

Christmas is Coming

December 18th, 2005

1). Ga 4:4 *But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, 5 to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.*

a). Regardless of the day or the month of the Lord's birth what we know for certain is that it happened 'when the fullness of the time had come'.

b). This was not an arbitrary event but a specific and exact moment within the course of human history that had been predetermined in the eternal council chambers of God before time began.

c). Nor was this a secretive event done in the shadow of obscurity, but an event that God had revealed to man from the very beginning. For even in the darkest moments this beacon of hope shone brightly.

2). Ge 3:15 *And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel."*

a). Man was created in the beginning to have dominion

b). The Woman was made to rule with him, by his side.

c). The plan failed to materialize through the deceit of Satan

d). But even in the darkness of this moment the Redeemer is promised

e). A fact further amplified for us in - 1Ti 2:14 *And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression. 15 Nevertheless she will be saved in childbearing (Literally – 'through the birth of a child') if they continue in faith, love, and holiness, with self-control.*

3). This is a glorious promise in itself. Yet God does not leave it there. He makes clear the lineage of this 'Seed', the regality of this 'Seed' and the Deity of this 'Seed'

a). 2Sa 7:12 *"When your days are fulfilled and you rest with your fathers, I will set up your seed after you, who will come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. 13 "He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. 14 "I will be his Father, and he shall be My son.*

b). From the lineage of David the king would come the 'Seed' who would be born as a man, but would be the literal Son of God, to establish the throne of David in relation to the rulership of the earth. And His kingdom would last forever.

c). *Php 2:5 Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, 6 who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, 7 but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men.*

4). The manner of His birth was also made clear

a). *Isa 7:14 "Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel.*

b). Immanuel – God with us.

c). He would be the seed of the woman, born of a virgin as sin is passed through the male line

i/ *Ge 5:3 And Adam lived one hundred and thirty years, and begot a son in his own likeness, after his image, and named him Seth.*

ii/ *Ex 34:7b.... visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children's children to the third and the fourth generation."*

5). The place of His birth is also revealed

a). *Mic 5:2 "But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, Though you are little among the thousands of Judah, Yet out of you shall come forth to Me The One to be Ruler in Israel, Whose goings forth are from of old, From everlasting."*

b). And even the time is given - *Da 9:25 "Know therefore and understand, That from the going forth of the command To restore and build Jerusalem Until Messiah the Prince, There shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks;*

6). And to leave no doubt more is said of His person, His character and His purpose.

a). *Isa 9:6 For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. 7 Of the increase of His government and peace There will be no end, Upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, To order it and establish it with judgment and justice From that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.*

7). All we have looked at then, and there is much more, is recorded in the Word of God – in Moses, the prophets and the Psalms. The very word of God possessed by the nation of Israel. The Word that was taught and reiterated throughout the centuries. From the first generation to leave Egypt through to those who were alive at the time of Christ's birth. An ever-expanding revelation.

a). Now we know - Ro 10:17 *So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*

i/ And God had spoken about the birth of His Son.

b). Throughout the whole of human history there has been the choice to believe what God has said and act upon it or not.

c). From Adam and the Woman in the Garden, to Abraham, to Israel at Kadesh Barnea, to those alive at Christ's birth, to the present day.

8). The announcement then of Messiah was loud and clear.

a). Let's look at the response of the major protagonists in the outworking of His first coming.

9). Let's begin in Luke - Lu 1:26 ¶ *Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by 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. The virgin's name was Mary. 28 And having come in, the angel said to her, "Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women!" 29 But when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and considered what manner of greeting this was. 30 Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. 31 "And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name JESUS. 32 "He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. 33 "And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end." 34 Then Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I do not know a man?" 35 And the angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God. 36 "Now indeed, Elizabeth your relative has also conceived a son in her old age; and this is now the sixth month for her who was called barren. 37 "For with God nothing will be impossible." 38 Then Mary said, "Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.*

- a). Notice what the angel draws attention to as he tells her of this incredible event – 2 Samuel 7 – the Word of God she already knew – ‘faith comes by hearing’
- b). He gives her a sign – that of the barren womb made fertile with the inevitable echoes of Sarah and Isaac, the son of promise.
- c). And Mary’s response – ‘Let it be to me according to your word’. This is faith in action. A faith equal to that of Abraham on Mount Moriah.
- d). Have you ever considered the possibility of her not believing what God had said?
- e). With faith like this is it any wonder she is called, ‘highly favored one’

10). Let’s also look at the faith of a man called Simeon

a). Lu 2:25 ¶ *And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon, and this man was just and devout, waiting for the Consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. 26 And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. 27 So he came by the Spirit into the temple. And when the parents brought in the Child Jesus, to do for Him according to the custom of the law, 28 he took Him up in his arms and blessed God and said: 29 "Lord, now You are letting Your servant depart in peace, According to Your word; 30 For my eyes have seen Your salvation 31 Which You have prepared before the face of all peoples, 32 A light to bring revelation to the Gentiles, And the glory of Your people Israel." 33 And Joseph and His mother marveled at those things which were spoken of Him. 34 Then Simeon blessed them, and said to Mary His mother, "Behold, this Child is destined for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign which will be spoken against 35 "(yes, a sword will pierce through your own soul also), that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed."*

b). Remember, to the casual observer this is just a young couple, probably amongst many others who have come for the circumcision of their newborn baby. Yet Simeon’s faith is unwavering.

c). Likewise, the woman Anna - Lu 2:36 *Now there was one, Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, and had lived with a husband seven years from her virginity; 37 and this woman was a widow of about eighty-four years, who did not depart from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day. 38 And coming in that instant she gave thanks to the Lord, and spoke of Him to all those who looked for redemption in Jerusalem.*

d). Notice in both of these people their single-minded devotion. Simeon in waiting for the consolation of Israel that he could depart this world 'in peace'. And Anna, after the death of her husband, choosing not to marry again but rather to serve God 'with fastings and prayers' as she looked for/waited for, redemption in Jerusalem. Something it appears that others were also looking for.

e). Why would this be the case? Because they had believed what God had said and organized their lives accordingly, being aware of the time and the season.

11). We see much the same thing with the Wise Men in - Mt 2:1 ¶ *Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, 2 saying, "Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him."*

a). Moses - Nu 24:17 *"I see Him, but not now; I behold Him, but not near; A Star shall come out of Jacob; A Scepter shall rise out of Israel, And batter the brow of Moab, And destroy all the sons of tumult.*

b). The Wise Men coming to Jerusalem is not the result of necromancy, but faith in that which God had said. There is absolutely no doubt in their minds as to whom they have come to see. 'Where is He who has been born king of the Jews?' – And where else would they look for the One who would sit on David's throne, but the very place where David's throne sat – Jerusalem.

c). Being born, as King is exactly what is confirmed for us in John Joh 1:11 *He came to His own, (Gk. Neuter word, referring to 'His own things') and His own (Gk. Masculine word, referring to 'His own people') did not receive Him.*

d). Christ came to His own things, having to do with His regal birth, the throne of David, the rulership of the earth, but His own people, Israel, rejected Him and what He came to offer.

12). Now let's note Herod's reaction to the Wise Men - Mt 2:3 *When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. 4 And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. 5 So they said to him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it is written by the prophet: 6 'But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, Are not the least among the rulers of Judah; For out of you shall come a Ruler Who will shepherd My people*

Israel." 7 Then Herod, when he had secretly called the wise men, determined from them what time the star appeared.

a). Herod does not dismiss the Wise Men as foolish, nor does he challenge their assertion that ‘the King of the Jews’ had been born. Notice that he inquires, ‘where the Christ was to be born’ – the Christ – the One anointed to be Prophet, Priest and King.

b). And where does he go for the answer? The Word of God.

c). We can conclude then that he also believed what God had said concerning the Messiah.

d). However, although he may have believed it he did not act in faith upon it. Instead he chose to act in his flesh - Mt 2:16 ¶ *Then Herod, when he saw that he was deceived by the wise men, was exceedingly angry; and he sent forth and put to death all the male children who were in Bethlehem and in all its districts, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had determined from the wise men.*

e). The one in regal authority on the earth sought to kill the One sent with regal authority from heaven. Knowing full well that he was attempting to kill the Messiah.

d). What he didn’t realize is that his actions were also the fulfillment of that which had been prophesied - Mt 2:17 *Then was fulfilled what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying: 18 "A voice was heard in Ramah, Lamentation, weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, Refusing to be comforted, Because they are no more."*

13). And this is no different to that which we see in the religious leaders of Israel. The ones who sat in Moses’ seat. The keepers of the Law. The teachers of Israel.

a). Remember what Nicodemus said in respect of Jesus? –

Joh 3:1 ¶ *There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. 2 This man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, "Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him."*

b). Let’s remember God’s voice at the Jordan River and the signs Jesus was performing in their midst by the power of the Holy Spirit.

c). Despite what they knew from what they had seen and from their knowledge of the scriptures

d). Isa 35:4 *Say to those who are fearful-hearted, "Be strong, do not fear! Behold, your God will come with vengeance, With the recompense of God; He will come and save you." 5 ¶ Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, And the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. 6 Then the lame shall*

leap like a deer, And the tongue of the dumb sing. For waters shall burst forth in the wilderness, And streams in the desert.

e). They chose to act, not in faith, but in the flesh - Mr 3:22 ¶ *And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem said, "He has Beelzebub," and, "By the ruler of the demons He casts out demons."*

Joh 7:1 ¶ *After these things Jesus walked in Galilee; for He did not want to walk in Judea, because the Jews sought to kill Him.*

f). The ones in spiritual authority on the earth sought to kill the One sent with spiritual authority from heaven. They knew full well they were trying to kill the One whom ‘God had sent’, whom ‘God was with’.

g). What they didn’t realize is that they too were fulfilling that which had been prophesied - Da 9:26a *"And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off,*

14). We would do well to realize that Herod’s actions and the actions of the religious leaders of the nation were not spontaneous in response to the coming of Christ. Their actions were a result of the condition of their heart.

a). Remember the religious leaders taught about the coming of Messiah, they professed to be looking for His coming. Outwardly they appeared to be in tune with God’s plan. But in reality - Mr 7:6 *He answered and said to them, "Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written: 'This people honors Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me.*

15). The actions of Herod and the religious leaders and ultimately the nation are in stark contrast to the faith of Mary, Simeon, Anna, the Wise Men and ultimately the disciples.

a). Yet they all start from the same base – a redeemed people in possession of what God had said in His Word.

b). Those of faith looked to the coming of His Kingdom.

c). Those of the flesh to the things of this world

16). And for us in possession of the same word the warning is this - Heb 6:4 *For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, 5 and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, 6 if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame.*

a). If we, believing what God has said about the coming Kingdom of His Son, turn with our hearts after the things of this world, we plot to put the

Lord to death all over again. We would be just like Herod, just like the leaders of Israel.

b). And living in a world, that especially for us living amongst the opulence of the west, offers us a myriad of distractions, a plethora of allurements to draw us away what is it that assures our victory over this world and its ruler? –

1Jo 5:4 For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world--our faith.

17). In this Christmas season let us take the lessons to be learnt from the Lord's first coming and apply them to ourselves as we wait for His second coming. For the faith we have, if it moves beyond just hearing will perform a deep work in our hearts from which we will govern our thoughts, our words and our actions.

a). Our faith will not just be in our words but will be manifest in the focus of our lives in the course of our everyday living. As we walk out a lifestyle of faithful obedience in all things.

b). Col 3:1 ¶ *If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God.*

c). Mt 6:33a *"But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness,*

18). Let us rejoice and give thanks for all God has made possible for us through the birth of His Son.

a). But let us also keep in mind that the manger is now empty and it will not be a babe wrapped in swaddling clothes that we shall see this time. But One whose eyes are a flame of fire, who comes as Judge, as King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

b). Let us hold fast to what we have

c). Let us be of the same mind as Paul - Php 3:12 *Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me.*

d). Let Christ be born in us everyday.