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The True Meaning of Christmas



By Steven J. Hogan

~ A Saturday Morning Post #201 ~

Most people, even many Christians, don't understand the real meaning of Christmas. We know it's not about presents, family, food, football, decorations, and singing *"The Twelve Days of Christmas,"* but it's not just about baby Jesus either. Yes, He is the reason for the season, but do you understand the whole story? Do you see the big picture? Do you realize that the Bible stories of Jesus' birth are not just about Him being a baby, but about His entire, eternal purpose? What does God's word say about Christmas and it's true meaning?

In the Old Testament we find many prophecies about Christ's 1st coming and 2nd coming. Isaiah 7:14 says, *"Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel."* Isaiah 9:6-7 tells us, *"A child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; and the government will rest on His shoulders; and His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God… There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace on the throne of David and over His*

kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness from then on and forevermore." These are remarkable, hope-producing predictions about this baby, this child, a son, and that He would miraculously be God in the flesh, would literally be with us on this earth, and then be a King who will rule over this world forever and ever.

Micah 5:2-5 says, *"But as for you Bethlehem Ephrathah, too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you one will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel. His goings forth are from long ago, from the days of eternity… He will arise and shepherd His flock… He will be great to the ends of the earth. This one will be our peace."* This too speaks of the Messiah, this eternal one who would be born in that little town of Bethlehem, and then become a ruler, bringing peace to Israel and to the whole world during what we know to be the millennial kingdom.

The New Testament tells us that these Old Testament prophecies were and will be fulfilled, for they describe Jesus' birth, but much more than that. In Matt. 1:20-23, we learn that Joseph found out from an angel that Mary's child was *"'Immanuel', which translated means, 'God with us,'"* this fulfilling Isaiah 7:14. Joseph was told that the baby's name was to be Jesus which means Savior, for He would *"save His people from their sins."* Matt. 2:1-12 goes on to tell us about the Magi worshiping this baby Jesus, for He was the King of the Jews, thus fulfilling the Micah 5:2-5 prophecy. To sum it up, the Christmas story as stated by Matthew makes it explicitly clear that Jesus wasn't just a baby but God in the flesh, a Savior and a King.

Luke 1-2 says the same thing. First, there's an angel telling Mary, *"He will be great and will be called the 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 1:26-33). Mary, a holy and humble young woman, was surprised but excited to hear that her baby would not just be her son, the son of man, but also the Son of God, and that He would be a King, fulfilling the promise given to David. (2 Sam. 7:12-16). Then there's the angel

bringing *“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

Zacharias, the priest, upon learning from the Holy Spirit that baby Jesus was to be the Savior, proclaimed that He would bring forgiveness of sins to His people, to both Jews and Gentiles (Luke 1:68, 77). He also knew Jesus would be the greatest King ever and would fulfill God’s promise to Abraham about his descendants being rescued from their enemies, receiving land, and living in peace. (Luke 1:71-75, 79). Finally, there’s Simeon, who actually held baby Jesus when He was in the temple with Joseph and Mary – and the ever-hopeful Anna was there too, one who had long been praying for that day. They knew this little baby was the Messiah, the Christ, and also the King who would bring lasting peace to Israel. Luke 2:25-32, 36-38

Indeed, the message of Christmas is infinitely and eternally bigger than just a story about the baby Jesus. I hope you clearly understand the meaning of the Christmas story, as told by Matthew, Luke, and the prophets, that Jesus is the Lord, God in the flesh, and that He came to this earth to be both a Savior and a King.

A little over 2000 years ago Jesus was born on this earth, and He grew up to become the most important Man, a perfect Man who died on a cross to pay the penalty for all your sins. You see, all people have sin-blackened souls and are guilty before God. And not you nor anyone else can save your soul – only Jesus Christ, the Son of God and son of man, can save you, can take away your sins. If you repent, if you tell God that you are truly sorry that you have sinned against Him, and believe that Christ, and Christ alone, satisfied God’s wrath by dying for you, then you will be born again and become a child of God. Your soul will be cleansed from all your sins, and you will receive eternal life, a needed, satisfying, and most wonderful relationship with the living God, one that will last forever and ever. *“Repent and return, so your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the*

presence of the Lord, and that He may send Jesus, the Christ appointed for you." Acts 3:19-20

We are coming to the end of 2020, a year that for many has been most difficult and troubling – and so the true and timeless message of Christmas is particularly relevant at this time. While some may think this is the time to just relax, eat good food, sing songs, get presents, and be with family, let me strongly say that now is when you need to know the real meaning of Christ, that Jesus Christ is a Savior and wants to deliver you from your sins, that He is Lord and wants to use your life for God's purposes, and that He is King, and will soon return to rule over this world during the kingdom age.

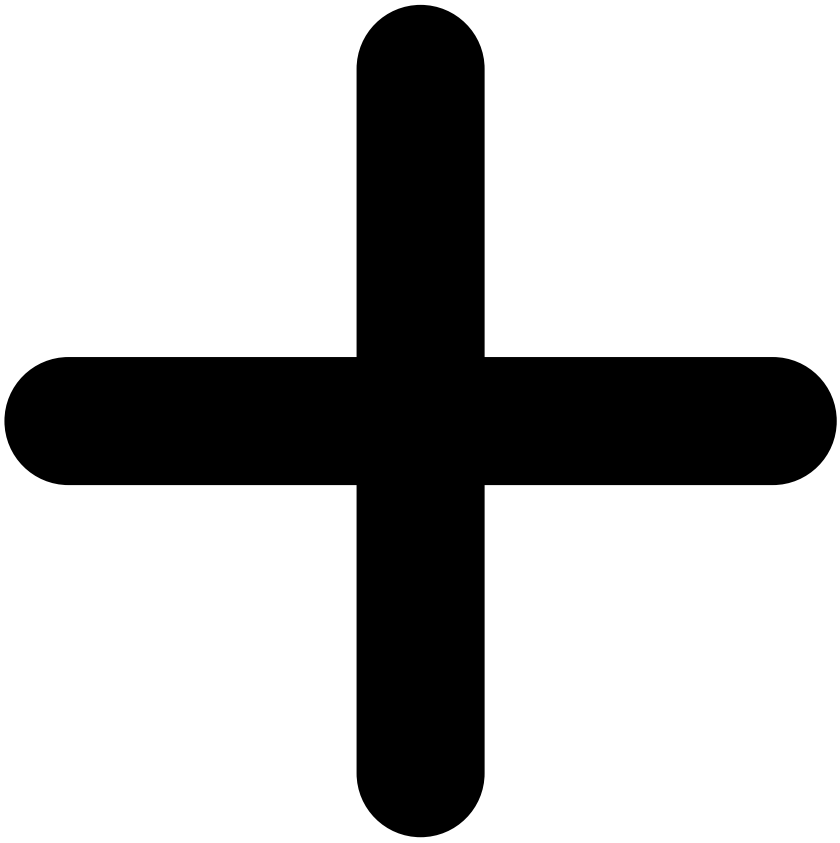
That a great many Jewish people have come back to their land means we are now in the end-times and this church age is about over. We are a lot closer to Christ's 2nd coming than we are to His 1st coming. It won't be long before we "*see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory"* (Luke 21:27), before we will be saying, *"glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace among men"* (Luke 2:14), and before *"the whole earth is full of His glory."* Isaiah 6:3

Let me share a truth-centered, super-encouraging, 1st and 2nd coming Christmas carol, *"Come Thou Long-Expected Jesus."*
1 – *"Come, Thou long-expected Jesus, born to set Thy people free; from our fears and sins release us; let us find our rest in Thee. Israel's strength and consolation, hope of all the earth Thou art; Dear desire of every nation, joy of every longing heart."*
2 – *"Born Thy people to deliver, born a child, and yet a King; Born to reign in us forever, now Thy gracious kingdom bring. By Thine own eternal Spirit rule in our hearts alone; By Thine all-sufficient merit raise us to Thy glorious throne."*

May the true message of Christmas live in your heart and be lived out in your life, bringing blessing to your life and great

glory to God!

P.S. What a wonderful time of the year to think about Jesus Christ, our Savior and King. Here are two previous posts that tell us how the Christmas story relates to Christ's 2nd coming and the hope that God has for every believer – *"First Coming to Church Age to Second Coming"* and *"The Christmas Story and Christ's Second Coming."*



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