

## An Unintentional Christmas Gift

We tend not to think of ourselves being connected with evil people or evil spirits. We saw that in the message, *Me, You...and Barabbas?* We tend not to think of ourselves being connected with evil people or evil spirits at Christmas either.

But what about connecting Christmas *and* Satan?

We think the battle with Satan was fought and won at the resurrection. But did we ever think Satan was defeated with the birth of Jesus Christ?

We tend to limit the birth of Jesus to a baby born in a cave or a shed. **With** an ox or a cow, **and** a donkey. **And** shepherds who came. **And** the three wisemen. **And** an angel hovering overhead. Oh, and let's not forget the little drummer boy, too. And all the while in the background Boney M are singing, "Mary's Boy Child".

Why do we limit Christmas to this? Because of commercialism. In a cave or in a shed because there was no room at the inn. Or any other accommodation. No relative took them in. Remember they had to go to where Joseph was from.

And there were no B 'n B's in those days.

But Jesus's birth was so much more than what commercialism gives us.

In the garden when Satan deceived Eve, where was Adam? He was standing beside her with his mouth shut. Not saying a word (Gen. 3:6). That's why Satan triumphed. Adam did not stand up and defend his wife.

Later when God spoke to Satan in Gen. 3:14-15 He said something that got Satan's attention.

"So the Lord God said to the serpent, 'Because you have done this, "Cursed are you above all livestock and all wild animals! You will crawl on your belly and you will eat dust all the days of your life. 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.'"

Satan must have wondered, "Who **IS** this seed that is going to crush **MY** head?"

He knew some time in the future someone was going to give him trouble. And over the subsequent years he heard prophecies about some 'coming Messiah'. "Maybe this Messiah will be the One who will give me trouble?"

He knew he would have to stop this Messiah from coming.

But not much happened for the next few thousand years.

One day though, Satan was told one of his enemies, an angel named Gabriel, had visited and spoken to a young Jewish girl. Gabriel had told her she would soon become pregnant by the power of the Spirit of God.

Ha ha! That made Satan's ears stand up. That made him pay attention.

He didn't know **when** this would happen. He didn't know **who** it would happen to. And he didn't know **where** it would happen. All he knew was something was going to happen he would not like.

He thought, "What can I do to stop this? I need to find this **ONE** child and kill Him".

But what if he couldn't find him? He decided he needed to come up with a plan to kill **ALL** the young boys born during this certain time period.

"In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world." Luke 2:1 NIV

A census was not something they normally undertook. But this time they did. And it meant that every adult male, accompanied by his family, had to return to the place of his birth.

One night Satan heard that thousands of angels had been rejoicing and saying, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom His favour rests." Luke 2:14 NIV

He must have thought, "Oh boy, this is definitely not good". But what could he do? Again, he didn't know **who** and he didn't know **when**. He wasn't really sure where but he was beginning to get a rough idea though he didn't have the specific location.

Satan must have been on "pins and needles" wondering where and when this baby's birth was going to take place.

And then some wise men from the east appeared. They went to King Herod looking for "...He that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen His star in the east, and are come to worship Him." Matthew 2:2 KJV.

Hearing this, Herod was very upset and he “gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born. And they said unto him, ‘In Bethlehem of Judaea: for thus it is written by the prophet’”. Matthew 2:4-5 KJV

Okay, **now** Satan knew it was in a town called Bethlehem. He still didn’t know **who** would have this baby. And he still didn’t know **when**. But that wasn’t a big problem.

“When Herod realized that he had been outwitted by the Magi, he was furious, and he gave orders to kill all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity who were two years old and under, in accordance with the time he had learned from the Magi.” Matthew 2:16 NIV

When all the boys under the age of two had been murdered, Satan thought, “Ahah! I got Him. I got Him. He is dead for sure”.

And why wouldn’t he think that? And why wouldn’t he **continue** to think that when it was “quiet” for the next 30 years? No talk of a Messiah. No angels announcing something. No angels rejoicing.

We don’t think about this but Satan **was** defeated when Jesus was born. Satan just didn’t know it. He had about 30 years to celebrate. And to *think* he’d won. Thirty years to continue his uninterrupted dominion over man.

And then some guy in the desert started preaching, “Repent for the kingdom of heaven has come near...after me comes One...(who) will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire” (Matt. 3:1, 11).

The thirty years were up! Satan knew then trouble was brewing. He knew then there was going to be a battle.

But that’s another story.

At Christmas we give gifts to those we love. And we also give gifts to others.

But **WE** have been given the very **best** gift by the One who loved us while “we were **STILL** yet sinners” (Rom. 5:8).

Satan didn’t realize it but he was just a small part of a BIG plan. His **many** plans were superseded by the **ONE** plan of God!

Try as he might, and he did, Satan **WASN'T** going to win. Try as he might, and he does, Satan **ISN'T** going to win.

By deceiving Eve in the garden, he unintentionally set in motion the intentional plan of God.

For God to come to earth, to be born of a virgin, to live among us, to die on a cross, to defeat Satan once and for all, and to bring man **BACK** into perfect relationship and fellowship with Him.

Forever. For ever.

The birth of Jesus was the First Christmas. And the very **BEST** Christmas.

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