

Fireman Sam and the Big Questions of Life



My five-year-old son is a great fan of Fireman Sam. He has converted our living room into a fire station complete with fire-trucks, a rescue boat and a helicopter. It seems that he has plans for further development of the fire department as he asked his mum if we could buy him a fire-engine crane truck for his birthday. ‘Yes, of course,’ his mother promised, ‘as long as you are a good boy.’

John knows that his birthday, which is on the 16th December, is close to Christmas. So he asked her again, ‘Can I get another helicopter for Jesus’ birthday?’ Joanne could have answered that we do not really know the exact date when Jesus was born, but again she promised to buy him that toy for Christmas.

Encouraged by his success, John went on to ask for yet another toy ‘for the birthday of Jesus’ Father.’ Now he had crossed the theological red line! My wife gently corrected his error. ‘Jesus’ Dad does not have a birthday.’

Without realizing John had touched two big life questions which all of us ask at some point or another.

The first is this: Why do I exist? Why am I here rather than non-existent? What is my origin?

The answer is found in the eternity of God. He exists in and of himself, without beginning or end. God is eternal. We are not. There was a time when we were not. We know our origin and owe our existence to him who has no birthday, to God the Father, the Maker of heaven and earth.

The second question is this: Why am I not what I ought to be? We desire what is beautiful but instead we’re often faced by ugliness in ourselves and around us. We yearn for what is true, good and sweet, but we are never far from falsehood, evil and bitterness. What is wrong with us and with the world? Can we ever reach the deepest desires of our heart?

The answer is found in the birth of Jesus, when we remember who he is and the purpose of his mission.

Jesus did not begin to exist at the moment of conception. He was with the Father before the creation of the universe. He is the eternal Son of God, as the Bible declares, ‘In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God.’

The baby in the arms of Mary was the eternal Son; he is both Divine and human. ‘The Word became flesh and dwelt among us.’ God the Father sent him to the world on a rescue mission. The innocent child of Bethlehem is the lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.

Jesus said, ‘I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.’ Because of Jesus we can become what we were meant to be. We can have a true, genuine and beautiful life. Because of him, we can enjoy fellowship with his Father and the privilege of calling him our Father!