

Unto You a Savior Is Born

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 publick 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. Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife—Matthew 1:18–24

God's Immeasurable Love

Throughout time God has shown His unfathomable love toward mankind, the crown of His creation. The Creator especially blessed mankind, having breathed the breath of life into Adam's nostrils so that he became a living soul. God provided all life's necessities for man in the Garden of Eden, and put man there to dress it and keep it.

Through deceit by the enemy of souls, however, Adam and Eve fell into sin, and the shadow of fear and death descended on mankind. Man and woman had to suffer even temporal consequences for having fallen into sin and disobedience. Sin separated man and woman from their Creator. The most striking aspect of the entire ordeal, however, was not the curse that man suffered and deserved, but rather the unfathomable compassion and immeasurable love shown by the Father. He promised a redeemer, a savior who would overthrow the power of the devil and offer complete atonement for sin-fallen man. Thus, the "Old Covenant" or promise was born, and those "old believers" from antiquity, by God's grace, were saved by living faith in those promises.

God Repeats His Promise

As the ages passed and biblical epochs unfolded, God repeated His promise again and again. In the life of Abraham and the other patriarchs God reconfirmed His covenant. The promise was made in the time of Moses, as God said, "The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken" (Deut. 18:15).

The Old Testament prophets were later able to behold, by faith, a distant but approaching moment when the Creator would send the promised savior. God then began to further open the mysteries and reveal through these prophets that great miracles and wonders, incomprehensible to the human mind, would mark the arrival and life of the coming Redeemer. No one—not even the prophets through whom God revealed the coming marvels—could understand with their own human minds, the true nature of the coming Savior or the nature of His ever-lasting kingdom. The prophets continued to work during a time of great duress and trouble. The Bible reveals that not many correctly believed the Old Covenant promises of God. The prophets' voices were then quieted and their writings ceased. A silent period of perhaps 300 years began. The last few grains of sand were falling through the glass. The time had arrived for the promised Savior to be born into the world.

Faith Was Needed

Scripture relates that the angel Gabriel appeared to Virgin Mary announcing that she would bring forth a son, whose name would be Jesus. In her own mind, Mary could not comprehend. She asked, “How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?” The angel reassured, “The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God” (Luke 1:35). Mary was able to comprehend through faith.

The Old Covenant promise continued to open a few months later, and the Bible describes Joseph’s experience. Imagine for a moment what must have passed through the mind of this “just man” under the circumstances surrounding this woman he was planning to marry. That she was “found with child” was undeniable. Quite clearly, Joseph deeply considered the situation. He came to the conclusion that he should quietly “put her away” to help avoid making any kind of public example of her.

The Promise Is Fulfilled

As Joseph thought about these things and considered his course of action, the angel appeared to him 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” (Matt. 1:20, 21).

Joseph, by faith, was able to comprehend as Scripture relates: “Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife: And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name Jesus.”

The gospel writer explains how the Old Covenant promise had to be fulfilled: “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” (Matt. 1:22,23).

The Miracle of Christmas

The true miracle of Christmas and the fulfilled promise of the Savior—in whose name and blood all sins are forgiven—still can be comprehended only by faith. The little child who was brought forth in the stable is the same one who loved us so immeasurably that He “took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross” (Phil. 2:7,8). The most doubting one can be reassured this Christmas season and always with the joyful Word of the Christmas Gospel: “Thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins” (Matt. 1:20, 21).

John Stewart