

He Who Came

12/14/25

Luke 2:1-14 | Jeremiah 22:24-30

Sunday AM

What do you think of when I say – **Christmas**? For most of us, we think of tinsel/toys, time w/ family, Santa and his reindeer, the baby Jesus in a manger – or some combination of all these things. Yet as we sing jingle bells and the first Noel – did you realize that underneath all of this is a **massive** claim:

Christmas claims that the eternal, one and only God stepped out of heaven and into our world as a real human being, in a specific time/place, w/ a specific mission – to die for the sins of the world.

But did this really happen? If so, why did God have to come this way – and what does a manger have to do w/ a cross? Answer – EVERYTHING!

DYK that the Bible actually answers these questions – but not w/ fairy tales, but w/ facts – including *names, dates, places*, and even a messy family tree. And tucked inside one of those family trees is an almost forgotten king named Jeconiah, and a curse that should have stopped Jesus from ever being the Messiah.

Our focus this Advent season is – **He Who is to Come**. But to appreciate this truth we need to understand why He came in the first place. So, today, I want us to walk thru the Christmas story in (3) movements:

I A Real **BIRTH** in a Real **WORLD**

The Gospel of Luke doesn't begin the Christmas story w/ – *once upon a time* – but w/ – *In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered...* (Luke 2:1).

Luke gives us a story that includes emperors and governors, Nazareth and Bethlehem, a census, and a stable. Meanwhile, Matthew gives us an even longer introduction complete w/ a genealogy that traces its roots from to *Abraham, Isaac, Jacob*, and *David* – all the way to a poor carpenter named Joseph and his young fiancée Mary (Matthew 1:1–17).

Have you ever wondered why the Bible goes to all that trouble? It's b/c Christianity isn't built on inspirational ideas; but on historical fact, events, and actual people.

In many ways, the Bible is planting a flag in the ground to say – *The story of God isn't some fictitious fable, but genuine reality. God does exist and He actually entered our world. Personally. Publicly. So, He could be seen, remembered, and recorded.*

This brings us to Bethlehem. To a real town, in a real world, to a rundown stable, and a rustic feeding trough – where a young lady named Mary felt the pain of labor as her betrothed husband heard the baby's first cry – b/c there's no room in the inn. It's such a strange and humble way to enter and save the world.

In spite of this subtle entrance, God pulled together a few select people to witness the birth of the Messiah. There was a woman named Anna, a man named Simeon, wise men and shepherd. In fact, we learn that an angel proclaimed to a band of shepherds – *for unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.* (Luke 2:11)

Have you ever noticed that in this (1) sentence the angel offered (3) unique titles to describe Jesus?

- **Savior** – He has come on a rescue mission
- **Christ** – The promised King/Messiah of David
- **Lord** – He bears the name and authority of God

So, there in that manger wasn't just anyone – it was the only and only Someone who was fully human – w/ a real body – who'd grow, learn, get hungry/tired – yet at the same time, He was fully divine – the promised Savior, Messiah, Lord.

Truth – if He wasn't truly human, then he couldn't have stood in for us; while if He wasn't truly God, His life and death would not have been able to save us.

This is where the apologetic of Christmas begins – b/c we see in Jesus that God didn't stay far off or send advice; He came near entering history in the flesh.

And yet there is so much more to the story that offers us an even greater appreciation of the incarnation.

II A King w/ a CURSE – and God with a PLAN

In Matthew 1 | Luke 3, we find two genealogies each w/ a long list of hard-to-pronounce names that includes the name of a king in Joseph's lineage by the name of Jeconiah.

Jeconiah was one of the last kings of Judah before the Babylonians swept in and carried the people into exile – only he was an incredibly wicked king. So wicked that God pronounced a judgment on him thru the prophet Jeremiah.

“As surely as I live,” declares the Lord, “even if you, Jehoiachin son of Jehoiakim king of Judah, were a signet ring on my right hand, I would still pull you off. I will deliver you into the hands of those who want to kill you, those you fear – Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and the Babylonians. I will hurl you and the mother who gave you birth into another country, where neither of you was born, and there you both will die. You will never come back to the land you long to return to.” Is this man Jehoiachin a despised, broken pot, an object no one wants? Why will he and his children be hurled out, cast into a land they do not know? O land, land, land, hear the word of the Lord! This is what the Lord says: “Record this man as if childless, a man who will not prosper in his lifetime, for none of his offspring will prosper, none will sit on the throne of David or rule anymore in Judah.”

Jeremiah 22:24-30

Don't Miss – while God had promised King David that one of his descendants would have a throne that lasts forever, yet b/c of the Jeconiah's wickedness, this particular branch of David's family tree was cursed – as God said – *no descendant of yours (Jeconiah) will sit and prosper on David's throne.*

If we fast forward several 100 yrs to Matthew 1 | Luke 3. We learn that Matthew traces the royal lineage of Joseph's line that includes the cursed Jeconiah – while Luke 3 traces his biological line thru Mary.

If Jesus is Joseph's natural, biological son, then He's a physical descendant of Jeconiah – which created a huge problem for God b/c His promise and curse have collided as if God had painted Himself into a corner.

This is why the virgin birth isn't just a Christmas curiosity, but a theological necessity.

This is why Matthew is so careful when he gets to Jesus. He didn't say, *“Joseph, who fathered Jesus.”* But *“Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born.”* IOW – ***Jesus isn't Joseph's physical son, but he is his legal son.***

This means that thru Joseph, Jesus inherits the legal right to David's throne – even though that line ran thru Jeconiah. Yet b/c of Mary's lineage thru Nathan, a line not cursed, He still had access.

So, b/c of the virgin birth, Jesus isn't counted as the physical offspring of Jeconiah, and therefore He doesn't fall under Jeconiah's curse – yet He still fulfills all the promises of a Davidic King.

This is vital b/c ¹it preserves Jesus' deity b/c He was conceived by the H.S.; ²it preserves His humanity b/c He was born of a woman; ³it preserves God's promise to David that a descendant would sit on his throne; and ⁴it preserves God's judgment on Jeconiah that no blood son of his would ever sit on David's throne.

It also underscores that God didn't cheat His own story – but wove it so every promise still stands, every judgment is honored, and Jesus is the rightful King. This is the apologetic of the incarnation – not some random, made-up fable; but a carefully crafted plan that stretches across centuries.

III The BABY Who Came for the CROSS

If this baby is who the angel said – *Savior, Christ, and Lord*; fully God, fully man – then ***why did He come?***

The angel told Joseph before Jesus was even born – *You shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.*” (Matthew 1:21) In fact, His mission is built into His name. Yeshua – that is – “*the Lord saves.*” And Luke 19:10 clarifies even more saying that Jesus came “*to seek and to save the lost.*”

Which begs the question – why do we often separate Christmas/Good Friday, as if they were different stories when they're not? The manger and the cross are (2) scenes in the same story. ***God had to become flesh in order to die for the sins of humanity.***

B/c sin is a human problem we all suffer from – a fatal disease we're all born w/ as a result of the fall of Adam and Eve – we need a cure. Problem is that no one has the ability to save themselves or earn God's favor – therefore we need a perfect substitute. Enter Jesus!

When we were incapable of saving ourselves, God did for us what we couldn't do – He stepped into time and space in Jesus to be a sinless, perfect sacrifice for us – *as God made Him who knew no sin to become sin for us so that we can be made right w/ Him.*

God in Jesus became flesh to stand in our place. He was that perfect, sinless Passover lamb sacrificed on our behalf for the forgiveness of sin.

This is what the incarnation/advent are so essential – *the Word became flesh and lived among us.* In Jesus, God shared in our humanity so that by His death He might break the curse of sin.

For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life thru Jesus Christ. Romans 6:23

Understand that from the manger forward, Jesus lived the life we should've lived. As a child, as a teenager, and as an adult, He obeyed perfectly at every stage of life so that He could fulfill the Law from the inside. And then, at the right time, He went to the cross.

The wood of the manger leads to the wood of the cross. The baby the shepherds came to see is the man the soldiers nailed to the tree. Unknown

SEE – on the cross, the rightful King – the one whose family line had nearly been cut off by a curse – hung there under another curse – *Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree.* (Galatians 3:13)

Jesus bore NOT the curse of Jeconiah, but the curse of sin. He took our judgment so that we could receive His mercy/grace. He absorbed our guilt so that we could be clothed in His righteousness.

So, if there was no real incarnation, there could be no real atonement. If the baby in the manger wasn't God and man, then the man on the cross is just another victim. But, if He is who the Gospels say He is, and did what they say He did; then His birth/death are the hinge of human history and the hinge of our eternity.

What will you do w/ the Christ-child who's already come and will one day come again?