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How to Have a Very Merry Christmas Selected Scriptures

Introduction

In one of the many magazines I receive and scan or read was a short, two page article entitled *The History of Christmas*, by Stephen Fauer. I found it to be a very succinct summary of the development of the celebration of Christmas in America. It prodded my thinking on the subject that I was already planning to preach on today.

Christ's birth is recorded in the Bible, specifically in Matthew and Luke, in fulfillment of various ancient prophecies such as those in Isaiah, Micah and various Psalms. However, the Scriptures do not record the date of Jesus' birth because that was not important in ancient Jewish culture. Our celebration of birthdays is actually related to the influence of Zoroastrianism and the keeping of Zodiac charts related to fortune telling such as horoscopes. Astrology developed as a belief that the alignment of the stars on the day of your birth determined your character and what your future would be like. Both Judaism and Christianity rejected such ideas as nonsense, but as modern cultures developed, the date of birth became increasingly important as a point of identification, a marker for gaining legal rights, and a good excuse for a party.

The date of Jesus birth is debated to this day. A lot of interesting calculations based in clues given in Luke 1 related to the time of Zechariah's service in the temple, the birth of John the Baptist and Mary's visit to Elizabeth, are used in the attempt to determine a date, but debate still continues. December 25th is the date most widely recognized by Western Churches. That date is conveniently close to the pagan winter solstice holiday of Saturnalia which became supplanted by Christmas after Christianity became the official religion of the Roman empire. However, January 6 is still the date used by many Eastern Churches. And there are those that would argue for a Spring date, or Summer date, or a Fall date. Practically speaking, since the exact date is not recorded in history, any of the dates could by mutual agreement be set aside as a day to celebrate the birth of Christ and the wonder of the incarnation when God, the Creator, took on the human flesh of a creature.

Some Christmas History

The first historical record of an activity related to what is now called Christmas was in 129 when a Roman Bishop directed the singing of hymns in observance of Christ's birth. The first record of Christmas being a Roman holiday is A.D. 336. Christmas celebrations became more widely celebrated in the Holy Roman Empire after Pope Leo III crowned Charlemagne as Emperor on Christmas Day in A.D. 800. After the reformation in the sixteenth century, those churches that rejected much of the ritual of Roman Catholicism also diminished celebrations of Christmas. This was particularly true among the English puritans and separatists. For example, William Bradford's only note on December 25th 1620 is that they "*begane to erecte the first house for commone use to receive them and their goods.*" Edward Winslow in *Mourt's Relation* notes that it was a busy day with some felling timber, some sawing wood, and some carrying and that no man rested that day. The only celebration was the Ship's captain encouraging them to have some beer that night. December 25th 1621 was similar in that the governor called them all out to work. However, those that had recently arrived on the *Fortune* said it was against their conscience to work on that day. They were later to be found playing games and sport, at which the governor took away their implements and told them that "*it was against his conscience that they should play and others work. If they make the keep of it a matter of devotion, let them keep their houses; but*

there should no gaming or reveling in the streets.” Bradford, writing in 1647, notes, “*since which time nothing hath been attempted that way, at least openly.*”

The puritan led government in England outlawed Christmas celebrations in 1645. Colonial governments did likewise, but it remained more a matter for the local church and community so there was a lot of variation. As new immigrants poured into America in the early nineteenth century, they brought their traditions with them and they blended together in the melting pot of America. The Germans brought traditions of decorating with evergreens. Roman Catholics brought nativity scenes. The Dutch brought Sinter Klaus. Washington Irving’s books, *A History of New York*, and his fictional “*Old Christmas*,” helped establish Christmas as a societal holiday in the same way Clement Clarke Moore’s poem, popularly known as “*The Night Before Christmas*” established Santa Claus as part of it. By 1860, fifteen states had made it an official holiday and it became a federal holiday in 1870. Thomas Nast’s drawing of Santa Claus in 1881 to illustrate Moore’s poem gave an image to Santa Claus, flying reindeer and a sled full of toys. Advertisers latched on to the theme and Montgomery Ward’s 1939 campaign added Rudolph. Commercialism was in full swing to take over the holiday, which it certainly has since the Christmas shopping season is what brings their financial books out of the red of loss and into the black of profit - hence the meaning of “black Friday,” the day after Thanksgiving, when the Christmas shopping season begins in earnest.

The secularization of Christmas became more pointed in the late twentieth century as political actions and lawsuits sought to block religious references inherent to Christmas such as removal of nativity scenes from government property, banning traditional carols from school musical presentations, and Christmas break becoming Winter Holiday. That battle continues in the present time as the intolerant seek to make Christmas a secular holiday without Christ. Sadly, even where they have lost legal battles so that nativity scenes can be placed on government property, (as long as the symbols of other religions are also included), they have won the culture for even Christians often forget the reason for the season. Hallmark sentiments of decorations, family gatherings, special foods, shopping for gifts, traditions kept though void of their actual meaning, doing something charitable, and the quest for a romance make Christmas a celebration that does not include Jesus.

I enjoy the various traditions, but I also want to make sure that the reason for them is known so that they are meaningful. I also want to do all that I can to help others make it a holiday of joy and keep them from falling into the trap of seasonal obligations that remove the pleasures that are supposed to be part of the celebrations. This is something that has developed slowly within me over the years, partially prompted by disappointments that I later recognized were not necessary if I took a different view of things, and partially prompted by the desire to increasingly see Christ glorified in me.

Becoming Aware

I want to tell you a little about how I became aware that you have to fight against Christmas celebrations becoming an obligation if you want to actually enjoy them and keep Christ as its purpose. Perhaps you will relate to some of what I say, but whether you do or not, I hope to prod you to start thinking through why you do what you do so that you can do it for the right reasons and be able to enjoy it all even when things do not work out the way you would like. I want you to have a very merry Christmas.

I was born in Los Angeles in 1958 and grew up in a typical American, protestant family of that time period. Christmas included extra church activities including concerts, children’s plays and holiday festivities. It also included decorating the house, family gatherings, Santa Claus, and getting unwrapped presents from Santa under the tree. Two specific incidents remain fixed in my mind from that time period.

The first was a Christmas party in my Boy Scout Troop when I was about 12. I wanted to give a great present for the gift exchange, and I took my hard earned money from mowing lawns to buy a model

plane for it. It took several trips to the local toy store to pick out just the right one. I thought my purpose was to make one of the other boys really happy at getting such an awesome present, but what I received revealed something different. I ended up with a white elephant gift. It was a toddler sized blue Lederhosen outfit - traditional young boys Alpine shorts with suspenders. The boy that got my present was very happy, but I was miserable. My motives were actually much more selfish than I would admit.

The other incident was near the same time period. My two brothers and I lined up in the hall way until my parents were ready, then the door was opened and we would walk out into the living room to see all the presents. It did not take long for me to become jealous. My brothers had all sorts of presents lying under the tree, and I only had a few. I was upset. My mom finally wanted to know why I was so grumpy, and I began to complain and grumble. She then pointed out that I had the biggest present there - a brand new gold, sting ray bike with a banana seat. I had not even noticed it. I enjoyed riding it the rest of the day, but I was also embarrassed. I knew something was wrong with me for my response, but it would be many years before I actually figured it out and that the problem was being self-centered.

The commercialism of Christmas present a grave danger of making getting gifts for others more of an obligation than a joy. It also feeds selfishness so that what is received in return becomes a test of how the other person loves or cares for you. Both are a long, long way from the original purpose of giving gifts to others, feasting, and celebrating as a common response to God's blessings (Nehemiah 8:10; Esther 9:19-20). At Christmas this should be out of joy for the gift of Jesus Christ that God has given to man.

Another important lesson I have learned over the years is that while some traditions will continue for many years and hopefully some will be intergenerational, others will of necessity change because circumstances and the people that you can be with will change. Two thousand miles separated my sets of grandparents, so we could never celebrate with both extended families, and only once did we travel from Los Angeles to Mississippi to celebrate with my dad's family there. After my Aunt & her family moved 340 miles north, family Christmas celebrations in Los Angeles became smaller. After Diane & I were married, we were blessed to be able to celebrate with each of our extended families each holiday, but that also meant being unable to participate in everything we used to do. And since we moved here in 1991, we have never been able to celebrate with our extended families though Diane's parents did come out once. Having adult children who are married makes it more complex to get everyone together, so the time together may be shortened, or the celebration held on a different day.

My point with all of this is simple. Hold to your traditions and expectations lightly so that you will rejoice over the blessings you do have instead of lamenting over what you do not have. It is a lesson that took me many years to learn. I hope you have already learned it, and if not, that you will learn it the easy way by heeding the advice I am giving you today. The greater your understanding of your motives and purpose, and the more those are grounded in godliness, the easier it will be for you to have a very merry Christmas regardless of circumstances.

The Reason is Jesus

The manner in which most of society now celebrates Christmas reminds me of a very tragic story I heard many years ago. A young couple had their first child and invited friends and family over to celebrate this wonderful blessing they had received. As guests started arriving, the baby was in the bedroom asleep on the bed. Since there was no other place to put them, the coats of the guests were also placed on the bed. After awhile one of the guests asked when they could see the baby. The new mother went in to see if the baby was awake, and discovered that somehow coats were covering the child who had smothered and was dead. Secular Christmas has smothered Jesus as the reason for the celebration. Do not let that happen to you.

The birth of Jesus is an incredible story beginning with the first prophecy concerning it. Genesis 1 & 2 record the days of Creation, and that on the sixth day, God formed Adam from the dust of the ground

and breathed into him the breath of life. Later on that same day after Adam had named all the kinds of animals, God fashioned Eve from one of his ribs. He placed them in the Garden of Eden and pronounced all He had created as “very good.” Genesis 3 then records the deception of Eve by Satan who spoke through a serpent. She fell for his lies and slander and disobeyed God by eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, then she gave to Adam who was with her, and he ate, and mankind plunged into sin. They immediately recognized the shame of their nakedness, vainly attempted to fashion clothes from fig leaves, and then tried to hide from God. After they confessed their sins to the Lord, He pronounced the consequences of a curse on the serpent, a curse on the woman, a curse on the man, and a curse upon the earth. Yet in the middle of these curses under which we all still live, was a message of hope in verse 15. *“And I will put enmity between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, And you shall bruise him on the heel.”* This is referred to as the proto-evangelicum - the first reference to the good news of the gospel. Without going into all the details, this is a reference to a male descendant that would be harmed by Satan, but who would Himself crush Satan. This is a prophecy of future deliverance from evil. It is also a prophecy of the virgin birth because this male would come directly from a woman. In Hebrew language and culture, the seed comes from the man, not the woman, so for a woman to have seed and give birth would have to be a miracle. Paul exposes the meaning of this in Galatians 4:4 stating that *“when the fullness of time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law.”*

The prophecies then continued narrowing down who would fulfill this promise. God’s covenant with Abraham in Genesis 12 includes that it would be through him that *“all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”* In Genesis 17:19 this promise is set to go through Sarah’s son, Isaac, and not through any of Abraham’s children by other women. Genesis 25 & 27 explain how the birthright including the Abrahamic covenant was transferred to Jacob instead of Esau the first born. The prophecy of Numbers 24:17 confirming that the star and scepter would come from Jacob / Israel. Israel’s blessings on his children in Genesis 49 includes that the scepter, the right of rule, would go through Judah in verse 10. Both Nathan’s prophecy in 2 Samuel 7 and the prophecies of Isaiah 9:7 & 11:10 mark that the promised Messiah would come through David who is of the root of Jesse. There are many Jews that could fit these requirements, but a complexity is added due to the curse upon king Jeconiah (Coniah) in Jeremiah 22:28 that *“No man of his descendants will prosper, Sitting on the throne of David Or ruling again in Judah.”* Messiah would have to be a physical descendant of David and have the right to the throne, yet must not be a physical descendant of Jeconiah which is the line that has the right to the throne. How could that be fulfilled?

The answer is revealed in the genealogies recorded in Matthew and Luke. Luke records Mary’s physical descent from David going through Nathan instead of Solomon and so had the correct blood line, but avoided the curse on Jeconiah. Matthew’s genealogy is that of Joseph and establishes the legal right to the throne being the descendant of the kingly line including Jeconiah, but because Joseph is step father instead of the father, the legal authority to the throne is given by right of adoption and so the curse on Jeconiah is avoided.

Three other factors related to Jesus birth - location, timing and paternity - are also in fulfillment of Messianic prophecies and narrow down the possibilities so that only Jesus could fulfill them. First is location. Micah 5:2 decrees that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem Ephrathah of Judea. That is the location of Jesus’ birth according to both Matthew 2:1,6 and Luke 2:4-6.

Second is timing. According to Daniel 9:25-26, Messiah would have to be present in order to be cut off after the seven and sixty-two weeks of years following the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem. According to the description given in Nehemiah 2, that occurred when Artaxerxes made such a decree in 444 or 445 B.C. Sixty nine weeks of years - 483 years - calculates out to A.D. 32 or 33. Messiah would have to be alive at that time period, and Jesus was. The fullness of time had come (Galatians 4:4).

Third is paternity. Isaiah 9:6-7 states of Messiah, ⁶ *“For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.”* ⁷ *There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, On the throne of David and over his kingdom, To establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness From then on and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will accomplish this.”* Messiah would not be an ordinary human. He would be God in human flesh as also explained in Isaiah 7:14, *“Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel.”* Matthew 1:23 attributes this directly to Mary bearing Jesus and Luke 1:26-38 describes the announcement of the angel Gabriel to a descendant of David named Mary who was a virgin. When Mary asked, *“How can this be?”* Gabriel answered, *“The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy Child shall be called the Son of God.”* If God can create the heavens and the earth and all that is within them in six days, and He did, then the Holy Spirit causing a woman to bear a son without a human father is easy. Do we understand it? Of course not. But there is a lot about God and what He has done that we do not understand because He is infinite in all respects and we are limited by time, space and intelligence. We simply cannot comprehend God except what He has revealed to us, and even that is often beyond comprehension.

Both Matthew and Luke continue in their narratives to explain a lot more about the events surrounding Jesus’ birth and the events that soon followed. That would include the following: *An angel of the Lord appearing to Zacharias as he served in the temple revealing he and Elizabeth would have a son they were to name John and that he would be the forerunner of the Messiah. *Mary’s visit to Elizabeth and her exaltation of the Lord. *The birth of John and Zacharias’ prophecy. *The angel revealing to Joseph how Mary became pregnant so that he would take her as his wife instead of putting her away. *The census that caused them to depart from Nazareth to go to Bethlehem. *The birth of Jesus in a stable. *The angels announcing the birth to the shepherds in the field and their visit to see Jesus in the manger. *The presentation of Jesus in the temple and the interactions with Simeon and Anna. *The visit of the magi from the east a year or two later as they were guided by a star in their search for the one “born King of the Jews” in order to worship Him and bring their gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. *The angelic warning to flee to Egypt, and *Herod’s slaughter of the male children two and younger.

Christmas carols sing about one or more of these themes just as Christmas plays often depict one or more of them. Nativity sets compact them into one scene as a reminder of them all. The world would be content with that scene of a sanitized stable with a star shining down on it while a baby lies peacefully in a manger with an angel, shepherds, three wise men, and barn animals all looking on in adoration. But Jesus did not set aside the glories of heaven to become a man for the purpose of providing a romanticized scene, or to become a substitute for a winter solstice holiday, or to be the excuse for increased business sales, or a host of other things people have made Christmas out to be. Baby Jesus is safe and the world would like to keep it that way, but Jesus did not stay a baby, and Jesus Himself is a threat to the world. That is why efforts are made to obscure Him with all sorts of traditions, to find substitutes for Him in mythological characters such as a jolly old man who rewards those who are good and whose worse punishment for the bad is a lump of coal in their sock, or to work hard to ban Jesus from even being recognized in the first part of the compound word, Christmas.

When I was young, when you went Christmas shopping, the stores played Christmas carols with the lyrics included - Hark, the Herald Angels Sing; Joy to the Word; O Come, O Come, Emmanuel; O Come, All Ye Faithful; O Little Town of Bethlehem; The First Noel, Away in a Manger and Silent Night to name a few. The mix would usually include winter songs such as Jingle Bells, Sleigh Ride, Deck the Halls, White Christmas and the Christmas Song (Chestnuts Roasting on an Open Fire). There would also be some secular songs such as Frosty the Snowman, Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer, and Santa Claus is Coming to Town. By the time I had my own children, it had become increasingly rare to hear the lyrics

of the carols even if the tunes were still played. Now it seems like an incessant assault by secular songs including the very inane ones such as *Santa Baby*, *Wonderful Christmas Time*, *Last Christmas*, & *So this is Christmas*. Admittedly, I am more sensitive to these because I find them irritating, so I notice them more because I have to switch radio stations. These are part of the effort to obscure Jesus in Christmas.

Christmas, a contraction of Christ + Mass, is about Christ. It is sad when efforts to enhance the celebration end up detracting from it. It is worse when those same efforts become expectations that substitute for the reason for the celebration. It is evil when the efforts are purposely done to remove Jesus from the celebration of Christmas. But this is the world we live in, and unless you are diligent yourself to keep a proper focus, you can fall prey to these things and the joy you should have can turn to disappointment, frustration or even anger.

Keeping Focus

The incarnation is wonder enough in itself to celebrate, but if you want a very merry Christmas, you must keep a proper focus and remember the reason that Jesus took on human flesh to become a babe lying in a manger. That takes us back to Genesis 3 and the first indication of God's plan of redemption for sinful man.

Once Adam & Eve fell into sin, God could have done many things in response including casting them both into ever lasting hell right then and there. That would have been the end of humanity and you and I would have never existed. But what God did do demonstrates His nature and character. God warned Adam that if he ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, he would surely die that day (Genesis 2:17). Sin brings death, and death is separation. Physical death is the separation of the soul from the body. Spiritual death is the separation of the soul from God, and on the day that Adam & Eve sinned they did spiritually die as they separated themselves from God and tried to hide from Him because of their shame. It was God that went looking for them. That is still the way it works. God invites man to seek Him, in fact He commands people to repent and seek Him (Acts 17:30; Isaiah 55:6), but no one will (Psalm 14:1-3) unless God acts first, which He does (John 6:44). We love because He first loved us (1 John 4:19). God found Adam & Eve. He rebuked them and they bore the consequences of the just curses they brought upon themselves and the earth, but God also gave them hope in this seed of the woman, which in the fulness of time was Jesus born of the virgin Mary.

But rescue from sin would take much more than just being born sinless. He would have to live a sinless life under the law otherwise He would have to die for His own sin. Redemption would require that the price of sin, death, be paid otherwise God would be unjust. Man could not pay it himself, so Jesus became a man to pay the price with His own life as a substitute sacrifice. Because Jesus is God, His life is of infinite value so that His death on the cross of Calvary would be sufficient payment for the sins of every human though only applied to those would believe. Jesus would also need to prove His claims about His identity were true and that His sacrifice was accepted, which He did when He rose from the dead on the third day just as He said He would. He then ascended into heaven as He said He would do where even now He is preparing a place for those that belong to Him and interceding with the Father on their behalf. He also promised to return one day for those who have faith in Him, and we can be absolutely sure He will keep that promise just as He has kept all of His promises. When He does return, it will also be as conqueror and judge of all who do evil.

All these things cause those that have placed their faith in the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ to love Him and long for His return. Our celebration of Christmas is simply joy over the beginning of the story of redemption. Jesus birth begins the whole process of redemption and brings the promise of eternity in heaven. It is out of joy over these things that we give presents and hold a feast. That is a joy that transcends any circumstance I may face in life. Being poor does not change it. Being alone does not change it. Being ill or sick does not change it. Being persecuted does not change it. In fact, all of those things just heighten the joy because celebrating the beginning of God's plan of

redemption is an assurance that all of it will be fulfilled. I am assured that whatever disappointments and frustrations I have in this life will be short term, for life on this earth is as a morning vapor that disappears with the rising Sun, but I am assured by the promises of Christ that I will soon be in His presence and dwell eternally with Him.

These same promises cause fear to those that do not know God and those that reject the gospel. Jesus as a baby lying in a manger is safe for them. But Jesus grown up and fulfilling the prophecies about the Messiah is a cause of fear. His life and teachings expose their sinfulness, and His promised return as judge assures their condemnation unless they repent. That is the reason they seek to obscure, distort and even deny the celebration of Jesus birth, because to do that to the beginning of His story is the effort to keep from having to face the reality of the end of it. Don't fall into their trap. Keep the focus on Jesus.

Conclusion

Jesus' birth is a reason for great celebration, but the celebration is much more than joy over the birth of a child. It is joy over the birth of the promised Messiah, the Savior that would redeem us from our sins. It is a celebration that has an emphasis on the incarnation, that God became a man, but the focus must be wider to include a celebration of His sinless life, His voluntary death as the substitute payment of the penalty of our own sin that redeems and makes possible forgiveness of sin through faith in Him, His resurrection assuring us of His claims and promises, His ascension to prepare a place for us, and His promised return to take us to be with Him forever more. Christmas is to be a celebration of all the prophecies and promises that begin with Jesus' birth.

Be careful that you do not let traditions and expectations distort the reason for the celebration of Christmas. Enjoy all that you get to experience, but keep clearly at the forefront of your mind that any disappointment because the holiday does not work out exactly as you had hoped does not in any way remove the reason for the celebration. If you keep the focus on Jesus, then your heart will still be full of joy even if there is disappointment or sad circumstances.

If you do not know Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior yet, then this year can be the first of many to truly celebrate Christmas if you will place your faith in Him, for only then can you know the true meaning of this season. Only then can you have a very merry Christmas regardless of circumstances instead of a happy winter solstice holiday of mythology, festive decorations, traditions of forgotten meaning, and propitious obligations.

Sermon Notes - 12/19/2021

How to Have a Very Merry Christmas - Selected Scriptures

Introduction

Birthdays

Date of Jesus Birth?

Some Christmas History

A.D. 129

A.D. 336

A.D 800

Sixteenth Century Puritans & Separatists

Immigration influences

Commercialism

Secularization

Becoming Aware

Disappointment

Jealousy

Changing Traditions

The Reason is Jesus

Creation - Genesis 1 & 2

The Fall - Genesis 3

The Protoevangelicum - Genesis 3:15

Genealogical prophecies

Overcoming the curse on Jeconiah (Jeremiah 22:28), Matthew 1, Luke 3

Location - Micah 5:2

Timing - Daniel 9:25-26

Paternity - Isaiah 9:6-7; Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:23; Luke 1:26-28

Additional prophecies in Matthew 2 and Luke 1

Romanticized Nativity

Changing Culture: Music

Keeping Focus - Why Jesus became a Man

The problem of sin

Redemption in Jesus

Joy for believers

Fear for unbelievers

Conclusion

Enjoy the celebration, but do not lose sight of the reason for it

KIDS KORNER

Parents, you are responsible to apply God's Word to your children's lives. Here is some help. **Young Children** - draw a picture about something you hear during the sermon. Explain your picture(s) to your parents at lunch. **Older Children** - 1) Count how many times the word "Christmas" is mentioned. 2) Talk with your parents about the meaning of Christmas including the meaning of the traditions your family keeps.

THINK ABOUT IT! - Questions to consider in discussing the sermon with others. Why are birthdays commonly celebrated in Western cultures? Do we know the day of Jesus birth? Why or why not? How did Roman Catholicism end up designating December 25 as Jesus birthday? Trace the historical development of the celebration of Christmas. Why did the Puritans and Separatists of England turn against Christmas celebrations? How did those celebrations become established in the United States? What is the origin of the traditions you practice? If you don't know, then what changes should you make? What disappointments have you had at Christmas? How did they affect you? How have you recognized your own selfishness? How have you seen Christmas celebrations become more secular and commercialized within your lifetime? How have your own Christmas traditions changed over your lifetime? Trace the prophecies concerning Messiah fulfilled in Jesus? Is there any possibility of anyone else fulfilling those prophecies? Explain. Why did Jesus become a man and why was that important? How does Jesus deal with man's sin problem? What Christmas carols do you like & why? What winter season songs do you like and why? What cultural Christmas songs do you like and which ones are irritating and why? Why didn't God just condemn Adam & Eve after then sinned and start over? What do God's actions toward Adam & Eve reveal about Him? What practical things can you do to keep your focus correct this Christmas so that it is very merry? Will you make any changes (including attitude) in your traditions this year?