



What is the Point of Christmas?

Luke 2:13-14: (KJV) ¹³*And 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.*



'Tis the season to be jolly! Christmas happened just a few days ago so we ask the question, what really happened? Did we have lots to eat - see lots of family and friends - give and receive lots of gifts? Did we smile and laugh and decorate? Did we watch Christmas specials and listen to all kinds of holiday music? I hope we did! I hope we took the time to reconnect with a spirit of love, life and giving. I hope we entered into the happiness that this season brings! Now the big question - how did we recognize the true reason for the season - how did we honor the life to change all lives? Well, if you are looking for more of *that* part of things, stick around - we have a story to tell!

CHAPTER I WHAT DOES CHRISTMAS LOOK LIKE?



"Rockin' Around the Christmas Tree," Brenda Lee

*Rockin' around the Christmas tree
At the Christmas party hop
Mistletoe hung where you can see
Every couple tries to stop*

*Rockin' around the Christmas tree
Let the Christmas spirit ring
Later we'll have some pumpkin pie
And we'll do some caroling*

*You will get a sentimental feelin' when you hear
Voices singing let's be jolly
Deck the halls with boughs of holly*

*Rockin' around the Christmas tree
Have a happy holiday
Everyone's dancing merrily
In the new old fashioned way*

What does Christmas look like? It is fun and it is entertaining. When you have those two elements on one side of an equation it is a very difficult task to overcome them. Christmas has in many ways become that difficult equation.



You can always tell where a society is by what the masses of people focus on. What are we focusing on?

FIRST we focus on fun - now there is nothing wrong with fun, but too often the fun *in* our lives here and now derails the potential for the happiness of our lives to flourish...fun can get in the way of happiness. We want to keep what we do in perspective.

Colossians 3:16-17: (NASB) ¹⁶*Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.* ¹⁷*Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through him to God the Father.*

Thankfulness can be a fun experience! There is an excitement in living thankfulness, with joy in our worship.

SECOND we focus on being entertained - again, to be entertained is good - it can be a wonderful way to wind down from various stresses in life.



"Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer" (first verse)

*Rudolph the red-nosed reindeer
Had a very shiny nose
And if you ever saw it
You would even say it glows
All of the other reindeer
Used to laugh and call him names
They never let poor Rudolph
Join in any reindeer games
Then one foggy Christmas Eve,
Santa came to say,
Rudolph with your nose so bright,
Won't you guide my sleigh tonight
Then all the reindeer loved him,
As they shouted out with glee,
Rudolph the red-nosed reindeer
You'll go down in history*

Entertainment can be healthy and positive, but like any good thing, it can also be excessive. Once entertainment crosses the line from being a positive outlet to becoming an obsessive need, it then loses its value. Christmas now lives in the danger zone of *entertaining us* rather than exercising us to entertain thoughts of goodness, holiness and thankfulness for God's unspeakable gift. This truly is a serious danger zone.

With these challenges in mind, let us again ask the question: What does Christmas look like?



"God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen - He has Come for Us," Nicole Sheahan

*God rest ye merry gentlemen,
Let nothing you dismay,
Remember Christ our Savior
Was born on Christmas Day;
To save us all from Satan's power
When we were gone astray.
O tidings of comfort and joy,
Comfort and joy,
O tidings of comfort and joy!
He has come for us
This Jesus
He's the hope for all mankind
He has come for us
The Messiah
Born to give us life!*

Time for a new old-fashioned focus:

Philippians 2:3-5,9-10: (NASB) ³Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; ⁴do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. ⁵Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, (he) emptied himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men...⁹For this reason also, God highly exalted him, and bestowed on him the name which is above every name, ¹⁰so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow...

How did God create an expectation and then fulfill it in a way that was unexpected?

CHAPTER 2

WHAT DID THE PROMISE OF THE CHRISTMAS EXPERIENCE LOOK LIKE?

We want to frame the telling of our Christmas story today through the eyes of children. This will add a measure of fun and entertainment to the telling of one of the most inspirational stories ever lived! This is an uplifting and joyous time.

Did you ever wonder what God thought right before He sent us Jesus? A group of children from Australia imagined what that would be like and choreographed the Christmas story in heaven from a child's perspective.



Send one person, *An Unexpected Christmas*, [Godtube.com](http://www.godtube.com/watch/?v=011CMCNU)

<http://www.godtube.com/watch/?v=011CMCNU>

- (Narrator) Have you ever wondered what we might see if we could pull back the curtain of time to that very first Christmas? If we could, I imagine the story began in heaven something like this: God was looking over heaven's balcony one day shaking His head about all the wrong things people were doing down on earth.
- (God) Oh man, this isn't quite what I had in mind when I created earth. I feel so far away from my kids down there.
- (Angels) Why?
- (God) It's just hard to be friends with people when you don't know what they are doing. I think it's time.
- (Angels) Time for what, Lord?
- (God) Time for us to step in.
- (Angel) Shall I ready the army, Lord?
- (God) No, I don't think we should send an army. Maybe just one person.
- (Angels) One person?
- (Angel) Brilliant! They won't be expecting that!



The beauty of it is that the plan of God is not expected by the world! God does have a way of bringing about His will in ways we would never expect. He often gives hints - lots of hints - and He gives them for a very long time. In spite of this - in spite of His pointing us in the proper direction - we are still often clueless. Let's take a few minutes and review some old, old prophecies that laid out the masterful plan God had designed.

We begin with the last prophecy of the Old Testament, given 400 years before the birth of Jesus. 400 years of prophetic silence (!!!) would follow this glimpse of the future.



Depressed, *A Charlie Brown Christmas*

- (Charlie Brown) I think there must be something wrong with me, Linus. Christmas is coming, but I'm not happy. I don't feel the way I'm supposed to feel. I just don't understand Christmas, I guess. I like getting presents and sending Christmas cards and decorating trees and all that, but I'm still not happy. I always end up feeling depressed.
- (Linus) Charlie Brown, you're the only person I know who can take a wonderful season like Christmas and turn it into a problem. Maybe Lucy's right. Of all the Charlie Browns in the world, you're the Charlie Browniest.





The last prophecy of the Old Testament:

Malachi 4:1-2: (NASB) *¹For behold, the day is coming, burning like a furnace; and all the arrogant and every evildoer will be chaff; and the day that is coming will set them ablaze, says the LORD of hosts, so that it will leave them neither root nor branch. ²But for you who fear My name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings;*

The sun of righteousness rising with healing: This was an allusion to Jesus. We know this because when he came to earth, he healed. What a comforting thought in the midst of all the turmoil that the prophecy detailed.

There were other prophecies as well - some much older - but all pointing to the same thing:

Genesis 3:15: (NASB) *And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise him on the heel.*

That was the oldest prophecy - a kind of veiled promise of redemption for the first sin. Hope was planted within this bad experience. This seed of the woman would eventually be Jesus.

This next Christmas carol serves as a wake-up call: Stop! Look! Listen! The greatest world changing event in ALL of human history is being foretold...

Genesis 22:16-18: (NASB) *¹⁶and said, By Myself I have sworn, declares the LORD, because you have done this thing and have not withheld your son, your only son, ¹⁷indeed I will greatly bless you, and I will greatly multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your seed shall possess the gate of their enemies. ¹⁸In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice.*

That is another old, old prophecy given to Abraham long before Israel was even a nation. That one gets so much more specific, detailing the blessing of all the nations of all the earth - not just one - or a few, but ALL!



"Carol of the Bells," (first verse) Pentatonix

*Hark, how the bells
Sweet silver bells
All seem to say
Throw cares away
Christmas is here
Bringing good cheer
To young and old
Meek and the bold
Ding dong ding dong
That is their song
With joyful ring
All caroling. (Oh! Oh! Ahh)
One seems to hear
Words of good cheer
From everywhere (From everywhere)
Filling the air
Oh how they pound, (Oh how they pound)
Raising the sound*

O'er hill and dale



Telling their tale. (Telling their tale)

*Gaily they ring
While people sing
Songs of good cheer
Christmas is here
Merry Christmas...
On, on they send
On without end
Their joyful tone
To every home*

Isaiah 9:6-7: (NASB) *⁶For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on his shoulders; And his name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. ⁷There will be no end to the increase of his government or of peace, (No end of peace! Isn't that what everyone is hoping for - wishing for - working for...? Now that is a prophecy with a lot of hope!) on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness from then on and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will accomplish this.*

There are hundreds of Old Testament prophecies that allude to the coming of Jesus, his life and death, his work, his resurrection and the coming kingdom. The Old Testament is full of hope! We definitely see the magnificent promise of Christmas in the Old Testament - what would come through both his birth, death and resurrection.

It is the zeal of God that gets it done! But it is not done yet and still has been such a long time - thousands of years. So, if God had been silent for the 400 years before Jesus' birth, should waiting these thousands of years further be such a problem? What God says, God does!



"Carol of the Bells," (second verse) Pentatonix

*Hark how the bells, (Hark how the bells)
Sweet silver bells
All seem to say, (All seem to say)
Throw cares away (Throw cares away)
Christmas is here
Bringing good cheer
To young and old
Meek and the bold
(Bringing good cheer, oh)
Oh how they pound, (Oh how they pound)
Raising the sound
O'er hill and dale
Telling their tale (Telling their tale)
Gaily they ring
While people sing
Songs of good cheer
Christmas is here
Merry, Merry, Merry, Merry Christmas...*



Malachi 4:5-6: (NASB) *⁵Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet (picturing the work of John the Baptist prior to Jesus) before the coming of the great and terrible day of the LORD. ⁶He will restore the hearts of the fathers to their children and the hearts of the children to their fathers, so that I will not come and smite the land with a curse.*

So, the last words of the Old Testament essentially tell us how the New Testament is going to start: Before the coming of Messiah there would be the coming of one who would prepare the people for the Messiah.

After these words, there were 400 years of silence from God!

Even though hope might be forgotten over time, it does not mean that the Giver of all hope forgets! The plan was in process even though it looked like nothing was happening.

*If you were sending the world their long-awaited deliverer,
what kind of fanfare would you plan?*

CHAPTER 3

MARY AND THE CHALLENGE OF THE MIRACLE OF CHRISTMAS

Often when God works His miracles, there are significant challenges that need to be met. Mary had an amazing challenge to deal with and overcome.



Born to a peasant girl, An Unexpected Christmas, Godtube.com

- *(Angel) Lord, if we're sending just one person, let it be someone very powerful and very strong because there's tons of people down there.*
- *(Lord) No, they don't have to be strong. They'll be going as a newborn baby.*
- *(Angels) A newborn baby?*
- *(Angel) Brilliant! They won't be expecting that!*
- *(Angel) Lord, this plan is rather risky. A newborn human baby is small and weak. This baby must be born to people who will protect him...maybe a great ruler or a mighty king?*
- *(Lord) Actually, I was thinking I could send him to a young peasant girl whose heart is beautiful and full of courage.*
- *(Angels) ...A peasant girl?*
- *(Angel) Brilliant! They won't be expecting that!*





It is pretty easy to look at prophecy and its fulfillment and figure, "Now, that's a no brainer!" After all, all of the pieces are in place, the timing is right, the right people are all present - let's get this thing fulfilled and move on!

But not so fast...because it is not so easy! Did you ever think about being one of those people whom God has chosen to use? Did you ever wonder at the extraordinary faith they would have had to exhibit to follow through on the things God was putting in front of them? We will briefly focus on Mary and how her faith must have been so firmly grounded and true!

Luke 1:26-37: (NASB) ²⁶Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city...called Nazareth, ²⁷to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the descendants of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸And coming in, he said to her, Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you. ²⁹But she was very perplexed at this statement, and kept pondering what kind of salutation this was...

The angel Gabriel appeared for the second time, now six months after Elizabeth conceived. This time the circumstances were nearly polar opposite - Elizabeth had been old, married and childless. Mary was young and only engaged. Gabriel had spoken to Elizabeth's husband, Zacharias, the first time; here he spoke to the young bride-to-be. His greeting was one of great favor, yet Mary's reaction was confused and fearful. The angel Gabriel? Speaking to me? For what reason?

The angel continued:

Luke 1:30-38: (NASB) ³⁰...Do not be afraid, Mary; for you have found favor with God. ³¹And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name him Jesus. ³²He 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; ³³and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and his kingdom will have no end.

Questions would have swirled in Mary's head - me? Have a son? He is to be called the son of the MOST HIGH? He is to be a king FOREVER? His Kingdom will have NO END? How? Why?

There was an obvious immediacy with all of this. The angel could not be speaking of some future son of Joseph. So, the question that needed answering above all else had to be asked, for faith could perceive of these other things, but this one question could not be fathomed..."How can this be, since I am a virgin?"

Gabriel answered:

³⁵... "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy Child shall be called the Son of God. ³⁶And behold, even your relative Elizabeth has also conceived a son in her old age; and she who was called barren is now in her sixth month. ³⁷For nothing will be impossible with God.



"Mary, Did You Know?" Pentatonix

*Mary, did you know that your baby boy would one day walk on water?
Mary, did you know that your baby boy would save our sons and daughters?
Did you know that your baby boy has come to make you new?
This child that you've delivered, will soon deliver you...*



For Mary, Gabriel's last words must have rung true in the deepest recesses of her young heart - *for nothing will be impossible with God.*

³⁸And Mary said, Behold, the bondservant of the Lord; may it be done to me according to your word. And the angel departed from her.

Continuing the story, we will see the "fanfare" God saw fit to create in preparation for the world's deliverer:

Luke 1:39-45: (NASB) ³⁹Now at this time Mary arose and went in a hurry to the hill country, to a city of Judah, ⁴⁰and entered the house of Zacharias and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. ⁴²And she cried out with a loud voice and said, Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! ⁴³And how has it happened to me that the mother of my Lord would come to me? ⁴⁴For behold, when the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby leaped in my womb for joy. ⁴⁵And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what had been spoken to her by the Lord.



"O Come Emmanuel" Pentatonix

*O come, O come, Emmanuel
And ransom captive Israel
That mourns in lonely exile here
Until the Son of God appear*

*Rejoice, rejoice, Emmanuel!
Shall come to thee, O Israel!*

*O come, O come, great Lord of might
And to thy tribes on Sinai's height
In ancient times once gave the law
In majesty on cloud and awe*

*Rejoice, rejoice, Emmanuel!
Shall come to thee, O Israel!*

Luke 1:46-56: (NASB) ⁴⁶And Mary said: My soul exalts the Lord, ⁴⁷And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior. ⁴⁸For He has had regard for the humble state of His bondservant; For behold, from this time on all generations will count me blessed. ⁴⁹For the Mighty One has done great things for me; and holy is His name. ⁵⁰and His mercy is upon generation after generation toward those who fear Him. ⁵¹He has done mighty deeds with His arm; He has scattered those who were proud in the thoughts of their heart. ⁵²He has brought down rulers from their thrones, and has exalted those who were humble. ⁵³He has filled the hungry with good things; and sent away the rich empty-handed. ⁵⁴He has given help to Israel His servant, in remembrance of His mercy, ⁵⁵as He spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and his descendants forever. ⁵⁶And Mary stayed with her about three months, and then returned to her home.

The "fanfare" was between these two women given a special privilege. There was no marching band, no press conferences; just two faithful women. They were given a sense of what would come - the greatness of God in little things. That is what we should really focus on - sometimes God works with the smallest things, humble and meek to get the greatest job done.



CHAPTER 4

THE TIME AND PLACE FOR THE BIRTH OF GREATNESS

 **Heavenly prince in a stable, *An Unexpected Christmas*, Godtube.com**

- (Angel) My Lord, I see your plan is to take earth by surprise. No one will be expecting a newborn baby born to a humble villager but what good can a baby do?
- (God) This is not to be just any baby. I'm sending in the Prince of Heaven in disguise.
- (Angels) The Prince of Heaven? Our prince? Your son?
- (Angel) Brilliant! They won't be expecting that!
- (Angels) Lord, this is too risky sending the prince as a tiny baby born not to kings but to humble villagers. Surely our prince cannot be born in a cottage. He must be born in a palace!
- (God) You're right. He shouldn't be born in a cottage.
- (Angels) Whew!
- (God) He'll be born in a stable.
- (Angels) A stable? Surrounded by animals? Filled with hay? Filled with poop?
- (Angel) Brilliant! They won't be expecting that!



Think of the greatest joys of life that you have ever heard of or experienced and inevitably, you will think about the birth of a child. This is an event that marks an end and a beginning. It is the end of a nine-month pregnancy that literally has a physical attachment needing to be cut, and it marks the beginning of a new, viable human life, whose attachments can now grow exponentially and in all directions. Any birth is a miracle, but the birth of Jesus - now that was a miracle of biblical proportions - for the heavens were alive with joy and celebration! Miracle of miracles!



"Do You Have Room?" (first verse) Shawna Edwards

*They journeyed far, a weary pair
They sought for shelter from the cold night air.
Some place where she could lay her head
where she could give her babe a quiet bed.
Was there no room? No corner there?
In all the town a spot someone could spare?
Was there no soul come to their aid?*



*A stable bare was where the family stayed.
Do you have room for the Savior?
And do you seek him anew?
Have you a place for the one who lived and died for you?
Are you as humble as a shepherd boy,
Or as wise as men of old?
Would you have come that night?
Would you have sought the light?
Do you have room?*

Luke 2:1,3-6: (KJV) *¹And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed. ... ³And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city. ⁴And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem;...⁵To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child. ⁶And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered.*

The experience of Mary and Joseph was one of complete normality. There were no special provisions, no special exemptions, no special circumstances. They were required to do what everyone else did, travel where everyone else traveled and pay what everyone else paid.

Luke 2:7: (KJV) *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.*

To be born in a stable and laid in a manger among the animals was in fact the most fitting of places for the Lord of men to enter the world. After all, Jesus would live these humble beginnings each and every day for 33½ years, for it was through this humility that he would be able to pay the ransom price for Father Adam.

Luke 2:8-12: (KJV) *⁸And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. ¹⁰And 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 Savior, 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.*

The fulfillment of such grand prophecy - in this case it required an angelic announcement to the most humble audience of shepherds - fitting - for the baby Jesus would grow to assume the throne of David, who himself was once a shepherd.

Luke 2:13-14: (KJV) *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.*

Remember, earthly humility does not preclude heavenly celebration; rather it provokes it! It was in this manner that Jesus our Lord was born...



(Instrumental and Joy to the World) U.S. Air Force at the Smithsonian



"Do You Have Room?" (second verse) Shawna Edwards

*A star arose, a glorious light
It was God's sign this was the Holy Night
And yet so few would go to see
the babe who came to rescue you and me.
This child divine is now a king
His gift of life to all the world he brings
And all the world he saves from doom
But on that night for him there was no room
Do you have room for the Savior?,
And do you seek him anew?
Have you a place for the one who lived and died for you?
Are you as humble as a shepherd boy,
Or as wise as men of old?
Would you have come that night?
Would you have sought the light?
Do you have room?
Will you come tonight?
Will you seek the light?
Do you have room?*

CHAPTER 5

RESPONDING TO THE BIRTH OF GREATNESS

 Sing to the shepherds, *An Unexpected Christmas*, Godtube.com



- (Angel) Lord, how will people know he's there? What if they don't notice?
- (God) Those who are looking will find him and his mission will bring all people closer to Me. Even if they do something really wrong. When the prince is done, nothing will get between them and My love.
- (Angel) Can we leave some clues for the people looking? Like in the stars?
- (God) Clues in the stars? Sure, why not? We can make one huge one that points to him.
- (Angel) Can we sing for him?
- (Angels) Yes! Can we sing? Sing to welcome him?
- (Angel) Please say we can sing.
- (Narrator) He looked at the hurtful faces and his heart was touched by their love for the prince.
- (God) Alright, you can sing.
- (Angels) Yeah!



- (God) But not in front of the whole world. That would just be weird. And no kings or rulers.
- (Angel) How about we sing for some shepherds?
- (Angels) That's a lonely job. Those blokes could use some cheering up.
- (God) Brilliant! They won't be expecting that!

Let's go back to the shepherds who were told of Jesus' birth:

Luke 2:13-14: (KJV) 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.



"Glory to God," Handel's Messiah

*Glory to God in the highest,
and peace on earth,
good will towards men.*

Luke 2:15-20: (NASB) ¹⁵When the angels had gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds began saying to one another, Let us go straight to Bethlehem then, and see this thing that has happened which the Lord has made known to us. ¹⁶So they came in a hurry and found their way to Mary and Joseph, and the baby as he lay in the manger.

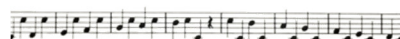
These shepherds knew that they were part of something much bigger than they had ever conceived possible. They acted in faith; they acted right away and found Mary and Joseph. The baby lay quietly in a manger. Think of the tranquility and peace of the moment as they lay their eyes on their future Savior...this was Jesus, the one who would save the world!

¹⁷When they had seen this, they made known the statement which had been told them about this child. ¹⁸And all who heard it wondered at the things which were told them by the shepherds.

To go and see him was one thing. To take this miracle and publish it amongst the people...that was another! These were just shepherds!

¹⁹But Mary treasured all these things, pondering them in her heart. ²⁰The shepherds went back, glorifying and praising God for all that they had heard and seen, just as had been told them.

For Mary, this was a time of awe-struck wonder.



"Little Drummer Boy" (first half) Pentatonix

*Come they told me
Pa rum pum pum pum
A newborn king to see
Our finest gifts we bring
To lay before the king
So to honor him
When we come
Little baby
I am a poor boy too
I have no gift to bring
That's fit to give our king
Pa rum pum pum pum,*



We have no gifts to give the King either, but we give him the best that we can. Where in our lives do we "see" the king? Can we find the child-like enthusiasm to come before the "newborn king" and offer him whatever little that we may have?

We know of course that the three wise men found Jesus and his parents and showered them with gifts...

The gifts of the three wise men were significant:

- *Gold* represented obedience and consecration;
- *Frankincense* represented praise, devotion, heart adoration, appreciation and gratitude;
- *Myrrh* represented submission, a willingness for service to the extent of bitterness and suffering.



"Little Drummer Boy" (second half) Pentatonix

*Shall I play for you
Pa rum pum pum pum
Pa rum pum pum
Mary nodded
The ox and lamb kept time
I played my drum for him
I played my best for him
Then he smiled at me
Me and my drum
Come they told me
A newborn king to see
Pa rum pum pum pum
Me and my drum...*

What gift can WE bring worthy for a king? How do we "play our best" for him? What is it like to have the king, Jesus, smile at you? How do we better grasp the child-like faith needed to truly appreciate Jesus and his gift to us?



CHAPTER 6

RECEIVING THE BENEFITS OF GREATNESS

 Summing up the story, *An Unexpected Christmas*, Godtube.com

- (Narrator) You know the rest of the story. An angel visits a humble girl with a courageous heart and told her the good news. She will have a baby and he will be the Prince of Heaven and would help earth to be close to God again. As planned, the baby was born in a stable about as far from a palace as you can get. A group of wise men noticed some strange clues in the stars. They packed their belongings and followed the star right to a baby, and of course a bunch of lonely shepherds were guarding their sheep when all of a sudden the sky was lit up with thousands of angels singing. Nobody would ever expect that!



Here we sit, 2000 years after the birth, life, death and resurrection of Jesus and the world is in a turmoil of dramatic proportions. All is *not* well, all is *not* in order, and it is at times like these we tend to lose hope and perspective. **This is the precise reason we tell and retell the story of Jesus, so we can reset our feet upon solid ground.**

Matthew 11:28-30: (NASB) ²⁸Come to me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. ²⁹Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.



So, take heart in the heart of Jesus and remember, he died for us, he died for the world and that includes even the nastiest, "wastiest" people anywhere:



The Grinch Song

*You're a foul one, Mr. Grinch,
You're a nasty wasty skunk,
Your heart is full of unwashed socks,
your soul is full of gunk, Mr. Grinch,
The three words that best describe you are as follows, and I quote,
"Stink, stank, stunk!"*

In our turmoil, where do we find the quietness we need to cope? In our busy world where do we find the space to stop, look and listen for God's word?



"Silent Night" Pentatonix

*Silent night, holy night
All is calm, all is bright
Round yon virgin, mother and child
Holy infant so tender and mild
Sleep in heavenly peace
Silent night, holy night
All is calm, all is bright
Round yon virgin, mother and child
Holy infant so tender and mild
Sleep in heavenly peace*

One final example from the story of Jesus' birth - the experience of a very old man whose life was spent waiting for the Messiah, the prophet Simeon:

Luke 2:21-22,24: (NASB) ²¹And when eight days had passed, before his circumcision, his name was then called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb. ²²And when the days for their purification...were completed, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord...²⁴and to offer a sacrifice according to what was said in the Law of the Lord...

Again this reminds us that Mary, Joseph and Jesus are given no special entitlement or dispensation, they are simply given opportunity to show their faith.

Luke 2:25-26: (NASB) ²⁵And there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; and this man was righteous and devout, looking for the consolation of Israel; and the Holy Spirit was upon him. ²⁶And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ.

Here was a man who had NOT forgotten hope, who had NOT allowed doubt or fear to rule his heart; rather he lived in anticipation and expectation of God's gift.



Luke 2:27-29: (NASB) ²⁷And he came in the Spirit into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to carry out for him the custom of the Law, ²⁸then he took him into his arms, and blessed God, and said, ²⁹Now Lord, You are releasing Your bondservant to depart in peace, according to Your word;

Being aged, the only thing Simeon looked forward to in his life was a glimpse of God's gift of redemption. He sees the baby, takes him in his arms and knows that his life is now complete, thinking, "in *my* arms I hold the hope of the world!"

Luke 2:30-33: (NASB) ³⁰For my eyes have seen your salvation, ³¹Which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, ³²A light of revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of your people Israel. ³³And his father and mother were amazed at the things which were being said about him.

Simeon realizes the full import of redemption: I have seen your salvation with my own eyes! He is a light that even reaches to all Gentiles - he is a light that is the glory of Israel! This light is now just a baby, but this baby is the hope of the world!



"O, Come All Ye Faithful" Faith Hill

*O come all ye faithful
Joyful and triumphant
O come ye, o come ye to Bethlehem
Come and behold him
Born the king of angels
O come, let us adore him...
Christ, the Lord
O sing, choirs of angels
Sing in exultation
Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above
Glory to God
Glory in the highest
O come, let us adore him...
Christ, the Lord
Yea, Lord, we greet thee
Born this happy morning
Jesus, to thee be all glory given
Word of the Father
Now in flesh appearing
Come, let us adore him
Come, let us adore him
O come, let us adore him
Christ, the Lord
O come, let us adore him
Christ, the Lord*



We hope you have gotten a sense not only of the magnitude of the birth and life of Jesus but the hope that the birth, life, death and resurrection of Jesus brings us. It was a world-changing event...for ALL mankind. The prophecies foretold there will be a never-ending kingdom on the earth. Jesus will rule that kingdom! We hope this Christmas season means something very special to you in terms of understanding the great hope and the great life we have been given in the Scriptures through the life of our Lord, Jesus.



*So, what is the point of Christmas?
(Salvation for the world!)
For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions...
Think about it...!*