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— Christ (Messiah) Announced

December 14, 2014

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^C Psalm 104:30; John 3:5-8, 18:36

-{1}. **Three Angelic Visitations..... Christ (Messiah) Announced**

A. Introduction

1. Three Prophecies

- a. last week we considered only three of many prophecies in the OT of the promise of the Christ; the Messiah
- b. the first took place at the very dawn of history,
 - (A) at the point where sin had just entered into mankind
 - (B) when the need of the Saviour became apparent to Adam and Eve,
 - (C) God had foreseen that need, and now He announced His plan
 - (D) "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." (Genesis 3:15)
 - (E) God would one day send a descendant of Eve who would deal with sin and defeat the Satan who had tempted her
 - (F) so the need was given for the coming of the promised Christ
- c. the second took place when King Ahaz of Judah sought a deliverer
 - (A) his idea of a deliverer was the great army of Assyria
 - (B) but God gave a sign that God himself would be a deliverer
 - (C) not only at that time, but also in the future
 - (D) "Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel." (Isaiah 7:14)
 - (E) God Himself would enter history to deliver His people
 - (F) so the means of the promised Christ's coming were foretold
- d. the third took place when Judah and Israel were being beset by the armies of Assyria
 - (A) there seemed to be no hope of deliverance
 - (B) yet, things were not out of control; those armies had been sent by God to punish the disobedience of His people
 - (C) but God had not deserted Judah and Israel, though they had Him
 - (D) "But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, Too little to be among the clans of Judah, From you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel. His goings forth are from long ago, From the days of eternity." (Micah 5:2)
 - (E) so the origins of the promised Christ were foretold
 - (1) in human terms, to be born in Bethlehem, King David's town
 - (2) in reality, to be the Eternal Son of God

e. from these prophecies let us turn to the announcements of the ...

2. Three Angelic Visitations

- a. the visit to Zacharias, father of John the Baptist, Christ's forerunner
- b. the visit to Mary, the mother of Jesus, the Christ
- c. the visit to Joseph, the legal father of Jesus, the Christ

B. The Visit to Zacharias

Luke 1:5-25

1. Zacharias' (Once in a) Life-Time Experience

- a. this Zacharias along with his wife Elizabeth different from many of the other priests then in Israel
 - (A) they were righteous in God's sight; walking blamelessly in His law
 - (B) but they had one sorrow – no child
 - (C) so from his perspective, you could see that the announcement that his wife would have a child would be of most personal import
- b. back in the days of King David the priests had been divided into 24 groups, with each group in its turn serving in the temple
- c. Zacharias was of the eighth course or division, so twice a year, for a eight-day period – Sabbath to Sabbath – he would be called to Jericho to wait if he should be chosen by lot to serve in Jerusalem
- d. but there were so many priests that perhaps as few as one in eight would ever be chosen to serve in the temple; none could serve twice
- e. this was Zacharias' biggest week ever for he was chosen to burn the incense at the hour of prayer
- f. a brief service from which the crowd praying outside awaited him
- g. this week became even bigger for he was visited by ...

2. Gabriel's Message

- a. the name Gabriel means 'Mighty one of God' and is found four time in the Scriptures, two of which we have read today, and twice in the book of Daniel – once in relation to the 70 weeks until Messiah comes
 - (A) his place was in God's presence
 - (B) his mission was from God to Zacharias
 - (C) his message was good news
- b. there would be no doubt that He was an angel of God
- c. he had incredible news

- (A) it should have filled his heart with 'joy and gladness'
 - (B) but Zacharias could only think of the his old age and Elizabeth's
 - (C) to doubt the messenger was to doubt the ability of God Himself
 - (D) so Gabriel told him who he was and gave him a sign for which he asked, an unpleasant sign: to be without speech until John's birth
- d. Zacharias was also instructed as to how this child should be raised
- (A) with a God-given name, John: a God-given child
 - (B) that the Holy Spirit should indwell John from his conception
 - (C) but it is the role that John would play that is of importance

3. Fore-Runner to the Christ

- a. Luke 1:15, 'He will be great in the sight of the Lord'
- (A) there is no doubt concerning the greatness of John the Baptist
 - (B) Jesus said, "I say to you, among those born of women there is no one greater than John; yet he who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he." (Luke 7:28)
- b. the next verse gives the first reason for John's greatness: "And he will turn many of the sons of Israel back to the Lord their God." (Luke 1:16)
- (A) John's was to be prophetic, preaching work
 - (B) a work that would change the hearts of God's people
 - (C) but all of that work was only preparatory for One greater
 - (D) as John himself said, "As for me, I baptize you with water for repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, and I am not fit to remove His sandals; He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire." (Matthew 3:11)
- c. for John was the fulfilment of the promise in Malachi 4:5-6, "Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord. He will restore the hearts of the fathers to their children and the hearts of the children to their fathers ..."
- (A) that is the promise of the concluding verses of the OT
 - (B) and here we are told that John is its fulfilment: "And it is he who will go as a forerunner before Him (that is, the Lord) in the spirit and power of Elijah ..."
 - (C) John was to be a herald, the one announcing the messenger promised in Malachi 3:1, "'Behold, I am going to send My messenger, and he will clear the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple; and the messenger of the covenant, in whom you delight, behold, He is coming,' says

the Lord of hosts.”

- (D) the greatness of the herald will be overshadowed by the greatness of the Christ that he will announce; ‘to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.’ (Luke 1:17)

C. The Visit to Mary

Luke 1:26-38

1. Mary Is Introduced

- a. while we respect Mary for her obedience and submission to God’s will in the face of all the slurs that would be directed upon her character
- b. we should not view her as a source or means of grace, of God’s favour
- c. because, in reality, when the Bible speaks of Mary, it is to emphasise the favour or grace that she received from God – a tremendous favour
- d. in the custom of the day Mary could have been as young as 12 when she was pledged in marriage to Joseph
 - (A) this state of betrothal would last at least a year
 - (B) it was just as binding as if the marriage had actually been performed, and could only be ended by divorce
 - (C) and she is introduced here, not by her own family, but by that of her affianced husband, Joseph
 - (D) that is important, because if you look at the lineage of Joseph as it is found in Matthew 1, you discover that it is the kingly lineage; from the historic Jewish legal standpoint (unlike in the state of Israel today), the status of Mary’s Son as King was derived from His legal father, Joseph
- e. this announcement is of the Christ (Messiah), the anointed King; and this is ...

2. Gabriel’s Second Message

- a. the first message had already begun its fulfilment with Elizabeth now in her sixth month of expecting a child
- b. as with Zacharias, now with Mary, a son is announced, and His name is given: not Joseph, after His legal father – that would be reserved for one of His younger half-brothers – but Yeshua’ or Yehoshua’ in its fuller formation: “He Saves” or “Yah Saves”
- c. the second thing Mary is told, is of the coming greatness of this child
 - (A) the words describe this child with respect to His human nature, of His development as a man; His greatness as a man
 - (B) but Mary is also told of another side of His being
- d. this her son is more than just a man, great a man as He would be
 - (A) as well as by the Name, Jesus, He would also be recognised as – called – ‘the Son of the Most High’
 - (B) and, in response to her puzzled enquiry, that truth is repeated in other words to ensure that there is no

misunderstanding

- (C) this 'holy offspring shall be called the Son of God.'
- (D) how this could be has already been explained by Gabriel: "The angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you ..."
 - (1) it is the Holy Spirit who is the Source of life, both physical as in Psalm 104:30, and spiritual, as in John 3:5-8
 - (2) so it was the direct work of the life-giving Holy Spirit that this child would be born in this miraculous fashion of the virgin
- e. and this child is the promised Christ (Messiah) – deliverer king of Israel
 - (A) 'the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David; and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever; and His kingdom will have no end.'
 - (B) this child fulfills the covenant God made with David in which He promised David's throne would continue forever
 - (C) this child is the rightful ruler of Jacob – but not in an earthly way
 - (D) this Christ will have a different kind of kingdom than that which the Jews expected, for one day as He faced death by the hands of Jews and Romans He would say, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, then My servants would be fighting so that I would not be handed over to the Jews; but as it is, My kingdom is not of this realm." (John 18:36)
- f. so Mary accepted God's will for her: "Behold, the bondservant of the Lord; may it be done to me according to your word." (Luke 1:38)

D. The Visit to Joseph

Matthew 1:18-25

1. Joseph's Dilemma

- a. Mary has returned from the home of Zacharias and Elizabeth at about the time of the birth of John
- b. Joseph then discovered the disturbing news
 - (A) in the custom of the Jews, he was already engaged to this young woman, Mary, and from a legal standpoint he was considered her husband and she his wife, although the marriage was yet to come
 - (1) at this stage, to cancel or annul that marriage would take divorce; – nothing short of divorce could end the relationship
 - (2) now, before they were married, he found out that she was expecting a child
 - (3) Matthew who records this knows that this was a Divine miracle, the work of the Holy Spirit of God, but Joseph didn't

- (4) to proceed with this marriage would bring her shame upon himself; but divorce of this one he loved would disgrace her
- (B) so he looked for a way in which he could be true to his own just and fair character, and yet effect a divorce without publicity
- (C) while in this state, there comes to him ...

2. The Angel's Assurance

- a. though not named, Joseph has no doubt that this is the Lord's angel
- b. when God speaks to man in such extraordinary ways he does so in such a fashion that there can be no questioning of the message
- c. so with Joseph, this just man, is shared the actual facts of the case, in such a fashion that he become the legal parent of this child and so qualify Jesus by ancestry to be indeed the Son of David
 - (A) as with Mary, so Joseph is acquainted with the supernatural origin of this expected child – conceived in her of the Holy Spirit
 - (B) as with Mary, so Joseph is given the name of this child – Jesus – but instead of its meaning as the deliverer King as given to Mary, Joseph is told of the supernatural spiritual mission of the Child – the One to deliver from sin those who shall be His people
- d. Now, while the angel is not quoted as having spoken verses 22-23, there is little doubt that with the words he realised that
 - (A) this was a fulfilment of the prophecy of the virgin birth of Messiah in the book of Isaiah, and,
 - (B) this child will not only be man, but also God Himself dwelling among mankind, as there promised
"Immanuel ... God with us"
- e. so, Joseph, the man chosen of God to be the legal guardian of His Son, like Mary his affianced wife, obeyed as God commanded Him

E. Conclusion

1. Obedience

- a. how did each of these people receive the word of God?
 - (A) incredible?
 - (B) puzzling?
 - (C) settling?
- b. I shall let you consider which you would choose to be your model in the matter of acceptance, submission and

obedience to God's will

2. Worship

- a. but it is Christ who is ultimately the focus of these announcements
- b. He is the ultimate model in seeking to do the will of His Father
- c. it cost each of these something in hearing the angel's announcement
- d. but the love of the Son of God sent him from the glory that He had with the Father in order to live and die as a man to bring us salvation
- e. surely, then, He is worthy of our praise and worship.

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ASV American Standard Version of 1901
AV Authorized (King James) Version of 1769
NAS New American Standard version © 1960, 1995 The Lockman Foundation (usually the 1995 edition)
NIV New International Version © 1984 by the International Bible Society
NKJV New King James Version © 1979 Thomas Nelson Inc., Publishers
WEY The New Testament in Modern Speech © 1902, 1912 R. F. Weymouth

Some of the commentaries and resources used in the preparation of this message are identified as follow:

Barnes – *Notes on the New Testament, et alia*, by Rev Albert Barnes, Gall & Inglis, Edinburgh
BM – *Biblical Museum*, Editor James Comper Gray, ca 1870
EBC – *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, © 1986 Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 49530, Michigan
EGT – *The Expositor’s Greek Testament*, Hodder & Stoughton
Gill – *Exposition of the Old Testament, Exposition of the New Testament*, by John Gill, D.D.
Kerux – The sermon & illustration data base compiled by Rev. David Holwick at the web-site, www.holwick.com.
NICNT – *The New International Commentary on the New Testament*
RWP – *Robertson’s Word Pictures of the New Testament*, by Dr. A. T. Robertson
TYN – *The Tyndale New Testament Commentaries*