

CHRISTMAS AND THE BIG PICTURE

I. THE JEWISH PEOPLE KNEW ABOUT THE COMING MESSIAH

- A. Micah 5:2-5a – The Eternal One born in Bethlehem would be a ruler.
- B. Isaiah 7:14 – This child would be Immanuel, which means “*God is with us.*”
- C. Isaiah 9:6-7. This child, this Son, would rule and govern the nation of Israel.
- D. Samuel 7:12-13, 16 – One of David’s descendants would be this Messiah, the King who would set up His eternal kingdom on earth.
- E. Isaiah 40:1-5, 9-11 – This Messiah, the Lord, would grant mercy to Jerusalem; He would be a ruler; and He would shepherd His people forever.
- F. Isaiah 53 – The coming Messiah would suffer and die for the sins of people, resulting in their sins being forgiven.
- G. Psalm 22 – The Messiah would be crucified and would rule over the world.
- H. Most Jews were excited about the coming Messiah being their King, but only some of the Jews expected Him to be their Savior, to save them from their sins.

II. THE PROPHECY ABOUT THE CHURCH AGE

Daniel 9:24-27 speaks of 70 weeks, 490 years of Jewish history. After the 69th week, the Messiah would be cut off, meaning He would be gone. We now know that this resulted in this long period of time between the 69th and 70th weeks, this gap being the church age.

III. THE BELIEVER’S TESTIMONY ABOUT JESUS – Luke 1-2

- A. Luke 1:26-34, 46-55; 2:19, 2:33-35 – Mary believed that her son was the Messiah, that He would fulfill God’s promise to Abraham and David.
- B. Luke 1:67-79 – Zechariah believed that the Messiah would save God’s people, both spiritually and physically.
- C. Luke 2:8-11 – The shepherds, other than the parents, were the first to see the Messiah, and then went and excitedly told others about Him.
- D. Luke 2:25-32 – Simeon believed the prophecies about the Messiah, and then held Him in his own hands.
- E. Luke 2:36-38 – Anna’s prayers about wanting the Messiah to come were answered, and she told others who were also looking forward to His coming.
- F. Acts 1:3-9 – The apostles wanted Christ’s physical kingdom to be established on the earth, but God wanted them, and us, to first preach the gospel to the entire world.

IV. 1ST CENTURY BELIEVERS DID NOT COMPLETELY UNDERSTANDING THINGS

The believers understood the need for salvation, and desired for Jesus Christ’s kingdom to be established on the earth, but they did not understand the big picture, the timing of events, the entire church age, and when Christ would return to set up His kingdom.

V. 21ST CENTURY PERSPECTIVES OF PROPHECIES ABOUT JESUS CHRIST

- A. Living at this time, Christians have an incredible advantage, for they can understand what happened at Jesus Christ's 1st coming, and what will happen at His 2nd coming.
- B. An unbeliever may know that Jesus was born but not understand why He was born, and therefore, not understand the true meaning of Christmas.
- C. All believers understand that Jesus was born to die, to pay for people's sins, and that all those who repent of their sins and believe Jesus died for them will receive eternal life.
- D. We know we live in the church age, that Jesus Christ is building His church all over the world, people are getting saved and being disciplined, and that the church is growing.
- E. At this time, there are differences among Christians as to the true understanding of various 2nd coming passages, what it means about their future and the future of the world.
- F. The Bible tells us that we live in the end-times, for the Jewish people are back in Israel, and that it won't be long before Christ's 2nd coming. Matt. 28:19-20, Rev. 22:20. If Mary, Zechariah, Simeon, Anna and the apostles were alive today, they would be very excited, knowing that Jesus Christ will soon return to reign as King over the earth.

VI. WHAT CHRISTIANS NEED TO UNDERSTAND AT THIS TIME IN HISTORY

- A. Prophecies about Jesus Christ's birth, death, resurrection, and various aspects of His life were fulfilled at His first coming.
- B. We are living in the church age, that gap of time between Christ's 1st and 2nd comings.
- C. This church age is soon coming to an end, and that's because we live in the end times.
- D. At the end of this age, Christ will rapture the church, judge an unbelieving world, save a remnant of Jews, and then begin His reign over the whole earth.
- E. All the Old Testament prophecies and promises for the believing Jews are now relevant to them and to Christians, and will soon begin to be fulfilled.
- F. We should be praying for Christ the King to come so that His Kingdom will come.

OUR FATHER, WHO ART IN HEAVEN, HALLOWED BE THY NAME.
THY KINGDOM COME, THY WILL BE DONE, ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN.
Matthew 6:9-10