

## **HOME GROUP BIBLE STUDIES: JESUS' COMING INTO THE WORLD**

### **1. The Prophecies of His Coming**

**Intro:** *As we approach another Christmas, what do you observe our society emphasising? [Discuss] What about you personally? What fills your heart and mind as you approach Christmas? [Discuss]*

In this two-part series, we are going to consider the prophecies of Christ's coming, and the preparations for His first coming – taking the time to glory in the coming of God's one and only Son into our fallen world to be our Saviour.

#### **The First Prophecy and Picture of Christ**

*The first prophecy and picture of Jesus coming into our world are found in Genesis 3. What's the setting of Genesis 3? (Gen 3:1-7)*

The setting is the fall of mankind; when Adam & Eve sinned against God after Satan's temptation.

*What was so serious about what happened? (Isa 59:2; Rom 5:12; Rev 20:11-15)*

It plunged the whole human race into a state of separation from God and into physical mortality and spiritual death; as well as facing judgment and eternal death after our life ends.

*When Adam and Eve sinned, what do we observe about the heart of God? (Gen 3:9-13)*

God came down and sought them – not to destroy them but to call them to Himself that they might own up to their sin. What a picture of the heart of God! He is the God who pursues us and seeks after us.

*In Gen 3:14-15 we read of God's judgment on Satan. Satan is cursed (unlike Adam and Eve who are not cursed - but punished). But what is so incredible in v.15?*

We have the very first prophecy of God promising to send someone to rescue us from Satan's hold on us (ie, of the Lord Jesus coming into our world). He would be born of a woman (be a human), and He would crush Satan, but in the process be bruised by Satan. This happened at the cross (Col 1:13; Col 2:13-15).

*We also have our first picture of what Christ would do for us in Gen 3:21. What is it?*

Adam and Eve clothed themselves with fig leaves (Gen 3:7), but God killed an animal for Adam and Eve (the first killing) in order to provide permanent clothing for them from the animal's skin – what a picture of how Christ would die for us in order for God to clothe us with Christ's righteousness (Rev 3:18).

#### **Further Prophecies and Promises of Christ's Coming**

From Genesis 3, we learn that Christ's coming into our world was planned by God long ago – well before Jesus came. And after the first prophecy and picture, throughout the next 4000 years before Jesus came, God continued to remind people that one day Christ would come into our world to rescue us.

*What do we learn from the following prophecies about Jesus?*

**Gen 22:15-18** From Abraham's descendants, one would arise through whom God would bless all people groups; all because Abraham did not withhold offering up his one and only son to God. What a picture we have in Gen 22 of what Abraham was prepared to do in offering up his Son on Mt Moriah, and what God would eventually do in offering up His one and only Son for us at Golgotha (Mt Moriah).

**1 Chron 17:11-14** From David's descendants one would arise who would establish God's kingdom and house and He would rule over God's kingdom forever; and His throne would be eternal.

**Isa 7:14** The Christ would be born of a virgin and be called Emmanuel – "God with us".

**Isa 9:6-7** The Christ would be given by God and born as a child, and He would be God's ruler for us. His identity is revealed – He would be divine; Wonderful Counsellor, mighty God, eternal Father, and the Prince of Peace. His rule would be eternal, bringing in justice, righteousness and peace.

**Isa 53:1-6** Jesus would come into the world plainly (v.2). He would be rejected and despised (v.3). But He would come to save us, by bearing the punishment of our sins (vv.4-6).

**Jer 23:5-6** Jesus would be of the line of David and be our king, reigning with justice and righteousness. His name would be "the Lord our righteousness"; ie, He would make us righteous.

**Dan 9:24-26** Jesus would come at God's perfect timing – 69 weeks (483 years) after the decree to rebuild Jerusalem. He would come and make atonement for sin and bring in everlasting righteousness.

**Micah 5:2** The Christ would be born in Bethlehem, and again, we read of one who is so unique and divine – "His origins are from long ago, from days of eternity".

**Mal 4:1-2** Jesus, the sun of righteousness, would come and bring healing and great joy.

**Summary:** **God planned and continually spoke about His Son coming into our world to save us.**

## **2. The Preparations for His Coming**

**Intro:** *Last week we considered the Old Testament prophecies about Jesus coming into our world. What were some of the things that were highlighted through prophecy? [Discuss]*

Jesus would come and set us free from Satan and sin’s consequences, be born in Bethlehem of the line of Abraham and David, be the one who heals us and clothes us in His righteousness, and is none other than God – He is divine. Even the time when Christ would come is revealed to the prophet Daniel in Daniel 9.

### **The Preparation of John the Baptist**

*Just before Jesus would come into the world, what did God say He would do? (Isa 40:1-5)*

God would send someone to prepare the way for Jesus; getting people’s hearts ready to receive Him. This was John the Baptist, who came calling people to repent and to get ready by being baptised. John came to prepare the way for the “LORD”, and for “the glory of the LORD” to be revealed. Jesus is the “LORD”.

*The closing words of the Old Testament refer to John the Baptist. What do we learn in Mal 4:5-6?*

John the Baptist is the one who came in the spirit and power of Elijah (cf. Matt 11:12-14; Matt 17:10-13). He came before the great and awesome day of the Lord, restoring hearts in readiness for Jesus’ coming.

*When John the Baptist came what specific things did he teach? (Matt 3:1-3, 11; John 1:29-34)*

He called people to repent, he spoke of how much greater Jesus was compared to him, and that Jesus was “the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world”. He also taught that this was the one who would baptise us in the Holy Spirit, and whom God confirmed to be the “Son of God” at His baptism.

### **The Preparation of Mary and Joseph**

*Besides John the Baptist preparing the way, God prepared a young woman to be the means by which Jesus would be born a human. What do we learn from Luke 1:26-33?*

The angel Gabriel came to a virgin named Mary to announce the news that she would bear a special son miraculously – and she was to call Him Jesus (which means “Saviour”). He would be great, the Son of the Most High God, and the one who would sit on the throne of David eternally. Imagine receiving this news!

*What was the angel’s response to Mary’s question about how could this be? (Luke 1:34-37)*

The angel made it clear that Mary would conceive not naturally, but miraculously. Through the power of God and the Holy Spirit, the eternal Son of God would be conceived in Mary. That’s why He would rightly be called “the Son of God”. And what a statement in v.37 – the conception of Christ is miraculous, but nothing is impossible with God (even her aged relative Elizabeth was pregnant with John the Baptist).

*What was Mary’s response to being pregnant outside of marriage? (Luke 1:38)*

She was pleased to bear Jesus, and she viewed herself as a servant of the Lord to do and fulfil His good will.

*The Lord also prepared her fiancé’s heart Joseph. What do we learn in Matt 1:18-25?*

Even though Joseph wanted to break off the engagement due to Mary being pregnant, an angel in a special dream explained to Joseph why Mary was pregnant, and that this was in fulfilment with prophecy. He also is told to call the child Jesus, because He would save us from our sins. As a result of this dream, Joseph went ahead and married Mary and kept her a virgin until after Jesus was born.

### **The Preparation of the World**

*Where did Mary live (together with Joseph)? (Luke 1:26)*

They lived in Nazareth in Galilee; some 150km from Bethlehem – the place Jesus was meant to be born at.

*So, how would God arrange for Jesus to be born in Bethlehem to fulfil Micah 5:2? (Luke 2:1-5)*

God used a pagan king, the emperor of Rome, to issue a decree for a census. This census was no ordinary one. People had to return to the town or city of their family ancestry. For both Joseph and Mary, this was the town of David, for they were both of this line. The town of David was Bethlehem (1 Sam 17:12).

What an amazing thing God did to fulfil His word – even using the Roman Emperor.

*The census’ timing was perfect and the coming of Mary & Joseph to Bethlehem. Why? (Luke 2:6-7)*

Mary gave birth to Jesus, not in Nazareth, nor along the way, but in Bethlehem itself – even though there was no room in the town. Jesus was born in a stable and placed in a manger – our Saviour came so humbly.

*What an amazing event that God marked spectacularly. Read Luke 2:8-14. What’s so glorious?*

Jesus had been born, our Saviour & Lord; and an angelic choir praised God. How we should praise God too!

**Summary:** **God prepared the people and our world perfectly for the coming of our Saviour.**

**May we have a blessed and special Christmas as we reflect on the birth of our Saviour and Lord.**