

December 1st



Advent 2024

“Humanity, where the spiritual and material world are joined together, is the crowning culmination of creation.”

—Herman Bavinck,
Reformed Dogmatics

—CHRISTMAS & CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY—

“Anthropology”

Introduction: Theology & the Birth Narratives

- ‘Advent’ is the English translation of the Latin word ‘adventus,’ which means “arrival” or “coming.” Historically, it was a season of reflection that preceded a season of celebration. While our modern “Christmas Season” is focused primarily on celebration, this is a time of year where people do tend to reflect upon the truth of Scripture and what it means for us as His people.
- This Advent, we are going to look at how the ‘Birth Narratives’ (Matt. 1-2 & Luke 1-2) inform our understanding of certain theological topics such as humanity, salvation, future events, and angels. We do well then to keep in mind these important truths about Christian theology:

(1) It should be *biblical* (2) It should be *systematic* (3) It should be *contemporary* (4) It should be *practical*

Key Point: The ‘Birth Narratives’ affirm both the _____ of humanity and our need for salvation as well as the _____ God’s original design for His image-bearers.

Anthropology Defined

“The study of man is called *anthropology*, from the Greek words *anthropos*, meaning “man,” and *logos*, meaning “word” or “discourse”; hence anthropology is a discourse about man.” —Paul Enns, *The Moody Handbook of Theology*

Human Sinfulness—Matthew 1-2

- The birth narratives affirm the realities of human _____ and the _____ of the world because of sin.

1. The genealogy of Matthew 1 is many ways a record of the sins of God’s people.

Matt. 1:1-7—1 The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. 2 Abraham was the father of Isaac, and Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers, 3 and Judah the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar, and Perez the father of Hezron, and Hezron the father of Ram, 4 and Ram the father of Amminadab, and Amminadab the father of Nahshon, and Nahshon the father of Salmon, 5 and Salmon the father of Boaz by Rahab, and Boaz the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse, 6 and Jesse the father of David the king. And David was the father of Solomon by the wife of Uriah, 7 and Solomon the father of Rehoboam...

2. The account of Herod in Matthew 2 demonstrates the level of evil of which sinful humanity is capable.

Matt. 2:7-8, 16-18—7 Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly and ascertained from them what time the star had appeared. 8 And he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, “Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him, bring me word, that I too may come and worship him.”...16 Then Herod, when he saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, became furious, and he sent and killed all the male children in Bethlehem and in all that region who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had ascertained from the wise men. 17 Then was fulfilled what was spoken by the prophet Jeremiah: 18 “A voice was heard in Ramah, weeping and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be comforted, because they are no more.”

Key Points: (1) We long for _____ from the consequences of sin both for ourselves and our world.

(2) The sinful actions of mankind cannot _____ the plans and purposes of God.

God's Good Design—Luke 1-2

- The Birth Narratives affirm God's good design for humanity as _____ and _____.

1. Marriage has a central place in the birth narratives.

Zechariah & Elizabeth

Luke 1:5-7—5 In the days of Herod, king of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah, of the division of Abijah. And he had a wife from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. 6 And they were both righteous before God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and statutes of the Lord. 7 But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and both were advanced in years.

Joseph & Mary

Luke 1:26-27—26 In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, 27 to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary.

2. Family has a central place in the birth narratives.

Luke 1:39-42—39 In those days Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country, to a town in Judah, 40 and she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. 41 And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the baby leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit, 42 and she exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb!

Luke 1:57-58, 76-80—57 Now the time came for Elizabeth to give birth, and she bore a son. 58 And her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had shown great mercy to her, and they rejoiced with her...76 "And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways, 77 to give knowledge of salvation to his people in the forgiveness of their sins, 78 because of the tender mercy of our God, whereby the sunrise shall visit us from on high 79 to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace." 80 And the child grew and became strong in spirit, and he was in the wilderness until the day of his public appearance to Israel.

Luke 2:1-7—1 In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. 2 This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. 3 And all went to be registered, each to his own town. 4 And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, 5 to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. 6 And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. 7 And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

Key Points: (1) God's good design for humanity is shown in the gender/sex _____.

- (2) The goodness of marriage and family are examples of God's _____ grace to us even as we live in a fallen world.

Christmas & Christian Theology

1. We do well to reflect this Advent on God's _____ in the incarnation to address both with our personal sins and the effects of sin in the world.

Matt. 1:20b-21—"Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. 21 She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins."

2. We do well to reflect this Advent on God's goodness to us as demonstrated in the _____ that He has entrusted to us.

Luke 1:35-38—35 And the angel answered her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God. 36 And behold, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. 37 For nothing will be impossible with God." 38 And Mary said, "Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.

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Human Sinfulness—Matthew 1-2

- **The birth narratives affirm the realities of human depravity and the brokenness of the world because of sin.**

1. The genealogy of Matthew 1 is many ways a record of the sins of God’s people.

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2. The account of Herod in Matthew 2 demonstrates the level of evil of which sinful humanity is capable.

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Key Points: (1) We long for deliverance from the consequences of sin both for ourselves and our world.

(2) The sinful actions of mankind cannot thwart the plans and purposes of God.

God's Good Design—Luke 1-2

- **The Birth Narratives affirm God's good design for humanity as male and female.**

1. Marriage has a central place in the birth narratives.

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