

WHAT IS CHRISTMAS ALL ABOUT?

Preparation

Mark 1:1-8

We are in our 2nd week of our Sermon Series entitled, “*What Is Christmas All About?*” and last week we looked at how Matthew answered that question with 1 word, Family.

- In the beginning of the Gospel that Matthew pens in the first 16 verses we see that he gives us 42 generations beginning with Abraham leading to the birth of Jesus Christ the Messiah.

Matthew’s audience would be the Jews, where Mark’s Gospel would be written to the Romans.

- The Romans could care less about the genealogy of this coming King.
- Since Mark’s Gospel would portray Jesus as a servant, His genealogy would mean little to the Romans.
 - **Mark 10:45**

Mark calls 2 Old Testament Prophets to help him answer that question of *What Christmas Is All About*.

- Isaiah
- Malachi

So, what would Mark say that Christmas is all about, one word, preparation.

- Isaiah 40:30 - *A voice is calling, “Clear the way for the Lord in the wilderness. Make smooth in the desert a highway for our God.*
- Malachi 3:1- *Behold, I am going to send My messenger, and he will clear the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple; and the messenger of the covenant, in whom you delight, behold, He is coming,” says the Lord of hosts.*

These prophecies do not relate to the Messiah but rather to the one who will come before Him to prepare the way for Him.

- In ancient times, before a king would visit any part of his kingdom, a messenger would be sent before him to prepare the way.
- This would include preparing the roads and preparing the people.
 - God can use anyone to accomplish His purpose (**Exodus 12:36**).
 - The Pax Romana (**the peace of Rome**).

- Travel was made easy with a great road system (Romans).
 - There was a common language (Romans)
 - There was safety when you traveled (Romans)
- Now someone had to come to prepare the people, enter on the scene of history the man called John The Baptist.
- Jesus would call him the greatest Prophet ever.
 - **Luke 7:24-28**
 - Just as the physical climate had to be ready for the Messiah's entrance into the world, so had to be prepared the hearts of the people.
 - One word could sum up the message of John, repent.
 - "To turn from" or "to change one's mind".

That is one word that we don't hear too much anymore especially from our pulpits is the need to repent.

- We make the usual excuses:
 - It might offend. **I Corinthians 1:23 - 25**
 - People might not come back. – **John 6:66-69**
 - Look Pastor the world makes me feel bad enough, when I come to Church, I need to be encouraged not discouraged.

Well let me ask you a question, do you think the message of John the Baptist was received with great joy?

- **Matthew 11:18**
- **Mark 6:17-20**
- **Mark 6: 27-29**
- *It is a poor sermon that gives no offense; that neither makes the hearer displeased with himself nor with the preacher.* - George Whitefield

Because we have not kept to the message for the need of repentance, the world no longer feels a need for it.

- There are only 2 continents where Christianity is on the decline, Europe and North America.

See when we stop preaching (proclaiming) the need for repentance the fires of the Gospel begin to grow dimmer and dimmer.

Luke 13:3