

## DAILY BIBLE STUDIES

### **"CHRISTMAS AND THE CROSS"**

**DECEMBER 20 - 26, 2009**

#### **SELECTED SCRIPTURE**

**THE LORD'S DAY** – This week we approach one of the most anticipated days of the year -- Christmas. Unfortunately and tragically today Christmas is to so many people not at all about Christ, but rather about "self". This week we will look at a few passages that explain to us what "Christmas" is all about and why it was even necessary. This study is not going to contain the typical traditional Christmas themes such as the stable, the manger, the star, etc... Our focus will be on the reason there was that first "Christmas" day -- The Cross. Ask God to teach you from His Word this week.

*The Word Applied & A Suggestion for Prayer: God help me to understand why Jesus came to earth and what we truly celebrate in Him at Christmas time.*

**MONDAY** – The first passage we want to look at for the next couple days is **Galatians 4:4-5**. This passage contains all the elements that explain so beautifully what we as Christians celebrate in Christmas. **Verse 4** starts out by explaining that the entire event of Christ's birth (God becoming a man) was executed in God's timetable "when the fullness of time had come." Exactly, when conditions were perfect according to God's preordained plan, Jesus came into the world. Read and meditate on today's passage and thank God for His perfect plan and sovereign control.

*The Word Applied & A Suggestion for Prayer: Father, thank You that Your timing is perfect. Help me understand that nothing takes place apart from Your sovereign hand of providence guiding and directing.*

**TUESDAY** – As we continue in **Galatians 4:4-5** we see that when God's timetable and plan was put into place He "sent forth His Son". Notice that Christmas was not the first day in Jesus' life. God "sent" forth His Son. You have to exist to be sent. Jesus Christ's pre-existence as the eternal second member of the Trinity is clear in this verse (see also **Philippians 2:6-7**). So, at the precise moment in history God sent forth His Son. Read the following verses in which Jesus Himself affirmed His being "sent" by the Father and that He was sent for a particular mission: **John 5:30,36-37; 6:39, 44,57; 8:16,18,42; 12:49; 17:21,25; 20:21**.

*The Word Applied & A Suggestion for Prayer: Jesus, help me to meditate on the fact that You have always existed, for You are God and Christmas was not the beginning for You "whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting".*

**WEDNESDAY** – After the Scripture tells us that Jesus was sent by the Father at the perfect time in His pre-ordained plan, we are given two truths about Jesus Christ's earthly life. He was "born of a woman" and "born under the law". The phrase "born of a woman" emphasizes Jesus' full humanity.

He was fully God as displayed in His virgin birth (**Isaiah 7:14** and **Matthew 1:20-25**) and yet He was also fully man. He had to be both fully God and man for His sacrifice to be both perfect and substitutionary. The phrase "under the law" shows us that Jesus was obligated to obey God's law just as mankind is. But unlike any other man, He perfectly obeyed the law. Praise God for a perfect, unblemished sacrifice that could take our place because He was not only God but also a man, the God-Man--Jesus Christ. Read **John 1:1,14,18**; **2 Corinthians 5:21**; and **Hebrews 4:15**.

*The Word Applied & A Suggestion for Prayer: Although You are God Jesus, thank You for being a man and for Your humility and faithful submission to The Father. Thank You for living a perfect life in my place as well as taking the punishment for my sin upon Yourself.*

**THURSDAY**– In **Galatians 4:5** we get to the real reason that Jesus Christ came into this world. This is the entire point! We celebrate Christ Jesus coming into this world not just because He came, but for the reason He came. This verse tells us He came to "redeem those who were under the law". All of us as guilty, vile sinners, condemned under the demands and curses of the law, needed a Savior. We needed to be "redeemed" (bought back). We cannot save ourselves for we are slaves to sin, and therefore condemned. Christ's death, as a substitution on our behalf for sin, satisfied God's wrath toward those who were bought back or purchased from being in slavery to sin and sentenced to eternal death. On the Cross, Jesus bore God's wrath for our sins as believers, therefore, we became God's children by the spiritual "adoption as Sons." Read **Galatians 3:13**; **Romans 8:15,23**; and **Ephesians 1:5**.

*The Word Applied & A Suggestion for Prayer: Praise You Jesus that You stood in my place and took the punishment due the guilty. Thank You for purchasing me with Your death on the cross. Father, thank You for adopting me as Your child.*

**FRIDAY** – **1 Timothy 1:15** would not be considered by many as being a Christmas verse, but it too expresses the reason and need for Christ to come into the world. Read the verse and notice that this is a "faithful saying". What is about to be said is key, a fundamental doctrine (truth). The faithful saying is this, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners. Read **Matthew 9:13** and **Luke 19:10**. The part that makes His coming so beautiful is the ugly phrase by the Apostle Paul in the last line of the verse, "of whom I am chief". Paul called himself the chief of sinners. You couldn't be much worse than a murderer and blasphemer. But what makes Christ's coming to earth and Christmas so glorious is that Jesus came to deal with the ugliness of sin. Paul recognized that he was a worthless, ugly sinner and therefore he was then eligible for forgiveness. According to Jesus, the man who is "poor in spirit"; "his is the kingdom of Heaven". You must first see yourself as an ugly, wretched, depraved, needy sinner or you can never be saved. Thank you Jesus for saving "chief" sinners.

*The Word Applied & A Suggestion for Prayer: O God, my sin is so great and I am a chief sinner. Forgive me for Jesus sake and give me faith to trust in His sacrifice for me as my only hope in life or death.*

**SATURDAY** – As we close this week, read **2 Corinthians 9:15**. In this verse we find Paul speaking to the believers in Corinth about giving. He compares their giving with God's giving of Jesus Christ. It was a costly and sacrificial gift, His most treasured possession. A lot of gifts will be given this Christmas, but the greatest, most unspeakable gift is Jesus Christ Himself! Thank God that as believers we can truly know what it means to have a Merry Christmas!

*The Word Applied & A Suggestion for Prayer: As I give this Christmas season o God, remind me often of Your great love in the giving of the unspeakable gift of Jesus, Your Son.*