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Christmas is More than Baby Jesus



By Steven J. Hogan

~ A Saturday Morning Post #149 ~

Many people do not understand the true meaning of Christmas. Indeed, it's a special day of the year, but it's not really about family, food and presents. In its simplest sense, Christmas is about Jesus, that as God's only Son, He became a man, and is now both God and man. We should be thrilled and thankful for what is called the *"incarnation,"* that Jesus came to earth to be God in human flesh. But more than that, Jesus actually came to live with us, for He is called *"Immanuel,"* meaning *"God with us."* Matthew 1:23

Living on earth that first time was an extremely humbling experience for Jesus. He was perfectly holy, yet dwelt among sinful people, with those who were worldly, with those who were ignorant of the truth, and with those who hated the truth, which meant they hated Him and His Father. But Jesus wasn't looking for praise and honor, for He wanted to be a servant, and He was the servant of all. Multitudes of people from all over Israel saw and heard Jesus, this perfect man, the best teacher, a

fighter for truth, a healer of diseases, One who drove out demons, and One who loved everyone, even His enemies.

For three years, Jesus ministered to the Jews, and to some Gentiles. Then the time came for Him to do His most important work, to suffer, die and be raised again. Jesus' death was purposeful, for it meant being punished by His Father for people's sins, so as to defeat the devil and destroy his work, and to pay for the sins of those who would repent of their sins and believe in Him. Justice and love met when Jesus died on the cross, for He satisfied God's justice, resulting in God being able to forgive sinners and show them His love. This forgiveness and salvation is only by God's grace, by Christ's death and the Spirit's work in a person's heart, and not by their own works. *"He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of His mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior."* Titus 3:5-6

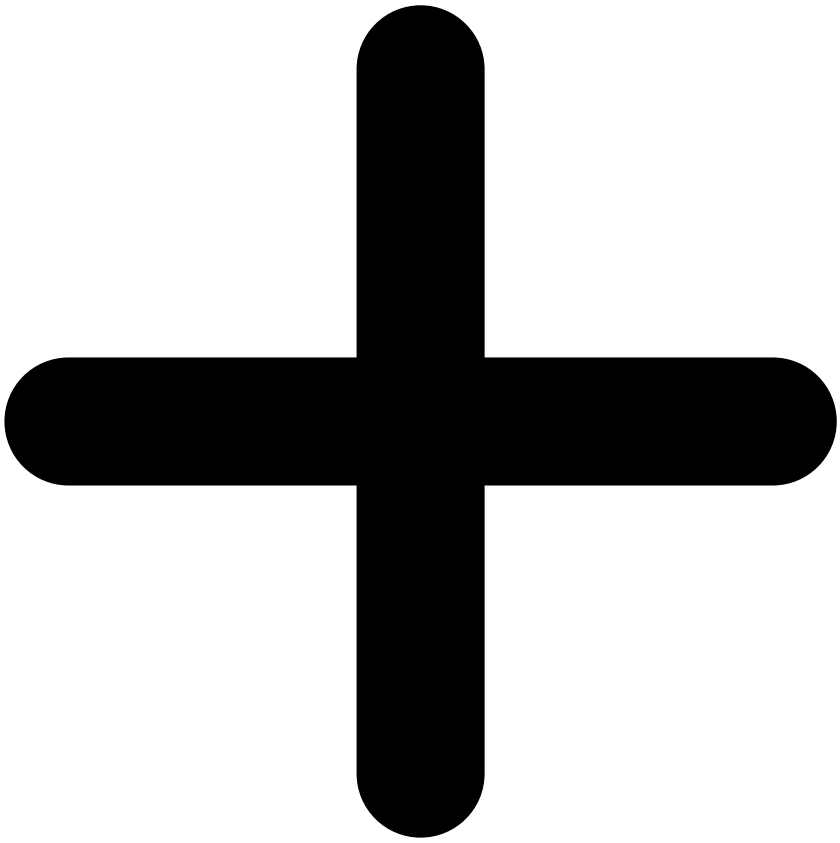
Jesus was born. Jesus lived. Jesus died. Jesus rose from the dead. Jesus ascended into heaven. That sums up Christ's 1st coming. Now we live in the church age, that period of time between Christ's 1st coming and 2nd coming, when He is building the church, redeeming a bride for Himself, and awaiting the end of this age when He will come back to earth. That the Jewish people have returned to Israel and reclaimed their land is God's clear signal to us that we are now living in the last years of this church age.

It won't be long before Jesus, with *"power and great glory,"* will come back in the clouds (Luke 21:27), and rapture the church still on earth, gathering her to Himself along with all believers who have already died and gone to heaven. Jesus will then punish this wicked world (Revelation 8-9, 16), redeem a remnant of Jews, and begin His long-awaited and prayed-for reign over the earth (Matthew 6:9-10). Then those famous Christmas verses (Isaiah 9:6-7, Micah 5:2-5a), along with many others from God's word, will be completely fulfilled. *"The zeal of the Lord of hosts will accomplish this."*

At this time in history, we can look back and see exactly which prophecies Christ fulfilled at His 1st coming, and look ahead, knowing that He will fulfill the rest of them at His 2nd coming. Believers living at the time of Jesus' birth (e.g. Mary, Simeon, and Anna) didn't have 20/20 vision like we do. They did understand that what happened was not just about a baby being born, but about the Messiah being both a Savior and a King – they just didn't know there would be a 1st coming and a 2nd coming. But we can see clearly now, knowing there needs to be a 2nd coming, and that Christ Himself told us so (Matthew 24:3-44). It's a God-guaranteed fact that Christ will return to earth, and once again will be called, *"Immanuel,"* for God, will literally be with us.

At this special time of the year, remember these words about Jesus, the Messiah: *"Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a Son, and you shall name Him Jesus. He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David; and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end"* (Luke 1:31-33). *"Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which will be for all the people; for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord"* (Luke 2:10-11). If you don't know Jesus and His love for you, I encourage you to pray these words from that Christmas carol, *"O Little Town of Bethlehem." "O holy Child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we pray. Cast out our sin, and enter in, be born in us today. We hear the Christmas angels, the great glad tidings tell. O come to us, abide with us, Our Lord Immanuel."*

P.S. I have written two previous posts about Christmas, ones I would encourage you to look at – "First Coming to Church Age to Second Coming" and "The Christmas Story and Christ's Second Coming." Have a blessed Christmas season as you are with family and friends and celebrate the birth of our Savior and King.



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