

The Three Heroes of Christmas

Jesus * Genesis 3:15

Tonight I want to bring our short series on the three heroes of Christmas to a close by telling you the story of the greatest hero of all, Jesus himself. And you know what? We all like a good hero story, don't we? I don't know about you but one of my favorite Christmas movies is the original *Die Hard*, which came out, hard to believe, all the way back at Christmastime 1988. Twenty-five years ago right now. Anyways, in this movie the hero, Bruce Willis, reconciles with his wife by leaving his home and rescuing her from evil powers that are holding her captive.¹ Now, I am sure when you think of *Die Hard* this probably isn't what you normally think of, but that is exactly what the movie is about. And you know what? That's what Christmas is about. It's about a hero named Jesus leaving His home to reconcile people to God by rescuing them from Satan and sin.

You see Christmas is not just a warm, fuzzy story of a baby born in a manger. While that is certainly a part of the Christmas story, to be honest with you it's only a very small portion of the story. The story of Christmas is much bigger and is ultimately about an epic cosmic battle between good and evil. And until we understand this, we will fail to understand what Christmas is all about. So tonight I'd like to put Christmas in its context as a part of the epic cosmic battle between good and evil. For that we need to begin all the way back in Genesis, specifically chapters 1-2.

These chapters of the Bible tell us that when God created the world, He made it absolutely perfect. There was no pain, no hurt, no conflict, and most of all no sin. And in this perfect world God placed two perfect people, Adam and Eve. Believe it or not, there really was a perfect man and a perfect woman. As hard as that is to believe, they really did exist at one time.

Tragically, however, they did not stay perfect for long. Genesis 3 tells us that Satan, the villain of the Christmas story, unleashed an assault against God

¹ <http://thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/tgc/2013/12/23/the-violence-of-christmas/>

and His creation by deceiving Adam and Eve into doing the one thing God told them they couldn't do. God had given Adam and Eve freedom to do pretty much anything they wanted. However, there was one thing He forbade them to do, and when they succumbed to the devil's temptation the consequences were devastating, both for Adam and Eve and for the rest of creation. As a result of their sin, death entered into the world, and every person since has been born a slave to Satan and to sin. If you want to know why we are in the mess we are in and why Christmas was necessary in the first place, all you have to do is go back to Genesis 3.

However, in the midst of this devastation, God did not stay silent. Instead, He made a promise, the biggest and most important promise of all time. We read about this promise in Genesis 3:15:

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 3:15, NIV)

Here we see God telling Satan that one day a hero will be born who will defeat Satan and set His people free. Do you understand what this means? It means that here in this verse, only three chapters into the Bible, we have the first glimpse of Christmas. Here we see God promising that one day He will send a hero to free us from captivity to Satan and sin.

Now, fast forward about 4,000 years or so. It took a while, but finally, at just the right time, that hero was born. Note how Paul describes this in Galatians 4:

*But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, **5** to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. (Galatians 4:4-5, ESV)*

These two verses are a great summary of the Christmas story. God sent His Son to be born of a woman, to live a perfect life, and to ultimately redeem His people from Satan and sin by dying on the cross. As a result, all who believe in the Son are reconciled to God and adopted into His family.

Now, this is a pretty good story isn't it? An exciting, wonderful, marvelous, awesome, amazing, incredible, spectacular, fabulous – did I miss any adjectives - story. But guess what – the story doesn't end here. It doesn't end with our adoption into God's family. As great as that is, there's an even better ending. Revelation 21 tells us that there is a day coming when our hero Jesus will return and will make all things new. He will come and make all wrongs right. He will come and return the world and the people He created to the perfect state in which He originally created them. Follow with me as I read some of the most encouraging and wonderful words that have ever been written. Revelation 21:

*Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more **3** And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. **4** He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away." **5** And he who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." (Revelation 21:1, 3-5, ESV)*

Friends, this is how the Bible ends, and this is how the Christmas story ends. It doesn't end in a manger. It doesn't end on the cross. And it doesn't even end with our salvation. It ends on the day when our hero Jesus returns and takes all of our pain, hurt, and suffering away. Forever. You see, Jesus has not only freed us from captivity to sin and the devil, but He is also coming back one day to make everything right that has gone wrong. In the words of *Joy to the World*, He is coming to make His blessings flow as far as the curse is found. Which leads me to the best news of all. Jesus is coming back soon. Note what Paul tells the church in Rome:

The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. (Romans 16:20, ESV)

If I can make another movie reference tonight, I'd have to say that my favorite movies are almost all superhero movies. I'm not into comedy too

much, I don't care a whole lot for drama, and I certainly am not into chick flicks. I truly believe *Sleepless in Seattle* is one of the worst movies ever made. However, I do love superhero flicks, and in particular the recent Batman movies. For me there are very few cinematic moments that are more powerful and enjoyable than Batman standing in victory over Ra's al Ghul, the Joker, and Bane. But I have to admit that even Batman pales greatly in comparison to Jesus and His coming final victory over Satan. What a great day it will be when Jesus crushes Satan, frees us completely from sin, and makes everything perfect for all eternity. What a great hero He is, and what a great hero He will be.

And here is the big question for all of us tonight. Do you recognize Jesus as a hero? As *the* hero? Have you allowed Him to rescue you from Satan and sin? If you haven't I would urge you to allow Him to do so tonight. Allow Him to do so by repenting of your sin and turning to Him in faith. He desperately wants to rescue you, and He proved it by giving His life for yours. And that, my friends, is what Christmas is all about.

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