

Christmas 2014

The Story of Christmas that Includes the Christmas Story!

It's really good news, of great joy to all men, that Jesus is in all the bad news with us... that He has overcome it all and made us to be more than overcomers as well!

That is the *Story of Christmas* that includes the *Christmas Story!*

The Christmas Compendium!

"From before the foundation of the world, Jesus was foreordained to come into the world. The birth of this special child, this Son of God, the One whom the rule of world would rest upon; the One who would be called "The Miracle Worker, The Wise Counsellor, the Champion of God, the Perpetual Father and the Master of Peace," had been announced to the world by the prophets and had become the hope of Israel and all the world! At precisely the right moment, descending from His heavenly form to be found in the humble fashion of a man, He was born of a woman, to redeem those who were in bondage to the beggarly elements of the world, so that we might be able to receive the adoption of sons and daughters... This is His story...

The birth of Jesus began like this... A young girl named Mary was engaged to a man named Joseph. An angel appeared to Mary and said, "You have been chosen by God for a great blessing!" When she saw and heard him she was troubled, and wondered what was coming next! "Don't worry Mary, you are the favored one of God... you are going to conceive and have a son and you will call His name Jesus! He is going to be a great and will be called the Son of God and God is going to give Him the throne of His ancestor David and He will rule over the house of Jacob forever and of His kingdom there will be no end..." 'How can this be true since I am a virgin?' And the angel said, "the Holy Spirit will overshadow you and you will conceive the One who will be called the Son of God!" At that Mary said, 'Let it be just as you have said!'

Now when Joseph heard that Mary was pregnant he determined to break things off. Because he loved her and didn't want her to be publicly exposed or put at risk he had decided to do it privately, quietly! While he was still thinking how this could best be done, he dozed off. Immediately an angel appeared to him in a dream saying, "Joseph, heir of David, don't hesitate to take Mary as your wife. She hasn't sinned. The seed in her womb was placed by the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son that you will name Jesus for He will save His people from their sins..." All of this was right in line with Isaiah's prophecy, "a virgin will conceive and birth a son and they will call Him Emmanuel, God with us!" Then Joseph waking up did what the angel from the Lord had told him; the wedding was back on and they became husband and wife!

There was a lot of activity during this same time! Wise men from the east saw a star at its rising and interpreting it as a sign of the birth of the great Messiah, they followed the star to Jerusalem. There they made inquiry about the new king's birth and were directed to Bethlehem. Because it was also the year of a national census and taxation, Joseph & a very pregnant Mary were making their way south from Nazareth of Galilee to Joseph's hometown of Bethlehem! While they were there she gave birth to her firstborn son, wrapping him up tightly because she had Him in an outdoor manger.

There were shepherds in nearby fields watching over their flocks. At His birth an angel showed up, the area around them lit up with the glory of God and they were afraid! The angel said, "Fear not, I proclaim good things, joyful things, for all people to hear... the Savior you have been waiting for has been born in the City of David and this is how you will know you've found the right one, he will be wrapped up tightly, laying in a manger...!" And suddenly they saw their angel surrounded by multitudes of heavenly angels praising God and saying, 'Glory to God in the highest places and on earth, peace to men of good will!' As the vision faded away the shepherds said, "let's go see if what we have been told is true!" And when they found Him, just like the angel said, they went and told everyone they could find about the baby! And everyone who heard it was filled with wonder.

Right about this time the Wise Men from the East found him in His mother's arms and came, fell down and worshipped, opened their treasures and gave Him gifts! But Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart!

At His dedication in the Temple a very old man named Simeon, who had the promise that he would not die without seeing the Lord's Christ, saw Jesus and took Him up in his arms saying, "Now I can die, I have seen with my own eyes, the salvation of God..." And Joseph and Mary both marveled at what was being said. Then Anna, a prophetess who prayed and fasted day and night, came and said the same things about Jesus being the Redeemer! Then Joseph, warned in another dream that the jealous ruler of the territory would try to kill Jesus, took the child and His mother to Egypt and was there until the wicked king died. In another dream he was instructed to return and settle in Nazareth, fulfilling the prophecy that He would be called a Nazarene... and the child Jesus, already aware of His mission for God, lived there, growing in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and people, until He was anointed by the Holy Spirit and began to teach and preach the kingdom of God!

He came to preach the good news to those who had none, to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, to restore sight to the blind, to liberate those who were bruised, to proclaim that now was the acceptable time of God, and to destroy the works of the evil one. He lived a sinless life, serving the will of God, so that God would be pleased to accept Him as the righteous payment for all who had sinned. He died, and preached His message to those who had died before salvation came to earth, then resurrected with all those who had been held in captivity, to be known as the Lord of the living and the dead! He was then seated at the right hand of God, where to this day, He lives to make intercession for us... for us upon whom the ends of the age have come... so that our faith will not fail us when we are tried because we no longer live for ourselves alone but for the One who died to give us eternal life...

Jesus Christ came and died to give us the gifts of eternal life and mission... Paying and paving the way so nothing could stand in our way... And that's the Story of Christmas!

**God so loved the world that He gave His son so that whoever would believe would not perish...
*Not perish eternally... Not perish under the weight of the headlines of broken society!***

"We are more than overcomers thru the One who loved us (**R8.37**), and gave Himself for our sins to deliver us from this present world (Gal 1.4), and get for Himself a people who are zealous to do good (**Tit2.14**) w/their new lives!" (**Gal 2.20**)

This year will hold the greatest challenges we have ever faced... But we know who sustains us and the way we will overcome! And today we have a family keepsake to remind you!