7)
- Sin begot death. (2:17)

The First Prophecy that a Savior would come at the appointed time.

- The Protoevangelium. (v. 15)

The Mercy and Grace of God

- The first blood sacrifice. (v. 21)
- Despite their disobedience, God spared Adam and Eve.

The Wrath and Justice of God

- Driven from Paradise. (vs. 23-24)
- Physical death entered the world. (v 19)
- From this point forward creation groaned as it began to decay just like men. (v. 17)

For the next ten generations (1,656 years) God patiently waited but man only grew worse not better. He did not learn from his mistakes, or the punishment of God.

Noah's World (Genesis 6 – 10)

- The loss of patience, grief, and regret of God. (Genesis

6: 5-7)

- The wrath and justice of God (Genesis 6: 7)
- Noah was different. (Genesis 6: 8-9) Again we see the grace of God (v8)

The Judgment of God on sinful and demon-possessed men.

- The entire living creature world died as a result—man and beast, fowls, and insects. Anything that moved or breathed.
- God hates sin and His perfection and holiness cannot abide it.
- So He destroyed all who continued to perpetuate sin and sinful lifestyles.
- The Rainbow Covenant (Genesis 9: 11-17)
- God will completely destroy sin and sinners again when Christ returns, but not by water.

Abram and Abraham. (Genesis 11 – 25)

- The Promises of God
 - His Covenant (Genesis 12: 1-9)
 - A legitimate heir (Genesis 15, 21)
- God's impossible demand (Genesis 22: 1-2)
- Abraham's obedience (vs 3 – 10)
- God's mercy, and grace (vs 11-12)
- God's provision (v 13-14)

The History of the nation of Israel

The rest of the Old Testament from Genesis 25 (after the death of Abraham) thru Malachi is the history of God's people called Israel after the name of Jacob. He was given that name after he wrestled with God and "prevailed". (Genesis 32: 28)

The cycle of their lives went something like this:

- Obedience to God and His law...great favor and prosperity
- Disobedience to His law and entangling with false gods (adultery)...God's punishment.
- Confession and repentance...God's forgiveness and reconciliation.

The cycle continued as the sins grew worse. God sent prophets to warn and remind them of the law as well as His favor and anger-wrath. They became so enticed and entangled with foreign gods and kings, God finally had enough. After years of warning through prophets, God finally had enough and gave them over to their sins. All of Israel was destroyed in two separate times. 722 northern kingdom to Assyria. 5846 Judah to Babylon. While the nation was gone, **God did not completely destroy His people.** Another example of His mercy. They were captives of other pagan nations and later scattered (diaspora) throughout the known world. No more nation of Israel for more than 2,600 years (1948 after WWII).

We moved very quickly from the fall of man in Genesis 3 to the end of Israel in Malachi 4, the last prophet, and the end of the Old Testament. It would appear that the story of God's people was finished with a very sad ending. Yet we know from His-story that it did not end there. Why?

Why didn't God just let that story end there? From the beginning, mankind, including God's own nation were sinful, willfully disobedient, and defiant. Why did He continue to exercise divine patience, mercy, and grace to such undeserving people? The one-word answer is **Love**.

- *The love of God was present during creation. His love brought us into being.*
- *The love of God spared Adam and Eve from eternal life in a fallen world.*
- *The love of God promised a Savior and the ultimate defeat of our fiercest enemy.*
- *The love of God saved Noah and his family from the*

destruction of the flood.

- *The love of God stayed the obedient hand of Abraham to prevent him from sacrificing Isaac.*
- *The love of God spared and reconciled His sinful people for many generations before giving them over to their own lusts and sins. Even then He did not destroy them altogether.*

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ, God's motive is pure and simple—**love**. It is one of the essential parts of His nature. It begins within the mysterious love relationship between the three Persons of the Holy Trinity, part of which John revealed to us.

“For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself is doing;” John 5: 20a

There is much I could say about this, but this is sufficient for today. It is enough to know that, even today, despite all our sins—willful disobedience and defiance, God loves us no matter what. He cannot not love us.

My strong admonition is this: do not be misled as so many are today. The camp on the love of God and stop because it is all they want to know. But they stop short. Their understanding is limited and narrow rather than complete and encompassing the full counsel of God. The love of God is indeed His motive, but that is only the beginning of His-story. For there are many other attributes within the perfect (complete) nature or personality of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Let all who hear or read these words and join us next week because now that we know His motive, we will dive deeply into His Message.

For Christ's sake,

Walter

