

Christmas - 2021

John 1:1-14 - The Eternal Word

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was in the beginning with God. ³ All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. ⁴ In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. ⁵ **And the light shines in the darkness**, and the darkness did not comprehend it.

John's Witness: The True Light

⁶ There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷ ***This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all through him might believe.*** ⁸ He was not that Light, but *was sent* to bear witness of that Light. ⁹ That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world.

¹⁰ He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. ¹¹ He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. ¹² But as many as received Him, to them **He gave the right to become children of God**, to those who believe in His name: ¹³ who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, **but of God.**

The Word Becomes Flesh

¹⁴ And **the Word became flesh** and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, **full of grace and truth.**

Christmas is such a joyous time, isn't it?

- *Families & friends* come together & celebrate and catch up with each other.
- **Everyone seems to be at peace**, forgetting about this year's struggles
- And enjoying the company of our loved ones.
- It's a true shame that this feeling doesn't last all year long.
- ***The good will and nature of people*** during this time is just a small example of **the love that God created us to have.**

If we ***truly understood*** **what Christmas was all about**, then these feelings would last a lifetime.

If we had proper understanding of God's plan for mankind, then we would realize **the enormity of the gift** that we celebrate today.

We would understand that **Christmas** is a part of a **much larger story**, a story that spans all of time as we know it.

- For many of us, ***there's great comfort in coming to church on this day.***
- When we ***sing and worship the God of our salvation,***
- **We are reminded** of **the joyous events** that took place so long ago.

We hear about how a child was born in the lowest of conditions in a small country village on the far side of the world to **Joseph's virgin wife, Mary.**

We hear the story of how the shepherds were **confronted by an angel from God** who announced to them **the royal birth** and **how the whole night sky** was filled with the angels proclaiming the birth of this child.

We read of the men from the east who travelled so far, **following a star**, just to **lay gifts at the feet of the king.**

It's estimated that in ***the whole span of human history*** there have been approximately 110,000,000,000,000 (***quadrillion***) people born.

Out of all those births, only one was born to save the world from sin and death through **God's gift of love.**

God considers each of His children special, but **this one child was different.** Throughout history, there has **never been a more momentous** event than **the birth of the Messiah.**

- This child is **the most important part** of God's plan.
- He came **at just the right time at the right place** for **just the right reason.**
- This child's birth **was a pivotal event** in history.
- Time, as we know it, **is measured from His birth.**
- ***Despite what historians*** would like to say, ***this day reminds us of God's love for His creation.***

John 3:16 - For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

- **God knew** that mankind **would turn away** from Him before mankind did.
- **He knew**, because He gave man **the ability to make decisions.**
- **He knew** that we would **fall to sin** under our own strength.

Yes, **He could have created us without the freedom to think for ourselves** and **to follow blindly**, but **what** would that do for Him?

- We'd just be robots, **not truly appreciating His greatness**.

So, time after time, **God urges us to return to Him**, but each time we are **led astray by our own desires**, until at just the right time we realize that ***He's our best interest.***

God sent **His only begotten son** to die for our sins on the cross.

- **Jesus Christ** came into **a sin filled world perfect** -
- **Was tempted** in every fashion - **lived a perfect life** -
- **And was sacrificed** as **the spotless lamb**
- **Whose blood covers and washes away our sins** for ever and ever.

This plan **was not** made in the spur of a moment; it **had always been God's plan.**

We know this, because we can read **the prophecies** concerning our savior.

Luke 1:26-27 - Christ's Birth Announced to Mary

²⁶ Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, ²⁷ to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name *was* Mary.

Approximately 700 years before Gabriel was sent, Isaiah wrote:

Isaiah 7:14 - Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall **call His name Immanuel.**

Gabriel said:

Luke 1:30-33 - Then the angel said to her, **"Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God.** ³¹ And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall **call His name Jesus.** ³² He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. ³³ And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, ***and of His kingdom there will be no end.***"

Then Joseph, who was engaged to Mary, after being spoken to by an Angel, took Mary to be his wife.

- After some months passed, Caesar Augustus decreed that a census should be taken over all the Roman empire to register each citizen.
- This required that they return to their ancestral towns, which is ***dependent upon whose bloodline*** they were from.

Joseph being descendant of David, went with Mary, now heavily pregnant, to the town of **Bethlehem, where **Mary gave birth to Jesus Christ**.**

About 700 years prior to Jesus' birth, the prophet Micah, a contemporary of Isaiah, wrote:

Micah 5:2 - The Coming Messiah

Bethlehem Ephrath, you are one of the smallest towns in the nation of Judah. But the Lord will choose one of your people to rule the nation— someone whose family goes back to ancient times.

I'd like to consider the two groups of people who came to see Jesus as an infant.

The Shepherds:

1. **Were** hard working.
2. **Weren't** well educated.
3. **Weren't** well payed.
4. **Weren't** the elite of Israel.
5. **Weren't** those who should have known the scriptures well; simple folk.

Then one day, on the hills outside of Bethlehem, an angel appeared.

Luke 2:9-14 – ⁹ And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid. ¹⁰ Then the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. ¹¹ For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. ¹² **And this will be the sign to you: You will find a 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, goodwill toward men!”**

The Shepherds didn't say, "Oh, we can't go... We can't leave our sheep... We have to work... What if wolves come and attack while we're gone..."

- **No.** They left their flocks and hastened to find this child.

The Wise men:

1. **Were the elite** of the ruling class from a country far to the east.
2. **Were used to** searching the night sky to note changes they saw.
 - a. They were searching for signs from God.

And one day **they saw a special star rise**. They knew it was a sign of something extraordinary. **They knew that it was the sign of a long promised king**.

They knew that:

Numbers 24:17 – “What I saw in my vision hasn’t happened yet. But someday, a king of Israel will appear like a star. He will wipe out you Moabites and destroy those tribes who live in the desert.

Their reaction?

- They followed the signs of the Christ child.
- They left their comfortable homes, traveled by camel, and followed the star until they **came to the place where the child lay**.
- **It's assumed** that by time they reached Bethlehem, **Jesus was about a year old**.

CLOSE:

Matthew 2:11 – ¹¹ When the men went into the house and saw the child with Mary, his mother, **they knelt down and worshiped him**. They took out their gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh and gave them to him.

Why did these men travel so far and search so diligently for Jesus?

- They knew that there was something special about Jesus.

So, what about you?

Are you going to be like the wise men and the shepherds?

Are you going to search high and low for Him?

He is here, **you just need to bow at His feet and acknowledge that you need Him** right now.

Jesus Christ is the greatest Christmas present ever.

Jesus Christ's birth was just one step in God's almighty plan.

He is calling you today.

Don't let this opportunity pass, **bow and accept the gift!**