



Getting Ready for Christmas—Parts 3 & 4
From Sermon 11.20 & 11.27.22

From Part 3—Read *Daniel 7:7*

Overview from sermon 11.20.22: 3 empires have come and gone. Yet there are still prerequisites for Christmas. Isaiah 53 prophesied that Messiah would suffer, bear our sins, die, be buried. Psalm 22 showed He suffers a foreign form of execution/death = Pierced hands and feet, bones out joint, surrounded by enemies, naked and shame. Additionally, Malachi predicted a forerunner who preaches repentance. All of this comes together in that final 150 years or so, before the blessed night in Bethlehem.

1. The 4th and final kingdom arrives [and it turns out they are crucifiers]. It is the empire of Rome.
2. Just as foretold [See *Malachi 4:5-6*], a blessed, miraculous pregnancy occurs. An aged, yet devout couple will parent our needed forerunner. Their names are Zechariah & Elizabeth
- 2a. The fiery preaching forerunner will be known as John the Baptist. See also *Luke 1:13-17*

3. What have you learned from this series, so far, about:

Ancient Israel: Persistent sin = prophets, warning, judgment, destruction & captivity.

Babylon: Used to judge Judah. Nebuchadnezzar statue & Daniel's vision of beasts predicts ancient history.

Persia: Conquers Babylon. Releases Jews to return home to build the city and the temple. [Magi]

Greece: Conquers Persia. Alexander the Great & Hellenization. Desecration of the temple.

Rome: Conquers Greece. Besides capital punishment & crucifixion, they implement infrastructure & roads, law & justice, taxes & census.

From Part 4—Read *Luke 1:30-37*

Overview from Sunday's sermon: The final details for Christmas are accomplished. Elizabeth's young, engaged relative from up north is found to be pregnant. By law, she could be sentenced to death. The angel, Gabriel, has visited both she and Joseph. Back in Rome, the decree for the taxation census has already gone out. Besides the drama of the main characters, a litany of future New Testament players are being born.

4. Matthew and Luke's genealogy verify and fulfill all we've covered. God has orchestrated redemptive covenant and preserved the royal line. What three main Old Testament figures continue to be mentioned in the Christmas drama and why?

- Abraham: the chosen and called father of the future nation by which all nations will be blessed. See *Genesis 12:2-3 & Galatians 3:8*
- Judah: the 4th son of Jacob/Israel. His descendants will be the rightful royal kingly line.
- David: the first true and ordained king of Israel. He will always have a rightful heir to the throne.

5. Sunday's message repeatedly point to *God's Sovereign Election*. Discuss what this means and how it is pivotal to the Christmas account. Various answers. God is not bound by anything—man, events, decisions. His plan, will, and choice will come to pass. God chooses the players...they did/don't choose Him. The story is not how man would write it or the path he would choose. God gets all the credit and glory.

6. Discuss Jesus' checkered lineage and why that should matter to us today. Everyone in Jesus' genealogy was a sinner. 4 women are mentioned, and they could be described as the most controversial, scandalous, questionable, and unlikely. Both their inclusion in the lineage and their mention in the Gospels should remind us that no one is outside of God's grace and usefulness in ministry or the Kingdom.