

End Times Session Notes- Fall 2014

Does the Bible speak to what is happening in the world today? With wars between Israel and its neighbors, global terrorism, increasing frequency of famine, new types of diseases, increasing moral decay, collapsing financial markets...*where will it all lead?* Add to that, churches walking away from Biblical Truth and redefining sin as acceptable in both the Christian community and our country.

The Bible gives us so many answers to the questions of life, particularly in this day and time. If you are interested in understanding what the Bible says will be in our future, come to a series of Biblical studies on ***Sunday nights beginning November 2, 2014*** entitled:



Schedule: Sunday night beginning at 6:00pm- 7:30pm in the Sanctuary

<u>Date</u>	<u>Title of Session</u>
✓ Nov 2, 2014	Signs of the Times
✓ Nov 9, 2014	Who is the Anti-Christ?
✓ Nov 16, 2014	Can one man rule the world?
✓ Nov 23, 2014	All Hell Breaks Loose
✓ Dec 7, 2014	Armageddon
✓ Dec 14, 2014	Ultimate Destination Wedding Reception
✓ Dec 21, 2014	Jesus' Second Coming
Jan 4, 2015	Touchdown!!
Jan 11, 2015	The Ultimate Hope
Jan 18, 2015	Q&A on End Times

This is a DVD series by Bryant Wright, Sr. Pastor at [Johnson Ferry Baptist Church](#) in Marietta, Georgia. We will have a brief introduction, play the DVD session, and end with Q & A. Each session will be facilitated by Jim Lay. **BRING YOUR BIBLE and join us!!**

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Session 7 – December 21, 2014 – Jesus' Second Coming

Introduction

Last week we covered the Rapture and Wedding Reception of the Lamb. I recorded my discussions and placed them on the website because of the date mix-up. I hope many of you listened to them and are caught up for this session.

Today's session is not controversial at all for believers in the Bible because the Word of God is clear that Jesus is coming again. He tells us that plainly in many verses. So I will defer to Bryant to discuss this wonderful topic fully but since we are discussing Jesus' Second coming a few days before we celebrate His First coming, I want to give you some information that you may not know unless you have been in my class over the past few years.

We have heard the Christmas Story read aloud in the Gospel of Luke for years. We replay it in our Cantatas each year. This year we heard something a little different in that we had a song that was called the Magnificat, which is one of 4 songs that happened in relation to Jesus Birth. The others are: Zechariah's Song, Simeon's song and the Angels Song. I want to focus on only 1 of them for this session but I will give you the reference verses for the others.

When Dr. Luke sat down to write his record of the life and ministry of Jesus Christ, he included four songs in the story of the Nativity – the birth of Jesus Christ.

- Mary's Song – called Magnificat – Luke 1:48-55. (my soul Magnifies..)
- Zechariah's Song – called Benedictus – Luke 1:67-80 (Blessed be...)
- The Angels' Song—called Gloria in Excelsis Deo – Luke 2:14 (in-eks-'chel-səs) (Glory to God in the Highest)
- Simeon's Song—called Nunc Dimittis – Luke 2:29-32 (Now let thou depart)

Depending upon your church background, you may have heard these four songs (or Canticles) sung in your church, especially on Christmas Eve, and in some churches, they are sung in Latin.

- Because these four songs are a part of Holy Scripture, they are as significant to our understanding of the events of the birth of Christ as any other section of Scripture.
- Perhaps a new generation of parents would want to include the study of these four songs as a part of their assignment to tell their children the true Christmas story.

Most of the time we start our discussion of the Birth of Christ at Luke Chapter 2, but I want to go back to Luke, Chapter 1 for a few minutes for our discussion of Zechariah

When the Old Testament ended with the last prophet writing the book of Malachi, God was silent with Israel for 400 hundred years...*no prophets, no miracles, no visions of God...no communication at all between God and His people until one day in Jerusalem. We think Jesus conception was a miracle, and it is...but this story begins with another miraculous conception.*

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Luke Ch1:5-7 NIV

The Birth of John the Baptist Foretold

⁵ In the time of Herod king of Judea there was a priest named Zechariah, who belonged to the priestly division of Abijah; his wife Elizabeth was also a descendant of Aaron. ⁶ Both of them were righteous in the sight of God, observing all the Lord's commands and decrees blamelessly. ⁷ But they were childless because Elizabeth was not able to conceive, and they were both very old.

King Herod was about 70 years old when this event takes place, but his brutality was well known throughout the Land of Israel. Zechariah was an old priest and would have been considered a country priest because he lived outside the City of Jerusalem. He was one of about 10,000 priests in 24 groups who ministered in the temple. Each group got two one-week assignments each year and with each group having about 416 priests; it was quite common for a priest to never have his individual turn at this service.

Zechariah was a priest and was in the Aaronic tribe, and also Elizabeth was out of the Aaronic lineage...a double blessing for them but with no children they were not only from the country and looked down upon but being childless in Jewish society especially for a priest was considered a curse from God.

V6- both blameless in the sight of God. Even while childless they kept doing their service and this was a high honor for Zechariah. Both of them were in their 80's and had given up on having a child and accepted their lot with grace.

⁸ Once when Zechariah's division was on duty and he was serving as priest before God, ⁹ he was chosen by lot, according to the custom of the priesthood, to go into the temple of the Lord and burn incense. ¹⁰ And when the time for the burning of incense came, all the assembled worshipers were praying outside.

*¹¹ Then **an angel of the Lord appeared to him**, standing at the right side of the altar of incense. ¹² When Zechariah saw him, **he was startled and was gripped with fear.** ¹³ But the angel said to him: "Do not be afraid, Zechariah; your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you are to call him John. ¹⁴ He will be a joy and delight to you, and many will rejoice because of his birth, ¹⁵ for he will be great in the sight of the Lord. He is never to take wine or other fermented drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit even before he is born. ¹⁶ He will bring back many of the people of Israel to the Lord their God. ¹⁷ And he will go on before the Lord, in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the parents to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous—to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."*

¹⁸ Zechariah asked the angel, "How can I be sure of this? I am an old man and my wife is well along in years."

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¹⁹ *The angel said to him, “I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to tell you this good news. ²⁰ And now you will be silent and not able to speak until the day this happens, because you did not believe my words, which will come true at their appointed time.”*

²¹ *Meanwhile, the people were waiting for Zechariah and wondering why he stayed so long in the temple. ²² When he came out, he could not speak to them. They realized he had seen a vision in the temple, for he kept making signs to them but remained unable to speak.*

²³ *When his time of service was completed, he returned home. ²⁴ After this his wife Elizabeth became pregnant and for **five months remained in seclusion.** ²⁵ “The Lord has done this for me,” she said. “In these days he has shown his favor and taken away my disgrace among the people.”*

You can read the rest of Chapter 1 but Mary gets visited by an Angel to and comes to see Elizabeth to check out the news she heard and also tell her about her visit with the angel. When Elizabeth’s son was born they named him John “Yahweh has shown Mercy” (Yochanan Heb or Johanine)

Benedictus

Zechariah’s Song

⁶⁷ His father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied:

⁶⁸ “Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel,
because he has come to his people and redeemed them.

⁶⁹ He has raised up a horn^[e] of salvation for us
in the house of his servant David

⁷⁰ (as he said through his holy prophets of long ago),

⁷¹ salvation from our enemies
and from the hand of all who hate us—

⁷² to show mercy to our ancestors
and to remember his holy covenant,

⁷³ the oath he swore to our father Abraham:

⁷⁴ to rescue us from the hand of our enemies,
and to enable us to serve him without fear

⁷⁵ in holiness and righteousness before him all our days.

⁷⁶ And you, my child, will be called a prophet of the Most High;
for you will go on before the Lord to prepare the way for him,

⁷⁷ to give his people the knowledge of salvation
through the forgiveness of their sins,

⁷⁸ because of the tender mercy of our God,
by which the rising sun will come to us from heaven

⁷⁹ to shine on those living in darkness
and in the shadow of death,

to guide our feet into the path of peace.”

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⁸⁰ And the child grew and became strong in spirit; and he lived in the wilderness until he appeared publicly to Israel.

I will talk again at the end and tell you a wonderful prophecy that is largely ignored in the church today but is a wonderful compliment to the Christmas Story

< Play DVD >

Post DVD Discussion

In Christ's first Advent that we celebrate at Christmas time we know the rest of Dr. Luke's Christmas Story but I want to clarify something in the story that we have either wrong or incomplete.

Our Pastor asked the question this morning about why Christ had to be born in a manger and I want to add some prophetic light to that subject. But first I want to read for you two sections of OT scripture and then I will try to tie it all together for you.

Jacob has just had his name changed from Jacob to Israel and was heading to Ephrathah (Bethlehem)

Gen 35: 16-21

*¹⁶ Then they moved on from Bethel. While they were still some distance from Ephrath, Rachel began to give birth and had great difficulty. ¹⁷ And as she was having great difficulty in childbirth, the midwife said to her, "Don't despair, for you have another son." ¹⁸ As she breathed her last—for she was dying—she named her son **Ben-Oni** (Son of my trouble) But his father named him **Benjamin** (Son of my right hand)*

¹⁹ So Rachel died and was buried on the way to Ephrath (that is, Bethlehem). ²⁰ Over her tomb Jacob set up a pillar, and to this day that pillar marks Rachel's tomb.

*²¹ Israel moved on again and pitched his tent beyond **Migdal Eder**.*

The term **Migdal Eder** only occurs in the Bible two times, both in the OT. It means **Tower of the Flock and is important in the Christmas Story**

The 2nd time this phrase occurs is in the book of Micah. I want to discuss Micah 4:4-8 which is included in a prophetic set of scriptures dealing with the End Times and the Last Days

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Micah 4:4-8 The LORD's Plan

⁶ *"In that day," declares the LORD,*

*"I will gather the lame;
I will assemble the exiles
and those I have brought to grief.*

⁷ *I will make the lame my remnant,
those driven away a strong nation.*

*The LORD will rule over them in Mount Zion
from that day and forever.*

⁸ *As for you, **watchtower of the flock,**
stronghold^[a] of Daughter Zion,
the former dominion will be restored to you;
kingship will come to Daughter Jerusalem."*

This is a prophecy that the LORD will gather His people and make them strong in the land (those driven out will be brought back)...and as for you Watchtower of the Flock (Migdal Eder) the Kingship will be restored to you oh Daughter Jerusalem. This indicates that from the Migdal Eder will come the king to be restored.

Ok that is pretty obscure and I admit it is hard to follow but there is one more piece of the puzzle that needs to be put into place.

A little history that is important. Today when we talk about the Lord's coming and His birth we read the Christmas Story usually starting with Luke Chapter 2, but in Chapter one we see the actual first communication between God and Man in nearly 400 years since the prophet Malachi put down his pen. No prophets, no visions, no dreams, no speaking to His people until the angel Gabriel shows up to Zechariah the priest and tells him he and Elizabeth are going to have a son who will be the forerunner of the Messiah. Listen to my SS lesson this morning for a fuller discussion of both this and Migdal Eder.

The point is that now only the person born (Jesus) is important but also the place chosen was part of God's ultimate plan and John the Baptist's birth was the first miraculous sign in the New Testament and was part of the glorious plan for Christ.

That was just a plug for listening to my recorded lesson from today but back to Migdal Eder.

When we read Luke Ch2 we get hung up on ordinary sheep, ordinary shepherds, ordinary night, lowly birth, no room in the Inn, wise men and Angels Singing...but we miss something.

Just outside of Bethlehem is what is called now Shepherd's Field and you can take a tour of the field with a guide. It looks a little different from Jesus Day because this field was where the Temple Shepherds raised the Temple Sheep for the sacrifices in the temple.

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These shepherds were not very young boys but men assigned to care for and protect the Temple Flock. One of the ways they did that was in a building in the field called the Tower of the Flock. This was a two story rock building that had a lookout walk on the top where the chief Temple Shepherd guarded the flock. One of the ways we know this was the Temple Flock is that normal everyday flocks were herded together into a pen and were rotation guarded by shepherds at night then separated by voice in the morning. Temple Flocks were now herded together but were kept separate and watched all night long by the shepherds.

In the bottom of the Tower is the feeding and birthing room for the sheep. When a Ewe was about to give birth the shepherds would bring her to the birthing room and aid her delivery. Because sheep are wild and unsteady at birth, if a newborn sheep was examined and found “perfect” of defects it was wrapped in “swaddling cloth” and laid down in the manger to prevent it from damaging itself. It was destined to be the Passover Lamb which had to be perfect. All of the shepherds knew what this meant. Migdal Eder, the tower is no longer in Shepherds field and was removed after the temple was destroyed but they can still be found in other places in Israel.

Now back to Luke Ch 2

2 And it came to pass in those days *that* a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. ² This census first took place while Quirinius was governing Syria. ³ So all went to be registered, everyone to his own city.

⁴ Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, ⁵ to be registered with Mary, his betrothed wife, who was with child. ⁶ So it was, that while they were there, the days were completed for her to be delivered. ⁷ And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

Glory in the Highest

⁸ Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹ And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid. ¹⁰ Then the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to **all** people. ¹¹ *For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.* ¹² *And this will be the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger.”*

¹³ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying:

¹⁴ “Glory to God in the highest,
And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!”¹

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¹⁵ So it was, when the angels had gone away from them into heaven, that the shepherds said to one another, *“Let us now go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has come to pass, which the Lord has made known to us.”* ¹⁶ *And they came with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the Babe lying in a manger.* ¹⁷ *Now when they had seen Him, they made widely known the saying which was told them concerning this Child.* ¹⁸ And all those who heard *it* marveled at those things which were told them by the shepherds.

So, just to recap... God through the Angels told the Shepherds that this newborn baby would be their Messiah, their redeemer, their deliverer, and their Passover Lamb that would take away their sins in sacrifice, as the Lamb of God. The shepherds understood it fully.

Prophecy says Messiah would be born in Bethlehem, born of a virgin, born in a stable and since Joseph and Mary lived in Nazareth about 90 miles away they would not have gone to Bethlehem unless the Roman governor did the tax roll. With her 9 months pregnant she would have wanted to stay where she had support, but that was not the Lord's plan.

There are over 300 prophecies of the Lords first coming which have been fulfilled literally. I have a summary of them in a David Jeremiah pamphlet. There are even more prophecies of the Lords 2nd coming, which we have discussed today.

God is sovereign, God is in control, and when God promises something He fulfills it.

On the Christmas story I hope you will not look at the “sign” ever the same way and that these scriptures will have a more vibrant meaning.