

Light in the Darkness Peace in the Storm

I. God Works In The Darkness—He Knows How To Set Things Up

Christmas wonder —to a child —> a tree and a gift. Hopes and fears... ignorant of the tree of Calvary and the inexpressible gift of God himself, the Lamb and the Lion.

An old priest and barren wife, a teenage virgin, a troubled dreamer, a Roman emperor, no room at the inn, terrified shepherds, star gazers, a treacherous king.

A. God Uses Disasters... the **sacredness** of the circumstances.

Gen 3:15 I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise (crush) your head, and you shall bruise (crush) his heel."

[slide 1]

First declaration of the Gospel was first a DECLARATION of war and triumph! ... One is ABOVE and one is BELOW.

A PATTERN of God at work.

Isa 9:2 The people who **walked in darkness** Have seen a great light; Those who dwelt in the land of **the shadow of death**, Upon them a light has shined. [slide 2]

Isa 9:6 For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. [slide 3]

7 Of the **increase** of his **government** and of **peace** there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness **from this time forth and forevermore**. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

B. God Rules over Timing

Gal. 4.4 But when the **fullness of time** had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, 5 to redeem

those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.

1. The Captivities and Diaspora

722 and 586 BC—the Jews were scattered to the nations and with them, the traditions and expectations of a Messiah.

[Acts 2.5](#) Now ... in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven.

2. The Conquests of Alexander the Great—Destroyed the Persian Empire in 330 BC, conquered the known world. And spread **Greek culture** and the **Greek language** throughout the world. He died in 323, but the impact of the language and the culture remained. **Koine Greek**—a common language from Spain to Egypt to Galatia, to Rome. The MESSAGE could travel far and wide. . (**Aramaic** — Jerusalem to India)

3. Roman Unity—in 63 BC, a power struggle within the Macabean dynasty led to the **conquest of Jerusalem by Pompey**.
ROME RULED THE WORLD.

From the Atlantic to the Caspian, from Britain to the Nile, the Roman standards could be seen. The barriers were down, and the world surrounding the Mediterranean was one big neighborhood.

4. Roman Roads—Caesar Augustus was worried about rebellion from within. So, he put **10,000 laborers** together building a network of roads from one end of his empire to the other, so that the legions could travel quickly to any hotspot.

Built for Caesar's soldiers, became the highways on which the Messengers of God carried the Good News of the Resurrected Christ.

5. Pax Romana, or Roman Peace (27 BC—AD 180)—Unprecedented and unsurpassed period of peace from huge wars that devastated the earth. Allowed people to focus on other concerns.

6. Spiritual Confusion—the Roman Empire was cluttered with gods, religions and philosophies. The Roman Empire didn't

care, just so the subjects made an annual declaration that Caesar was Lord. Mystery religions.

7. **Moral deterioration**—old standards collapsed and were supplanted by moral corruption, sensuality, despondency and despair. There was a longing in the hearts of people for justice, truth and decency.

(Ultimately, the Gospel conquered Rome. By AD 200 there were hundreds of thousands of Christians in Rome itself!)

III. Peace in the Storm (Gospel in the Dark)

A. Nebuchadnezzar Conquers

The **precise** time was this: People of Israel, because of their sins, had been conquered and carried away into captivity. Jerusalem destroyed, the Temple in ruins. All of Israel glory lay there desolate and hopeless. The land derelict and the people captives and slaves, under Nebuchadnezzar. It was one of the lowest points in the history of Israel.

BUT, just then and there, something tremendous happened

B. Good News in the Dark

[Dan 2.1](#) In the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams; his spirit was troubled, and his sleep left him.

Going to kill all the scholars, astrologers, enchanters, etc.
Daniel's chutzpah.

Dan 2:16 And Daniel went in and requested the king to appoint him a time, that he might show the interpretation to the king.

The **head** gold **chest** and **arms** silver, **belly** and **thighs** bronze, **legs** of iron **feet** iron & clay

4 kingdoms or empires. Each inferior

Timing — detailed description of the strength and weaknesses of the Roman Empire...

Dan 2:44 And in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed, nor shall the kingdom be left to another people. It shall break in pieces all these kingdoms and bring them to an end, and it shall stand forever, [slide 4]

45 just as you saw that **a stone was cut** from a mountain **by no human hand**, and that **it broke in pieces** the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold. A great God has made known to the king what shall be after this. The dream is certain, and its interpretation sure."

Precision timing

Luke 2:1 In THOSE days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered.

When Jesus was born, the situation seemed hopeless:

**400 Silent Years with no true prophet... country conquered...
There and then God SENT his son...**

Mal. 3.1 "Behold, I send my messenger, and he will prepare the way before me. And the **Lord** whom you seek will **suddenly come** to his temple; and the **messenger** of the covenant in whom you delight, **behold, he is coming**," says the Lord of hosts.

C. God Works on the Night Shift

We're at our wits' end; God's people under attack, seeming helpless and hopeless. Her enemies **loud, proud**, arrogant.

This is **God's custom** through the ages... to visit unexpectedly!

When Rome was most powerful, at that EXACT TIME, God sent his son.

"And in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom..."

The **precise** time. Dan 9 — the **precise** year.

Micah tells us exactly where he would be born in Bethlehem.

Luke 2.6 And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. 7 And **she gave birth** to her firstborn son and

wrapped him in swaddling cloths and **laid him in a manger**, because there was no place for them in the inn.

IMMANUEL — God WITH us.

Every calendar marks this event!

God is in charge of HISTORY!

Even YOUR history.... In every disaster, he is working

IV. Unshakeable Kingdom

Dan 2.45 just as you saw that **a stone was cut** from a mountain **by no human hand**, and that it broke in pieces [. **A great God** has made known to the king what shall be after this. The dream is **certain**, and its interpretation **sure**."

1. Distinct from human kingdoms... each descends from other, The STONE is independent, apart from all others
2. Spiritual, unseen, in the heart of men. Jesus told Pilate, "My kingdom is not of this world." ([Jn 18:36](#))
3. Seems insignificant "A stone" Not GOLD< SILVER< BRONZE< IRON. All the glory of empires. Insignificant country. Insignificant towns. Insignificant status of the people.

Born in a stable. Laid in a manger. Joseph & Mary couldn't afford a lamb (for the Lamb of God).

Not a scholar, a carpenter, no great travel, no books, a poor rabbi executed in the worst way.

4. Displaces every other dominion

Yet this STONE "broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold."

Of the increase of his government and PEACE there will be no end.

Dan 2:34 As you looked, a stone was cut out by no human hand, and it struck the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces. **35** Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold, all together were **broken in pieces**,

and became **like the chaff** of the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away, so that not a trace of them could be found. But **the stone** that struck the image **became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.**

v. 45 The **dream** is **certain**, and its interpretation **sure**."

Heb 12.28 Therefore let us be grateful (have grace) for receiving **a kingdom that cannot be shaken**, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe, 29 for our God is a consuming fire. [slide 5]

CANNOT BE SHAKEN — unchanging, enduring

V. The Gift Beyond Words

2Cor 9.15 Thanks be to God for his inexpressible (indescribable, unspeakable) gift!

The Gift on the Tree. (Gave himself 6x in Paul)

Gal 1.4 who **gave himself** for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father.

The kingdoms of this world will pass away, military, political, economic, cultural... The dream is **certain**; the interpretation **sure**.

PEACE — the conditions of Eden

Jn 14:27 Peace I **leave** with you; **my peace** I **give** to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid. [slide 6]

FREEDOM from FEARS, AGITATING PASSIONS, MORAL CONFLICTS

This CANNOT be shaken. Though the whole world shakes

The Adversary may bruise our heel, but Christ will CRUSH his head.

Rom 6.20 The **God of peace** will **soon crush Satan** under your feet. The **grace** of our Lord Jesus Christ be **with** you. Amen.