

## CHRISTMAS/WHY JESUS? Part 1

JROC – 12/3/17

### “This is Such a Strange Way to Save the World”

God is love (I John 4:8). Whom did God love before He created man? How does God know love? Gen. 1:26a - *Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness...*

God promised the Redeemer Who would take away sin (Gen. 3:15).

God required blood. Until the Redeemer would come, the blood of spotless animals would cover/atone for sin (Gen. 3:21; Lev. 17:11),

And so, Jesus, the Son of God, the Messiah, came...He Who is Emmanuel, God in the flesh, God with us (Isa. 7:14).

Jesus entered the world as 100% God and 100% man. As man, He could die. As God, His blood was pure, untainted...precious blood!

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

What was the Jewish climate at the time of Jesus? There was Messianic fervor/Messianic expectation. The Jewish people, who were the ones looking for the Messiah, were longing for Him. They were living in the excitement of the coming of the Messiah. Why? Because God had promised that the Messiah would come and deliver them and give to them the Kingdom of God on earth where the Messiah would rule and reign. But first, the Messiah had to come to die for sin!

Christmas is the fulfillment of Messianic prophecies re: the Messiah's first coming in the OT. And those prophecies begin in Genesis. The first Messianic prophecy is Gen. 3:15 when God promised THE REDEEMER!

The OT declared that the Messiah would have credentials and those qualifications were written in the OT.

Malachi 4:5-6 - *Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD. <sup>6</sup> And he will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, And the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the earth with a curse.* This is the LAST prophetic message...spoken by a prophet relating to the future...that God would give the Jewish people for 430 years!!!!

What are these two verses telling the people? God had been telling them that their HEARTS needed to change (Deut. 5:29....). They needed to repent...to turn from their ways and to seek Him.

Turning over a few pages from the end of Malachi to the Gospel of Matthew, we read of the perfect remedy for the curse:

Matthew 1:1 - *The book of the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham:* The Jewish people knew that the Messiah would be from King David's line. Typical genealogies would either begin or end with the elder...in this case, Abraham. BUT, we have David stated first. Of course we do. The people were expecting a "greater" king. And, they knew that King David of Israel was from Judah, the kingly line, the line from which the Messiah would come.

Genealogy means "origin." Genealogies were very important to the Jewish people. Genealogies proved that a person was indeed a descendant of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Genealogies recorded tribal lineage. Land allotment was according to tribe. Only those from the tribe of Levi could serve as priests. Only those from the tribe of Judah could serve as kings.

And then in Matt. 1:21 we read ". . . and you shall call His Name Jesus," the angel told Joseph, "for He will save His people from their sins." Here was the One written of in Isa. 53 – the One Who would come as the Suffering Servant and be wounded for our transgressions – the One on Whom God would lay our sins!

What do we celebrate at Christmas? Believers in Jesus celebrate the birth of the promised Messiah, the promised One of Israel – the One Whom God had promised to the Jewish people and to the Gentiles (Gen. 12:3; Isa. 49:5-6).

Before the birth of Jesus, we read in the book of Luke the birth announcement of John the Baptizer/Immerser. The angel Gabriel was sent by God to tell Zacharias (whose name means God Remembers) that he would have a son. Zacharias' wife, Elizabeth, was barren and both were well-advanced in years. Gabriel told Zacharias that their son would be named John. And John would serve as the herald for the Messiah. John would announce the Messiah, Jesus, Who would come as the ultimate sacrifice for sin. At Jesus' first coming, He came to die for sin. He is the ultimate SACRIFICE (the perfect Passover Lamb). When was the announcement of John's birth given to Zacharias? The angel Gabriel came to Zacharias who was serving in the Temple in Jerusalem at the time of SACRIFICE! How fitting is that? What a message God proclaimed to the world. We have a sacrifice theme laid out for us at Jesus First Coming! Zacharias, as a priest, was burning incense in the Temple in Jerusalem. (The Temple was known as the House of prayer for all people – Jews and Gentiles (Isa. 56:7; Matt. 21:13). Zacharias questioned Gabriel's words re: this son. Zacharias was struck mute.

Elizabeth gave birth to a son. The gathering for the circumcision and the naming of the baby occurred 8 days after his birth. Luke 1:59-79.

The Gospel of Luke begins with this account concerning Jesus' SECOND COMING! Here is the OT's Messianic promise and Israel's hope – God visiting Israel for redemption through the Savior, the Redeemer, and King in King David's line. Zacharias was praising God that the Messiah would soon appear and fulfill all of God's promises to Abraham including blessing, protection, and possession of their land and victory over their enemies forever! (Gen. 12:1-3; Gen. 15:18-21; Gen. 22:16-18). WHY would the Gospel of Luke begin with the truths surrounding the Second Coming of

Jesus? Because God had promised...these truths! AND, we know that Jesus preached the Gospel of the Kingdom (Matt. 4:17). BUT, the incarnation of the Son of God and His death on the cross had to come before the Kingdom would be established!

Luke 1:26-33 – in Gabriel's message to Mary we read of the first coming of Jesus and His second coming!

As we read through the Christmas accounts in Matthew and Luke, we're told that the people in Judea were discussing all that was transpiring prior to Jesus' birth (Luke 1:21; Luke 1:63; Luke 2:18) and they were MARVELING at the happenings.