

Salvation Has Come

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[Advent message]

We have all made mistakes; so we all need a Messiah; we have all sinned, so we all need salvation. Satan is out to deceive and destroy everyone who will allow him, therefore, we need to follow God's plan of salvation—which began Matthew 1:21 “*And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.*”

The devil corrupts anything and everything possible, and he constantly tries to divert our attention from spiritual concerns to secular matters. Only true and active faith in the atoning sacrifice of the Lord Jesus can save anyone. God wants everyone to repent and be saved, but Satan wants everyone to sin and be lost. It is a serious battle for the soul every day.

We should continually thank and praise God for the gift of His Spirit—who inspires faith in us to trust God every day. *Salvation has come* in the flesh, to deliver us from judgment that will be unleashed on a wicked world. We need not despair because 1 John 4:4 “*Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.*”

The devil's darkness cannot overpower the Savior's light that He brought into our world. John 12:46 “*I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness.*” We can know of God's salvation plan, but after *knowing* it, we must *live* it every

day. Our attention, our thoughts, and our faith must be focused on the Atonement Blood of Christ concerning every issue—He alone is able to give salvation to those who truly believe.

The season is supposed to be about loving others, showing good will toward people, and thanking God for the greatest Gift ever. 1 John 4:8 “*God is love. 9 In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. 10 Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.*”

This season represents good will; Christ-like attitudes; giving of gifts; and a general good feeling toward everyone. Statistics say that crime lowers drastically on that one day. Could not this love, concern, and consideration for others continue after the holiday and all through the year—is the question. But the answer is 1 John 5:19 “*The whole world lieth in wickedness.*”

We must be on guard and not allow the evil one to distract us from living God's Truth every day; to not allow Satan to have us be resentful about *anything* toward *anyone*. Ephesians 4:32 “*Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.*” We must guard against being discontented because God has already richly blessed us.

The reason for the season is to recall what Jesus came to say; to love each other, as He loves us. Consideration for the feelings of others must always come *first*, and the accumulating of *things* a distant *second*. 1 John 5:2 “*By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. 3 For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.*”

During this season, many read through the first chapters of Matthew and Luke to recall the gospel accounts of the birth of Christ. It is good

reading any time and any season, because there is always something new and important to learn from reading any Scripture.

Joseph's response to the news of Mary's condition is a reminder of how we should always consider the feelings of others. As an act of kindness and consideration, Joseph just wanted to do the right thing, and not bring shame or embarrassment to anyone. He would not be able to proceed with the marriage, because he was not the father of the Child.

He was grieved at the thought of Mary's humiliation, although it was common at that time to heap shame on anyone who was known to be unfaithful in marriage. Joseph's concern was not for himself, however, but for the feelings of Mary. Matthew 1:19 “*Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly.*” All too many today show no concern, love, or consideration toward their spouse or fiancé. If people would respond with the same divine love and concern as Joseph did, many more marital problems would be solved rather than dissolved.

Joseph did not know what had taken place, but he still did not want Mary to be humiliated. Her feelings and reputation was his concern, so he decided to just back out of the relationship. The Lord then intervenes in a vision and says Matthew 1:20 “*Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to bring home your wife Mary, for she is with child through the Holy Spirit.*”

The announcement verifies both the virgin birth and that Jesus is from the royal line of King David. The deity of Christ as God in nature and human form, had to be clearly stated in the gospel accounts, because it is vitally important, and there can be no misunderstanding God's salvation plan. This one-time payment for the sins of the world, through a perfect blood sacrifice,

would not be possible if *God* had not become *man*.

The Good News of the Gospel is, that Jesus was both human and divine, so the sacrifice was accepted by God as a *perfect* sacrifice. Knowing of the deity of Christ and fully understanding that He was God by nature, is essential to our salvation. Now we understand the importance of Jesus' words to the Pharisees *John 8:24* "I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins."

Jesus had only one *human* parent, Mary, so He could sympathize with *humans*. Jesus, as God the Messiah, *Hebrews 4:15* "was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." The Divine Trinity consists of *three* Persons acting as *One* Person to offer us salvation through faith in the *second* Person.

The Jews of that day would not be surprised to hear about an announcement of the Messiah's birth. They knew the Scriptures *Micah 5:2* "But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, Though you are little among the thousands of Judah, Yet out of you shall come forth to Me The One to be Ruler in Israel, Whose goings forth are from of old, From everlasting."

They would be familiar with *Genesis 3:15* "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers." The Lord and the serpent would constantly wage a spiritual war against each other. It is the *light* of God's truth vs the *darkness* of Satan's lie.

The birth of Christ was the fulfillment of prophecy; *Isaiah 7:14* "Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel; God with us" *Matthew 1:23*. The Son of God would be *born* of a virgin; would *live* on earth; and then *die* on a cross to offer salvation to

all who would *believe* Him and *trust* Him in faith every day for everything.

The significance of the unique birth of Christ at Bethlehem, is told in the vision God gave to Joseph. *Matthew 1:24* "Then Joseph, being aroused from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took to him his wife, and did not know her till she had brought forth her firstborn Son. And he called His name JESUS."

Joseph was, no doubt, glad to understand what the Lord told him in the vision. Now he could go ahead with plans to take Mary as his wife, and that he could rejoice because of having the honor and privilege of raising God's Son. Matthew makes it clear that Mary remained a virgin until after Jesus was born. Later, however, some asked *Mark 6:3* "Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, and Joses, and of Juda, and Simon? And are not his sisters here with us?" Mary needed a Savior like everyone else; *Luke 1:46* And said: "My soul magnifies the Lord."

Although many do not believe a virgin birth as possible, it just reveals the widespread unbelief in the world, and how much power Satan has over people—convincing them to accept a lie and reject the truth.

The divinity of Christ, His virgin birth, and His sinless life on earth are of absolute vital importance; because *Romans 3:12* "All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one." *Romans 3:23* "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." Since Jesus was perfect as God, only He could offer a perfect sacrifice for sin.

Luke's detailed genealogy of Christ affirms the credentials of our Lord; who was *Luke 3:38* "The son of Enosh, the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God." When Adam deliberate-

ly sinned, by disobeying God's Word, every descendant of his has been stained by that sin.

Jesus, however, came into the world as the kind of man Adam *once* was. Jesus, like Adam before he sinned, was sinless, having a perfect image of the Father, and obeying His will in everything. God said *Luke 3:22* "Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased."

While He was here on earth, Jesus was like His followers—He was tempted, persecuted, hated, and rejected—He was both fully God and fully human. God's promise to Abraham was based on one person. *Galatians 3:16* "He saith not, and to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ."

The family tree of Christ consists of far more than a list of Hebrew names—it is a testimony to God's love, mercy, grace, and forgiveness. Jesus was born to be a friend of sinners; *Luke 5:32* "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." Regardless of our *sin*, Jesus invites us *in* to His family of believers. We just need to accept His offer of forgiveness, and then begin a new life of faith in Him by the power of the Holy Spirit.

The supernatural birth of the Lord Jesus at Bethlehem is a necessary component in our understanding of His deity as our Savior. The divine plan, conception, birth, ministry, and perfect sacrifice of Atonement has never before, nor since, been offered. *125, vs 3—Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace! Hail the Son of Righteousness! Light and life to all He brings; Risen with healing in His wings.*



www.fcqchurch.org

PO Box 24283

Philadelphia, PA 19120

info@fcqchurch.org