



The Christmas Story

The Drama

Isaiah 7:14

Message #1 of 3 – S668

Sermon given on December 20, 2015



Sunday Morning Service

Pastor Rick Lancaster

The Christmas Story - The Drama

Isaiah 7:14

Opening Comments

- Today, we begin a three part series **The Christmas Story**
- I hesitate to use the word ‘story’ in the title because for some that means it isn’t true
- What I am going to share with you in this series is true
- We won’t even be changing the names to protect the innocent
- Besides, the Christmas Story sounded so much better than the Christmas Account or the History of Christmas or try this on for a title: the expositional narrative of the people and events that came to be defined as the Christian observance of Christmas
- No, we’ll stick with the simple title, The Christmas Story
- It is a true story
- Every good story has heroes and villains
- It has drama, mystery, action, suspense
- It has romance and love, and betrayal and reconciliation
- It has love scenes and fight scenes
- We are going to look at this story in three parts
- The Drama, the Love Scene, and The Action
- Some refer to this time of year as the holiday season
- Many of them are avoiding using the word ‘Christmas’ because it might be offensive to others
- That seems odd to me – if it weren’t for Christmas, would there be a holiday to celebrate
- The next time someone wishes you a ‘Happy Holiday’ ask them what holiday they are referring to – just out of curiosity – be gentle – not confrontational
- Who knows, maybe it will open the way to a conversation about the reason for the season
- That reason is the birth of Jesus Christ – the Savior of the World
- Today I would like to talk about the reason for the reason for the season

- I want to try to answer the question, ‘Why did Jesus have to be born?’ and ‘Why is it important to every single person in the whole world?’
- **Pray**

Teaching

- **The Christmas Story - The Drama**
- 2015 years ago, a baby was born to a poor young woman from the town of Nazareth in Israel
- That birth was predicted over 700 years earlier by the prophet **Isaiah 7:14**

Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel.

- We know the virgin by the name Mary, we’ll talk more about her at the Christmas Eve service
- But this story goes back much further than that
- In fact it goes back to the very beginning of time
- Turn to **Genesis 2**
- Let me set up the background
- In chapter one we see the creation story – in six literal days, God creates the whole universe out of nothing
- On the sixth day God created man
- **Genesis 2:7**
- And after all the work was finished God said ‘it is very good’
- After creating man God created a place for him to live and work
- **Genesis 2:8-9**
- This is the Garden of Eden – a perfect place to live – everything he could need or want was right there
- God then told Adam to live and enjoy the fruit of the Garden, but not all of it
- **Genesis 2:15-17**
- Just one tree in the whole garden of trees – stay away from that one
- Perfect place – perfect weather – perfect food
- Everything he could possible need – not quite – something was missing

- **Genesis 2:18-25**
- Okay, now it is perfect
- One of the trees of the Garden was the Tree of Life
- This was one of the trees that God told them they could eat from
- This one came with an amazing side effect – allowed them to live forever
- There they were in a perfect environment, with perfect food, with perfect mates – and it could have stayed perfect forever
- They were made for each other – in perfect love for each other
- God would even come and walk with them in the Garden
- Then the drama develops – cue the suspenseful music
- There they are Adam and Eve chilling with an iced tea in the shade of the Tree of Life
- The sun is shining and the birds are chirping happily all around them
- And then it gets eerily quiet, and a cloud covers the sun
- And in slithers a dark figure
- **Genesis 3:1a**
- The couple doesn't seem to be alarmed by its presence, even though it is in the form of a serpent
- Almost as if, this creature has been around for a while
- And then this serpent does something that I think would freak most of us out
- **Genesis 3:1b**
- The couple doesn't seem alarmed that the serpent is speaking to Eve
- Is that because it is not the first time they have heard from it?
- It asks her a question, 'Did God really say that you couldn't every of EVERY tree of the Garden' implying that God is holding out on them
- **Genesis 3:2-4**
- What do you think it is poisonous or something, it isn't
- **Genesis 3:5**
- It is actually really good for you
- The villain of our story, the serpent, is Satan – he is a deceiver
- And something inside Eve accepts what the serpent says
- **Genesis 3:6-7**

- Instantly something inside them changed
 - Up to that moment they had been in perfect communion with God and each other
 - The fruit of the Tree of the knowledge of good and evil was not poisonous to their body, but it was to their soul
 - In that moment their souls died to God, the perfect communion was broken
 - **Genesis 3:8-13**
 - From intimacy with God they had fallen to blame-shifting and justifying their actions
 - Something had been taken from them – they were no longer innocent
 - Then God proclaims the consequences that not only they would experience, but all of their descendants throughout time
 - One of those consequences was to be driven from the place of perfection
 - **Genesis 3:20-24**
 - In 2008 the movie ‘Taken’ starring Liam Neeson came out
 - In the movie Liam Neeson is a retired CIA operative whose daughter is taken to be sold as a sex slave
 - The rest of the movie is about him doing everything he must do to save his daughter from that fate
 - No amount of money was too much, no effort too extreme
 - When Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit, something was taken from humanity, and we were sold into slavery **John 8:35**
- Jesus answered them, “Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin.”**
- And the Apostle Paul tells that all of have this same problem **Romans 3:23**
- All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.**
- Some of you might be thinking right now, ‘Wait a minute, I thought this was a Christmas story?’
 - Turn to **Luke 2**
 - It is, you see, without this background, the birth of Jesus is just an interesting story

- Something has been taken from God, His children have been taken and sold into the slavery of sin
- And He will not rest until He has saved as many as can be saved
- Luke chapter 2 is the fullest description of the birth of Jesus
- This will be the focus of the Christmas Eve service, here at 7 on Thursday
- I want to draw your attention to something that happened immediately after Jesus was born
- **Luke 2:8**
- It is a chilly December night and these shepherds are sitting around a fire to keep warm as they watch over their sleeping flocks
- The sky is filled with countless stars – all is still and quietly – suddenly
- This is the scene that inspired the song: Silent Night
- **Luke 2:9**
- Out of nowhere appears an angel, and the darkness of the night is driven away by the glory of the Lord
- Needless to say, that was a little freaky to the shepherds
- **Luke 2:10-14**
- The angel makes an announcement that is not just for the shepherds, but is for all people
- The announcement is so great, that it seems all of heaven breaks out in praise to God
- Song: Hark the Herald Angels Sing
- Many Christmas songs inspired by this scene
- As far as I know, this is the only time something like this ever happened, the host of heaven praising God on earth
- It happens all the time in heaven
- What was the big deal? What made this ‘good tidings of great joy’
- Verse 11 – ‘a Savior’ is born
- The prophecy of Isaiah about a virgin giving birth 700 years earlier came to pass
- The birth of Christ is the reason for the season
- The reason for the reason is what that child would grow up to do

- When we plan for the future of our children, we envision them doing something significant with their life
- Jesus didn't come to live a significant life, though His life was significant
- Jesus was born of the virgin to die a significant death **John 3:16**
For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.
- When it says, 'He gave His only begotten Son' = God gave His Son Jesus as the sacrifice to save us from our sins – a gift to the whole world
- To become the sacrifice for our sins, Jesus had to be born
- It is right to celebrate the birth of Jesus – God the Son came from heaven and became a human by being born of the virgin
- And anyone who will accept that can be saved from the slavery of sin
- We exchange gifts to symbolize the greatest gift ever given to mankind was Christ
- We celebrate the birth of Jesus because heaven celebrated it
- God, through the birth, life, and death of the Jesus made it so that we could be with Him forever
- In the movie 'Taken' the drama ended when Liam Neeson's daughter was freed and safe with him
- We are made free through Christ
- And we are promised that at the end of this drama we call life, that we will be safely ushered into heaven to be with Jesus forever
- Jesus is a gift sent to us by a loving Father, and we do nothing to get it except receive it
- Let's celebrate with great enthusiasm the greatest gift ever given
- Amen

- **Pray**

May the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you complete in every good work to do His will, working in you what is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever.

Amen. Hebrews 13:20-21