

Ready for Christmas 1 - God Told You So

1. Getting ready for Christmas

We are entering into the Christmas Season which is always so exciting. Most people know enough that it is not all about the presents. There are a number of ways that people warn about having the right attitude. Some say that Jesus could not have been born in this time of the year while others insist it is definitely during this season He could have been born. Some point out the commercial influence that made the season popular and how there were times Christmas was banned by Christians because of that. Then there are those who talk about how there was a pagan connection to Christmas, while still others report that the pagan celebration was in *reaction* to the Christians celebrating. Certain cultists suggest that celebrating birthdays is pagan. But, Paul gave us good reason to celebrate Jesus' birth in Romans:

Rom 14:5-6 One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day *alike*. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.

6He that regardeth the day, regardeth *it* unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard *it*. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks.

We know why the business world has expanded the season to start even before Halloween, but we should probably be okay with that. It's not a bad thing to have Christmas bump out Halloween. You might have heard of Christmas in July and wondered about the commercialism, but it actually *does* have some spiritual history behind it.

Celebrate Jesus *every* day! The

angels certainly thought it was a big deal

Luke 2:10-14 And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

11For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

12And this *shall be* a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

13And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,

14Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

The birth of Christ was so big that God sent angels to prepare for it other times. In the Revelation 5:12 He is called worthy:

Rev 5:11-14 And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands;

12Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.

13And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, *be* unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.

14And the four beasts said, Amen. And the four *and* twenty elders fell down and worshipped

him that liveth for ever and ever.

- God sent an angel to get ready for Christ's forerunner, John the Baptist.

Luke 1:11-16 And there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense.

12 And when Zacharias saw *him*, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him.

13 But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John.

14 And thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth.

...

16 And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God.

- God sent an angel to Mary to announce the coming child.

Luke 1:26-35 And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth,

27 To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name *was* Mary.

28 And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, *thou that art* highly favoured, the Lord *is* with thee: blessed *art* thou among women.

29 And when she saw *him*, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be.

30 And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God.

31 And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring

forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS.

32He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David:

33And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

34Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?

35And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.

- God sent an angel to Joseph to prepare him for what was coming.

Matt 1:18-21 Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost.

19Then Joseph her husband, being a just *man*, and not willing to make her a publick example, was minded to put her away privily.

20But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.

21And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.

The excitement of the holiday with

all the hustle and bustle of the decorating and preparation is something that Jesus deserves. The best part of our Christmas Eve Service, though, is when we have eaten, sung the carols of Christmas, meditate on His birth, and then darken the auditorium, light the candles, and join in sweet song of that silent night when a hush went across the world and the world became speechless before Him. Heaven is filled with His praises, but there is a power in silence also; like when darkness came over the earth when Jesus hung on the cross. Or, as Zechariah described the holiness of silence:

Zech 2:13 Be silent, O all flesh,
before the LORD: for he is raised
up out of his holy habitation.

Or as David described it:

Ps 46:10-11 Be still, and know
that I *am* God: I will be exalted
among the heathen, I will be
exalted in the earth.
11The LORD of hosts *is* with us;
the God of Jacob *is* our refuge.
Selah.

Or as Habakkuk described it:

Hab 2:20 But the LORD *is* in his
holy temple: let all the earth keep
silence before him.

This is often sung as the doxology
before a church service:

The Lord is in	Keep silence,
His holy temple	Keep silence,
The Lord is in	Keep silence
His holy temple	before Him.
Let all the earth	
keep silence	
before Him	

2. God told us so

How special the season is! But the
preparation that preceded the first

Christmas is far bigger than all the preparation for all the Christmases that have been celebrated.

At some point, you have undoubtedly heard someone say to you, "I told you so." They might be trying to convince you about something and what they predicted came true. In the case of the birth of Christ, all the mouths of the gainsayers will be stopped. There will be no excuse. When it comes to the arrival of Christ, God truly told us way in advance that He was coming. God had planned it out and made sure we had sufficient notice for what He was doing. It was planned before the foundation of the world.

1Pet 1:18-20 Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, *as* silver and gold, from your vain conversation *received* by tradition from your fathers;
19But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:
20Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you,

And then when the time was come, He brought His Son forth into the world.

Gal 4:4-5 But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law,
5To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.

- From the beginning God told us so in Genesis.

Gen 3:14-15 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:
15And 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.

- He told us He would be a descendant of Abraham

Gen. 22:18 And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice.

- He told us He would be a descendant of Abraham's son Isaac Gen. 26:1-5
- He told us He would be a descendant of Isaac's son Jacob Gen. 28:13,14
- He told us He would be a descendant of Jacob's son Judah Gen. 49:10
- He told us He would be a descendant of Jesse, a descendant of Judah Isa. 11:1-10
- He told us He would be a descendant of Jesse's son King David

Isa. 11:1 And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots:

- He told us He would appear after a succession of rulers from the Tribe of Judah Gen. 49:10
- He told us He would appear after the rebuilding of Jerusalem Dan. 9:25
- He told us He would appear before the (Roman) destruction of Jerusalem Dan. 9:26
- He told us He would be born in Bethlehem

Mic. 5:2 But thou, Bethlehem 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.

- He told us He would be born of a virgin

Isa. 7:13,14 And he said, Hear ye now, O house of David; *Is it* a small thing for you to weary men, but will ye weary my God also?

14Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

The beauty of the Scriptures is that God told us ahead of time exactly what to expect at the first Christmas: that Jesus was Immanuel: God with us.

3. Jesus was God with us

When you say Immanuel, you have said so much. Jesus is God with us.

This brings us to a very interesting passage in 1 John where he warned the believers about an early heresy they were to face about the incarnation:

1John 4:1-3 Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.

2Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God:

3And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that *spirit* of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.

He is not talking about just the average person as if anyone who acknowledges the incarnation must be a Christian. He identifies the problem further in his second epistle:

2John 1:7 For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist.

John was concerned about the false prophets as deceivers and what they taught about Jesus coming in the flesh. The nature of Christ was one of the early doctrines that Christianity wrestled with. It was not the very first issue, but corrupt views of the incarnation, or God coming in the flesh, developed very quickly as wannabe prophets hijacked and co-opted the Christ for their own purposes. You find out about their debates when you read about theology.

- The Gnostics thought of Christ as being as far from God as one could possibly be, the lowest of the angels, created to be the final connection to a sinful material world.
- The Patripassionists thought it was the Father who suffered on the cross.
- The Apollinarians thought that Jesus did not have a human nature
- Subordinationists thought that Jesus was not equal with the Father and the Spirit
- Ebionites thought that Jesus was only a man adopted by the Father
- Arians thought that Jesus was not fully God
- Sabbelians thought that God appeared in different modes: sometimes as Father, sometimes as Son, sometimes as the Holy Spirit
- Docetism taught that Jesus was actually God, but only *appeared*

to be human

- Nestorianism taught that Jesus was actually two persons, one divine and the other human

The biggest thing about Christmas that God wanted us to be prepared for is that Jesus came to be one of us and then to die for us as the perfect sacrifice.

Heb 2:14-18 Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil;

15And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

16For verily he took not on *him* the nature of angels; but he took on *him* the seed of Abraham.

17Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto *his* brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things *pertaining* to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.

18For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.

This brings us back to the silence again. All we can do is stand humbly and quietly before God, just as we are, without one plea, but that His blood was shed for me, waiting not to rid our soul of sin's dark blot, tossed about with conflict and doubt, fightings and fears within and without, poor wretched, blind needing healing of the mind, ready for Christ to receive because it is in His promise that we believe.

1. Getting ready for Christmas Rom 14:5-6, Luke 2:10-14, Rev 5:11-14, Luke 1:11-16, 26-35, Matt 1:18-21, Zech 2:13, Ps 46:10-11, Hab 2:20
2. God told us so 1Pet 1:18-20, Gal 4:4-

5, Gen 3:14-15, 22:18, Isa. 11:1,
Mic. 5:2, Isa. 7:13,14

3. Jesus was God with us 1John 4:1-3,
2John 1:7, Heb 2:14-18