

The Christmas Story Told by John

Families gathering around the Christmas tree usually turn to Matthew or Luke to read the Christmas story. Angelic visitations, the birth of Jesus in a manger and the search for the Christ child by shepherds and wise men are pictures that come readily to mind. Descriptions given by Matthew and Luke have resulted in magnificent artwork of the nativity scene.

Joseph's visitation by an angel of the Lord in his dream was to let him know that Mary's child was of the Holy Spirit. Matthew said this event fulfilled Isaiah's prophecy. "BEHOLD, THE VIRGIN SHALL BE WITH CHILD AND SHALL BEAR A SON, AND THEY SHALL CALL HIS NAME IMMANUEL," which is translated, "GOD WITH US" (Matthew 1:23).

Where Matthew and Luke record the birth of the baby Jesus as fulfilled prophecy, John takes a different approach to the event. IMMANUEL didn't appear on the day Jesus was born. IMMANUEL has always been. With a bodily form, we could now set our eyes upon Him. Jesus Himself created the prophets and it was His Spirit that gave the prophecies to them.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made (John 1:1-3).

In John's gospel, it was Jesus Himself who gave us details about why He came the way He did. His birth was His plan. When the right time came, He fulfilled His plan.

The Bread of Life

"I am the living bread that came down out of heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world" (John 6:51).

The birth of the Christ child put flesh on the Son of God so that He could accomplish His redemptive plan.

The Light of the World

In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it..."I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life" (John 1:4-5;6:12).

In the Old Testament, a man could not see the light of the eyes of God and live. Righteous men of the past looked forward to that day; we who have been born since His return to Heaven have His word and the word of His witnesses that the Light became flesh; those who walked and talked with Him in person could actually peer into the eyes of the light of the world. His birth made that possible.

The Door

"I am the door of the sheep. All who ever came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture" (John 10:7-9).

Without the birth of the baby Jesus who grew into the man who became our Savior on the cross, mankind would have been unable to have fellowship with God. There is no other door.

The Good Shepherd

"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep" (John 10:11).

The good shepherd existed long before the Christ child was born because God is the good shepherd. David described Him. It was the body of the good shepherd that hung on the cross for us - the body that was conceived by His Spirit and birthed by Mary on Christmas day.

The Resurrection and the Life

"I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die" (John 11:25-26).

Jesus came to die for our sins. He did that as a man - a substitute for the sinner. If it had ended there, He would only have proven that He was our loving replacement. It was in resurrection that death - our penalty for sin - was conquered.

The Way, The Truth and The Life

"I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me" (John 14:6).

Man has tried and continues to try to find a way to God other than through Jesus. It is not possible. As Immanuel, God in the flesh, He explained why.

The True Vine

Jesus lived on earth as a man. He walked and talked with His followers. He became our Savior and example. By His life and His words He showed us how we could share in His kingdom and His joy. "These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full" (John 15:11).

In Jesus' prayer to the Father in John 17, He gives the real reason He came in the flesh: to glorify the Father, to finish His work, and to share His glory with those who believe. This is the purpose of the Christmas story. The child in the cradle became the Savior on the cross, the Redeemer who rose and the Immanuel who shares His glory with those who love Him.

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Scripture quotations taken from the New King James version of the Bible.