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WAITING FOR GOD

The Christmas season affords opportunity to consider the providence of God in fulfilling His promises and prophecies of the coming Christ. Advent, from the Latin *adventus*, means arrival, and so the four Sundays of Advent look forward with anticipation to the expected Savior. Christ, from the Greek *christos*, means the same as the Hebrew *messiah*, "the anointed one" specially marked for God's purpose. The evergreen Advent wreath symbolizes the never-ending love of God. Four candles signify progressively increasing light of Scripture, proclaiming the coming Christ. The center candle is lit to announce His arrival. Similarly, let's look at five truths from Scripture about the Christ of Christmas, the centerpiece of the Bible.

1- Christ is the offspring of Adam and Eve. In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. That's Genesis 1. And everything He made was very good. Adam and Eve were created in His image to relate to Him with mind and heart and will, and to represent Him on earth as stewards of His creation. But in Genesis 3, they rebelled. They disobeyed, listening to the lies of the devil through the serpent, and we all live with the consequences, sin and death. Then God promised an offspring of the woman, to deliver mankind from sin and death. Genesis 3:15 is the *proto-evangelium*, the first instance of the gospel in the Bible. But the promised Deliverer was not Cain, nor Abel, nor Seth, nor Noah. Mankind kept waiting.

2- Christ is the offspring of Abraham and Sarah. About 2,000 years before Christ, God promised Abraham in Genesis 12, "*I will make of you a great nation, and in you all the families of the earth will be blessed.*" Abraham is considered the Father of Faith and the Father of Israel. When he was 100 years old, his miracle-son Isaac was born. Then his son Jacob had twelve sons, heads of the tribes of Israel who received the Promised Land. One of these was Judah, the lion's cub, of whom was said, "*the scepter shall not depart from Judah.*" And one of the titles of Jesus is "*the lion of the tribe of Judah.*"

3- Christ is the offspring of King David. In 2 Samuel 7 God told David, a descendant of Judah, that he would not build God's house, but his son would: "*I will raise up your offspring after you, and I will establish His kingdom forever.*" His son Solomon built the temple, but God was looking ahead to Jesus Christ, in whom the family of believers would be a living temple in which God would dwell by the Holy Spirit. By His human lineage, Matthew 1 and Luke 3, Jesus is a descendant of David, of Abraham, of Noah, and of Adam. Jesus, the God-man, comes to do what only the Son of God can do: undo the curse of sin and death, and bring righteousness and life to all who put their trust in Him. Just as God promised.

4- Christ is the God-man born to the virgin conceived by the Holy Spirit. In the days of King Ahaz, a descendant of David, the prophet Isaiah said God would protect from enemy armies. Ahaz wasn't sure, so the word of the Lord came through Isaiah 7:14, "*Hear then, O house of David! The Lord Himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel, which means God with us.*" This is an impossible miracle that only God could do. And 700 years later, the angel spoke in Matthew 1: "*Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.*" Verse 22 says all this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet Isaiah. The virgin Mary gave birth, and they named the child Jesus, which means, "*Jehovah saves.*" The people waited thousands of years, but God kept His promise!

5- In Christ, YOU become a child of the promise. Galatians 3 shows how the promises and prophecies relate to you personally. The apostle Paul explains that the blessing to the offspring of Abraham really points to Jesus Christ as THE offspring. That's how the promise comes to Gentiles as well as Jews, as people from every tribe and tongue and nation put their faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. And in Christ, he says, "*you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise!*" That's the Good News about Christmas! Christ has come, and through Him, salvation! Perhaps you are waiting on God today. Waiting for an answer to prayer, or for a promise of Scripture to become real in your life experience. Remember, we are like the ancient people of God, waiting. Christ has come, as prophesied - and He has promised to come again, to make all things new. Wait, as you trust and obey Him, for He IS coming again!