

## “A DIFFERENT LOOK AT CHRISTMAS”

**INTRODUCTION:** Christmas today is often associated with Santa Claus, Frostie the Snowman, Jingle Bells, Mistletoe, pretty Christmas lights, and presents. But what does Christmas really mean? What is the real meaning of Christmas. I like what Brother John Hankins said at our church services last Sunday. *It is not Christmas but CHRISTmas!!* Did you get it, not Christmas but CHRIST mas. The Lord Jesus Christ and his wonderful birth. Let us do a small study of the “real” Christmas story and hopefully draw some applications for our daily Christian walk

We will focus on three main aspects of the Christmas story:

- Waiting for the First Christmas
- Wonder of that First Christmas
- Wise Men that were seeking the Christ of Christmas

### I. WAITING FOR THE FIRST CHRISTMAS:

There were many, many believers in the Old Testament who were awaiting the coming of “Messiah” to the earth to fulfill his biblical promise to come to earth to redeem Israel.

- The first PARENTS – Even Adam and Eve were looking for the Messiah right after their fall in the Garden of  
*Genesis 3:14-15 - “14 And the LORD God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life:  
15 And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.*
- The PATRIARCH Abram (Abraham) – Abram was promised the Messiah would come through his lineage”
  - *Genesis 12:2,7 “2 And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing:”  
7 And the LORD appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there builded he an altar unto the LORD, who appeared unto him.”*
  - *Genesis 17:5-8 “5 Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee.  
6 And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee.  
7 And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee.*

*8 And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.”*

- *Genesis 22:7-8 - “7 And Isaac spake unto Abraham his father, and said, My father: and he said, Here am I, my son. And he said, Behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?  
8 And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering: so they went both of them together.”*

- **The PROPHETS – Particularly Isaiah and Micah**

- **Isaiah – prophesied the circumstances of his birth:**

*Isaiah 7:14 - “14 Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.”*

*Isaiah 9:6-7 - “6 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.  
7 Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.”*

- **Micah – the place of His birth**

*Micah 5:2 - “2 But thou, Beth-lehem Ephratah, 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.”*

## **II. WONDER OF THAT FIRST CHRISTMAS:**

**Let us examine a little closer the “Wonder” of that first Christmas and some things about it you may have not pondered:**

- **The SHELTER For that First Christmas** – Notice here the shelter were Jesus was born was a livestock stall and the crib Jesus was laid in was a “Manager” or in today's terminology a feeding trough:
  - *Luke 2:3-7 - “3 And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city.  
4 And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judæa, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:)*

*5 To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child.*

*6 And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered.*

*7 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 SHEPHERDS – The First Visitors to Jesus Birth:**

- *Luke 2:8-17 “8 And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.  
9 And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid.  
10 And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.  
11 For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.  
12 And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.  
13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,  
14 Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.  
15 And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us.  
16 And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger.  
17 And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child.*
- Notice here that the visitors on the night Jesus was born were Shepherds. Notice who is absent:
  - *Levites*
  - *Priests and High Priests*
  - *King Herod,*
  - *The Roman Governor.*
- **SPECULATION:** Even if they have been invited by angels, they still would not have believed and come.
- Notice whom God invited to His dear and only **BEGOTTEN** son's birth: Shepherds. Regarded as the lowest form of occupation in society at that time They were considered violators of the Sabbath and unclean yet they had faith in God and his promise of the Messiah!!!!

- **The Wonderful SAVIOUR Himself: (Deity but in ORDINARY Form)**
  - **Isaiah 53:2** *“2 For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him.”*
  - **Mark 1:9** *“9 And it came to pass in those days, that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in Jordan.”*
  - **Notice here in the Scripture some things you may not have pondered before:**
    - **What was missing at His birth and life here on earth: His Glory.**
    - **His place of birth could not have been recognized if the angels had not pointed out where he had been born.**
    - **The Messiah being born was so Wonderful, the Shepherds told everyone what they had seen.**

### III. WISE MEN THAT WERE SEEKING THE CHRIST OF CHRISTMAS

Now let us take a look at the Wise Men who traveled to see Jesus after he was born and dispel couple of common Christmas story myths:

- **The direction of TRAVEL – From the East**
  - **Matthew 2:1-2** *“1 Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, 2 Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him.”*
  - **DIRECTION** they came from – East: Possibly Asia or at the least Persia.
  - **DESTINATION** they were headed – Where the star led them.
- **The TROUBLE the Wise Men brought King Herod**
  - **Matthew 2:3-6** *“3 When Herod the king had heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. 4 And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born. 5 And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judaea: for thus it is written by the prophet, 6 And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel.”*
  - **Sometimes we are TROUBLED by what God's word has to tell us.**
  - **God's word should have been TREASURED not TROUBLING.**

- **The TIME of the Journey – Approximately 2 years**
  - **Matthew 2:7,16 - “7 Then Herod, when he had privily called the wise men, enquired of them diligently what time the star appeared.”**  
*16 Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wrath, and sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently enquired of the wise men.”*
  - **LOVING DEVOTION - These Wise Men INVESTED time to seek God's will**
  - **LONGEVITY - The Journey took 2 years. A long term commitment.**
- **The TREASURE the Wise Men brought Jesus as a Child:**
  - **Matthew 2:8-11 “8 And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, Go and search diligently for the young child; and when ye have found him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also.**  
*9 When they had heard the king, they departed; and, lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was.*  
*10 When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy.*  
*11 ¶ And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.”*
  - **They brought Jesus the BEST, not SECOND RATE.**
  - **They were EXCITED to find King Jesus.**
- **The TRIBULATION that Herod brought on Israel**
  - **Matthew 2:12-15 “12 And being warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way.**  
*13 And when they were departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him.*  
*14 When he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt:*  
*15 And was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my son.”*
  - **The Scripture predicted this – Jeremiah 31:15**
  - **Even God uses tribulation often times to bring about his will – Fulfillment of Hosea 11:1**

**CONCLUSION:** Hopefully now you will look at the Christmas story a little different. Do you know the “babe” born here to be your personal Saviour??