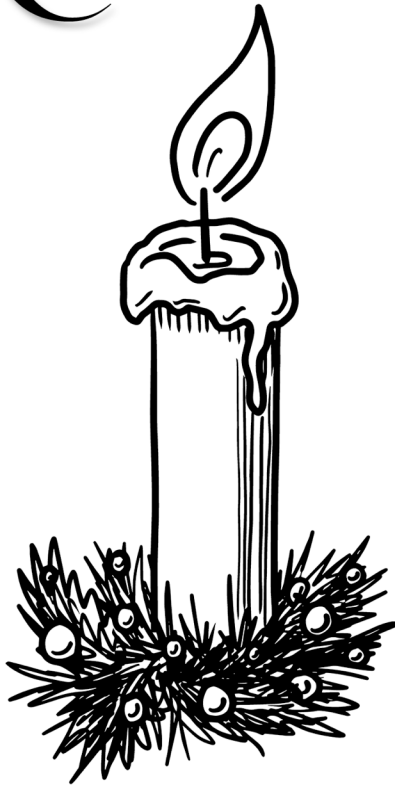


# THE REASON





# The Reason—Day One



*Genesis 3:14-15 “The LORD God said to the serpent, Because you have done this, Cursed are you more than all the cattle, And more than every beast of the field; On your belly you will go, And dust you will eat all the days of your life; And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, And you shall bruise him on the heel.”*

It’s easy to run ourselves ragged trying to make the holiday resemble a Norman Rockwell painting. Is every present wrapped with a beautiful bow? Can we rearrange schedules to attend each party we’re invited to? If we make a trip to the store on the other side of town, will the perfect gift for Mr. Hard-to-Buy-For be waiting for us near the check-out counter?

In the flurry of activity, it’s easy to forget there is a reason for the time we’re celebrating. We give lip service to Jesus being the reason for the season, but do we take time to reflect on what that means?

The Old Testament is full of prophecies about the coming Savior. While Isaiah contains what are probably the most quoted Christmas prophecies, it’s far from the first book to include them. As early as the

third chapter of Genesis, we see references to the promise of the Savior as well as the reason why we needed Him in the first place.

Three chapters into the history of the world and people had already sinned against God. With one bite of forbidden fruit the relationship was destroyed. We could never be good enough to undo the damage, and our holy God cannot allow sin in His presence.

The problem required a divine solution. God loves His creation, including us. The idea of eternity without those He created in His image, those He breathed life into, was not acceptable. Even as He disciplined the parties involved and set out their curses, God gave hint to the promise of future reconciliation.

While people messed up at every turn, God patiently and lovingly provided a temporary answer in the form of the Old Testament's sacrificial system. It wasn't given to secure our salvation but to show how we needed to rely fully on God's provision to cleanse us of sin once and for all. Ritual sacrifice created a picture of God's plan of salvation that we could grasp so when the Savior finally came, we could better understand why His sacrifice was needed.

Focusing on the reason we celebrate at Christmas doesn't mean we have to give up our activities and traditions. But through reflecting on the reason for our celebration, we gain the necessary perspective to put each activity in its rightful place. It can even add spiritual depth to our traditions.

Daily Reflection: As Christians, we're quick to say, "Jesus is the reason for the season." And that's true. But there is a reason we needed Jesus in the first place.

Looking at previous celebrations of His birth, can you recall any event, song, or reading that impressed on you the reason why we need Jesus's birth? What could help you move your focus from celebrating Jesus's birth to celebrating His birth as the starting point for our forgiveness of sin? What could help you remember our salvation is the real reason for the season?