

THE LONG WAIT FOR A SON

Advent 2022, Genesis 3:15, 12:1-9

November 27, 2022

*And I will put enmity between you and the woman,
between her offspring and hers;
he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.*
Genesis 3:15

When you're waiting for an Advent miracle

So how come history,
Takes such a long, long time?
When you're waiting for a, When you're waiting for a,
When you're waiting for a miracle
Bruce Cockburn, 1986

¹⁶ *Bind up the testimony and seal up the law among my disciples.*

¹⁷ *I will wait for the LORD, who is hiding his face from the house of Jacob.
I will put my trust in him.*

Isaiah 8

Nevertheless, there will be no more gloom for those who were in distress. In the past he humbled the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the future he will honor Galilee of the Gentiles, by the way of the sea, along the Jordan—

² *The people walking in darkness
have seen a great light;
on those living in the land of the shadow of death
a light has dawned.*

Isaiah 9

1. Advent matters because waiting is hard work
2. Advent matters because God's people too often identify with darkness
3. Advent matters because the light comes from the outside
4. Advent matters because God's providence is mysterious

Questions sonship answers

¹⁵ *And I will put enmity between you and the woman,
and between your offspring and hers;
he will crush your head,
and you will strike his heel.”*

Genesis 3

The LORD had said to Abram, “Leave your country, your people and your father’s household and go to the land I will show you.

² *“I will make you into a great nation
and I will bless you;
I will make your name great,
and you will be a blessing.*

³ *I will bless those who bless you,
and whoever curses you I will curse;
and all peoples on earth
will be blessed through you.”*

⁴ *So Abram left, as the LORD had told him; and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he set out from Haran. ⁵ He took his wife Sarai, his nephew Lot, all the possessions they had accumulated and the people they had acquired in Haran, and they set out for the land of Canaan, and they arrived there.*

⁶ *Abram traveled through the land as far as the site of the great tree of Moreh at Shechem. At that time the Canaanites were in the land. ⁷ The LORD appeared to Abram and said, “To your offspring I will give this land.” So he built an altar there to the LORD, who had appeared to him.*

Genesis 12

“ The LORD declares to you that the LORD himself will establish a house for you: ¹² When your days are over and you rest with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, who will come from your own body, and I will establish his kingdom. ¹³ He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. ¹⁴ I will be his father, and he will be my son. When he does wrong, I will punish him with the rod of men, with floggings inflicted by men. ¹⁵ But my love will never be taken away from him, as I took it away from Saul, whom I removed from before you. ¹⁶ Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever.’ ”

¹⁷ *Nathan reported to David all the words of this entire revelation.*

2 Samuel 7

1. The story of sonship explains our need for a Savior
2. The story of sonship uncovers God’s promise of a Savior
3. The story of sonship begins to reveal the character of the Savior

Living this side of Christ's Sonship

1. Sonship

⁴ But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, ⁵ to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons. ⁶ Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, "Abba, Father." ⁷ So you are no longer a slave, but a son; and since you are a son, God has made you also an heir.

Galatians 4. See also John 3:16!

2. The story of Sonship can help us with a realistic perspective on sin, evil, and great hope in our battle with Satan. Note: This is one of the themes of the Spurgeon and Keller sermons.

Now, beloved, let us take out of the promise that is given us concerning our Lord's conquest over the devil this one item and rejoice in it, for Christ has delivered us from the power of the serpent who opened our eyes and told us we were naked, by covering us from head to foot with a righteousness which adorns and protects us, so that we are comfortable in heart, beautiful in the sight of God, and are no more ashamed.

Charles Spurgeon, "Christ the Conqueror of Satan". See Keller's "unsentimental Christmas" article.

3. The confessions of the church most often discuss the person of Christ in terms of his hypostatic union, his offices of prophet, priest and king, and his indwelling by the Spirit. But Article 20 introduces Christ as the Son, through whom God's love and justice are revealed. Why does de Bres use this sonship picture to illustrate the Father heart of God? Hint: Count the number of times "His" is used in this article.

Belgic Confession, Article 20: The Justice and Mercy of God in Christ

We believe that God—who is perfectly merciful and also very just — sent the Son to assume the nature in which the disobedience had been committed, in order to bear in it the punishment of sin by his most bitter passion and death.

So God made known his justice toward his Son, who was charged with our sin, and he poured out his goodness and mercy on us, who are guilty and worthy of damnation, giving to us his Son to die, by a most perfect love, and raising him to life for our justification, in order that by him we might have immortality and eternal life.

4. Jesus' sonship is our model of obedience

Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God— ² the gospel he promised beforehand through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures ³ regarding his Son, who as to his human nature was a descendant of David, ⁴ and who through the Spirit of holiness was declared with power to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord.

⁵ Through him and for his name's sake, we received grace and apostleship to call people from among all the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from faith. ⁶ And you also are among those who are called to belong to Jesus Christ.

Romans 1. See also the other sonship passages, especially Romans 8:29-32, and the "obedience" passages like Hebrews 5:8

Resources for further studies in faith practices

I appreciated Tim Challies' visual Christmas study at <https://www.challies.com/visual-theology/a-visual-theology-advent-reading-calendar-for-your-family/>

Tim Keller has a wonderful "big picture" series on Genesis which is available at <https://www.monergism.com/topics/sermon-manuscripts-mp3s-scripture/genesis/chapter-genesis/chapters-03-05-fall> . I've included his sermon on Genesis 3 is at <https://www.monergism.com/paradise-crisis-%E2%80%93-genesis-31-9>

Attached is Spurgeon's sermon on Genesis 3:15 at <http://www.spurgeongems.org/vols22-24/chs1326.pdf> . Spurgeon also has a "God's First Words to the First Sinner" sermon at <http://www.spurgeongems.org/vols7-9/chs412.pdf>

Derek Thomas has a short article on the importance of Genesis 3:15 at <https://www.ligonier.org/learn/articles/significance-genesis-315>

David Linden has a sermon on the "long story of Jesus" in Isaiah at <https://davidhlinden.com/article/birth-of-jesus-christ>

R. C. Sproul has a wonderful summary of the incarnation at <https://www.ligonier.org/posts/incarnation-what-we-celebrate-christmas>

Tim Keller wrote a Christmas Eve editorial in the NY Post at <https://nypost.com/2016/12/24/christmas-is-the-most-unsentimental-way-of-looking-at-life/>

John Walton has a good analysis of names in Isaiah 7:14 at http://www.etsjets.org/files/JETS-PDFs/30/30-3/30-3-pp289-306_JETS.pdf

ADVENT

THE NEED FOR A SAVIOR

THE PROMISE OF A SAVIOR

THE WAIT FOR A SAVIOR

THE BIRTH OF A SAVIOR



Christmas is the most unsentimental way of looking at life

By [Timothy Keller](#)

December 24, 2016

at <https://nypost.com/2016/12/24/christmas-is-the-most-unsentimental-way-of-looking-at-life/>

Christmas is the only Christian holy day that is also a major secular holiday. This brings some discomfort on both sides. Many Christians can't help but notice that more and more of the public festivities surrounding Christmas studiously avoid any references to its Christian origins. The background music in stores is moving from "Joy to the World" to "Have a Holly, Jolly Christmas."

On the other hand, nonreligious people can't help but find that the older meaning of Christmas keeps intruding uninvited, for instance, through the music of traditional Christmas carols. It can be irritating to have to answer their child's question, "What does that music mean — 'born to give them second birth'?"

Christmas does not say, 'Cheer up! If we all pull together we can make the world a better place.'

As a Christian believer, I am glad to share the virtues of that day with the entirety of society. My fear is, however, that its true roots will become more and more hidden to most of the population.

The secular Christmas is a festival of lights, a time for family gatherings, and a season to generously give to those closest to us and to those in greatest need. These practices are genuinely congruent with the Christian origins of the celebration. The emphasis on light in darkness comes from the Christian belief that the world's hope comes from outside of it. The giving of gifts is a natural response to Jesus' act of self-giving, when he laid aside his glory and was born into the human race. The concern for the needy recalls that the Son of God was born not into an aristocratic family but into a poor one. The Lord of the universe identified with the least and the most excluded of the human race.

But the truth is that Christmas, like God himself, is both more wondrous and more threatening than most understand.

Christmas is about receiving presents, but consider how challenging it is to receive certain kinds of gifts. Some gifts by their very nature make you swallow your pride. Imagine opening a present on Christmas morning from a friend — and it's a dieting book. Then you take off another ribbon and wrapper and you find it is another book from another friend, "Overcoming Selfishness." If you say to them, "Thank you so much," you are in a sense admitting, "For indeed, I am fat and obnoxious."

In other words, some gifts are hard to receive, because to do so is to admit you have flaws and weaknesses and you need help. Perhaps on some occasion you had a friend who figured out you were in financial trouble and came to you and offered a large sum of money to get you out of your predicament. If that has ever happened to you, you probably found that to receive the gift meant swallowing your pride.

There has never been a gift offered that makes you swallow your pride to the depths that the gift of Jesus Christ requires us to do. Christmas means that we are so lost, so unable to save ourselves, that nothing less than the death of the Son of God himself could save us. That means you are not somebody who can pull yourself together and live a moral and good life.

Christmas, therefore, is the most unsentimental, realistic way of looking at life. It does not say, "Cheer up! If we all pull together we can make the world a better place." The Bible never counsels indifference to the forces of darkness, only resistance, but it supports no illusions that we can defeat them ourselves.

Christianity does not agree with the optimistic thinkers who say, “We can fix things if we try hard enough.” Nor does it agree with the pessimists who see only a dystopian future.

The message of Christianity is, instead, “Things really are this bad, and we can’t heal or save ourselves. Things really are this dark — nevertheless, there is hope.” The Christmas message is that “on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned.”

Notice that it doesn’t say from the world a light has sprung, but upon the world a light has dawned. It has come from outside. There is light outside of this world, and Jesus has brought that light to save us; indeed, he is the Light.

Adapted from the book [“Hidden Christmas: The Surprising Truth Behind the Birth of Christ”](#) by Timothy Keller (Viking). Keller is the founding pastor of Redeemer Presbyterian Church in Manhattan.