

## 2022 Incarnation Series

### Part 1

"Long lay the world, in sin and error pining."

### Sufficient Alone

#### Isaiah 59

*Most of the sentimental acknowledgement of Christ's birth (when it is actually acknowledged) seems to focus on the human elements of that night: The angelic visit to the shepherds, the rudeness of the setting, the crisis when Mary's time came and there was no lodging to be found. What seems too often missing is anything directly dealing with the reason for Christ's birth. Follow along with me as we look at three things: why we need saving, what our condition has done to us here, and how God has responded and intervened.*

**God is not limited. No matter how tough things can get, it isn't because He is overwhelmed, preoccupied, or unable to aid His people. What is the problem, then?**

#### **1. Our sins are the problem (1-8)**

- a. They have driven a wedge between us and our Creator. In scripture our rebellion against God is described in three ways: sin=falling short of the mark, transgression=crossing a line or boundary and iniquity=lawlessness. These have separated us from God and we are under judgment (Rom 3:23/6:23).
- b. We are guilty (Ecc 12:14, Lk 12:12, 1 Cor 4:5) and we cannot hide it from Him (Ps 139:1-12, 1 Cor 14:25)
- c. We are deceitful (Jer 17:9-10)
- d. We try to justify ourselves (In fact, we are fairly good at finding "right" sounding reasons for why we do what we do, just ask us!
- b. We are just nasty critters (Rom 3:9-20)
- c. Our rationalizations are useless for "clothing." They might make us feel better but God sees right through them.
- d. Our minds, actions and proclivities are marked by evil.

***I think that it was Harry Truman, who when asked what the biggest single problem was facing our nation, answered, "sin." It isn't a symptom, it is the problem.***

#### **2. The reality of sin not only separates us from God, but it pollutes our world: Sin's out-working in our world is ugly: (9-15)**

- a. Justice is far from us.
  - We look for light and find darkness.
  - We have poor spiritual perception (e.g., 2 Pet 1:3-11).
  - Life gets oppressive (vs 11).
- b. Our sins weigh us down (Ps 40:11-12, 90:7-9, 130:3; Prv 20:9; Ecc 7:20)
  - We (should) acknowledge them (12). (Prv 28:13)
  - Justice is driven back because even those who administer it here are sinful people like us.
  - Truth is nowhere to be found.

***Humanity longs to be clean, to have the burden of guilt and the fear of judgment removed. Consider Ps 32:1-7. But how is this available to us?***

**3. The solution came from an alien source (Rom 3:21- it *had* to). (16-21)**

- a.** God reconciles us to Himself. Why?
- There was/is no one else able to intervene.
  - His own arm worked salvation for Him (Heb 1:1-3, see also Is 63:1-6, Mft 9:1-8, 19:26; Jn 10:18)
- b.** The Judge is both our Ransom and Advocate (Rom 8:28-39, 1 Jn 2:1-2).
- It is life for those who repent (salvation!).
  - it is life for those who seek Him (The practical out working of having received the grace of God).
  - It is a work of the Spirit! We must cease from dependence on our own power and ability.

***The solution is not a human one, but divine. Ro 3:21-26***

***He came to us, as one of us and yet God Almighty (Is 9:1-6) to do what we could never accomplish. There is no "how to," special works or ritual, no "secret handshake," etc. The answer is a Person and He calls us to repent of seeking our own solution and turn to Him.***

**2022 Incarnation Series**  
**Part 2**  
**What Did Jesus Come to Destroy? Satan.**  
**Gen 3**

**Satan and his angels are fallen and irredeemable.**

- a. Satan's judgment was proclaimed at the Fall.**
  - Eat dust. In Jn 18:1-9 the enemy got a forecast of what will come. In Gen 3 he appeared as a serpent. In his judgment he will live out that reality. (See Is 14:11-15, Ez 28:1-19, Rev 12:7-9)
  - He is humanity's enemy. (Zech 3:1, Jn 8:44, 10:10; Rev 11:12)
  - The Seed (Jesus) of woman, though wounded, will crush him. (Rom 16:17-20, Rev 12:1-17)
  - How will he be resisted and defeated? (Rev 12:1-17 esp vs 11, Jas 4:1-12, esp vs 7, Rev 20)
  
- b. Eve's judgment**
  - Pain in childbearing.
  - Relational power struggle. (Eph 5:21-33, 1 Cor 11:1-16, 1 Tim 2:11-15)
  
- c. Adam's judgment**
  - The earth cursed because of his rebellion and "infection" (sin). (Rom 8:18-25)
  - He will earn his bread through toil/effort.
    - \* A cursed earth will exact a price for its increase.
    - \* Humans are mortal. Made from the dust, we will return to it.
  - Sin separates us from fellowship with God. (2 Chr 6:36, Ps 143:2, Prv 20:9, Ecc 7:20, Is 59:1-15)

**Satan:**

- His name means, "adversary." And so he is. - He is the "prince of the power of the air." (Eph 2:1-3)
- He was the "covering cherub," other highest of the angels. (Ez 28:14) - He is called the "ruler of this world." (Jn 14:30)
- He was evicted from heaven. (Lk 10:17-20) - He has no power over Jesus. (Jn 14:30)
- He (for now) has access to heaven (e.g., Job 1:6, 2:1) - He is our accuser (e.g., Zec 3:1-5)
- He is wicked and malicious (Mat 13:1-8, 18-23) - We can resist him. (Eph 6:10-18, Jas 4:7, 1 Jn 2:13)
- He is a liar (Mat 5:37, Jn 8:42-47) - He is the "father" of those who do not believe.
- He is a tempter (Mat 6:13) - He can appear to be "good." (Is 14:12, 2 Cor 11:9)
- He rules over fallen angels (Mat 25:41)

**JESUS CAME TO DESTROY HIM AND HIS WORK**

Heb 2:14-15, 1 Jn 3:8-10, Rom 8:1, 2 Cor 5:17

From The Expositor's Bible Commentary, Vol 12, pg 512-513  
Johnson, Alan F, Zondervan c. 1981

In Greek mythology:

“A usurper doomed to be killed by a yet unborn prince plots to succeed to the throne by killing the royal seed at birth. The prince is miraculously snatched from his clutches and hidden away until he is old enough to kill the usurper and claim his kingdom.”

In the mythological account of the birth of the god Apollo: when “the child’s mother, the goddess Leto, reached the time of her delivery, she was pursued by the dragon, Python, who sought to kill both her and her unborn child.”

In Egyptian lore, “Set, the red dragon who pursues Isis, the pregnant mother of Horus. When the child is grown, he too kills the dragon.”

Satan knows scripture - Gen 37:9-10

While there are parallels, check this out from Rome:

“In 83 AD, after the death of his ten year old son, Domitian (*the emperor*) immediately proclaimed the boy a god and his mother, the mother of a god. Coinage of this period shows the mother Domitian as the mother of the gods (Cerea, Demeter, Cybele) or enthroned on the divine throne or standing with the scepter diadem of the queen of heaven with the inscription ‘Mother of the Divine Caesar.’ Another coin shows the mother with the child before her. In his left hand is the scepter of world dominions, and with his right hand he is blessing the world. Still another coin shows the dead child sitting on the globe of heaven, playing with the seven stars, which represent the seven planets, symbolic of his heavenly dominion over the world.”

The message God communicated to people who very well understood the imagery promoted by known myth and political propaganda - The true Lord is Jesus and he will reign (Ps 2:9, Rev 12:5, 19:11-16) - as the King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

## 2022 Incarnation Series

### Part 3

#### Preparation

#### Is 40:1-11

### 1. The Forerunner (John the Baptist) Words of comfort for Jerusalem and Judah.

**Is 40:1-11**

- a. He was coming according to God's purpose and promise (Is 40:1-11, Mt 3:1-12, Mk 1:1-8, Lk 3:1-20, Jn 1:19-28) - to direct them to the Messiah!
- b. The messenger of the covenant (Ma 3:1 and 4:5-6)
- c. He would be great (Mt 11:1-19, 17:12-18) and come in the spirit and power of Elijah.

***God Fulfills His Word in the Fullness of Time Gal 4:4***

### 2. His birth was noteworthy

**Lk 1:1-25, 57-89**

- a. He would be born to a godly, elderly and childless couple. Think of the notable births described in scripture: Isaac, Esau and Jacob, Sampson, Samuel etc. (E.g., Gen 18:10-14, Jdg 13:2-3, 1 Sam 1:1-20, 2 Kng 4:14-17)
- b. It was predicted through a heavenly messenger (Lk 1:8-17)
  - An answer to prayer.
  - His name would be John.
  - He would be a joy and delight.
  - He would be great in the sight of God (Mt 11:1-19. Jn 10:40-42)
  - His would be a ministry of preparation (for the Messiah).
  - He would come in the spirit and power of Elijah.
  - Zechariah's silence only enhanced the anticipation of who and what this child was to be.

***God Often Used the Miraculous to Get Our Attention. E.g., Lk 1:46***

#### c. Glory to God!

- According to God's promise, the baby was born to Zechariah and Elizabeth.
- Zechariah's long silence was broken in praise of God for:
  - \* The coming of a "horn of salvation" in the house of David as He had promise.
  - \* For Israel's rescue from her enemies and to enable them to serve God. Grace!
- As for the new baby, John - he would:
  - \* Be a called prophet of the Most High.
  - \* He would go on before the Lord to prepare the way before Him.
  - \* He would give his people the knowledge of salvation through the forgiveness of sins (Jn 1:29).
- All this would come about due to the tender mercy of our God, by which the rising sun will come to us from heaven to shine on those living in darkness and the shadow of death (Is 9:1-7) and guide our feet into the path of peace.

***God's Works and Servant Seek His Glory.***

#### d. The child grew, became strong in spirit and lived in the wilderness until the time for his ministry came.

- What was John? A priest yet we have no record of him training or serving.
- Where was he? In the wilderness.

***John spent his time in preparation***

***We may not know our purpose and role but we can all:***

- *Seek to know Him better and seek our own growth. (Word, Prayer, Fellowship, Service)*
- *Be available for whatever opportunities open up.*
- *Along with being available, we need to patiently wait on God while we seek Him & prepare.*
- *Be watchful. We miss a lot just by being oblivious. To see things one has to be watching.*

**2022 Incarnation Series**  
**Part 4**  
**Emmanuel**  
**Lk 1:26-56**

***God uses those who are willing. But obedience can come with a cost. Think of Moses, Elijah, Isaiah, Ezekiel, Paul - their obedience was used by God to accomplish great things. But nothing was easy. Mary was a young woman who made herself available to God for His purpose. And at a cost to herself that we cannot imagine. Yet as a person who played a pivotal role in history, she was most ordinary. Think of 1 Cor 1:26-2:5: If it were not for the fact that know about Mary already how would she have seemed to us? Another kid? A teenager with little life experience? How quick we are to look past the ordinary and miss the incredible things God is doing right in front of us! He does extraordinary things through ordinary, willing and obedient people.***

**1. Mary received a message from heaven**

**1:26-33**

- a. God's message came to a young woman who was engaged to be married.
- b. It was a message (and a messenger) she had no reason to expect.
  - "Greetings, you who are highly favored. The Lord is with you!" *What was she supposed to make of this?*
  - "Do not be afraid." God often asks us to trust Him to do the seemingly impossible. Think of Moses or Gideon.
  - "You are going to conceive and have a son."
    - \* You are to call Him Jesus. (Matt 1:21)
    - \* He will be great.
    - \* He will be called the Son of the Most High.
    - \* The Lord God will give Him the throne of His father (in this case, ancestor) David.
    - \* And, He will reign over David's descendants forever; His kingdom will never end."

**2. Mary saw a problem with this.**

**1:34-37**

- a. She was a virgin - and she was pledged to marry Joseph. How could God's words be fulfilled?
- b. God's answer (Given through the angel Gabriel):
  - "The Holy Spirit would come upon (*"overtake, come upon"*) you.
  - The power of the Most High would overshadow (or *"envelop"*) her.
  - So, the Holy One to be born will be called the Son of God.
  - "even her relative Elizabeth" was pregnant (who was said to be barren.
  - "No word of God will ever fail."

**3. Mary accepted her calling. (See also Act 26:19)**

**1:38**

- a. The future is a blank slate for us.
- b. We don't set preconditions - we follow Him or we don't. (See Phil 3:12-14)

**4. Mary's song of praise!**

**1:46-56**

***Purpose to live a life of radical obedience***  
***"Yes, Lord!"***

**God isn't impressed by the things that impress people (1 Sam 16:7, Lk 16:15, Act 1:24)**

**Education, appearance, natural abilities, human strength - these only matter to the extent that those who "possess" them are faithful. But who does God use? The willing, humble, obedient. (1 Cor 1:26-29)**

**Mary was a humble young woman, just starting out in her adult life. Humanly speaking she had much to lose by her obedience. Yet she was willing and God used her mightily.**

**Are we available for Him to use?**

**First of all, do you know Him? Any "service" to Him is empty if we do not first know Him.**

**Secondly, we must always remember Who we serve. (1 Pet 4:11, Rom 12:1-3)**

**Third, serve from your heart and let the "chips" fall where they will. Don't make human comparisons to assess your worth. That's not how His kingdom operates.**

**"Emmanuel," God with Us, came to redeem us, equip and empower us and send us out into the world. Our birthright as His people is to serve Him "without fear in holiness and righteousness before Him all our days." Lk 1:74-75, Rom 12:1-2)**