



*Reflections*  
*on*  
*Christmas*  
*volume one*



“But, when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.”

Galatians 4:4-5

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*Reflections on Christmas*

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### ***Introduction:***

We all live in a world ordered, controlled and constrained by time. Due to this fact, we all understand the need to plan our time. We all understand that to arrange our lives we must to some degree plan our time.

I am sure that every person has already planned in some way how they will spend their time tomorrow, the next day, the rest of the week and probably to some extent next year.

We all have appointments, classes and jobs that we have to go to each day at the appointed time.

We all have vacations from these classes and jobs, but only at the appointed times.

Now we are in the Christmas season and I am sure we all have made some kind of plan and preparations for that special day.

We will visit family, give gifts and eat a special meal all at the appointed time. Why? Because we all live in a world ordered, controlled and constrained by time. The reality of a world ordered by time has two very important implications for us.

The first is that, in reality, every person on the face of the earth lives by some measure of faith.

The very fact that we have plans for tomorrow, for the weekend, for Christmas, and for our vacation next year is based solely on faith.

What do I mean by that? The fact is that there is no guarantee that any of us will be alive tomorrow, next week and certainly not next year. We simply believe that we will and we act on that belief. This is what most people would call "faith."

Consider: according to statistics I have read, the global death rate is as follows, "millions of people die every year in the world. That is 178,000 every day, 7245 every hour, and 120 every minute."  
(bioethics.georgetown.edu).

In short, you and I have absolutely no guarantee that we will wake up tomorrow morning. We could be one of those hundred and twenty people who die every minute.

The Old Testament says it this way, "*Man that is born of a woman is of few days and full of trouble. He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down: he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not.*" (Job 14:1-2).

The New Testament puts it this way, "*Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.*" (James 4:14). Yet, we all have plans for the future. We act as if tomorrow is certain. This is living by faith.

Why do I point this out? This is a book about Christmas. Christmas is about the coming of God Himself in human form to be the Savior of the world. As a believer in Jesus Christ as my Savior, many people over the years have told me, "I simply do not have faith like you to believe." This is not true.

It is not a matter of having faith or not. It is not even about how much faith a person may have, but it is about where the faith that we all have is placed.

It is not the existence of faith that makes the difference, but it is simply the object of faith that makes the difference.

The faith that I have and live by has been placed in the Person of Jesus Christ and in no one, or nothing, else. I do not turn my eyes to any human institution for my hope and salvation. The salvation and satisfaction of my soul is found in my faith in Jesus Christ alone.

The faith that the unbeliever has and through which he lives has been placed in something other than Jesus Christ alone. They look to some human institution for hope and salvation. The salvation and satisfaction of their souls reside on faith in themselves, in a better politician, or in any number of other things.

In the end, it is all the same because the object of faith is not Jesus Christ alone.

To tell the truth, I am not a man who possesses some kind of super faith that other people do not have, but all the faith I have rests in Christ alone.

For thirty-three years I made my plans and placed my faith in human institutions, until I realized that if faith and salvation were found in human institutions (in us), then there would be no hope of salvation. We are the problem, not the solution.

I knew that if salvation and hope were possible, they had to be found in something, or someone better than us. This finally led me to Jesus Christ. It led me to the truth of Christmas: that God Himself became one of us and did what none of us could ever do. He lived a perfect life and died a perfect death in my place. Now, my faith rests in Jesus. This might be a good time to ask: What is the object of my faith? In what do I rest for hope and salvation?

Because we all live in a world ordered, controlled and constrained by time, the first implication is that every person lives by faith.

The second implication of living in a world ordered, controlled and constrained by time is the fact that our life priorities are clearly revealed in the way we spend our free time.

We go to work, school, or do whatever else in our daily lives, and afterwards we will use our free time to do other activities. We all have already decided, even if we do not yet recognize it, what is most important in our lives through the way we are willing to spend our free time.

The truth is this: we make time for what is important.

This is why most people do not attend church, because they do not see it as important. No one wants to waste their time on something that has no value.

The most valuable resource we possess is our time. Our time is so valuable because it is the one thing that we can never recover to any extent.

There are many things we can recover to a certain extent. God created us in a wonderful way so that during the course of our lives we can heal many times and recover our health up to a certain point. Of course, a doctor is not God and his power is limited, and sooner or later we all have to die. Medicine cannot give us eternal life. After we have spent money, we can also recover it. But when the time is gone, it is gone forever and we can never get it back. It is impossible to get back the time used. That is why we hesitate to give our time. That is why we are more willing to give money instead of our time.

While I was attending Bible School there was a pastor who was telling how he wanted all the members of the church to gather on a Saturday morning, for a few hours, to go and invite people to participate in a special church event. When he presented this idea to the members, no one wanted to sacrifice their time for this activity. So the pastor told the congregation that they could donate some money to the church so they could create a mailing list.

The response was huge and the congregation offered their money generously instead of giving their time. The pastor said that he was very pleased with the outcome.

Why were people so willing to give their money, but not their time? Because time is the one thing we cannot get back in any way. The giving of our time is the greatest sacrifice we can make. Personally, I think the only thing the congregation learned that day is that Jesus Christ does not deserve the sacrifice of the most precious thing in our lives. That is why the Bible says, *"So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom."* (Psalm 90:12).

The Bible says that our time is limited and therefore

we must use it wisely. We must determine what deserves the short amount of time that we have.

If we do not value eternal things we will never be willing to give our time to them. What we do invest ourselves in is what has the attention and affection of our hearts. That is why Jesus said: *"Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."* (Matthew 6:19-21). The Lord is saying that the more we give our time, talents and resources to something the more important it will become. If we want eternal things to have great importance in our lives, we must invest in them. This means the giving of our most precious resource- time.

I want to ask a question: How much of our time are we willing to give to eternal things?

The answer to this question points us to what is really important in our lives.

I pray that this book will help Christmas to be a time of reflection regarding the object of our faith.

***“But, when the fullness of time was come,”***

Because we live in a world that is ordered, controlled, and constrained by time, we all understand the demands involved in planning a special event and how difficult it is to make it go exactly as we would like.

Every time we plan a special event there always seems to be something we have overlooked, or have not considered as being important. There is always some small detail that we haven't considered.

It seems that every time I plan a special event at church, I figure out or learn something else that helps make the event better and go more smoothly the next time. There is always something I need to learn to make the event go as planned. Many times, I learn a few ways to improve the event from my wife, or other friends in the ministry who have already planned the same events.

In short: Every planned and organized event for me is a learning process. This is because I do not know everything and I have my own limitations as all of us do.

In addition to our own limitations, there are also external factors that have an effect on our ability to make our plans go exactly as we would like.

In short: there are many things beyond our capacity and there are many things beyond our control.

Our helpers can become ill, our financial situation can change, even the government can prevent or change our plans for a future event. This has certainly happened to any a missionary in regards to obtaining a visa, entering a country,.....

All of these are things that we cannot foresee and cannot control and therefore they make it difficult to bring a plan to fruition exactly as we intended it to.

Imagine how difficult it would be to plan for an event 2,500 years from now and how many things could change to prevent or change its fulfillment?

Besides that: We could never know the outcome because we would not be alive to see its fulfillment.

But I must say emphatically that this is not the case with God. When we talk about God we are not talking about someone who is a little better than we are, but we are talking about the Almighty, Omniscient, Omnipresent, Eternal, God. There is nothing out of His control and there will never be a new thing that God will discover at the last second. No one can stop God from carrying out one of His plans or make it fail. There is no one who can teach God anything. God does not overlook anything. There is no "learning experience" for God.

I have heard it said, "Has it ever occurred to you that nothing has ever occurred to God?"

The Bible, indeed God Himself, says that His faculties make Him incomparable to anything and anyone we can possibly imagine. *"To whom then will ye liken God? or what likeness will ye compare unto him?" (Isaiah 40:18)*. In the same chapter He Himself gives us the answer to this question by naming some of His characteristics that make Him incomparable. *"To whom then will ye liken me, or shall I be equal? saith the Holy One. Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number: he calleth them all by names by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power; not one faileth" (Isaiah 40:25-26)*.

To put it simply: There is no god like the One, True and Living God, for He created and is sustaining the whole universe.

However, God Himself adds other characteristics (attributes) that make Him totally unique.

Consider: *"Let them bring them forth, and shew us what shall happen: let them shew the former things, what they be, that we may consider them, and know the latter end of them; or declare us things for to come. Shew the things that are to come hereafter, that we*

*may know that ye are gods: yea, do good, or do evil, that we may be dismayed, and behold it together. Behold, ye are of nothing, and your work of nought: an abomination is he that chooseth you" (Isaiah 41:22-24).*

Again, to put it simply: there is no god like the One, True and Living God, for He knows and shows things that are past and things to come.

And again, we read: *"Thus saith the Lord the King of Israel, and his redeemer the Lord of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God. And who, as I, shall call, and shall declare it, and set it in order for me, since I appointed the ancient people? and the things that are coming, and shall come, let them shew unto them. Fear ye not, neither be afraid: have not I told thee from that time, and have declared it? ye are even my witnesses. Is there a God beside me? yea, there is no God; I know not any. They that make a graven image are all of them vanity; and their delectable things shall not profit; and they are their own witnesses; they see not, nor know; that they may be ashamed. Who hath formed a god, or molten a graven image that is profitable for nothing? Behold, all his fellows shall be ashamed: and the workmen, they are of men: let them all be gathered together, let them stand up; yet they shall fear, and they shall be ashamed together." (Isaiah 44:6-11).*

This says, in short, that men have imagined and created many gods, but none of them are comparable to the One, True and Living God.

The Bible is also clear that God has established a plan regarding human history and He is fulfilling that plan exactly as it has been determined, which includes God's plan for His creation and for His creatures.....

Since the end of the world cannot and will not happen until God's appointed time (*2 Peter 3:7,12*) the coming of Jesus Christ would not and could not have happened except at God's appointed time.

Simply put: When God makes a plan, it will happen exactly as it was intended- no matter how far in the future it is.

Consider these verses: *"To whom will ye liken me, and make me equal, and compare me, that we may be like?" (Isaiah 46:5).* Then we read, *"Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure: Calling a ravenous bird from the east, the man that executeth my counsel from a far country: yea, I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it" (Isaiah 46:9-11).*

I would like to read a verse in the New Testament regarding the crucifixion of Jesus Christ that perfectly shows us the reality of what we have just read concerning the fact that God will carry out His plan even though it may have been made in eternity past: *"For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done" (Acts 4:27-28).*

The Bible is clear that God has His plans and purposes and that no one can stop them. This is what the Bible calls "the power and dominion of God," which means God has the power to do whatever He desires and the authority to do it whenever and wherever He chooses. The God who created the universe and even time itself has His designs for His creation that no one can prevent.

We can say that the second coming of Jesus Christ is inevitable. Sooner or later He will return and reign from Jerusalem for a thousand years and no one can prevent this fact. There is an appointed day for this event.

The world will end on God's appointed day and it will not happen a day early or a day late. These things are part of God's eternal design and are unchangeable.

Now, let us reread our text with the understanding that the coming of Jesus Christ was God's plan established before the world even existed. *"But, when the fullness of time was come, God sent forth his Son," (Galatians 4:4).*

It is amazing to think that despite the changing of empires, despite all the power of the devil, and in the face of every human challenge, God's plan regarding the first coming of Jesus happened in "the fullness of time".

This means that the day on which Jesus Christ came into the world was not a day late or a day early, but it was exactly the day set by God before He created the world!

The true meaning of Christmas, that is, the day when the Creator became a creature, was part of God's eternal plan.

I pray that this Christmas will be a time of reflection regarding God's greatness.

The birth of Jesus Christ is a demonstration of the power, dominion and intelligence of our infinite Creator and Savior.

***“God sent forth his Son,”***

It is amazing to think that God planned the coming of His Son into the world before the world, or even before time itself was created. So, to think that He did everything necessary to make that day happen at exactly the right time is mind-blowing. This is something to celebrate!

That event was celebrated by some shepherds when it happened. *“And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them” (Luke 2:20).*

There were also angels celebrating. *“And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men” (Luke 2:10-14).*

There were wise men who traveled a long distance to come and celebrate. *“Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him.” And, “When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh” (Matthew 2:1-2, 10-11).*

We can safely say that the coming of Jesus Christ into the world is an event to be celebrated!

However, we must ask: Why was His coming such an important event? Why was His coming celebrated on earth and in heaven?

Let's read our main verse again: *"But, when the fullness of time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law,* (In the following chapters we will consider each of the phrases "made of a woman, made under the law" but for now, let us note that the thought does not end and the following verse gives us two reasons why the coming of Jesus Christ into the world is so important) *"To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons" (Galatians 4:4-5).*

In this verse, we find two reasons why Christmas is one of the most important days in human history. We find two reasons why Christmas is an event to be celebrated.

First, we want to note the first phrase: *"to redeem."*

The verb "redeem" means "by payment of a price to recover from the power of another, to ransom, to buy up, to buy up for one's self, for one's use."

To put it very simply: the Bible says that by nature we all belong to the devil and live under his influence and power, but the first coming of Jesus Christ centered on accomplishing what was necessary to pay the price so that we could and would be saved and freed from his power.

The Bible says in both the Old and New Testaments that salvation is found only in God Himself. *"I, even I, am the Lord ; and beside me there is no saviour."* (Isaiah 43:11). Then, we read in the New Testament, *"For therefore we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe."* (1 Timothy 4:10).

We can quote many other verses from both the Old and New Testaments, but suffice it to say that the Bible

is clear: the Only One who could pay the price to save us and deliver us from the power of the devil is God Himself. He is the One and only Savior.

Therefore, Christmas is so important because it is the coming of the Only One who could redeem us, that is, God Himself in human form. The Bible is also clear on this point in both the Old and New Testaments: "*For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.*" (Isaiah 9:6). Then, in the New Testament we read: "*And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.*" (1 Timothy 3:16).

Since God Himself is the only Person who can redeem us, this means that if Jesus had not come, there would have been no salvation. However, the fact that He came makes Christmas one of the most important events in human history and worthy of celebration!

Thanks to the first coming of Jesus, we have the possibility to have our sins taken away. We have the possibility to be redeemed.

How did He do it?

We read in the next chapter, "*Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree:*" (Galatians 3:13). And again, we read: "*The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!*" (John 1:29).

The coming of Jesus Christ is so important because if He had not come there would have been no salvation.

However, in our main text there is a second reason why Christ's first coming was so important to us. Let us

notice the second phrase: *"that we might receive the adoption of sons."*

Christmas gives us the possibility to be adopted into God's family!

I am no longer a child of the devil for by faith in Christ alone I have been adopted into the family of God. Again, let's go back a chapter: *"For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus."* (Galatians 3:26). Being a child of God does not depend on our nationality, our family history, or how strong our will is, but it depends solely on the basis of our faith in Christ Jesus. *"But as many as received him, to them gave he power (authority) to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God"* (John 1:12-13).

We must think about the reality of these two phrases, *"that we might receive the adoption"* and *"he gave the authority to become the sons of God,"* to appreciate the true meaning of Christmas.

If *"in the fullness of time, God sent forth His Son that we might redeem us and that through Him we might become the sons of God"* then, this means that for us Christmas is a day of utmost importance.

Christ's coming to earth is one of the most important events in human history because it gives us salvation and entrance into God's family. It was an event that was planned an eternity ago and was fulfilled in the fullness of time.

I pray that this Christmas will make us reflect on God's grace.

Without the coming of Jesus Christ to earth we would not have salvation.

***“Born of a woman,”***

There are many prophecies in the Bible that were fulfilled in the first coming of Christ. The promise of the coming of Jesus Himself was given before the creation of the world and the ages: *"In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began;"* (Titus 1:2). Jesus Himself is eternal life: *"I am, the way, the truth, and the life,"* (John 14:6); *"I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:"* (John 11:25), and, still: *"And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life."* (1 John 5:11-12). Thus, God gave the promise of the coming of Jesus Christ before the world and all of the ages were even created.

However, God did not just give a generic promise, but He made Himself responsible for fulfilling very specific details regarding Jesus' coming. God revealed specific details (prophecies) regarding the place, manner, time and other details surrounding the birth of Jesus Christ that came true exactly as they were written in the Bible.

We see the truth of this in Galatians 4:4 in the words, *"made of woman."*

At the heart of this phrase is the uniqueness of Jesus Christ. God not only made a future promise (prophecy) regarding the first coming of Christ as Savior of the world, but also that His coming into the world would be in a unique and supernatural way.

We can see two aspects of this promise (prophecy) at the beginning, in the Garden of Eden. *"And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."* (Genesis 3:15). In this verse God Himself was talking to Satan and said two essential things about Jesus Christ.

First, there is the truth that the Person of Jesus Christ would be unique. He would be different from any other person who ever lived because of the manner of His conception and birth.

Let's talk first about His conception.

The words of Galatians 4:4-"*made of woman*"-are connected with the words of Genesis 3:15-"*the seed of the woman*"-and refer to the fact that the conception of Jesus Christ would not be by a man, but by the Holy Spirit.

The New Testament describes it like this: "*Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily. But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.*" (Matthew 1:18-21).

The Bible is clear that Jesus' conception was a divine and unique act. It is essential to understand that there is no other person in the Bible described as coming from the seed of a woman. In every other case, they are always described as coming from the seed of the man. In fact, every other human being has Adam as his father, whereas Jesus is called the second Adam, "*the second man, the Lord from heaven.*" (1 Corinthians 15:47).

The uniqueness of Jesus' conception is found in the fact that He did not have a human father, but rather His Father is God Himself.

The Bible says it this way: "*And the Word (God: v.1) became flesh and dwelt among us; and we beheld his*

*glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." (John 1:14).*

This means that by nature Jesus had the same essence as God. The New Testament says this clearly: *"Who (Jesus) being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person," (Hebrews 1:3).*

In every sense, the conception of Jesus Christ was an act that made Him unique. But, Jesus' uniqueness goes beyond His conception and is clearly seen also in His unique birth.

As with His conception, both Old and New Testaments speak of His birth in a unique and supernatural way.

The Old Testament made this prophecy: *"Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." (Isaiah 7:14).* Isaiah again wrote: *"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." (Isaiah 9:6).* This prophecy said without any doubt that the Mighty God, the Eternal Father (Emmanuel) would be born in human form to a virgin.

The New Testament explains that the fulfillment of that prophecy was realized in Jesus Christ: *"Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily. But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS:*

*for he shall save his people from their sins. Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us." (Matthew 1:18-23).*

But, Mary's own testimony also confirms this truth: *"Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?" (Luke 1:34).*

Thus, the child who was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary was God Himself dwelling on earth in human form for thirty-three years in the Person of Jesus Christ.

This is precisely why Jesus is called *"the Only Begotten Son of God"* (John 3:16).

Because Jesus was *"born of a woman,"* that is, as the Only Begotten Son of God by nature and by birth, we might become the children of God by adoption.

I pray that this Christmas will make us reflect on the uniqueness of Jesus Christ.

Without His holy nature and supernatural birth, we would not have salvation.

***“made under the law,”***

In this chapter we will reflect on the phrase *“made under the law,”* and some of its implications.

As we have already said in the other chapters, the coming of Jesus Christ was not just a generic prophecy, but God made Himself responsible for fulfilling specific details that had been written in His Word many years before regarding the coming of the Christ. The words in this chapter refer to three specific prophecies.

First, however, we need to understand a bit of the historical context regarding the events surrounding the birth of Jesus Christ.

After the completion of the Old Testament there were four hundred years without divine revelation. Four hundred years of silence on God's part. Therefore, the people of Israel had quite a bit of time to understand the Old Testament prophecies and to prepare themselves for the coming of the Christ.

Some of those Old Testament prophecies began to be fulfilled after these four hundred years and were recorded in the Gospels. So, it is not that God revealed all these prophecies about Jesus and then a year later the people of Israel missed His coming. They had many years to prepare themselves and thus to receive the Messiah.

Having said this, the first prophecy to which these words *“born under the law”* refers to is The Place of Jesus' Birth.

The Bible is crystal clear that God had not withheld details concerning the place where Christ would be born. In fact, the prophecy was quite clear that even foreigners, i.e., the wise men, came from a distant country to worship Him without hesitation: *“Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, Saying, Where is he that is born King*

*of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him. When Herod the king had heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him" (Matthew 2:1-3).*

Now, we want to note that God clearly revealed not only the region where Christ was to be born, but also the very city itself. The next verse adds: "*And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born. And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judaea: for thus it is written by the prophet, And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, art not the least among the princes of Judah: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel" (Matthew 2:4-6).* This prophecy was given in the Old Testament seven hundred years before the birth of Christ. "*But you, O Bethlehem Ephratah, though you are small among the thousands of Judah, out of you will come forth for me the one who will be ruler in Israel, whose origins are from ancient times, from everlasting days" (Micah 5:2).*

The answer given by Herod regarding the arrival of the wise men and the clarity of the prophecy regarding the place of Christ's birth is related to a second prophecy regarding the words "*born under the law.*" The Old Testament prophesied that a terrible act would happen in that city because of the birth of Jesus.

The testimony of Scripture is clear that King Herod perfectly understood the appearance of the Messiah as the King of Kings. But, Herod was unwilling to give the throne to another king. That is why we read, "*On hearing this, King Herod was troubled,*" (Matthew 2:3). And again, we read: "*Now after they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said to him, "Arise, take the child and his mother and flee to Egypt, and stay there until I warn you, for Herod will seek the child to put him to death"*

*(Matthew 2:13).*

Herod was very jealous of his throne and tried to use the wise men to find Jesus and kill him. But God divinely warned them not to return to Herod: *"And being warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way."* (Matthew 2:12).

This jealousy of Herod was the cause of the fulfillment of a prophecy written about six hundred years earlier. The New Testament says: *"Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wroth, and sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently enquired of the wise men. Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not"* (Matthew 2:16-18). From this account we know that Jeremiah 31:15 was in fact a prophecy of this terrible event in Bethlehem concerning the birth of Jesus.

The third prophecy concerning the place of Jesus' birth said that because of that terrible event Jesus' family would be forced to flee to Egypt. We read in the Old Testament: *"When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt."* (Hosea 11:1). The New Testament explains to us that that prophecy was fulfilled when Jesus' family fled to Egypt: *"And when they were departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him. When he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt: And was there until the death of*

*Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my son." (Matthew 2:13-15).*

The Bible is clear and Christmas shows us that God would intervene under all circumstances to fulfill His promise regarding the place of Jesus' birth exactly as it was prophesied many years before.

A second prophecy to which the words "*made under the law*" concerns The Nationality of Jesus.

In short: God made several prophecies concerning the fact that the Messiah would be born from the tribe of Judah and the lineage of David. For example: "*Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this*" (Isaiah 9:7). The New Testament says: "*And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end*" (Luke 1:31-33).

In fact, one of the last prophecies given to the nation of Israel to contemplate for those four hundred years of silence concerned the fact that there would be a messenger who would announce the arrival of the Messiah to the nation: "*Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts.*" (Malachi 3:1). The New Testament tells us that John the Baptist was the fulfillment of this prophecy: "*In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, And saying, Repent ye: for the*

*kingdom of heaven is at hand. For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight." (Matthew 3:1-3).*

Thus, in every sense, Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of the prophecies concerning the place and nationality of the Savior announced before the foundation of the world.

Unfortunately, it was also prophesied that His own people would reject Him. *"He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not." (Isaiah 53:3).* And then with sadness we read in the New Testament: *"He came unto his own, and his own received him not," (John 1:11).*

Sadly, we see the fulfillment of that prophecy to this day not only with the nation of Israel, but with the world continually rejecting Him.

We conclude with the third prophecy to which the words *"made under the law"* refer, namely The Perfection of Jesus Christ.

The Old Testament made a few prophecies regarding the character of the Messiah. *"Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth." (Isaiah 42:1-3).*

The New Testament makes it clear that this prophecy refers to Jesus: *"But when Jesus knew it, he withdrew himself from thence: and great multitudes followed him, and he healed them all; And charged them that they should not make him known: That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Behold my servant, whom I have chosen; my*

*beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased: I will put my spirit upon him, and he shall shew judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not strive, nor cry; neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets. A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory. And in his name shall the Gentiles trust." (Matthew 12:15-21).*

Then, there is another wonderful prophecy in the same chapter of Isaiah about the character of the Messiah: *"The Lord is well pleased for his righteousness' sake; he will magnify the law, and make it honourable" (Isaiah 42:21).* The essence of these prophecies is that God the Father would be pleased with the Person of Jesus Christ because of His own righteousness.

In short: The Person of Jesus Christ would be righteous before the Law of God.

Listen to God's words when Jesus began His public ministry, *"And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." (Matthew 3:16-17).*

And then, shortly before His death, God the Father said: *"While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him." (Matthew 17:5).*

This is why Jesus alone can save us! Because He is the only Person in human history who has ever lived a perfect life before God's law. Jesus is the only Person who always did what is good and what is right. Jesus is the only Person of whom God can say, *"I am well pleased."* What a wonder is Jesus Christ, He who is the fulfillment of all these prophecies! The baby in the

manger was the perfect servant who came to heal our broken hearts and open our blinded eyes.

I pray that this Christmas will make us reflect on the perfection of Jesus Christ.

***“To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.”***

In the first chapter, we said that Jesus came into the world and overcame every human challenge and even all the power of the devil "to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons."

From that point onward, I have tried to make it clear that God's eternal plan regarding salvation was in every case sure and unchangeable.

In each case, Jesus fulfilled all the prophecies given concerning His first coming. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin in Bethlehem and lived a perfect life before God's Law.

We said that if Jesus had not come, there would have been no salvation. But, now we can say that because Jesus came, our salvation is secure!

If you remember, we said in chapter three that the first prophecy about Jesus' coming was given in the Garden of Eden: *"And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; it shall crush your head, and you shall bruise its heel"* (Genesis 3:15).

I want to emphasize the words, *"he will crush your head."* It is important to understand that at this time God was speaking to Satan.

So, get it in your head: God told Satan that his defeat was inevitable and Jesus' victory was sure.

According to God's plan, salvation was never in doubt. There was never a time when Jesus Christ could have failed in His mission to bring salvation to mankind. It was never possible for the devil to defeat Jesus Christ. Let us remember that salvation (eternal life) was "promised before all ages by God, who cannot lie."

Brothers and sisters, God has given us the same promise of victory in Christ! *"Now the God of peace will*

*soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen" (Romans 16:20).*

Because Christ will crush Satan, in Him we will have victory. Because of God's promises and the Person of Jesus Christ every believer can say, "But in all these things we are more than conquerors by virtue of him who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers nor things present nor things to come, nor heights nor depths, nor any other creature will be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:37-39).

I pray that this Christmas will make us reflect on God's promises and rejoice in the certainty of our salvation.

### ***A Personal Appeal:***

Christmas should prompt you to consider well your relationship with Jesus Christ. To put it another way: The manger should make you think about the cross.

The coming of Jesus was the coming of the Messiah, the Savior, the One Person who can pay our debt for sins. In fact, the Bible says that God's desire is for humanity to be reconciled in Christ and that He has done whatever it takes to achieve this. *"for God has reconciled the world to Himself in Christ, not imputing their failures to men, and He has placed in us the word of reconciliation. We therefore act as ambassadors for Christ, as though God were exhorting through us; and we exhort you for Christ's sake, Be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him that knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in him"* (2 Corinthians 5:17-21).

The price is already paid but each person must receive it through faith in Christ alone.

The Bible says, *"Knowing that man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, we also believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified through the faith of Christ and not through the works of the law, for no flesh shall be justified through the law."* (Galatians 2:16).

When it says "man is not justified through the works of the Law" it means that we cannot save ourselves through the various religious rites, or through our own righteousness.

If we could save ourselves through a religious ritual, why would God have sent Christ?

The Bible calls eternal life (salvation) *"The gift of God."* (Romans 5:12-21,6:23; Ephesians 2:8-9)

God is offering you the gift of eternal life, but it can only be received by faith alone. If you are working to

earn your salvation, then it that would not be a gift but a wage.

I want to say emphatically that salvation is not for sale. Therefore, to use Jesus' words, "*Repent and believe the gospel*" (*Mark 1:15b*).

I pray that this Christmas you will receive the greatest gift ever: eternal life through Jesus Christ.



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