

Eric R Ross / General

The Kingdom of God / Jesus' Birth; Conversion

We celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ at Christmas. It is His life in demonstration of the Kingdom of God and the authority He gave us through the Holy Spirit that changes everything for us.

---

## Introduction

Christmas is the time where we celebrate the birth of Jesus.

This should be a time of great joy.

It should be a time to remember the blessings we have in this life.

This often though is a time when people find themselves lonely.

## The Birth of Jesus

### God Spoke Through the Prophets

There are many places we could look at in the Old Testament that describe the coming of Jesus Christ.

For this message, we will only look at two:

The first is in Isaiah 7:14

#### **Isaiah 7:14 NLT**

<sup>14</sup> All right then, the Lord himself will give you the sign. Look! The virgin will conceive a child! She will give birth to a son and will call him Immanuel (which means 'God is with us').

This New Living Translation says "God is with us". Many translations simply say "God with us".

God said long ago through that He was not far off. He was with Israel in the tabernacle of Moses but there was a separation between the people and God. The people could not enter into God's presence. God wanted a closer

relationship and intended to fulfill that through Jesus Christ.

Next, in Psalm 132:11 God made a promise to David.

**Psalm 132:11 NLT**

<sup>11</sup> The LORD swore an oath to David with a promise he will never take back: "I will place one of your descendants on your throne.

This was not to be a cloud of the glory of God by day and a pillar of fire by night as it was with Moses.

This was a promise of a flesh and bone son, a descendant of David that would rule.

## God Spoke to Zechariah

Zechariah was a priest doing his duty in the temple. He was married to Elizabeth but they didn't have any children.

An angel appeared to him in Luke 1 and told him they would have a son.

**Luke 1:13–14 NLT**

<sup>13</sup> But the angel said, "Don't be afraid, Zechariah! God has heard your prayer. Your wife, Elizabeth, will give you a son, and you are to name him John. <sup>14</sup> You will have great joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth,

John, who we call John the baptist, was a forerunner and prepared the way for Jesus.

## God Spoke to Mary

The same angel that had delivered the message to Zechariah then came to Mary in Luke 1:26-33.

**Luke 1:26–33 NLT**

<sup>26</sup> In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a village in Galilee, <sup>27</sup> to a virgin named Mary. She was engaged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of King David. <sup>28</sup> Gabriel appeared to her and said, "Greetings, favored woman! The Lord is with you!" <sup>29</sup> Confused and disturbed, Mary tried to think what the angel could mean. <sup>30</sup> "Don't be afraid, Mary," the angel told her, "for you have found favor with God! <sup>31</sup> You will conceive and give birth to a son, and

you will name him Jesus. <sup>32</sup> He will be very great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his ancestor David. <sup>33</sup> And he will reign over Israel forever; his Kingdom will never end!"

The promise to Mary was that:

"He will be very great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his ancestor David. And he will reign over Israel forever; his Kingdom will never end!"

Mary great response is recorded in Luke 1:38

#### **Luke 1:38 NLT**

<sup>38</sup> Mary responded, "I am the Lord's servant. May everything you have said about me come true." And then the angel left her.

We also should note here that Elizabeth was the relative of Mary. The King James says Elizabeth was the cousin of Mary.

## God Spoke to Joseph

God spoke to Mary in advance, but Joseph doesn't know anything about this plan until "she (Mary) was found with child". Lets read Matthew 1:18-21.

#### **Matthew 1:18–21 NLT**

<sup>18</sup> This is how Jesus the Messiah was born. His mother, Mary, was engaged to be married to Joseph. But before the marriage took place, while she was still a virgin, she became pregnant through the power of the Holy Spirit. <sup>19</sup> Joseph, to whom she was engaged, was a righteous man and did not want to disgrace her publicly, so he decided to break the engagement quietly. <sup>20</sup> As he considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream. "Joseph, son of David," the angel said, "do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife. For the child within her was conceived by the Holy Spirit. <sup>21</sup> And she will have a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins."

The angel said "the child within her was conceived by the Holy Spirit" and ""he will save his people from their sins".

## The Life of Jesus

Jesus grew up and demonstrated great wisdom. The family made their pilgrimages to Jerusalem as they were commanded under the Law of Moses. After one of these journeys, they realized after three days that Jesus wasn't with them.

We might think, how could they not miss him for three days? But, this was a trip made by many people that were family and friends. There wasn't any fear of losing a child. If we read all of this, what Mary found was that Jesus was "sitting among the religious teachers" in Luke 5:46. Jesus was learning as it says in Luke 5:52.

**Luke 2:52 NLT**

<sup>52</sup> Jesus grew in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and all the people.

After Jesus was baptised with the Holy Spirit, He began His ministry and there are many places we could read, but let's just look at Luke 6:17-19 in

**Luke 6:17-19 NLT**

<sup>17</sup> When they came down from the mountain, the disciples stood with Jesus on a large, level area, surrounded by many of his followers and by the crowds. There were people from all over Judea and from Jerusalem and from as far north as the seacoasts of Tyre and Sidon. <sup>18</sup> They had come to hear him and to be healed of their diseases; and those troubled by evil spirits were healed. <sup>19</sup> Everyone tried to touch him, because healing power went out from him, and he healed everyone.

As Jesus had been teaching and preaching in the synagogues, people were healed and now many people came from all around.

They came to hear Him and to be healed.

"and He healed everyone".

In His life, Jesus demonstrated the will of God and that was to do good and to heal.

Jesus himself said in John 3:17

**John 3:17 NLT**

<sup>17</sup> God sent his Son into the world not to judge the world, but to save the world through him.

The work Jesus was doing showed that God's will was to help people, to

deliver them from their trouble.

This work that Jesus did is summarized in Acts 10:38.

**Acts 10:38 NLT**

<sup>38</sup> And you know that God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. Then Jesus went around doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him.

Jesus was “doing good”.

Jesus was “healing”.

## The Death of Jesus

Jesus also said in John 3:14-15

**John 3:14–15 NLT**

<sup>14</sup> And as Moses lifted up the bronze snake on a pole in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, <sup>15</sup> so that everyone who believes in him will have eternal life.

No one understood these words. It wasn't until much later that even Jesus disciples understood what Jesus meant.

What people did recognize, was that in this life there is trouble.

Our son Elias and his family were visiting from San Diego. We hadn't seen them in five years and it has been more than ten years since Elias has visited New York City. We met at Bryant Park and then walked to a few local sites. One of them was St. Patrick's Cathedral in Manhattan.

This Church is an architectural marvel but also an historic monument illustrating some key biblical messages.

St. Patrick's Cathedral

## The Stations of the Cross

1. Jesus is condemned to death
2. Jesus takes up his Cross

3. Jesus falls for the first time
4. Jesus meets his Mother
5. Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus carry the Cross
6. Veronica wipes the face of Jesus
7. Jesus falls for the second time
8. Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem
9. Jesus falls for the third time
10. Jesus is stripped of his garments (sometimes called the "Division of Robes")
11. Jesus is nailed to the Cross
12. Jesus dies on the Cross
13. Jesus is taken down from the Cross
14. Jesus is laid in the tomb

## Identifying with His suffering

Jesus was taken at the height of His ministry.

He had performed miracles of healings

He had fed the thousands, yet though He had only helped people, He was still put to death.

These stations are a visual reminder of the sufferings of Christ.

These are to bring us into close contact with the pain and suffering that we also bear in this world, that we share in the suffering.

As we walked through the doors of St Patrick's Cathedral to leave we faced across the street, the Atlas statue.

This sculpture depicts the ancient Greek Titan Atlas holding the heavens on his shoulders.

Elias commented to me that one of his theology professor's said "This is a stark reminder that we can live in the peace and joy of God's Kingdom or

| carry the weight of the world on our shoulders”.

I am going to take a side trip here and talk about

## **The Virus**

This pandemic continues to impact our lives

### **New Covid Cases**

The highest number of reported Covid Cases for New York City was 7,252 on Jan 15, 2021

We are currently at more than double that rate with 15,213 new cases reported on December 24, 2021

### **Prevention**

- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.

### **Masks**

- Wear a mask to protect yourself and others and stop the spread of COVID-19.
- Stay at least 6 feet (about 2 arm lengths) from others who don't live with you.
- Avoid crowds and poorly ventilated spaces. The more people you are in contact with, the more likely you are to be exposed to COVID-19.

### **Sanitizing**

- Clean your hands often, either with soap and water for 20 seconds or a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- Clean frequently touched objects and surfaces daily. If someone is sick or has tested positive for COVID-19, disinfect frequently touched surfaces.

### **Isolation**

- Isolate for 10 days after contact

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick

## **Treatment**

- Stay home except to get medical care.
- Monitor your symptoms carefully. If your symptoms get worse, call your healthcare provider immediately.
- Get rest and stay hydrated. Take over-the-counter medicines, such as acetaminophen, to help you feel better.

## **Air Purifiers**

In confined spaces, seek products like “the Vollara® Air & Surface Pro (which) combines multiple complementary technologies, including HEPA, activated carbon, and ActivePure® Technology. Patented ActivePure is an advanced surface and air purification technology. It has been proven to reduce over 99.9% of many common airborne and surface contaminants.” [1](#)

Units like these (if installed) are available through Mr. George Ambrose  
845-641-3605

If all we know is the suffering and trouble in the world, we have not yet understood the message of Jesus. We also need to remember the resurrection of Jesus.

# The Resurrection of Jesus

There is also the power of the resurrection. Paul said this in Romans 8:11.

### **Romans 8:11 NLT**

<sup>11</sup> The Spirit of God, who raised Jesus from the dead, lives in you. And just as God raised Christ Jesus from the dead, he will give life to your mortal bodies by this same Spirit living within you.

Just as we considered the Stations of the Cross which identify the suffering in the world, we must also consider the Stations of the Resurrection.

## The Stations of the Resurrection

1. Jesus is raised from the dead
2. The finding of the empty tomb
3. Mary Magdalene meets the risen Jesus
4. Jesus appears on the road to Emmaus
5. Jesus is known in the breaking of bread
6. Jesus appears to the disciples in Jerusalem
7. Jesus gives the disciples his peace and the power to forgive sins
8. Jesus strengthens the faith of Thomas
9. Jesus appears by the Sea of Tiberias
10. Jesus forgives Peter and commands him to feed his sheep
11. Jesus commissions the disciples upon the mountain
12. The Ascension of Jesus
13. Mary and the disciples wait in prayer
14. The Holy Spirit descends at Pentecost

## Identifying with His Resurrection

It is important for us to look beyond the suffering and remember what Jesus said in John 16:33.

### **John 16:33 NLT**

<sup>33</sup> I have told you all this so that you may have peace in me. Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world."

When we identify with the resurrection we also remember that God had a plan in Acts 2:23-24.

### **Acts 2:23-24 NLT**

<sup>23</sup> But God knew what would happen, and his prearranged plan was carried out when Jesus was betrayed. With the help of lawless Gentiles, you nailed him to a cross and killed him. <sup>24</sup> But God released him from the horrors of death and raised him back to life, for death could not keep him in its grip.

Though Jesus said on the cross “it is finished”, He wasn’t saying “this is the end”. Jesus finished God’s plan by giving His life to reconcile us back to God.

## The Outpouring of the Holy Spirit

Jesus told His disciples in John 16:7.

### **John 16:7 NLT**

<sup>7</sup> But in fact, it is best for you that I go away, because if I don’t, the Advocate won’t come. If I do go away, then I will send him to you.

The day of Pentecost was the beginning of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

## The Power of the Anointing

Jesus told his disciples in John 16:12-14.

### **John 16:12–14 NLT**

<sup>12</sup> “There is so much more I want to tell you, but you can’t bear it now. <sup>13</sup> When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own but will tell you what he has heard. He will tell you about the future. <sup>14</sup> He will bring me glory by telling you whatever he receives from me.

There is power that comes to us through the Holy Spirit.

“He will guide us into all truth”

“He will tell you about the future”

There are great gifts that the Holy Spirit gives to lead us, to teach us, to comfort us as we navigate through the trials of this age.

## Identifying with Our Position in the Kingdom

Paul said it this way in Hebrews 12:22-24

### **Hebrews 12:22–24 NLT**

<sup>22</sup> No, you have come to Mount Zion, to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to countless thousands of angels in a joyful

gathering. <sup>23</sup> You have come to the assembly of God's firstborn children, whose names are written in heaven. You have come to God himself, who is the judge over all things. You have come to the spirits of the righteous ones in heaven who have now been made perfect. <sup>24</sup> You have come to Jesus, the one who mediates the new covenant between God and people, and to the sprinkled blood, which speaks of forgiveness instead of crying out for vengeance like the blood of Abel.

When we identify with our position in the kingdom we receive power as Jesus said in Acts 1:8.

**Acts 1:8 NLT**

<sup>8</sup> But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

## Conclusion

God spoke to the prophets and revealed His plan.

God spoke to individuals about their part in His plan.

Jesus came, a flesh and blood man, to show us God's will and purpose.

Jesus was obedient to fulfill God's plan and gave His life on the cross.

After Jesus resurrection He explained the scriptures and the minds of the disciples were opened.

The, God poured out His Holy Spirit on all that will receive Him.