

# Looking Forward to Christmas!

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DEC 18, 2022

# Ready for Christmas?

- A Unique Season
- Have you been looking forward to it?
- Think about your best Christmas ever
- What's the best part??



# That First Christmas...

Who was looking forward to it?

- Anyone??
- The Jewish nation?
- The prophets who foretold the Messiah?
- Sinful mankind?
- The Priests and Scribes who studied the scriptures?
- The Chaldean Wise Men?
- Anna and Simeon (in the temple)?
  
- Satan and his demons??

# That First Christmas...

Who was looking forward to it **the Most**?



# Six times in Matthew's account...

“So all this was done *that it might be fulfilled* which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet...” (Mat 1:22)

- (Mat 2:5)
- (Mat 2:15)
- (Mat 2:17)
- (Mat 2:23)
- (Mat 4:14)

# Think of What God Put into it...

*Peter tells us: “He (Jesus – his birth, death and resurrection) indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you.” (1Pet 1:20)*

- Before the foundation of the world..

This has implications...

- Our need of a Saviour was not a surprise to God...
- Eons of Meticulous planning...
- Dropped hints...
- Overcame enemy plots
- Worked through actors who ‘messed up’ their lines
- Prepared the world to receive this gift - In the fullness of time



# The First Hint

- Departure from Eden

“And I will put enmity Between you (the serpent) and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; **He shall bruise your head**, And you shall bruise His heel.”  
(Gen 3:15)

# Abraham (~ 2000 BC)

- **The call** (to participate in God's long plan)

The LORD had said to Abram, "Go from your country, your people and your father's household to the land I will show you. **"I will make you into a great nation,** and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing.

(Gen 12:1-2)



# Abraham (~ 2000 BC)

- The call
- **The promise delayed.. No great nation in sight..**
  - ~ 25 years later!... God shows up again and repeats his promise

Abraham fell facedown; he laughed and said to himself, "Will a son be born to a man a hundred years old? Will Sarah bear a child at the age of ninety?" (Gen 17:17)

Is anything too hard for the LORD? I will return about this time next year, and Sarah will have a son." (Gen 18:14)

# Abraham (~ 2000 BC)

- The child was born!
- Then came: **THE TEST**

Some time later, God tested Abraham's faith.

"Abraham!" God called. "Yes," he replied. "Here I am."

"Take your son, your only son—yes, Isaac, whom you love so much—and go to the land of Moriah. Go and sacrifice him as a burnt offering on one of the mountains, which I will show you."

(Gen 22:1-2)



# Abraham (~ 2000 BC)

- **THE TEST**

Abraham obeys: takes Isaac to the mountain range Jesus would ultimately be sacrificed on, and prepares ..

“Don’t lay a hand on the boy!” the angel said. “Do not hurt him in any way, for now I know that you truly fear God. You have not withheld from me even your son, your only son.” (Gen 22:12)

“This is what the LORD says: Because you have obeyed me and have not withheld even your son, your only son, I swear by my own name that I will certainly bless you. I will multiply your descendants beyond number, like the stars in the sky and the sand on the seashore. ... **And through your descendants all the nations of the earth will be blessed**—all because you have obeyed me.”

(Gen 22:16-18)

# Abraham (~ 2000 BC)

- The call
- The promise long delayed..
- THE TEST
- **Fulfillment** –how does that genealogy start?

“This is a record of the ancestors of Jesus the Messiah, a descendant of David and of Abraham: Abraham was the father of Isaac. Isaac was the father of Jacob...” (Mat 1:1-2)

(think of the miracles in that genealogy!)



# Moses (~ 1500 BC)

- **A bush burns but is not consumed**

... He said, "I am the God of your father—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God. And the LORD said: "I have surely seen the oppression of My people who are in Egypt, and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters, for I know their sorrows. (Exo 3:6-7)

# Moses (~ 1500 BC)

- A bush burns but is not consumed
- **God transforms Moses into a great prophet – then God said (to Aaron and Miriam):**

"Hear now My words: If there is a prophet among you, I, the LORD, make Myself known to him in a vision; I speak to him in a dream. Not so with My servant Moses; He is faithful in all My house. I speak with him face to face, Even plainly, and not in dark sayings; And he sees the form of the LORD..." (Num 12:6-8)



# Moses (~ 1500 BC)

- At the end of Moses' life, God provides a big Christmas Hint

Moses tells Israel: "The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your midst, from your brethren. Him you shall hear... (Deut 18:15)

Then Moses relays God's own words:

I will raise up for them a Prophet like you from among their brethren, and will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him.

And it shall be that whoever will not hear My words, which He speaks in My name, I will require it of him.  
(Deut 18:18-19)

# Moses (~ 1500 BC)

- **Fulfilled: A prophet like Moses...**

Moses	Jesus
Satan inspires Pharoah to kill all the male babies! – Moses is spared	Satan inspires Herod to kill all the male babies! – Jesus is spared
Hears from God face to face	“The Father who sent me has commanded me what to say and how to say it.” (Jn 12:49)
Face shone after speaking with God	As the men watched, Jesus’ appearance was transformed so that his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as light. (Mat 17:2)
Introduced a Covenant between God and Israel on Mt Sinai	Introduced A new Covenant ‘in My blood’ open to all people

- There are many more parallels...



# David (~ 1000 BC)

- **The anointing**

Now the LORD said to Samuel, "How long will you mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? Fill your horn with oil, and go; I am sending you to Jesse the Bethlehemite. For **I have provided Myself a king** among his sons." (1Sa 16:1)

# David (~ 1000 BC)

- The anointing
- **A Promise (a Christmas promise, late in David's life, through Nathan the prophet)**

Now therefore, thus shall you say to My servant David, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts: "I took you from the sheepfold, from following the sheep, to be ruler over My people, over Israel. And I have been with you ... and have made you a great name, like the name of the great men who are on the earth.

(2Sa 7:8-9)

...Also the LORD tells you that **He will make you a house...** "I will set up your seed after you, who will come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom **forever**.

(2Sa 7:11-13)



# David (~ 1000 BC)

- The anointing
- The Promise
- **God gave David many specifics hints**

God showed David that this Forever King must also suffer. For example:

Psalm 22: “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?...

I can count all My bones. They look and stare at Me. They divide My garments among them, And for My clothing they cast lots.”

# Isaiah (~ 750 BC)

- David's kingdom had fractured. Some kings good, some evil
- Syria was invading. God's promises seemed remote..
- **God recruits a Prophet**

Isa 1:1: These are the visions that Isaiah son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. He saw these visions during the years when Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah were kings of Judah.



# Isaiah (~ 750 BC)

- God recruits a Prophet
- **God brings Isaiah to new level**

It was in the year King Uzziah died that I saw the Lord. He was sitting on a lofty throne, and the train of his robe filled the Temple. Attending him were mighty seraphim ... They were calling out to each other, "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of Heaven's Armies! The whole earth is filled with his glory!" (Isa 6:1-3)

So I said: "Woe is me, for I am undone! Because I am a man of unclean lips, And I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; For my eyes have seen the King, The LORD of hosts." (Isa 6:5)

(God sends an angel to touch Isaiah's lips with a coal from Heaven's altar. . .)

(then) I heard the voice of the Lord, saying: "Whom shall I send, And who will go for Us?" Then I said, "**Here am I! Send me.**" (Isa 6:8)

# Isaiah (~ 750 BC)

- God recruits a Prophet
- **Then God starts dropping incredible hints through Isaiah**

For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. (Isa 9:6)



# Isaiah (~ 750 BC)

- **God continues dropping incredible hints**

In the midst of trying to bring faith to a wayward King (who refused to listen) God drops this one...

Then Isaiah said, "Hear now, **O house of David!** Is it a small thing for you to weary men, but will you weary my God also? Therefore the Lord Himself will give you (the House of David) a sign: **Behold, the virgin shall conceive** and bear a Son, and he shall be called **Immanuel**.  
(Isa 7:13-14)

# **What About The Angels !**

- **Wait, there's Angels in the Christmas story!**
- **And Isaiah told us about War among the Angels!**

Isaiah's vision:

"How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground, You who weakened the nations! (Isa 14:12)

For you said to yourself, 'I will ascend to heaven and set my throne above God's stars. ... I will climb to the highest heavens and be like the Most High.' (Isa 14:13-14)

**God's Angels had their own war with evil, and overcame.**



# What About The Angels !

- **Now they are watching our war with evil with great interest**

For Peter tells us: (God's salvation through Jesus...) is all so wonderful that even the angels are *eagerly* watching these things happen. (1Pet 1:12)

# The Angels ! (15 months BC)

- **After a long silence, Gabriel gets chosen for special duty..**

(from Luke 1)

There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judea, a certain priest named Zacharias, ... But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren...

So it was, that while he was serving as priest before God ...

**Then an angel of the Lord appeared to him** ... the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your prayer is heard; and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John.

*He will be a man with the spirit and power of Elijah. He will prepare the people for the coming of the Lord. He will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and he will cause those who are rebellious to accept the wisdom of the godly."*



# The Angels ! ( ~ 9 months BC)

- **Gabriel gets chosen again.. Six months later!**

God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a village in Galilee, to a virgin named Mary. She was engaged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of King David...

“Don’t be afraid, Mary,” the angel told her, “for you have found favor with God! You will conceive and give birth to a son, and **you will name him Jesus**. He will be very great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him **the throne of his ancestor David**.

(Luke 1:26-32)

Jesus – Yeshua – *Jehovah our Salvation*

# The Angels ! (0 BC)

- **The First Christmas!**

The long promised birth

- it was incognito
- in a small country town
- in a stable!!



# The Angels ! (0 BC)

- **One Angel was sent...** to a lonely hillside

That night there were shepherds staying in the fields nearby, guarding their flocks of sheep.

Suddenly, **an angel of the Lord** appeared among them, and the radiance of the Lord's glory surrounded them.

They were terrified, but the angel reassured them. "Don't be afraid!" he said. "I bring you good news that will bring great joy to all people. The Savior—yes, the Messiah, the Lord—has been born today in Bethlehem, the city of David!

(Luke 2:8-11)

# The Angels ! (0 BC)

- One Angel was sent... to a lonely hillside
- **But the Heavenly Host could not remain silent!**

Suddenly, the angel was joined by a vast host of others—the armies of heaven—praising God and saying, “Glory to God in highest heaven, and peace on earth to those with whom God is pleased.”

(Luke 2:13-14)



# All of Heaven was Involved

- The Father – the Great Planner
  - Planning since before the foundations of the world
  - Preparing the world to receive His Only Begotten Son
- Holy Spirit
  - Filling the prophets with visions
  - Overcame Zechariah, Elizabeth, Mary such that they also prophesied
  - Overshadowed a virgin to conceive the very Son of God
- The Son
  - Willing to leave His heavenly throne...
  - Invested 100% of himself in mankind's war with evil (we were hopeless warriors without Him)
- The Angels
  - Bringing God's messages through the ages
  - Eagerly watching; helping where they are allowed
  - Cheering us on
  - Rejoicing Greatly in the coming of Salvation for fallen man!

# Have Faith in the Faithfulness of God

- Does it seem sometimes that God takes a long time fulfilling His promises?
- Is God worth trusting?
- But what if my Christmas is less than full, even if it were to be lonely – nothing to look forward to?

## Reflect on this:

- The Great Planner's plans will NOT fail
- No one can create an obstacle that God cannot overcome
- GOD himself, has given us a gift, that No One can take away

**Have Faith in the Faithfulness of God**