

Local Group Meeting · “Celebrating Christmas”

Hillcrest Bible Church ❖ ❖ ❖ December 2021

Christmas celebrates the birth of Jesus Christ. This birth marked the beginning of the amazing ministry of Jesus Christ, Son of Man and Son of God. The coming of the Messiah was promised at the very beginning of time. When Adam disobeyed God and fell into sin and death, God promised to provide the Seed of the woman. The Seed alone would defeat Satan and restore the rightful relationship between God and man. The hope for mankind was focused on the coming of the Seed. Humanly speaking, the timing of Jesus’ birth was sudden and surprising, but the birth itself was a divine certainty. Whatever God promises – He will provide. We celebrate Christmas because this birth set in motion the fulfillment of God’s promise to save sinners and restore the rightful authority and dominion of God. In that sense Christmas celebrates the ministry of Jesus Christ as Savior and King. The cross fully accomplished our salvation in the past – and the crown and earthly kingdom are yet to come. We celebrate Christmas with faith and hope in Jesus Christ. He is the Savior of Christmas past and He is the King of Christmas future.

Christmas and the Promises

- ① “The Promises of Old” → Genesis 3:15 + Isaiah 7:14 + Isaiah 9:6-7

The origin of Christmas is in the eternal plan of God. God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that all who believe in Him would have eternal life. This divine purpose was set forth over centuries of time in covenant promises and prophetic revelations. Who was this Seed that was to come? When would He come? How would He defeat Satan and accomplish the great restoration of mankind’s broken relationship with God? All through the ages, there were many questions. And, all along, God progressively revealed more and more about the coming Seed. He would be Son of God and Son of Man. He would be the Messiah, Savior, Lord and King. Christmas not only celebrates the birthday of an important person, but also the faithfulness of God in providing the Messiah who forever changes everything – including our lives.

Christmas and Israel

- ② “The Promise to Israel” → Zechariah 8:1-23 + Zechariah 12:10

Christmas is not celebrated by the Jews today. They did not receive Jesus Christ as the Messiah but rejected and crucified Him. Some think that when the Jews rejected God that God rejected them. This is not true. When God made His covenant promises to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and David, He purposed to fulfill them “for His name sake”. Although Israel was unfaithful to the LORD God, God will be faithful to them. Restoration, salvation, and kingdom await them in the last days. God spoke the truth when He said that salvation is of the Jews. And, it will include all the believers from Old Testament times – and all the believers who are drawn to Jesus Christ in the end times. One day they too will celebrate Christmas – the birth of their Messiah, Savior, Lord and King.

Christmas and the Gentiles

③ “The Promises to the Gentiles” → Luke 2:25-32 + John 1:29 + Romans 15:7-13

God chose to make a great nation out of Abraham. God’s plan of the ages was to accomplish salvation and kingdom through Abraham, Isaac and Jacob ... and the children of Israel. Israel is God’s chosen nation – and the seed of David will be King of kings and Lord of lords. God’s divine purpose, however, was never limited to the Jewish people alone. God promised Abraham that the great blessings that would come to and through him would be for all the nations of the earth. In other words, God’s divine purpose also included the Gentiles. The Gentiles enter into the promises of God through Jesus Christ. When we are saved, we are spiritually baptized into the Body of Christ. We are “new covenant Christians” – and full partakers and participants in all the promises of God. The church was a mystery in the Old Testament, but it was revealed later through the apostles. Salvation is indeed of the Jews, but that salvation and kingdom include all who are saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. The Christ of Christmas is our Savior and King too. It is the reason we celebrate Christmas.

December 1st ① “Promises” → Genesis 3:15 + Isaiah 7:14 + Isaiah 9:6-7

December 8th ② “Israel” → Zechariah 8:1-23 + Zechariah 12:10

December 15th ③ “The Gentiles” → Luke 2:25-32 + John 1:29 + Romans 15:7-13

Memory Verse: Luke 1:32-33 · Gabriel’s message to Mary about Jesus:

“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.”

Read all the verses at the beginning of the meeting – and then answer the questions below – referencing the truth found in these verses of Scripture.

Discussion Questions:

1. How does the context give insight into this passage of Scripture?
2. What does this Scripture reveal about the Messiah – the Christ – and his coming?
3. What is the broader significance of this Scripture to the gospel and the world?
4. How should this text impact the way that Christians remember the birth of Christ?