

Unwrapping the Mystery of Christmas

I. In His Light We See Light

[Psalm 36:9](#) (ESV) For with you is the fountain of life; in your light do we see light.

A. From Darkness to Light

[Genesis 1:1–3](#) (ESV) In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.² The earth was without form and void, and **darkness** was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.

³ And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light.

[John 1:5](#) (ESV) The light **shines in the darkness**, and the darkness has not overcome it.

[Isaiah 9:2–4](#) (ESV) The **people** who **walked in darkness have seen a great light**; those who **dwell in a land of deep darkness**, on **them** has **light shone**.

³ You have **multiplied** the nation; you have **increased its joy**; they **rejoice** before you as with joy at the harvest, ...

⁴ For the **yoke** of his burden, ...the rod of his oppressor, you have **broken** ...

[Isaiah 9:6–7](#) (ESV) 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.

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. Unveiling the Secret — Before All Time

[Romans 16:25–27](#) (ESV) Now to him who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the **preaching of Jesus Christ**, according to the **revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages**²⁶ **but has now been disclosed** (made **manifest**) and through the prophetic writings has been made known **to all nations**, according to the command of the eternal God, to **bring about the obedience of faith**—²⁷ to the only wise God be glory forevermore through Jesus Christ! Amen.

***to act based on having paid attention. (hearing, really hearing)**

[Revelation 13:8](#) (NKJV) All who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose **names** have not been written in the Book of Life of the **Lamb slain from the foundation of the world**.

[Matthew 25:34](#) (ESV) Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father, **inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.**

[Ephesians 1:3–4](#) (ESV) Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places,⁴ even as he **chose us in him before the foundation of the world**, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love

[Hebrews 4:3](#) For we who have believed enter that rest, ... **his works were finished from the foundation of the world.**”

[2 Timothy 1:9](#) (ESV) who **saved** us and **called** us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of **his own purpose and grace**, which **he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began**,

II. Promises Made in the Dark...

A. Spirit and Creation

[Gen. 1:1](#) In the **beginning**, God created ...

[Gen 1:2](#) ... without form and void, and darkness ... And the **Spirit of God was hovering** over the face of the waters.

The **Holy Spirit greets the Chaos**, preparing for the WORD that would create light, day and night, earth and sea, you and me.

B. Unwrapping the Promise to Mary

[Titus 1:2](#) — God, who never lies, **promised the hope of eternal life before time began!**

[John 1:5](#) **The light shines in the darkness...**

In the fullness of time **to Mary**

1. Gabriel blows Mary's mind!

[Luke 1:26–29](#) (ESV) In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth,²⁷ to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary.²⁸ And he came to her and said, “Greetings, O **favored one**, the Lord is **with** you!”

(NKJV)...“Rejoice, highly favored *one*, the Lord *is* with you; blessed *are* you among women!”

²⁹ But she was **greatly troubled*** at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be.

2. Calm down... you have favor (overflowing grace)... your son will be king forever

[Lu 1:30](#) And the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. 31 And behold, you will **conceive in your womb** and **bear a son**, and you shall call his name Jesus. **(SAVE!)**

³² He will be **great** and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will **give to him the throne of his father David**, ³³ and he will **reign** over the house of Jacob **forever**, and of his **kingdom** there will **be no end**.”

3. “How” can the impossible happen? Wait... something is missing!

34 And Mary said to the angel, “How will this be, since I am a virgin?””

4. Holy Spirit... the Wind blows!

35 The **Holy Spirit** will *come upon you*, and the **power** of the Most High will *overshadow* you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God. ...

37 For **nothing is impossible with God.**"

38 And Mary said, “Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; **let it be to me according to your word.**”

In that **let it be** response, **the Wind begins to blow...** Ruach Ha Qodesh hovers over her... overshadowing

- Who hovered over the Waters of Chaos
- Who blew waters back at the Red Sea. Slaves freed by a way where there was no way.
- Who on the Day of Pentecost comes upon people, creating a new community that has power, humility and mission.
- Who stirs witnesses and martyrs to bold and dangerous acts beyond themselves.
- Holy Spirit begins when the world is exhausted, when our imaginations fail and our lives shut down in silence and despair.
- The gift contradicts everything we sense about our own lives.
- The world seems beyond salvaging, and here is **a baby named, Jesus, I AM WILL SAVE**

Who is God that He would take our frame [SLIDE 1]

The artisan inside the painter

Or breathe the very air His breath sustains

The architect inside the plan

C. Unwrapping the Promise to Joseph the Dreamer

Flexible, Humble, Faithful

Matt 1:18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother **Mary** had been **betrothed** to Joseph, before they came together she was **found to be with child** from **the Holy Spirit.** [SLIDE 2]

19 And her husband **Joseph**, being a **just** man and **unwilling to put her to shame**, resolved to divorce her quietly. 20 But as he considered these things (NRSV But **just when he had resolved to do this**), behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “**Joseph, son of David**, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.

Be ready to have your sense of the world contradicted by this Gift from God! Welcome the Holy Spirit!

21 She will bear a son, and **you shall call his name Jesus**, for **he will save his people from their sins.**”

The One who had no start and knows no end

[SLIDE 3]

Became confined in time and tense

The Everlasting God

The Great I Am

In the mercy of a mother's hands

22 All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet:

23 “Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,
and they shall **call his name Immanuel”** [SLIDE 3]
(which means, God with us).

Not just “God made us.”

Not just “God thinks of us”

Not just God “above us.”

But God WITH us, where we are.

In the office, kitchen, on the plane.

He breathed our air and walked this same earth.

Always near us. For us.

Never forgets us.

Always ON His mind and IN His plans.

Now he is In us. Now he shines through us.

24 When Joseph woke from sleep, **he did** as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, 25 but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And **he called his name Jesus.**

III. A New Reality Unfolds for Joseph, Mary

A. Darkness Trembles

Augustus Caesar running low on taxes! The troubled, dark EMPEROR brings about God's Plan

[Luke 2:1-7](#) (NLT)

At that time the Roman emperor, Augustus, decreed that a census should be taken throughout the Roman Empire.

...

And because Joseph was a descendant of King David, he had to go to Bethlehem in Judea, David's ancient home. He traveled there from the village of Nazareth in Galilee. He took with him Mary, to whom he was engaged, who was now expecting a child.

And while they were there, **the time came** for her baby to be born.

She **gave birth** to her firstborn son. She wrapped him snugly in strips of cloth and laid him in a manger, because there was no lodging available for them.

*The One who had no start and knows no end
[SLIDE 4]*

Became confined in time and tense

The Everlasting God

The Great I Am

In the mercy of a mother's hands

B. Angelic Glory Invasion

Luke 2:8–9 (ESV)

And in the same region there were **shepherds** out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.

And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and **the glory of the Lord shone around them**, and they were filled with **great fear**.

1. Great (*mega*) Fear Overcome by Great Joy!

Luke 2:10 (ESV) And the angel said to them, “Fear not, for behold, I bring you **good news of great joy** ...

2. Good News - Announcing the Kingdom

3. Great (*mega*) Joy for everyone everywhere

Luke 2:10 (TPT)

But the angel reassured them, saying, “Don’t be afraid. For I have come to bring you good news, the most joyous news the world has ever heard! And it is **for everyone everywhere!**

For Everyone Everywhere!

C. THE Promise - Savior and King

Luke 2:11 (ESV)

For **unto you** is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.

Unto **YOU!**

Everyday People

Born – God’s face...just getting started

This Day

Specific time

In the city of David

Specific location

Savior

Specific mission – Rescue, Restore, Renew

Christ, Messiah

Specific Person — Messiah - the Seed of Abraham

Lord

Specific purpose —A new ruler —Kyrios, Lord! (Caesar)

Specific Sign that He Came to Save

[Luke 2:12](#) (ESV)

And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.”

Shepherds who cared for the temple lambs understood this. When a male lamb without defect, suitable for sacrifice, was born the shepherds would wrap the lamb in clean cloth. It set them apart.

D. Suddenly Worship!

1. Massive Army of Worshippers

[Luke 2:13–14](#) (ESV)

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 among those with whom he is pleased!”

3. Impact of Worship — Beholding the Face of God

Mission

[Luke 2:15](#) (ESV) When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us **go** over to Bethlehem and **see** this thing that **has happened**, which the Lord has made known to us.”

¹⁶ And they **went** with haste and **found** Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger.

Wonder

[Luke 2:17–18](#) (ESV) And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them.

Mary Treasured

[Luke 2:19](#) (ESV) But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart.

Shouting and Praise!

[Luke 2:20 \(ESV\)](#)

And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them

The **Christmas Cycle** is the **annual reminder** that the World is not lost in Darkness, but has seen a great light.

It is not politics or religion, but redemption that has the final word.

It's all GIFT. It's all FAVOR – His Gift to us!

Holy Spirit Come, Overshadow, Conceive in Us