

12-12-2023, COTR Texarkana

Title: Christmas Through Ancient Eyes

Purpose: Provoke people to see Christmas through the eyes of ancient Biblical characters and apply their spiritual lessons to our life.

Truth for Today: The birth of Jesus, our Savior, at Christmas leads to the fulfillment of our greatest need, the forgiveness of sin on the cross.

Text: Genesis 3:15

Topic: Christmas, Prophets, Mary, Herod, Anna, Simeon

## Christmas Through Ancient Eyes

- I. Introduction (Christmas Eve weekend schedule. Dilemma # services) SFLB
  - A. Pic Charlie Brown reminds us, it's 15/16 days till the day we celebrate Christmas. Christmas today means Santa, gifts, and time off from work. They're fun traditions, but the real meaning of 'Christ's-Mass' means a worship service celebrating the Incarnation/ birth of Jesus Christ, the Son of God and Savior of the world. The birth of Christ is so significant that time is divided by His birth, BC/ AD; BCE/ CE.
  - B. The birth of Christ is more than a day to celebrate Christ's birth. Jesus was born to die to forgive and save us from the consequences of sin. Today we're going to look at Christmas and what it means through ancient eyes. We'll begin in Genesis, and then see Christmas through the eyes of the prophets, Mary, Herod, Anna, and Simeon.
  - C. Title: Christmas Through Ancient Eyes
- II. Christmas through the eyes of the prophets
  - A. Moses wrote...after Adam's sin God told serpent/ satan, [Genesis 3:15 (NCV)...Your descendants and her descendants will be enemies. **One of her descendants will crush your head**, and you will bite his heel."] Pic, stomping a snake's head, i.e., Jesus crucified/ bitten yet in his death and resurrection destroyed the power of sin through the death and resurrection of Jesus. Jesus couldn't have died to save us if He hadn't been born of a woman and that's what makes Christmas so significant. The birth of Christ is the day the fulfillment of this prophetic declaration begins.
    1. Life lesson #1: Jesus triumphed over satan through His birth, death, and resurrection.
    2. Life lesson #2: God in His foreknowledge, knew people would sin and need a Savior. [1 Peter 1:18–20 (NLT) For you know that **God paid a ransom to save you** from the empty life you inherited from your

**ancestors...**<sup>19</sup> It was the precious blood of Christ, the sinless, spotless Lamb of God.<sup>20</sup> **God chose him as your ransom (NIV) before the creation of the world**, but was revealed in these last times for your sake.

B. Isaiah, 700 years before the birth of Christ, [Isaiah 7:14 (NIV) Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: **The virgin will conceive** and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel (*NLT which means 'God is with us'.*)] Quoted in Mt. 1:23,

1. Life lesson #3: Fulfilled Biblical prophecy proves the credibility of the Bible and shows us God is in control of time and world history.

### III. CAMERA Christmas through the eyes of Mary

A. [Luke 1:30–38 (NLT)...the angel told her (*Mary*), “for you have found **favor with God!**<sup>31</sup> You will...give birth to a **son**, and you will name him Jesus.<sup>34</sup> Mary asked...how can this happen? **I am a virgin.**”<sup>35</sup> The angel replied, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the baby to be born will be holy, and he will be called the **Son of God.**<sup>37</sup> (ESV) **nothing will be impossible with God** (NLT) **For the word of God will never fail.**”<sup>38</sup> Mary responded, “**I am the Lord’s servant. May everything you have said about me come true.**”

B. Life lesson #4: God choose Mary because, // us: (1) She lived a life of holiness, she was a virgin, [Vs. <sup>38</sup> Mary responded, “**I am the Lord’s servant. May everything you have said about me come true.**”] (2) She was committed to serve the Lord with her life, (3) She had faith to believe the impossible is possible with God.

C. Life lesson #5: Nothing is impossible with God; When God gives us a word or promise it will happen if we believe. E.g., dream of investing \$1M a year in the Great Commission is happening this year. Dec 3<sup>rd</sup> almost \$1.2 M in missions and outreach. How could this happen so soon after Covid shut down the nation. Nothing is impossible with God.

### IV. CAMERA Christmas through the eyes of Herod (Not everyone is excited about Christmas)

A. Magi, wise men “where is He who is born king of the Jews? [Mt. 2:16–18 (NLT) **Herod...sent soldiers to kill all the boys in and around Bethlehem...two years old and under...**] The wise men brought Jesus gifts; Herod wanted to kill Him.

B. Life lesson #6: There has always been and always will be satanic opposition to God's plan. In Genesis, satan 'biting Jesus's heel' was not just the cross, it represents the devil's relentless attack against all that is good and holy. E.g., Pharaoh inspired to kill all Jewish boys to stop Moses, satan used greed and jealousy to inspire Judas and the Jews to kill Jesus, [1 Pet 5:8 (NLT) **Stay alert! Watch out for your...enemy**, the devil. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to **devour.**]

V. Christmas through the eyes of Anna

A. 40 days after Jesus' birth, [Luke 2:36–38 (NLT) **Anna a (*ESV prophetess*)** was...in the Temple. **She was...very old.** Her husband died when they had been married only seven years. <sup>37</sup> Then she lived as a widow to the age of eighty-four. **She never left the Temple but stayed there day and night, worshiping God with fasting and prayer.** <sup>38</sup> She came along just as Simeon was talking with Mary and Joseph, and she began praising God. **She talked about the child to everyone who had been waiting expectantly for God to rescue Jerusalem.**

B. Life lesson #7: Lesson: As we age or suffer hardship, we become more aware of our need for God. This awareness should translate into an eagerness to serve Him and be with Him like Anna. [Vs. 37, She never left the Temple but stayed there day and night, worshiping God with fasting and prayer.] The American view of aging and retirement centers around fun and enjoyment. I suggest we do more than have fun and rest when we retire but look for opportunities to serve God because, like Anna, our devotion to God will be rewarded.

1. E.g. Pic Lady cans at gas station to buy devotionals.

VI. Conclusion: CAMERA Christmas through the eyes of Simeon

A. [Luke 2:25-32...Simeon...was **righteous and devout** and was **eagerly waiting for the Messiah (*Def. Christ, The anointed one, sent to redeem the world*) to come and rescue Israel...**<sup>27</sup> That day the **Spirit led him to the Temple. ...**<sup>28</sup>...**He took the child in his arms...saying,** <sup>29</sup> "Sovereign Lord...<sup>30</sup> **I have seen your salvation,** <sup>31</sup> **which you have prepared for all people.** <sup>32</sup> **He is a light to reveal God to the nations, and he is the glory of your people Israel!"**

1. Simeon recognized Jesus was the fulfillment of God's Word to Moses. This baby would be the one to crush/ defeat satan's control over the destiny of the human race. Jesus was born to die for the sins of every human being, freeing us from the control of satan and eternal damnation.

2. Life lesson #8: Jesus was born on Christmas morning to be the savior of the world. The question we must ask ourselves, ‘Is Jesus my Savior? [John 1:12 (ESV) But to all who did **receive him**, who **believed in his name**, he gave the right to become **children of God...**]
  - a. Salvation is a gift from God we receive by faith. // Gift from Grandma at Christmas. Would you like to receive the gift of salvation today? How? Believe in Jesus and follow Him.

## VII. Response

A. Prayer

B. Souls

## VIII. Bibliography/ Resources: Logos Bible Software and Library, Platinum Edition, was used to prepare this message.

A. Blomberg, C. (1992). [\*Matthew\*](#) (Vol. 22, p. 68). Broadman & Holman Publishers.

B. Barbieri, L. A., Jr. (1985). [\*Matthew\*](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 23). Victor Books.

## IX. Supplemental Material

A. Mt. 2<sup>17</sup> Herod’s brutal action fulfilled what God had spoken through the prophet Jeremiah: <sup>18</sup> “A cry was heard in **Ramah**— weeping and great mourning. **Rachel** weeps for her children, refusing to be comforted, for they are dead.” Rachel, Jacob’s wife’s, tomb was near Bethlehem and Rachel was the mother of the nation of Israel.<sup>2</sup>

B. Christmas was 1<sup>st</sup> celebrated in Rome in 336AD.

C. Matthew applies the passage to the mothers in first-century Israel in anguish over the babies Herod massacred. Ramah originally was located approximately five miles north of Jerusalem and would have been one of the first cities the exiles passed by as they headed north on their way out of Israel. First Samuel 10:2–3 associates Rachel’s tomb with the same general area on the border of Judah and Benjamin.<sup>1</sup>

D. Micah 5:2 (NKJV) Bethlehem...out of you shall come forth to Me The One to be Ruler in Israel, Whose goings forth *are* from of old, From everlasting.”

E. Christmas through the eyes of Zechariah, Elizabeth, and John the Baptist

1. Lesson: God uses had a plan but He needs people...before the world began...a forerunner/ prepare the way. God is at work and... Zechariah, Elizabeth, and John the Baptist were part of Gods plan....and didn’t

even know it sometimes we don't even know it...lived a righteous life and

2. Zechariah, Elizabeth, and John the Baptist and family lived a set apart life to fulfill God's plan
3. Vs 1 the Bible historically verifiable
4. Luke 1:5–17 (NLT)...a Jewish priest named Zechariah...and his wife, Elizabeth...<sup>6</sup> ...were **righteous in God's eyes, careful to obey all of the Lord's commandments** ...<sup>11</sup> While Zechariah was in the sanctuary, an angel...appeared to him...<sup>13</sup> But the angel said...**God has heard your prayer**. Your wife, Elizabeth, will give you a son, and you are to name him John. <sup>14</sup> You will have great joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth, <sup>15</sup> for he will be great in the eyes of the Lord. He must never touch wine or other alcoholic drinks. He will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even before his birth. <sup>16</sup> And **he will turn many Israelites to the Lord their God**. <sup>17</sup> He will be a man with the spirit and power of Elijah. **He will prepare the people for the coming of the Lord**. He will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and he will cause those who are rebellious to accept the wisdom of the godly.”] Fulfilled Malachi 4:5–6, the last vs. of the OT, 400 years before He was born. (NLT) “Look, I am sending you the prophet Elijah before the great and dreadful day of the LORD arrives. <sup>6</sup> His preaching will turn the hearts of fathers to their children, and the hearts of children to their fathers. Otherwise I will come and strike the land with a curse.”

- F. Isaiah 9:6–7 (NIV) For to us **a child is born**, to us a **son** is given, and the **government** will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, **Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace**. <sup>7</sup> **Of the greatness of his government and peace there will be no end...**