

Searching the Scriptures / 6 / Christ’s Birth / Part 1

Since Christmas is celebrated in almost every country, the birth of Christ is undoubtedly the best-known part of the Bible for people all over the world. But beyond the Baby in a manger Who would bring “*peace*” on earth and “*good will toward men*” (Luke 2:14), most people do not grasp the real significance of Jesus’ birth.

Christ came for a very specific mission. We find this explained in Mat 1:21, “*And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.*” Yes, He did come to bring “*peace*”, but it is a spiritual peace that ends the warfare between mankind and his Creator, God Almighty. We also find in Acts 10:36, “*The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (he is Lord of all).*”

For further clarification let’s turn to Eph 2:14-15, “*For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace.*”

Why does such “*enmity*”, or hatred, exist between man and God? It is because of our sin, which is sending us to Hell, as we read about in Eph 2:1-5, “*And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved).*”

This passage clearly underscores the necessity of Jesus’ first coming to pay for the sins of His people, to clothe them with His righteousness, and to qualify them to enter heaven. Isa 61:10 beautifully describes this gift which God graciously bestows upon His elect: “*I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels.*”

The birth of the Lord Jesus was foretold by Micah the prophet in Mic 5:2, “*But thou, Bethlehem Ephrata, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.*”

Micah’s prophecy informs us that the Lord Jesus was to be born in Bethlehem, or the “*house of Bread*”. This should not surprise us because the Bible refers to Jesus Christ as the “*Bread of Life*” in John 6:35, “*And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.*” The Bible also details His virgin birth, His eternal deity, and His many names. Because of time we will be able to look at only a few of His names. Mat 1:18 speaks about His virgin birth, “*Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost.*” Then Mat 1:23 emphasizes that one of His names is “*God with us*”: “*Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a*

son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.”

Jer 23:5-6 tells us, *“Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.”* Isa 9:6 is a passage that is quoted frequently at Christmas time and is sung in Handel’s “Messiah”. It lists five of the Lord Jesus’ names: *“For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.”*

Luke 2:7 gives us more information regarding the birth of Christ: *“And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.”* The Lord Jesus was not welcome as a baby, nor as man. Indeed, as Isa 53:2-3 declares: *“He hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.”*

However, we read in Luke.2:10-11, *“And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.”* The good tidings that the “angel”, or messenger, announced in this verse is referring to the spreading of the Gospel of salvation. Once again we need to be reminded that this was Jesus’ mission, as He Himself declared in Luke 4:18-19 and 21: *“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, To preach the acceptable year of the Lord... And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.”*

The responsibility of preaching the Gospel did not fall on Christ alone, but on every one of His followers thereafter. May God give us grace to be obedient to this command.