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The Christmas Story and Christ's Second Coming



By Steven J. Hogan

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It’s the Christmas season, that glorious and wonderful time of the year when we celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ. And we must, for that’s when God became man, and therefore, was with man, a necessary and most-amazing miracle for mankind. But understanding the meaning of the Christmas story is more than just learning about Jesus’ birth – it’s learning about Jesus our Savior, and Jesus our King and His reign on earth.

The Christmas story, found in Luke 1-2, tells us about Joseph and Mary, the birth of Jesus, and some key details about *what* happened that winter night. We also learn *why* Jesus was born. Now God tells us *why*

by providing witnesses who speak about the purpose of Mary's Son, of God's Son. Knowing their testimony is vital to comprehending the whole truth of the Christmas story, for they give us critical information about Jesus being both Savior and King, that which relates to both Jews and Christians. These witnesses, the angels, Mary, Zechariah, Simeon and Anna, all knew the God-given prophecies, the promises concerning the Messiah. Their testimony centered on three of these promises, the Abrahamic Covenant, the Davidic Covenant and the New Covenant.

First, there's the **Abrahamic Covenant, which is national,** focusing for the most part, on the nation of Israel. Mary said, *"He has given help to Israel, His servant, in remembrance of His mercy, as He spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and His descendants forever"* (Luke 1:54-55). Zechariah affirmed this, *"... Salvation from our enemies... and to remember His holy covenant, the oath which He swore to Abraham our father"* (Luke 1:71-73). It was said of Simeon that he *"was righteous and devout, looking for the consolation of Israel"* (Luke 2:25). Then there's Anna, who *"continued to speak of Him to all those who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem"* (Luke 2:38). These faithful witnesses knew this covenant related to Israel and Jerusalem, and that God's promise to Abraham would result in a great nation, a vast amount of land, many descendants, and God's blessing to the entire world (Genesis 12:1-3, 13:14-17, 15, 17:1-8). We have seen some of these physical blessings in the past and now again in the present, but it's in the future, at Christ's coming, that we will see this covenant completely fulfilled. It must also be said that all believers are spiritual descendants of Abraham. Romans 4:16-17

Second, there's the **Davidic covenant, which is universal,** for it tells us about the reign of Jesus Christ over Israel, and of course, over the entire world. The angel explains this when he says to Mary*, "He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High; 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 1:32-33). Now that we live in the end-times, we know Christ's reign over this earth is about to begin.

Third, there's the **New Covenant, which is personal,** for it speaks of the salvation of an individual sinner before God. Jesus was born to live a perfect life, and then die for sinners. This covenant applies to all people who repent of their sins and turn to Jesus for mercy, believing that He died to pay the penalty for their sins, resulting in complete forgiveness. Mary joyfully shared, *"My soul exalts in God my Savior"* (Luke 1:46). Zechariah spoke of this when he said, *"To give His people the knowledge of salvation by the forgiveness of their sins"* (Luke 1:77). The angel declared, *"Today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord"* (Luke 2:11). This is the key and central covenant, for the person who is saved from his sins will also, fully and forever, enjoy the blessings and benefits of the Abrahamic and Davidic covenants.

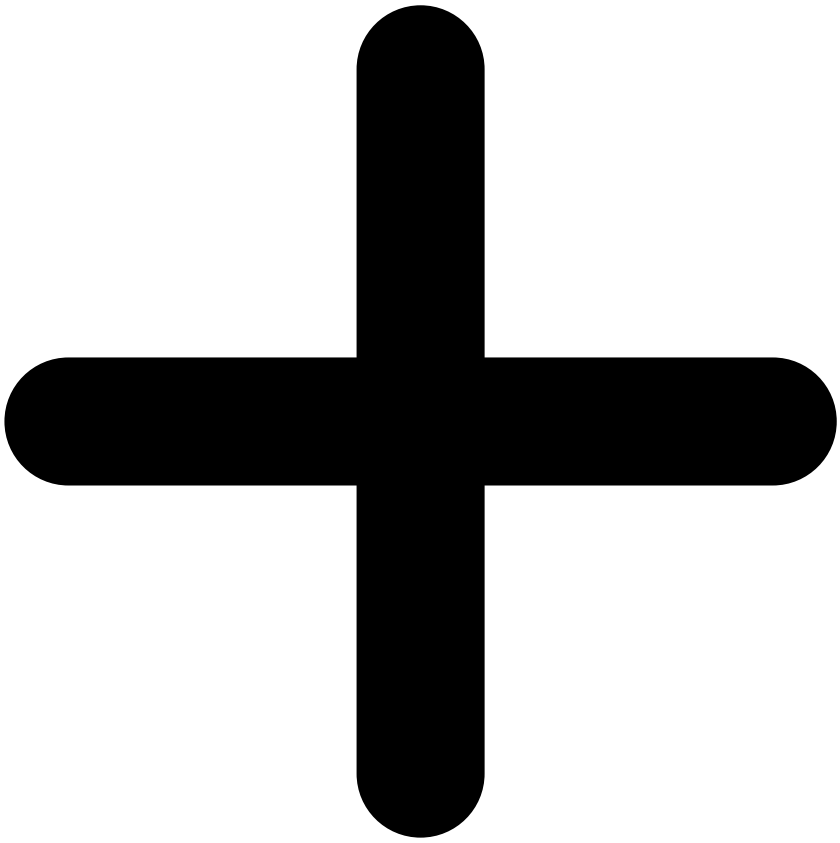
Do you see what these witnesses were saying, that Jesus would be the One to fulfill God's promises to His people, those given in the Abrahamic, Davidic and New Covenants? The Christmas story tells us about Jesus' birth, but more than that, it tells us that He came to keep God's promises. At His first coming, Jesus was born, died for sinners, rose from the dead, and ascended into heaven, which all relates to the New Covenant. But He has to come again, He must come again, and He will come again, to finish the work that relates to the Abrahamic and Davidic Covenants.

I hope you see the relevance and the importance of the Christmas story for those of us living at this time in history, for much of what these witnesses said will soon come true. Yes, their testimony reminds us of Christ being born to die for our sins, but it also relates to His second coming, and the fulfillment of God's promises to believing Jews and Gentiles. Unbeknownst to them, these witnesses are speaking to us today. Might we be listening to them!

There's no doubt that Mary, Zechariah, Simeon, and Anna, were overflowing with joy when Jesus came the first time, for they knew what His presence on earth would mean for the Jews, for all believers, and for

the entire world! Might we be just as excited about seeing Jesus! Might we be praying for His kingdom to come, be telling others about Him, and be looking forward to seeing Him come in the clouds, and then begin His reign over the earth! *“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men.”* Luke 2:14

P.S. Here is the Christmas post from last year that I would encourage you to read – First Coming to Church Age to Second Coming. Our focus, as Christians, is to always be on Christ, and here is an article that will help direct your attention to Him – Thinking of Jesus Christ.



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