

GBC *Connection*

“For to us a child is born, to us a son is given and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace there will be no end ...”. Isaiah 9:6 records the prophecy of the birth of Christ. Isn't this a powerful verse! I particularly get goosebumps when I read the second part of verse 6 through 7, “ ... And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the LORD Almighty will accomplish this. WOW! This is our powerful God!

I have really been reflecting on the power of the Christmas story and it's impact on the gospel. Without the fulfilling of this prophecy, God could not claim to be who he says He is. Moreover, if Christ did not come to this earth and die for our sins there is no forgiveness of sins, redemption, we would not be saved from God's wrath. There would be no gospel to speak of.

In my Sunday school class we have been learning that all men were born sinful after Adam & Eve disobeyed God in the Garden of Eden. Their hearts were once a reflection of who God is, but as a result of sin they became dark and unlike God. In order for them to be accepted by God, He commanded them to sacrifice the blood of animals to “cover” or be a propitiation for their sins. In a sense their sins were “swept under the rug”, not dealt with in entirety but only covered by the blood. God used this Old Testament example to teach that blood was needed to cover sin. He had a plan to send his Son, to die for us and shed his blood, a one-time sacrifice, not to just be a cover, but to fully atone for sins.

Romans 6:23, tells us that the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. Let me repeat the first part again, the wages of sin is death! God is serious about sin, and our sinful nature is leading us to death – spiritual and physical death. This means Hell and separation from God. However, the good news of the gospel is that Christ makes a way for us to have eternal life with him. Romans 10:9 is the key, “That if you confess with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord’, and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved”. Hence, the gospel message.

Making the Connection

Without the birth of Christ we do not have the death of Christ which is key to the Christian faith. For those who have made a profession of faith – let us thank God that we are redeemed! Hallelujah! Let us do as James 1:22 tells us, “Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. DO WHAT IT SAYS”. Show

the fruit of your faith by obeying God's commands. And share your fruit with others. Your fruit is ultimately rooted in the gospel of Salvation. We are all disciples of Christ and called to share the “good news” with others. So let's do it. We do not have to be evangelists to share God's word. It should be evident in how we live, and if we share our lives with others, we will also be sharing Christ with them. Their key is being open and willing to share your life, and make an effort to build relationships at work, with family, or new acquaintances. We weren't called to a life where we continually maximize our comforts and pleasures. We need to seek out people we can help and share our lives with.

Taking Action

Try reading Isaiah 9 and then flip over to Matthew 1:18-26, and finally John 19:28-20:31. Carefully ponder the importance of these scriptures.

Next, I want you to think about your testimony, your story of how you met Jesus and what how God has impacted your life. Now, I challenge you to share this with someone that is not necessarily a close friend or relative this Christmas holiday.

Lastly, I want to leave you with this Christmas creed to muse.

I believe in Jesus Christ and in the beauty of the gospel begun in Bethlehem.

I believe in the one whose spirit glorified a little town; and whose spirit still brings music to persons all over the world, in towns both large and small.

I believe in the one for whom the crowded inn could find no room, and I confess that my heart still sometimes wants to exclude Christ from my life today.

I believe in the one who the rulers of the earth ignored and the proud could never understand; whose life was among common people, whose welcome came from persons of hungry hearts.

I believe in the one who proclaimed the love of God to be invincible:

I believe in the one whose cradle was a mother's arms, whose modest home in Nazareth had love for its only wealth, who looked at person and made them see what God's love saw in them, who by love brought sinners back to purity, and lifted human weakness up to meet the strength of God.

I confess my ever-lasting need of God: The need of forgiveness for our selfishness and greed, the need of new life for empty souls, the need of love for hearts grown cold.

I believe in God who gives us the best of himself. I believe in Jesus, the son of the living God, born in Bethlehem this night, for me and for the world.

Walter Russell Bowie
<http://blessingsofchristmas.com>

Suggested Reading: Isaiah 9; Matthew 1:18-26; John 19:28-20:31

Memorization: Isa. 9:6-7

The purpose of GBC (Graphite Bible Chapel) Connection is for reflection and further personal study to make a deeper connection between the Sunday teaching and our daily lives.

Also available online at www.graphitebiblechapel.com