

Text: various

As usual, we celebrate communion on the first Sunday of the month. Since this is December, I thought I would do a “Christmas Communion” message. I’ve called it:

Gems of Atonement in the Christmas Story

Actually, we will probably run out of time before we finish all of these “atonement highlights,” so we may come back to this again for January at least.

Of course, salvation is the purpose of the Incarnation. That’s why we make a big deal about Christmas in our church. The actual date of the birth of Christ could have been on some other day, but given Western tradition it is convenient to celebrate it at this time of year.

And it is right to celebrate it all the time. The incarnation (God made flesh) is a critical aspect of Christian doctrine. It is crucial to the righteousness of God in saving us, it is crucial to the right of Jesus to be our Saviour; it is really just foundational to everything. We should never grow tired of this one doctrine.

So today, our style will be more of a Bible reading/commentary style than an organized sermon. We will start with Luke 2, and see how far we get.

I. The announcement of the forerunner (Lk 1.5-17)

A. Key atonement section: vv. 16-17

B. Key atonement themes

1. John will be a preacher of repentance (no atonement without repentance) (16)
2. John will be the forerunner of Messiah (Elijah that was prophesied) (17a, see Mal 4.6)
3. John’s ministry is to make ready the people for the Lord (17b)

II. The announcement of the Messiah (Lk 1.26-38)

A. Key atonement section: vv. 31-33; 35

B. Key atonement themes

1. The name Jesus (Joshua) = “YHWH is salvation” or “YHWH saves” (31)
2. The status of Jesus (32)
 - a. He will be great
 - b. He will be called Son of the Most High

c. He will receive the throne of his father David

Messianic promise – explicit fulfillment, the greater David

3. The everlasting kingdom (33)
4. The theological details of the incarnation (35)
 - a. Brought about by the Holy Spirit
 - b. Overshadowed by the power of the Most High
 - c. Consequence: the child will be called the Son of God

III. The rejoicing of Elizabeth (Lk 1.39-45)

A. Key atonement section: vv. 41-45

B. Key atonement themes

1. Elizabeth is filled with the Holy Spirit [the Spirit intimately involved in redemption from start to finish] (41)
2. Elizabeth's blessing on the babe [no ordinary rejoicing] (42)
3. Elizabeth's insight: "the mother of my Lord" (43)
4. Elisabeth's commentary: "blessed is she who believed" (45)

IV. The Magnificat (Lk 1.46-56)

A. Key atonement verses: vv. 47, 54-55

B. Key atonement themes

1. God is our saviour (47)
2. God's salvation fulfills God's promises to the fathers (54-55)

Conclusion:

Well, I said we would probably have to come back for more. It may take us more than two times to complete these themes.

What a blessed subject for our meditation!

What a great Lord we have!

Let us all bow, worship, and obey Him!