

CALVARY EPISCOPAL CHURCH
INDIAN ROCKS BEACH, FL
THE REASON FOR THE SEASON
CHRISTMAS EVE - YEAR B
9PM
24 DECEMBER 2017

THE REV. JON ROBERTS



While the shepherds were keeping watch over their sheep an angel of the Lord appeared saying, “Behold, I bring you glad tidings of great joy, for tonight a child is born in Bethlehem who will be the Savior of the world. And they left their flock and followed the star that led them away to a manger, where they saw the baby Jesus, swaddled in cloths and laying on the hay...

And that’s the true meaning of Christmas, Charlie Brown.”

It is so hard to believe that this narrative almost didn't make it in the final cut, but Charles Schultz stood his ground with the producers of CBS way back in 1965. He wanted to make sure people knew the meaning of Christmas.

Today, if you ask any person on the street what the true meaning of Christmas is, you would be lucky to get even the simplest message as is found in Linus' description to Charlie Brown.

The first story of Christmas certainly did not begin in the 60s.

It wasn't three hundred years ago as our forefathers were determined to forge to a distant land to find freedom.

The first Christmas story went back further, nearly five thousand years ago.

It began with a choice by Adam and Eve to take of the forbidden apple. They wanted control over their lives and were tempted by the serpent in the Garden.

The famous Baptist preacher, Charles Spurgeon said the "reason for the season" was not because of Jesus but rather he came because of our sin.¹

¹ Charles Spurgeon, "The First Christmas Carol" sermon, #3;

This is why God became incarnate in the first place, to save sinners.² There was no other reason.

When we take into account the nine lessons and carols, we see that Christmas is the story of human struggle, conquest, defeat and salvation. It's about people who make wrong choices but are spared. It's about a father's love, faced with sacrificing his son. It's about the valley of dry bones, where battle and blood stain the field. It's about jubilation when good news is heard. From a solemn holy night to a go tell it on the mountain, God was made man to meet us in our condition in order that we may be saved. When you look at Christmas as the full complement of our own passion to serve God or ourselves, it takes new meaning. In the simplest form representing the birth of a child in a manger, for reasons we may not be able to articulate, we are connected to this meaning. It takes us to our own origin and yet it also reveals our own destiny. Jesus, born in a manger. Christ, died on a cross. For you and for me. Now that's the true meaning of Christmas.

² 1 Timothy 1:15