

# David Brown: The Unexpected Expected One (22/12/18)

## Introduction - Messiah:

Merry Christmas! What does that mean to you? To some of you it might carry kind of a general extension of the hand in blessing; to others of you it might carry a more weighty meaning. Both of which are acceptable. But, if we fail to see the role of the Baby whose birth we recognise at this time of year we are probably missing a HUGE portion of what those words could truly mean.

The Christmas story is all about Jesus. Jesus, that miraculous child born in a manger all those years ago. He was the one that was born as the expected Messiah of the world. Christmas is about peace, it is about hope, it is about joy. This is what Messiah is all about!

"Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit. Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly. But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins." So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: "Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel," which is translated, "God with us." Then Joseph, being aroused from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took to him his wife, and did not know her till she had brought forth her firstborn Son. And he called His name JESUS." **Matthew 1:18-25**

Jesus, Matthew says, was born as the "Messiah" (chosen one). He was chosen, the Angel communicated, for the purpose order of saving "His people from their sins."

## Generations of Expectation:

"And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel." **Genesis 3:15**

Expectation for the coming Messiah was something that every Israelite knew well. As soon Adam & Eve had sinned in the garden of Eden and the promise of a Deliverer was given there was a deep sense of expectation that filled their hearts. At first they expected that any one of their children could in fact be that promised deliverer. In fact, every Israelite Mother wondered if in fact their 'seed' would be the one to deliver them.

Over time the expectation morphed and became merely an expectation of physical deliverance from slavery and oppression, rather than the hope of deliverance from all sin. Eventually, exiled from their land, they became so consumed by their captivity that they began to imagine their Messiah as a violent warrior who would come to wipe out their enemies and, with Him as their leader, bring them the kind of domination over the world that they had been so used to being on the opposite end of.

When the Deliverer actually came, the strangest of things happened - they missed Him!

"For more than a thousand years the Jewish people had awaited the Saviour's coming. Upon this event they had rested their brightest hopes. In song and prophecy, in temple rite and household prayer, they had enshrined His name. And yet at His coming they knew Him not..."

Yet God had chosen Israel. He had called them to preserve among men the knowledge of His law, and of the symbols and prophecies that pointed to the Saviour. He desired them to be as wells of salvation to the world...

But the Israelites fixed their hopes upon worldly greatness. From the time of their entrance to the land of Canaan, they departed from the commandments of God, and followed the ways of the heathen... By the Babylonish captivity the Israelites were effectually cured of the worship of graven images. During the centuries that followed, they suffered from the oppression of heathen foes, until the conviction became fixed that their prosperity depended upon their obedience to the law of God. But with too many of the people obedience was not prompted by love. The motive was selfish. They rendered outward service to God as the means of attaining to national greatness. They did not become the light of the world, but shut themselves away from the world in order to escape temptation to idolatry...

As they departed from God, the Jews in a great degree lost sight of the teaching of the ritual service. That service had been instituted by Christ Himself. In every part it was a symbol of Him; and it had been full of vitality and spiritual beauty. But the Jews lost the spiritual life from their ceremonies, and clung to the dead forms. They trusted to the sacrifices and ordinances themselves, instead of resting upon Him to whom they pointed. In order to supply the place of that which they had lost, the priests and rabbis multiplied requirements of their own; and the more rigid they grew, the less of the love of God was manifested. They measured their holiness by the multitude of their ceremonies, while their hearts were filled with pride and hypocrisy...

While the Jews desired the advent of the Messiah, they had no true conception of His mission. They did not seek redemption from sin, but deliverance from the Romans. They looked for the Messiah to come as a conqueror, to break the oppressor's power, and exalt Israel to universal dominion. Thus the way was prepared for them to reject the Saviour...

Hatred of the Romans, and national and spiritual pride, led the Jews still to adhere rigorously to their forms of worship. The priests tried to maintain a reputation for sanctity by scrupulous attention to the ceremonies of religion. The people, in their darkness and oppression, and the rulers, thirsting for power, longed for the coming of One who would vanquish their enemies and restore the kingdom to Israel. They had studied the prophecies, but without spiritual insight. Thus they overlooked those scriptures that point to the humiliation of Christ's first advent, and misapplied those that speak of the glory of His second coming. Pride obscured their vision. They interpreted prophecy in accordance with their selfish desires." **Ellen White, The Desire of Ages pg 27-30**

How could it be that a people who had lived with expectation for generations, could miss the very one that they had been living their lives in expectation of?

The reason is that they were not expecting Him to be the kind of person that He was, or for Him to arrive in the way that arrived. But, in spite of them missing Him, the expected One He was and His coming onto the stage of history it was.

What was it that they misunderstood about Him?

They misunderstood the kind of Messiah that they should have been expecting, because they misunderstood the true nature of the problem that He was to deliver them from. Jesus was an unexpected Saviour. A Saviour they desired, but not the kind of Saviour that He was. That kind of Saviour they'd rather crucify as a blasphemous madman!

## Deliverance from what?

"He shall save His people from their sins."

If a misunderstanding of the true nature of the problem was what led them to miss the Messiah, then an understanding of the true nature of the problem should also yield an understanding of the true nature of the Deliverer.

"Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said to the woman, "Has God indeed said, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden?'" And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.' " Then the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings. And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. Then the Lord God called to Adam and said to him, "Where are you?" So he said, "I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself." And He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you that you should not eat?" Then the man said, "The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate." And the Lord God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate." **Genesis 3:1-13**

Do you see it? When their eyes were "opened" they knew that they were naked and made themselves coverings. The Devil had successfully changed their belief structure and the net outcome of their unbelief was that insecurity became part of the psyche for the first time. With the birth of insecurity came the need to cover, fear of God, blaming each other and in the proceeding chapters of the story - all sin.

Here is the cycle in flow chart:

**Unbelief -> Insecurity -> All Sin**

However, if that is true, then the converse is also true:

**Belief -> Security -> Righteousness**

Restoration of belief in the trustworthiness of God restores security, taking away shame and fear. Which eventually leads to the restoration of righteousness. See the Apostle Paul observe the same:

- "Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, In the day of trial in the wilderness, Where your fathers tested Me, tried Me, And saw My works forty years. Therefore I was angry with that generation "and said, 'They always go astray in their heart, And they have not known My ways.' So I swore in My wrath, 'They shall not enter My rest.' "Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God." **Hebrews 3:9-12**
- "Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience." **Hebrews 4:11**

A restoration of belief is the cornerstone that the Messiah came to re-lay!

## **Joy to the World:**

Peace, Hope & Joy has come to us through the Messiah. Maybe not the kind of hope that we expected, maybe not the kind of peace we'd like, but peace, hope & joy nonetheless.

Since the promise made in **Genesis 3:15** to send a deliverer men had been expecting the promised one. As we have noted, few expected Him to come as the kind of Messiah that He was; but the promise made was to deliverance from the Serpent, whose work, as we have clearly noted was that of deception resulting in unbelief. If we are true to that promise we must look for One who will restore belief, not necessarily national or personal pride and power.

In **John 12:32** Jesus said of Himself, "And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself." Not drive, whip or force, but draw with lovingkindness to Himself. The kind of Messiah that came was a wooing, winning Messiah. The kind that restores belief in the integrity of God. The kind that leads us to place our confidence in Him, restoring security, and eventually restoring Righteousness (from the inside out).

This had always been God's promise. Through slavery and captivity the people had dreamed up a completely different kind of deliverance than this, but His promise stood firm, and the fulfil was bang on. In **Jeremiah 32:40,41** we read this articulation of God's intentions through Messiah "I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from doing them good; but I will inspire their hearts so that they will not depart from Me. Yes, I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will assuredly plant them in this land, with all My heart and with all My soul."

Peace, Hope & Joy. This is the eternal message of Christmas!

So let me ask you this question today: Do you believe in the true Messiah this Christmas?