

We all have favorite parts of the Christmas season. It might be the familiar Christmas carols which speak of the wonders of what God has done for us in sending His Son into this world to be our Savior. It might be the Christmas Eve worship service in which we hear again the familiar account of the birth of that Savior. We will probably have to admit that to have a little of the “old and familiar” is something which we all really appreciate. Even this morning we were able to sing many of the loved songs and hear again the familiar accounts of how the birth of our Savior came about. But then you heard the verses which I chose as the basis for the sermonette this morning. It probably was not what you were expecting. Yet these verses really explain why Christmas is such a joyous time of the year. Our joy comes because GOD SPEAKS TO US BY HIS SON. Throughout the Old Testament, 1) God had told us of His great love for us. Now, however, 2) God shows us His great love for us.

As soon as man fell into sin in the Garden of Eden, God gave evidence of His great love for us by promising that He would send a Savior. We know those familiar words — what we call the first gospel promise: “*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.*” (Gn 3:15) As wonderful as that promise is, it did not provide many details. So God repeated that promise over and over again throughout the whole Old Testament, as the writer to the Hebrews says, “**In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways.**” (v1) This promise was repeated to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. It was given to King David, and through many of the other prophets, each time adding a few new details about this promised Savior.

It did not matter when the Lord repeated this promise, nor to whom this promise was spoken. Each time it showed that God loved us so much that He did not want anyone to perish, but that all would be with Him in the eternal home He had prepared for His children. In His great love, He did not abandon us in our sin or let us struggle with sin on our own, only to end up in hell. He kept reminding us of His love and that promised Savior Who was to come.

The people of the Old Testament had to live by faith, trusting that God would keep those promises which He was making to them. Since it was a promise not yet fulfilled, they longed for the time when God would bring all of those promises to complete fulfillment. They did not doubt God’s promises, but they were like children who know that Christmas is coming and cannot wait for it to finally get here. So were the hearts of believers eagerly waiting for the day when God would reveal His Savior of the world.

We know that God fulfilled all of those promises — He kept His Word. This why the verses before us fill our hearts with such great joy: “**In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets ..., but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son.**” (v2a) We have the privilege to be able to gather this morning to celebrate an accomplished fact. The joy and peace in our hearts comes because God put His promises into actions. As we see that baby lying in the manger, we see God’s love in sending us His Son in fulfillment of all those prophecies.

This is no ordinary baby, for this is the creator of the world. This is the Lord of Hosts Who reigns over all things with unapproachable glory. “**In these last days God has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe. The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word.**” (v2-3a) God Himself took on our flesh and blood so that He would be able to crush Satan’s head and win salvation for all of us. It is no wonder that the angels proclaimed, “*Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace, good will toward men!*” All praise and honor goes to our God in heaven for showing us how great His love for us really is- — love that was so great He came to this earth to be our Savior.

The peace and joy that fills our hearts at Christmas is not just based on what happened in Bethlehem at the time of Jesus' birth, for that was only the beginning of God showing us His great love for us. We know that the story continues, for Jesus had only one purpose for coming to this earth as our brother, and

that was to be our Savior — to show us God's great love for us. So the reason for our joy at Christmas is because we know the rest of the story, how Jesus perfectly kept the law for us, and then offered His holy, precious blood through His innocent sufferings and death so that the sins of the world would be atoned for. **"After He had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven."** (v3b) When Jesus had completed the work which He had come to do, He returned to heaven to take back all of the glory and the majesty was always His, but which He did not make full use of while He was on the earth.

The festival of Christmas is truly one that is near and dear to our hearts. We love this season because we see God's love for us in actions, not just in words. For when Jesus is born in a stable in Bethlehem, God is now speaking to us through His Son. And the message that He is bringing to us is the message of love — His great love for us sinners. He loved us enough to send us His one and only Son to be be our Savior. That brings us the peace and joy which the angels announced to the shepherds the night Jesus was born. That is also the basis for us having a very joyous and blessed Christmas.