

We Wish You a Merry Rescue: The Advent of Christ and the Rescue of Sinners (Part 1)

Sermon Series: Luke: All Things New



Series Goal

That Mercy Hill Church would be made new as we follow the One who is making all things new!



Key Text

Luke 1:26-27a

→ “In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David.”



Big Idea

Christmas is a rescue operation undertaken by the Trinity to bring sinner's back into the joyful dance of the Godhead!

(1) An Ancient Hope

Our text represents the climaxing fulfillment of an ancient hope. While every stream of the OT is now flowing into this single point of the Christ's arrival, it seems that there is behind Luke's presentation 1 predominant prophetic source. It is the source that Matthew makes explicit in Mat 1:23 and later on in 4:14-16. It's the prophecy of Isaiah particularly regarding this sign-child: Immanuel (discussed in Isa 6-12). In Isaiah, God promises a coming Child who will turn everything around, the Rescuer. And in our gospel, Luke is saying, that child is here!

The four clues from our text that point in this direction are (1) “Galilee”, (2) “Virgin”, (3) “David”, and (4) “The Lord is with you.” These direct us in particular to Isaiah's prophecies in 7:14 and 9:1-7.

(2) A Bipolar Fulfillment

While there is enough in Luke's narrative to convince us God is wonderfully at work, we also get this sense that He's at work in a way no one expected. As we read we're left wondering: Are we looking at glory or shame, at strength or weakness, at joy or sorrow, at a King or a slave? The answer: yes!

Already at the bright light of Christ's incarnation, the shadow of His crucifixion is coming in like fog over the bay. Even at Christmas, the cross is in view. And the cross would be simultaneously the brightest and darkest moment in history. So there's this bipolar nature to this fulfillment. O He would rescue sinners, only not with His biceps, but with His wounds.

God has not given up. He is still in pursuit. God will get us, sinners though we be, back into the dance! But the means by which He will accomplish this is a horrific thing. If we are to be let back into the trinitarian dance He would have to be kicked out! That's the meaning of: “My God, my God, Why have you forsaken Me?!” To draw near to sinners the Father would have to pull back from His Son. The trinity is torn open to make room for a wretch like me!



Critical Action

At the cross, God has restarted the record, and the everlasting dance has begun. Have you taken His hand? Have you trusted Him? Come back to your Creator and Redeemer this Christmas.



Reflection Questions

- What's one way you (and your family) try to keep Christ central in the celebration of Christmas? How, during this season, are you tempted to relegate Him to the margins?
- Read King Ahaz' story in 2 Chron 28. How does the prophecy to him in Isa 7 become all the more powerful in light of this.
- How can Jesus being of *Nazareth* encourage your struggling heart?
- What's your favorite “Christmas” text? Why?