

A MESSIANIC MELODY ~ SELECTED TEXTS

PASTOR COLIN RIEKE ~ CHRISTMAS EVE, DECEMBER 24, 2014

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.” (Genesis 3:15)

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. (Isaiah 9:6)

“Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God. You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. (Luke 1:30-32)

While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. (Luke 2:6-7)

Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.” (Luke 2:10-12)

When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold and of incense and of myrrh. (Matthew 2:10-11)



Grace, mercy and peace be yours through the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ,

Name this tune [Hum two different tunes]. Many people, even people who are not music majors would be able to pick out some familiar tunes or melodies. Because a melody is something that sticks in someone’s head. Whether it’s the songs you hear on the radio, or the hymns you sing here in church, the melodies start to stand out, the melodies are what many people sing. Some melodies are easy to recognize (like the ones I hummed before), others are not so recognizable, like this one: [Hum Malawian Anthem]. That, by the way, is the Malawian national anthem. You might say that it was a nice melody, but you just didn’t know where it was from.

To get the most out of a melody, it not only needs to sound nice, but it also helps to know where it’s from, so you are able to put a picture with that tune. Whether you realized it or not, this evening you were repeating another melody, a very specific melody. It’s a melody that is found in all of the carols we have sung, it’s a melody that is also found in all

of the Scripture readings we have read. This is not a melody composed by man, but it is a divine melody, a melody composed by God himself. The promise of a Savior has weaved its way throughout all of our Christmas carols and all of our Christmas lessons. This is God's MESSIANIC MELODY:

1. To recall
2. To rejoice in

(1)

In the introduction to each of the lessons, I tried to call to your attention this divine melody. God's MESSIANIC MELODY had its beginning in our first lesson. God had created a perfect world in which for Adam and Eve to live. He had given them a garden in which to live. He had given them a way to worship him, by obeying his one command to not eat from a particular tree. And yet, they disobeyed God, and as a result of their sin, plunged the whole world after them into sin, into a separation from God. Nothing that Adam and Eve (or their human descendants after them) could do would bring back a unity with God. And so God began to play the MESSIANIC MELODY of the one who would – **"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."**

But many years past after that first fall into sin. God had even sent a flood to destroy the whole world save one family because the world was so wicked. He had selected a people from which the Messiah would come. But even they grew impatient and tired of waiting. God sent foreign nations to conquer the Israelites – in part to punish, in part to draw the Israelites closer to him. It was to the prophet Isaiah who spoke during these turbulent times, repeating the MESSIANIC MELODY from God – **"the people walking in darkness have seen a great light...For to us a child is born, a son is given...he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."**

It was another 700 years after Isaiah that an angel appeared to the Virgin Mother Mary. And still the Israelites waited to see the fulfillment of this MESSIANIC MELODY. We recall yet again the MESSIANIC MELODY when we hear the words of Gabriel, the angel – **"Do not be afraid Mary, you have found favor with God. You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. He will be great and called the Son of the Most High."** And so Mary endured the next few months, with her husband Joseph by her side, the MESSIANIC MELODY playing over and over in her head. They trekked to Bethlehem where the baby was to be born. Such a humble birth for such a great king.

That night the MESSIANIC MELODY played loud for all to hear. **"There were shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flocks at night."** An angel of the Lord made sure that such a birth would not go unannounced. He relayed to the shepherds the MESSIANIC MELODY of the Christ child's birth. After seeing the Christ child

they went away with the MESSIANIC MELODY on their hearts. A star appeared in the heavens above the Christ child for all to see, and yet it seems only few noticed it. Wise men from the East followed the star – the MESSIANIC MELODY playing in the heavens. They brought gifts to worship this new-born king, to honor the MESSIANIC MELODY.

What was so long promised had come to fulfillment. The MESSIANIC MELODY was recalled by Adam and Eve, Isaiah, Mary, the shepherds and the Wise Men. It is something that we, 2,000 years later also recall. Why else would we be here this afternoon but to recall the birth of our Savior, to recall God's good and gracious promises, the MESSIANIC MELODY reverberating across the centuries?

(2)

Yet, it is not just something that we can recall with some fondness and go along our merry way to the Children's Christmas service, or home to celebrate with family. The MESSIANIC MELODY is something in which to rejoice. Imagine for a moment the joy that would have filled the hearts of those individuals who heard the MESSIANIC MELODY repeated to them? Adam and Eve would have been filled with joy concerning the hope there was in a restored relationship with God. Isaiah and the people of Israel would have rejoiced that God had not forgotten his people. Mary and Joseph rejoiced that the Messiah was drawing near. Shepherds and Wise Men alike rejoiced when they saw the baby Jesus.

So the MESSIANIC MELODY is something in which to rejoice. We rejoice because this was the child promised to crush the serpent's head, he's the child that brought light to a world darkened and blinded by sin. We rejoice with Mary, Joseph, the angels, the shepherds, the Wise Men that God kept his promise – a promise to restore our relationship with God – something we could not do. And just as men and women like Adam and Eve put their hope in this promise of God, so we too put our hope in the promise fulfilled.

It is through believers that the MESSIANIC MELODY continues playing in this world today. God has given us the tune to play, the tune to sing, the tune to rejoice in. It is a tune we play every time we praise God with our hearts in worship. It is a tune we sing every time we share with others the story of Jesus – with our kids, with our friends, with our neighbors. It's a tune we rejoice in every time God is reflected in the actions of our lives.

It is this MESSIANIC MELODY that so many in our world consider foolishness, and so they change the tune to suit their own ears – this can certainly happen outside of the church, but it is even more dangerous when it happens inside the church as well. It is considered foolish and downright impossible that a virgin could have a child. It is considered poppycock that someone could prophesy with accuracy about a future event. It is considered foolishness to pay attention to the simple words of God – the MESSIANIC MELODY.

That is the counter-melody of culture. At times this melody can sound similar to the MESSIANIC MELODY. But no melody that man comes up with can hold a candle to the MESSIANIC MELODY of God. And it's not just because we believe it, it's not just because of the miracles it contains, but because it is the only melody that saves. It is the only melody that gets you to heaven. This MESSIANIC MELODY is summed up on this night that we remember – the night of our Savior's birth – Christmas.

Maybe this is a melody you are already very familiar with, if so, I encourage you to continue listening to this melody and singing along. Maybe this is a melody you've heard a long time ago, but not as much recently, if so, I encourage you to again become more familiar with this melody heard in God's Word. Maybe this is a completely new melody for you, if so I invite you to learn more about it. May this MESSIANIC MELODY work in your hearts this Christmas Eve, and be a song on your lips in the days to come. Amen!