

# Gospel and Christmas Story

## Outline

1. It's the Greatest Prophetic Story
2. It's the Greatest Historical Story
3. It's the Greatest Humble Story
4. It's the Greatest Love Story
5. It's the Greatest Glorious Story (His Story Becomes Our Story)

### 1. It's the Greatest Prophetic Story

There are **over 300 prophecies** about the birth, life, death and resurrection of Jesus right from Genesis to Malachi, of which there are **16 major prophecies concerning His birth**. But for now, we will examine just a few, and that too, briefly. They are the prophecies of Isaiah, written around 725 BC.

*Isa 9:6-7 For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. 7 Of the increase of his government and peace, there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this.*

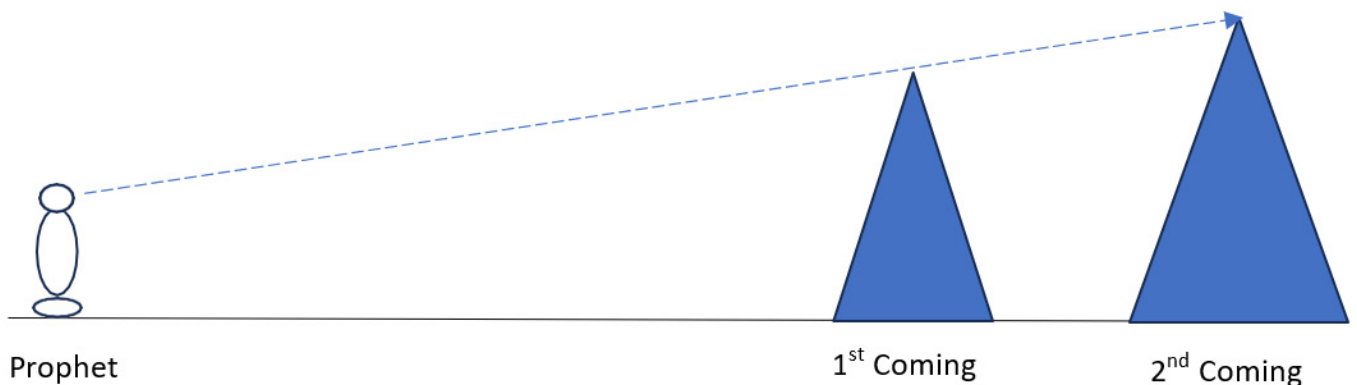
- Birth of the Messiah—1<sup>st</sup> Coming (v6: *For to us a child is born*)
- Divine Names of the Messiah (v6: *Mighty God and Everlasting Father*)
- Ways and Work of the Messiah (v7: *Reigns with justice and righteousness*)
- Reign of the Messiah—2<sup>nd</sup> Coming and to eternity (v7: *forever*)

*Isa 11:1-9 A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit. 2 The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him—the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of might, the Spirit of the knowledge and fear of the LORD—3 and he will delight in the fear of the LORD. He will not judge by what he sees with his eyes, or decide by what he hears with his ears; 4 but with righteousness he will judge the needy, with justice he will give decisions for the poor of the earth. He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth; with the breath of his lips he will slay the wicked. 5 Righteousness will be his belt and faithfulness the sash around his waist. 6 The wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the goat, the calf and the lion and the yearling[a] together; and a little child will lead them. 7 The cow will feed with the bear, their young will lie down together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox. 8 The infant will play near the cobra's den, and the young child will put its hand into the viper's nest. 9 They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain, for the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.*

- Birth of the Messiah — 1<sup>st</sup> Coming (v1: *shoot from the stump of Jesse*)
- Spirit of the Messiah (v2: *Spirit of the Lord will rest upon Him*)
- Ways and Work of the Messiah (vv 3-5)
- Reign of the Messiah — 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming to eternity (vv 5-9)



The prophets saw the future like we see a mountain range in the distance. They see God's purpose in sending His Messiah and establishing His kingdom. But they see it all together, just as we might see distant mountains but unable to gauge the distance between them. Does Isaiah speak of the first or the second coming of Christ? The answer is both and also in between — and simultaneously. This helps us look to the birth of Christ as the beginning of a story that has still reached its conclusion — **it's unfolding the wonderful story of Christmas**. It's a story that you and I have a part to play. It's a story that involves the zeal of the Lord Almighty.



## 2. It's the Greatest Historical Story:

*Luke 2:1-2, 4, 11 In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. <sup>2</sup> (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.). .*

*<sup>4</sup> So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. . . . [Then the Angel said to the shepherds] <sup>11</sup> Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord.*

**It happened at a real and particular time—a set time** in history. Not a time in some mythological, imaginary story, but a time set when **Caesar Augustus** was the emperor of Rome “and Quirinius was governor of Syria” (v2). It was a time planned in eternity because the Lamb was slain before the world's creation. “*When the set time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law*” (Gal 4:4).

Augustus Caesar was the first and greatest emperor of the Roman Empire. He was the grand-nephew of Julius Caesar. Augustus was the one that built the Roman roads (some of them exist today). He entered Rome, a city made of bricks and left it a city of marble. Augustus Caesar ruled from 27 BC to 14 AD — a

period of 40 years.

But the greatest emperor of all time, indeed of the Universe, made everlasting roads right into the hearts of men. He entered the world of the sons of men to make them the sons of God. And His rule never ends. History is His Story.

**It happened in a real town:** Not in a fairy tale land. It happened in a town that still exists today. *“Joseph also went up from Galilee to Bethlehem, the town of David”* (Luke 2:4). Bethlehem, the city that Micah prophesied: *“But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, from you shall come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times”* (Mic 5:2).

### 3. It's the Greatest Humble Story:

*Isa 11:1 A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots, a Branch will bear fruit.*

Jesse was the father of King David. Samuel the prophet visits Jesse and his family to anoint David as the future king, the man God has chosen to replace King Saul. Samuel sees all of Jesse's sons except David, the youngest, the shepherd boy. He was **so insignificant** that no one had even thought to fetch him along with the others. But he was God's chosen king, the man after God's heart. But his descendants, from Solomon to Zedekiah, with few exceptions, were a great disappointment.

So what Isaiah sees is the tree of Jesse – the royal house of David – cut down to a mere **stump** by God's judgment because of sin. The royal line of the kings of Israel came to an end. But a **shoot grows out of the stump**. We would have thought that the tree was dead. God will return to the dynasty's origins and raise a king from the very root of the dynasty. Just as David was not raised in a royal palace but was an insignificant shepherd boy, the new David, the Messiah, will be born in a trivial manner of humble origins. Unexpected. Not in a palace with prestige, pomp and privileges that kings and rulers have and so often abuse. But he was born in a stable in Bethlehem. Jesus was born in Bethlehem, where David's family originated, but not where Solomon or any of the kings of Israel were born. This Jesus is God's Messiah, raised unexpectedly from **humble origins**. But because David the shepherd boy came from humble origins, he was a man of the people, besides being a man after God's heart. Jesus was like neither Herod nor Caesar. He was a different sort of king after God's heart, and that difference began with his birth in humble circumstances to a family of no status in society and to a life of no reputation. Look at His lineage, His looks and His life.

**His Lineage:** *The Gospel of Matthew, chapter 1*, mentions four women in the lineage of Jesus. Why? As if to make a statement because these women were of questionable character. Tamar had committed incest with her father-in-law, Rahab was a prostitute, Ruth was a Moabite (an enemy of Israel), and Bathsheba was an adulteress. Yet Jesus was not ashamed to call them His mothers.

**His Looks:** *Isa 53:2 He grew up before him like a tender shoot, like a root out of the dry ground. He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him.*

**His Life:** *Isa 53:3 He was despised and rejected by mankind, a man of suffering and familiar with pain. Like one from whom people hide their faces, he was despised, and we held him in low esteem.*

### 4. It's the Greatest Love Story — His Story

*Isa 9:6-7 For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. 7 Of the increase of his government and peace, there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this.*

God had a great plan **to establish an eternal kingdom** (rule of God) with a race of men & women who are not angels (angels are ministering servants)— but a race of men & women who could be called His sons and

daughters with God-like character. **Let me elaborate on this plan:**

- i. This plan was conceived before man was created because the Lamb of God was slain before the world's creation.
- ii. This plan was meticulously carried out through the ages, despite man's repeated failures until today.
- iii. This plan was carried out by the Trinity—the Father conceiving the plan, the Son giving His life for the plan and the Holy Spirit working out the plan till today.
- iv. This plan was that God's only Son should come into this world (*son is given*) and become a man (*child is born*) in every aspect except sin.
- v. This plan involved the birth, death, burial and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- vi. This plan involved His bloody sweat, tears and loud cries, intense suffering, excruciatingly painful death on the cross and very shedding of the blood of God.

**But Why? Why? Why? Because--**

- vii. This plan would involve wooing us with His love and transforming us from rebellious, selfish, unbelieving, hard-hearted sinners into soft-hearted and willing lovers of God.
- viii. This plan would make us children of the Father and the Bride of Christ.

Now, dear friends, it was such a plan as this that aroused the zeal of God.

- This plan could not be accomplished by just speaking the word (even though His word is so powerful that the universe was created by it) nor by His breath (even though His breath was so powerful that man was created by it). Still, it must involve all the attributes of God—His holiness, His love, His goodness, His faithfulness, and His power—in full flow.
- This accomplishment of this plan was worthy of a great Creator;
- The execution of this plan is the **Greatest Love Story ever**—it is His Story, and it can become Our Story.

And how can it become our story? — When you believe in the gospel that God sent His one and only son, whoever believes in Him will have eternal life (John 3:16). God is passionate about us. We love because He loved us first. We have joy because we see Him rejoicing over us. We have peace because He first made peace with us by dying on the cross to pay the price for our rebellion against God

## **5. It's the Greatest Glorious Story — Our Story:**

*Luke 2:13-14 Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, <sup>14</sup> "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests."*

The coming of this child will be the **greatest revelation of God's glory, even in heaven's highest place**. And the arrival of this child will bring peace to God's people. God's offer of peace goes out to all, yet only His chosen people who receive Christ and trust him as Saviour and Lord will experience the peace He brings.

But notice the relation between His glory and our peace through the gospel.

**Remember:** When we find Our Peace in Him, He gets the Glory, His Joy becomes Our Joy, His Righteousness becomes Our Righteousness, and His Story can become Our Story. Also, remember that when we get our peace, it is the God of Peace that crushes Satan under our feet (*Rom 16:20*)

**I pray that you will start a new story this Christmas, enjoy His peace, and thus glorify Jesus Christ.**