

December 20, 2020 – THE BIRTH OF OUR SAVIOR

Christmas is the day we celebrate the birth of Jesus, the birth of the Savior, the Messiah, the Christ, the birth of our coming King. The birth of Jesus has been part of God's plan since eternity past. Long before this world was ever made, God knew that He'd create a people who would need a Savior. In Gen. 1-2, we read that God created the heavens, the earth, and mankind. And God created man and woman and they were perfect, and not at all sinful.

But in Gen. 3, we read that Adam and Eve sinned against God, and Gen. 2:17 tells us that the result of sin was death, and this was both spiritual and physical death. And this sin spread to all of mankind. Rom. 5:12 - *"Just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned."* Now God could have left all people in their sin, and then die, and then be separated from Him and punished in hell by Him for all eternity, but He didn't do that.

God greatly loved people and wanted to save people from their sin, and God had a plan to save people from their sin.

- Gen. 3:15. God is talking to the serpent, to the devil. We read about this opposition between the seed of the devil and the seed of the woman. But in the end, we learn that the seed of the woman, which is speaking of the Messiah, of Jesus Christ, would bruise the devil on the head, that is would defeat the devil, and therefore, be able to save people from their sin.

- Gen. 3:7, Gen. 3:21. Adam and Eve had sewed fig leaves together for their clothes. But God gave them garments made of skin, meaning that an animal had to have been killed, that an animal had to have shed blood, and this was symbolic of the Messiah to come, one who would shed His blood and sacrifice His life for our sins.

And so God's plan to save people from their sin meant that His Son would come to die for people's sin, but God's overall plan was more involved than that.

- Gen 12:1-2. We read about Abraham becoming the father of a group of people, of a nation of people, and one of his descendants would be the Messiah, the Savior. And most of the Old Testament is the story of Israel, of the Jewish people. And from the time of Abraham to the birth of Jesus, the Messiah, the Savior, is about 2000 years. And in that time, we read about Israel growing up in Egypt, and then leaving Egypt, and traveling through the desert to the promised land, to the land called Canaan.

We read that God gave to Moses and the Israelites a set of laws, for He was to be their God and they were to be His people, and they were to worship Him and obey Him. But God also set up a system whereby the Jews would offer sacrifices so as to make temporary atonement for their sins, sacrifices that were a picture, a picture of Christ who would offer Himself as a final and perfect payment for their sins. Heb. 9:6-12

The Old Testament then describes these Jewish people, and their relationship with God, which, for the most part, was not so good. I mean God was good, but the Israelites time and time again sinned against God, and worshiped idols, and didn't obey God. Psalm 78 And we continually see how God was patient and merciful with His people, and yes, He disciplined and punished them too. And we read about their imperfect judges and kings, but there was the Messiah who would come and be a perfect judge and a perfect king.

Then there's the prophets who spoke against the people's sin and warned them that if they didn't repent, they would be punished for their sin. Jer. 10:10-11, Is. 1:4-9. God then punished the unrepentant but always left a remnant who believed in God and lived for God.

The prophets also gave the people hope, for they spoke about the coming Messiah.

- Isaiah 7:14 – The Messiah would be born of a virgin, and His name was Immanuel.

- Isaiah 9:6-7 – The Messiah would be a Son, and become a King, and would be an eternal King, One who would bring justice, righteousness, and peace on earth.

- Isaiah 53:3-7 – The Messiah would be a Savior, would die for us, would be punished by His Father for our sins so as to pay for our sins, so we could be forgiven of our sins.

There are many other vss. in the Old Testament that speak of this coming Messiah and King, thereby giving hope to all people, that God would send His Son to be a Savior who'd save people from their sins, and then send His Son to be a King who would rule over the world. And there are many other promises for the Jewish people about how this Messiah would be their God, and would bless them and rule over them. Micah 5:2-5

Rev. 12:1-5. Let me explain this. The woman represents Israel, and one way to look at the Old Testament is to see it as the history of this woman, of Israel, and how she was in labor pains for close to 2000 years, waiting for that time for the Messiah to be born. Now the dragon represents the devil. Rev. 12:9. And remember Gen. 3:15 when God was talking to the serpent, and how the seed of the woman, that is the Messiah, would bruise the head of the serpent, would defeat him, and this all took place when Christ died and rose again from the dead. Col. 2:13-15

But in Rev. 12:3 we read about how this dragon had 7 heads and ten horns. And these 7 heads refer to 7 evil empires controlled and used by the devil, empires who tried to defeat Israel, with a goal to prevent Israel from bringing forth the Messiah, that is, preventing Jesus from being born into our world.

The first six empires were Egypt, the Assyrians, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome. Now vs. 4 refers to Rome, and specifically to king Herod when he tried to have all the babies two years and younger killed, and all because he wanted to keep Jesus from becoming a King and being his rival. But God through Joseph and Mary enabled Jesus to escape. The point of Rev. 12:3 is that there was this intense Satanic opposition to Jesus being born, but He was born, and miraculously so. Luke 1:30-35, 2:11
- Indeed, Jesus, the Messiah, our Savior, was born and lived a perfect life, died on the cross to pay for our sins, was raised from the dead, and then ascended into heaven.

Many of Jesus' disciples thought that He'd establish His Kingdom on earth at that time. But that wasn't His plan. You see, Christ wanted people to be saved from their sins, to become children of God, to become members of God's spiritual kingdom.
- Acts 20:20-21, 24-25; Acts 28:30-31. Paul knew that he was living in the church age, and he was preaching about the kingdom of God, and how people could enter it, and how people could be saved from their sins, could be forgiven of their sins. John 3:5 He also knew Jesus would be coming back to set up His kingdom on this earth. I am sure he was praying the Lord's prayer, *"Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth."*

Acts 3:18-22. Now Peter knew that Jesus was the Savior and a Prophet, and that He'd be coming back as a King. Matt. 24:3-27 – Peter knew about the signs and Christ's coming. Peter then knew about all these signs that needed to take place, and now we too know all these signs that need to take place, and since we're now living in the end times, we know it won't be long before Christ the Lord comes back to rapture the church, judge the world, save a remnant of Jews, and then set up His kingdom on this earth.

Matt. 19:27-29. We read about this conversation between Jesus and Peter, and that Jesus said to Peter that He would, in the future, be sitting on His throne in Jerusalem, and that He and the other disciples would be ruling and reigning with Him. And *"everyone"* who is truly saved, who is truly a disciple of Jesus will be eternally blessed and have eternal life, an eternal relationship with Jesus.

On this day that we celebrate Christmas, might we remember the big picture, that God sent Jesus into this world as a baby, and then He grew up and died for us so He could be our Savior, so He could then save us from our sins. And in the near future, Christ will return as King, and will rapture the church, and a short while after that, He will come back, land on the earth, and establish Himself as King over the entire world. Zech. 14:9, Isaiah 12, Rev. 1:4-8