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## The Revelations Of The Lord's Coming

### Introduction

When the Lord was going to come into this world God was very particular:

- a) He was very precise as to which nation He would be born into (Rom. 10:1)
- b) Where He would be born (Mic. 5:2)
- c) He would be from the seed of a woman (Gen. 3:15)
- d) By the character of the woman by which he would be born, she would be a virgin (Isa. 7:14)
- e) The exactness of the time (Gal. 4:4)

Reading of His coming “into this world” is in itself a profound truth, for unlike us, His coming into the world was a deliberate entrance and of His own volition “took part” of flesh and blood (Heb. 2:14), became in the “likeness of sinful flesh”, and born “under the law” (Gal. 4:4).

When we read: “The Father sent the Son”, due to that great event there are a number of interrelated truths which can be considered:

- a) The prophetic revelations concerning His coming
- b) The order in which the imminent revelations were given
- c) The reaction of the individuals to whom those revelations were made.

### The Prophetic Revelations

The coming of the Lord into the world is fraught with the deepest of truths, among them being the twin truths of His condescension and incarnation. Without His condescension to come into the world and willingness to become a human being, the incarnation would never have been possible. His condescension relates to His coming down from the glory of Heaven, and the incarnation relates to His adding to Himself humanity. There must be no mistaking, the Lord did not divest Himself of His deity in any degree. He never ceased being God and we must never say that he slept as a man, and as God, stilled the storm and waves. The superlative declaration is, “God manifest in flesh”. It is beyond human understanding and eclipses human comprehension.

The prophetic revelations concerning the coming of the Lord were given over an approximate four thousand year period and fall under three avenues, those given to the satanic world, to the angelic world, and to the human world.

1) Those given to the satanic world:

- a) The first prophecy concerning Christ (Gen. 3:15), contained the foreshadowing gleams of His humanity, suffering, and ultimate victory.
  - i) It was the seed of the woman (Gen. 3:15), and Paul informs his readers that the word “seed” was singular, pointing onward to Christ (Gal. 3:16).
  - ii) Satan would bruise His heel (Gen. 3:15) a revelation of the sufferings the Lord would incur at the hands of men by satanic instigation. These were not the sufferings for sin. The satanic world had no part in the work of redemption. It was God who laid our sins penalty on Christ (Isa. 53:6). Throughout the rest of history until the “fulness of the time was come” (Gal. 4:4), the Holy Spirit gave hundreds of little smidgins of data by which to recognize that Jesus was the Messiah.

2) Those given to the angelic world:

- a) We do know that angels knew about the coming of the Lord but when they were given this information we do not know. Was it in a past eternity when God promised eternal life (Titus 1:2), or when the promise of the coming seed was given to Satan (Gen. 3:16)? We do not know, but we do know they had to know for it was Gabriel who communicated the message to Zacharias (Lk. 1:19) and Mary (Lk. 1:26) before the baby was born. Furthermore, when the Lord was born there appeared to the shepherds a single angel, the “angel of the Lord” (Lk. 2:9), and then a “multitude of the heavenly host” (Lk. 2:13).

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3) Those given to the human world:

- a) Those given to the human world are divided into two groups, those given to humanity by angelic revelations, and those given by divine revelation to individuals, for instance to the wise men.

### Those Given To Humanity By Prophetic Statements From Angels

One of the first observations is that since God is the God of order, then it is to be expected that the appearances before the Lord's birth and subsequent declarations by humans concerning the Lord were not given randomly, but in orderly sequence. It is also clear that the immediate prophetic statements were given before His birth, and after His birth.

a) Those given before His imminent birth.

- i) The first revelation in the New Testament concerning the coming of Messiah and His deity was to Zacharias (Lk. 1:13-17) when the angel, speaking of John, said: "And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the **LORD** their God. And he shall go before Him . . . to make ready a people prepared for the **LORD**". It will be noted that I have changed the King James Version word "Lord" to "LORD". This I believe to be in keeping with the scriptures. The expression "LORD your God" occurs in thirty-five passages of the Old Testament scriptures. They range from Exodus 10:7 to Zechariah 10:6. When the angel was speaking, the context in the Old Testament (Mal. 4: 5-6) the Lord is referred to as "LORD" and thus the change. The Greek did not have a separate name for God as Hebrew had. Observing the lettering, the word "LORD" is the Old Testament Hebrew word for "Jehovah" the covenant keeping God. The "Him" is the one who was to be born, John's younger cousin, so that the passage is a revelation that John was the forerunner of the Jehovah of the Old Testament, who entering humanity was the Christ, the son of David. This coming was of whom John would speak was the "Jehovah Zebaoth", the "Lord of Hosts", who would come suddenly to His temple (Mal. 3:1).
- ii) To Zacharias was given the double exhilarating understandings that he would be the father of a baby and that child would prepare the way for the Messiah (Lk. 1:13-20). To this very elderly pair who had stopped praying for a child, to suddenly be given this double information, it would have been almost too hard to believe. It was for Zacharias because he was struck dumb (Lk. 1:18-20).
- iii) Gabriel was sent again and this time it was to the virgin Mary (Lk. 1:27-38). The message was as disturbing as it was wonderful. What questions must have raged through her mind when she was told she was going to have a baby, and she understood it did not mean sometime in the distant future, but very soon. Her perplexity was very genuine when she asked: "How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?" (Lk. 1:34). She was then informed of the mechanics of the conception: "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee" (Lk. 1:35). The communication to Mary was: "Thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a Son, and shalt call His name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end." (Lk. 1:31-33.)
  1. Evidently Elizabeth understood from the information her husband Zacharias had received that her child would prepare the way for the Lord. However, she would not know who the Messiah would be born to. Many questions must have traversed her mind. Was the looked for One born yet? How would her son know Him? How would they meet? Then in the sixth month of her pregnancy Mary came to visit her, and when Elizabeth heard the salutation of Mary, "The babe leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost" (Lk. 1:41), and among other things said: "Whence is this to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me?"

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- iv) The next recorded revelation was to Joseph, but it was not by an angel but in a dream. One cannot but feel a sympathy for Joseph. What a situation he was in through no fault of his own. His espoused wife was going to have a baby, what was he to do? Who was the father? Being in love with Mary it was a dreadful storm to endure. To make matters worse he was not told about how the baby was conceived until after it was conceived, so for an undisclosed time the man's mind must have been in a turmoil. Then in a dream which was very real, perhaps we could call it a vision, the angel revealed the whole situation to him. He was told how the baby was supernaturally conceived, to have no reservations about taking Mary to wife and was told why the child was to be called Jesus (Matt. 1:19-21). Neither Mary nor the others were told why the Lord was called "Jesus", and there was no mention of the throne of His father David given to Joseph.
- b) Those given at or shortly after the birth of the Lord.
- i) To the shepherds. It was an event that would never be forgotten, but talked about for years. In the darkness of that Eastern night, possibly the skies ablaze with the twinkling of a million stars, the quietness and darkness was suddenly interrupted by the transcendent glory of the divine light and the visitation of the celestial being. Fear filled the shepherd's hearts but then the silence of four hundred years was broken and the most glorious words were heard across the Judean hillside: "Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord" (Lk. 2:10-11).
- ii) This is the fourth time the message from heaven began with the words, "Fear not" (Lk. 1:13; 30; 2:10; Matt. 1:20) and the third appearance of an angel. The archangel Gabriel first appeared to Zacharias, then to Mary, and now to the angels, what messages of hope and glory they were. After the public silence of God for 400 years (for God had not spoken publicly to man since the days of Malachi), now there shines the light of the glory of the Lord on earth again and the public silence of God is broken. It was a message which would bring great joy to all people for it told of the arrival of the Saviour. When John writes his first epistle the Holy Spirit caused him to record information concerning the coming of Christ into the world as the Saviour. It says:
1. "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him" (1 Jn. 4:9).
  2. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (1 Jn. 4:10).
  3. "We have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son *to be* the Saviour of the world" (1 Jn. 4:14).

As we ponder the wonder of the Christmas story, may the Lord cause our hearts to be like that of those whose lives would never be the same having seen the Son who had come into the world.



. . . . Rowan Jennings