

I. Introduction

A. Why Revelation at Christmas?

1. Christmas is bigger than you think... like most things, we settle for much less than what God wants of us or is willing to reveal to us.
2. We may have been missing the grand-ness of Christmas
3. Revelation 11:15b

*Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were loud voices in Heaven, saying, "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever."*

4. Revelation 21:3-5a

*And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be His people, and God Himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away." And He Who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new."*

- a. All things new
- b. World of competing voices and worrisome chatter, but He is making all things new
- c. I am inundated by fears, weakness, and brokenness, but He is making all things new.
- d. Overwhelming needs in my community and nation - homelessness, addiction, fallout of wars, financial struggle, a government that can't fix anything, but He is making all things new
- e. Nations of the world are caught up in conflicts and wars, but He is making all things new

B. We have traditionally limited our perspective of Christmas to a young man and woman who spent the night in a stable and gave birth. Some shepherds and wise men came along with a visitation of some angels. We need to see the cosmic nature of Christmas!

1. Eugene Peterson says of Revelation 12, "This is not the nativity story we grew up with, but it is the nativity story all the same."
2. There is no baby in a manger, shepherds rejoicing or wise men bringing gifts and worshipping.
3. There are angels, but not singing. They are engaged in a heavenly war of eschatological proportions. In this story there is a woman beautifully clothed. A male child (a son) and a fiery red dragon ready to devour that child who is to shepherd all nations.
4. \*This Christmas, I want us to see clearly the stakes and the power and the glory that is Christmas!

II. The promise

A. Read v1-2

1. A great sign in the heavens: the cosmic reality of Christmas

2. A woman clothed: Israel, the redeemed people of God as God sees them, glorious and in splendor (Genesis 37:9-10)

*Then he dreamed another dream and told it to his brothers and said, "Behold, I have dreamed another dream. Behold, the sun, the moon, and eleven stars were bowing down to me." But when he told it to his father and to his brothers, his father rebuked him and said to him, "What is this dream that you have dreamed? Shall I and your mother and your brothers indeed come to bow ourselves to the ground before you?" [God has always seen his people this way: sun clothed and star crowned.]*

3. Pregnant and crying out
  - a. Genesis 3:15-16a (offspring and labor pains)

*"I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel." To the woman He said, "I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children. Your desire shall be contrary to your husband, but he shall rule over you."*
  - b. This birth has the entire universe's attention both seen and unseen.
  - c. \*This is the promise first in Genesis 3:15, further clarified in Genesis 12, and developed in the Psalms and the Prophets.

#### B. Joy and pain

1. In two short verses, all of history up to Jesus' birth is summarized—a sense of promise, expectation of hope, a longing and counting down.
2. God has promised a Messiah through Israel and now is that time. He will save His people, specifically those who have surrendered their lives to Him. \*We win... no, Jesus wins.
3. But, while there is hope and joy there is also pain, just like labor and childbirth—sleepless nights, indigestion, all kinds of issues.
  - a. \*God has made a specific choice of how to reach, redeem, and restore humanity.
  - b. Not through angels, but through humanity, specifically, the line of David.
  - b. God's choices are always opposed by someone—the rebellious, the ignorant, the arrogant, or the wicked.
    - 1) Am I in opposition to God's choices?
    - 2) Do I trust God's choices?

#### III. The promise lived out this week

##### A. The promise of wonder

Assess vs admire; evaluation vs awe; Psalm 46, "come behold the works of the Lord" and "be still and know that I am God"

##### B. The promise of prophecy

Isaiah prophesied the virgin birth more than 700 years before it occurred (Isaiah 7:14; around the same time Micah predicted the King would be born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2); and around 600BC, Jeremiah predicted Herod's massacre of infants (Jeremiah 31:15); Maybe you need confidence that God is Who He says He is and you are secure no matter what the world tells you.

##### C. The promise of hope

The temporary relief of Christmas for those apart from Christ is not temporary for those who are in Christ; No matter what we may have experienced, God has been alongside us and we have the promise of His love; Not only do you and I have real hope right now, but we have hope that extends beyond even death.

D. The promise of Christ's return

Scholars have identified 1,845 biblical references to the second coming of Christ, outnumbering references to the first coming by 8 to 1; Jesus doesn't win, He has never been off the throne and in His compassionate patience waits for us to acknowledge Him and for us to pursue others; Joy to the world (let Earth receive her King; joy to the Earth, the Savior reigns)