

12.23.18 ~ **"Sovereign Event: The Birth of God's Son!"**

**Read Luke 1:5-25...** Zechariah is in the Holy of Holies when Gabriel tells him that his wife Elizabeth is going to give birth to a son, and he is to name him John [which means, *God is gracious*]; this son of theirs (see **verse 17**) will fulfill the prophecy of **Malachi 3:1**, "Behold, I am going to send My messenger, and he will clear [prepare] the way before Me.

**Matthew 11:10-11**, "This is the one about whom it ]is written, 'Behold, I send My messenger ahead of You, Who will prepare Your way before You.' Truly I say to you, among those born of women there has not arisen anyone greater than John the Baptist!"

**Read Luke 1:26-38...** Gabriel tells Mary she is going to have God's Son, and also that her aunt Elizabeth (who had been barren) is now six months pregnant.

**Read Luke 1:39-55...** Mary visits Elizabeth and the Holy Spirit confirms that, both her and Elizabeth's pregnancy is from God, just as Gabriel had said. Mary (**verse 56**) stayed with Elizabeth for three months and then returned home.

The Jewish priestly cycles at the Temple and the seven major Feasts and Festivals (Passover, First fruits, Harvest, Trumpets, Day of Atonement, Tabernacles, Hanukkah), when applied to the NT Scriptures concerning the conception and birth of both, Jesus, and John (His cousin), reveal some very amazing things.

Mary's visit would have been late in the 9th month of Kislev (Nov/Dec); not surprisingly, the Jewish festival of Hanukkah [Festival of Lights] begins on the 25th day of Kislev, which is very close to December 25, when we celebrate the birth of Jesus: the Light of the World.

**John 8:12**, "I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life."

**1John 1:5**, "This is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all."

**Read Luke 1:57-66...** John would have the privilege to announce the beginning of the ministry of God's Son.

John was six months older than Jesus, and since John's birth was near or during Passover (Nisan= Mar/April), Jesus would have then been born in Tishri (Sept/Oct) about the time of the Feast of Tabernacles.

Our celebration of Christmas doesn't line up with the actual birth of Jesus, but it very likely lines up with the time of Christ's conception in the womb of Mary.

**Read Luke 2:1-7...** Joseph took Mary from Nazareth to Bethlehem, to register in the town of his ancestors, according to the census being taken. While they were there, it came time for the baby to be born, since they could find no place to stay, Mary gave birth to her firstborn, a son, and placed Him in a manger; probably in the stable behind the inn.

**Read Luke 2:8-20** An angel of the Lord appeared to some shepherds, announcing the birth of the Savior, Christ the Lord. The angel said God would validate this marvelous event with a sign (**v. 12**), the baby would be wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.

A large number of angels appeared praising God, the shepherds then went to Bethlehem to see all God had done, and there they found Mary, Joseph, and the baby Jesus who was lying in a manger, just as they were told.

Shepherds were near the bottom of the Jewish social order, because they couldn't keep the religious rituals and ceremonies. Out of all the people in and around Jerusalem, God chose a small band of shepherds to be the ones to witness the birth of His Son, who said (**John 10:11**), "I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep."

After looking upon the baby Jesus, **Luke 2:18** says the shepherds went out into the streets, sharing the good news that the Savior had indeed been born. **Luke 2:19** says, "Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart," all these things meaning: the angel's announcement about her Holy conception, Joseph's response to this news, Elizabeth's marvelous greeting, and the special names to be given to Mary's baby boy "Jesus" and "Immanuel."

The shepherds (**verse 20**) "went back, glorifying and praising God for all that they had heard and seen, just as had been told them."

Jesus came to earth the first time, in the flesh of a helpless baby boy; the next time, He will come as a Warrior, the Eternal King, Sovereign Lord, and Righteous Judge over All (**See Revelation 19:11-16**).

At Jesus' first coming, there was no room available for Him to be born in; upon His return to the Father in heaven, He began preparing a place for all those who love Him, where we will live forever with Him (**See John 14:1-3; Revelation 21:1-5a**).

Only a few shepherds witnessed the first coming of Jesus; but when He returns to earth again, everyone in the world will see Him (**See Revelation 1:7**).

More books and song lyrics have been written about, and more paintings done, of Jesus, than anyone else in history. The world's dating system (B.C., A.D.), two

major holidays (Christmas, Easter), and the praise and worship of 2 billion followers, declares that this Jesus is indeed very, very, special.

At just the right time, according to God's plan, God put on the flesh of a son of man, in order to provide payment for our sins by the sacrifice of Himself, in order that we might become the children of God.

**Galatians 4:4-5**, "When the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons."

**Hebrews 9:26-28** tells us that Jesus [the Christ] has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of Himself; and that man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment, and so Christ was sacrificed to take away the sins of many people [those who believe in Him]; and He will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who belong to Him."

**1John 3:1**, "See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called children of God; and *such* we are."

The most important question that you, or any other person must ever answer is this, "Who do you genuinely believe this Jesus, born in Bethlehem, in Judea, to a virgin named Mary, to be? Your answer to that question will determine not only the quality of your life here on earth, but also the nature of your life for all of eternity.

**John 10:10**, "I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly," **28**, "I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish."

**2Peter 1:3-4**, "His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust."

**1John 5:11-13**, "And the testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life. These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life."

And that is the greatest reason for us to say, **Merry Christmas!**

*Pastor Mike*  
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