

The Beginning of Christmas, and Its Greatest Gift

The blessed hope of Christmas extends all the way back to the book of Genesis, in fact, all the way back to the Garden of Eden (Gen. 3:15). Adam's disobedience to God and His word brought sin into the world, and with sin came death along with all its ugliness, pain, hatred, division and sorrow. Because of the first couple's sin, God's judgment fell on them just as He had warned; but, with His judgment also came God's mercy and His grace. For God promised Adam and Eve that one day from the woman's seed would come a mighty Savior! So mighty a One that He would crush the head of the serpent who had deceived them both and brought sin and death into the world. God promised a remedy and rescue from sin and death, misery and despair, sickness and pain; and God always is faithful to keep His word.

From that time, God's plan of rescue (salvation) was set in motion: a plan that included Noah, through whom God preserved a righteous remnant. After Noah, God wonderfully worked through Abraham by an immutable covenant. God promised Abraham that one day through his seed all the nations of the earth would be blessed. Thereafter, God gave His prophets more and more specific revelation concerning this promised mighty Deliverer through whom all the earth would be blessed. And then came Isaiah! God used the prophet Isaiah to most clearly and precisely reveal the coming of Messiah (that is, the *Anointed-One*). From this great prophet, God foretells that a virgin will bear a child called *Immanuel* ("God with us"), who will be both the "Lamb of God" and "Savior" of those who receive Him. During Isaiah's time, God used the prophet Micah to foretell the birthplace of this Coming-One: Bethlehem. We can praise God for His faithfulness; He always keeps His word. Just as He had promised from the beginning, so it came to pass 2000 years ago. Today we call it Christmas.

God's Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, whose birth we celebrate at Christmas, is God's one and only answer for sin and death, and for all the heartache sin has brought into the world. By trusting in Jesus Christ and His Saving work on the Cross, and receiving Him as your Savior, there is glorious forgiveness of sin, wonderful peace with God and a New Life with new purpose, filled with hope and unspeakable joy. There is no greater decision one can make than to receive Jesus Christ as their Savior; and there is no greater gift that God could give than the One He gave us - His Son - at Christmas!