

The Point of Christmas: Fulfillment of God's Promises

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The major framework of the biblical narrative consists of covenants God made with people – Noahic, Abrahamic, Davidic, Old, and the promise of the New Covenant. The Old Testament was a 2,000-year-era of God entering into covenants with men and women who died without seeing the fulfillment of those promises. Then, one day, people received startling visits from angels announcing that the time had come. God was about to act and bring His covenant promises to fulfillment.

Our Christmas series this year is entitled “*Christmas: What’s the Point?*” Almost everyone in America understands that Christmas is related to the birth of Jesus. Most people do not understand, though, the reason and the significance of Jesus’ birth. In our last post, we discovered that Jesus came to reveal the glory of God, and to show us who God really is.

For the second point, we turn to [Luke 1:31-33](#)^L to see that Jesus came to fulfill the promises of God. Here, in this passage, we find three basic promises, standing as figures for all the covenants God has ever made.

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First, Jesus came to *fulfill the promise of a savior.*

The angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary; for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus.”

Jesus, the name Mary was commanded to give to her Son, was especially noteworthy. This name means *the Lord saves* or *the Lord is salvation*. Jewish parents commonly named their sons *Joshua* as a tribute to the truth that the God of Israel was the God of salvation and the God who saves His people. However, Jesus (the Greek form of *Joshua*) was given this name for a different reason because the son of Mary, Himself, would be the Savior, saving His people from their sins as the promised redeemer.

The promise of a redeemer and a savior is central to the entire Bible because it is the first promise that God makes after humanity fell into sin in Adam. After God gives this promise, those who called upon the name of the Lord were constantly searching for its fulfillment. The reality of the curse of sin was inescapable for the people of God, who were groaning for the day of salvation and looking for God’s promise to be fulfilled as the Old Testament progressed.

When God’s people were in exile, and it looked like this promise could not be fulfilled, the Lord promised a new covenant. Though the Israelites’ circumstances were dire, though they had been unfaithful to God, and though their sins were as scarlet, the Lord made a new covenant with them and forgave and rescued them, promising that He would be their Savior. Mary was commanded to name her son *Jesus*, not because God is salvation, though He is, but because this boy would be God our Savior. Jesus was born to fulfill the promise of a Savior.

Second, Jesus came to *fulfill the promise of a king.*

“He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David.”

One of the great misconceptions about the monarchy in Israel is that it was not one of God’s desires. On the contrary, God had promised Abraham his offspring would include a dynasty of *kings*. Later in Deuteronomy, the Lord anticipated Israel would someday yearn for a human king and gave directions for this future installment to conform to His purpose and plan so that the nation would be set apart as a light to the Gentiles. God, in His purpose and in His promise to Abraham, *had* established that a king would reign over Israel.

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The problem Israel had in wanting a king, however, was that they ignored the divine instructions about what kind of king they should have. Samuel warned Israel that the type of king they were seeking would, in fact, be just like the rulers of all the other nations, and they should not want such a leader. The Israelites insisted on their own inclinations despite these warnings, and they got a dreadful and ungodly ruler in Saul.

After a while, Saul's rebellion became so heinous that God deposed him as king and anointed David. God promised David that, after his death, one of his offspring would be raised up to inherit David's throne forever, and that this descendant would be a son to God, and God would be a Father to him. We know, though, that the northern and southern kingdoms fell into exile long after David's death.

During this time of exile, Israel hoped that God would restore their kingdom, that God would bring back the throne of David, and that God would be faithful to David's offspring and not cast him off forever. Then the angel tells Mary that Jesus was the fulfillment of God's promise. David, when he was writing Psalms 16 and 132 and meditating on God's covenant, understood that the promise would be fulfilled by the resurrection of the Messiah from the dead. Jesus was raised from the dead in fulfillment of God's covenant promise to David. Jesus came to fulfill God's promise of a king.

Finally, Jesus came to fulfill God's promise of a kingdom that would never end.

"And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end."

Throughout the Old Testament, God promised His people an eternal, everlasting kingdom that would endure for all ages to come. This kingdom would reign over the house of Judah, enfolding all the families of the earth – all people and tongues and tribes and nations. When the angel came to Mary, he made plain to her that Jesus' birth would be for the fulfillment of this magnificent promise.

Jesus was born to fulfill God's promises: the promise of a savior, the promise of a king, and the promise of a kingdom. These three promises include every promise God has ever made to His people. The beauty of the Gospel, as the New Testament unfolds it, is that because Jesus was faithful and receives all the promises of God, everyone who is connected to the Savior by faith receives those promises as well.

When the apostle Paul was despairing of life itself, he found comfort in God through Christ, and the rock he embraced amid life's storms was the promises of God. In [2 Corinthians 1:20](#), Paul wrote, **"For as many as are the promises of God, in Him they are yes; therefore also through Him is our Amen to the glory of God through us."** Paul

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could overcome his depression because he found comfort in the fact that all of God's promises belonged to him because they all belong to Jesus Christ. Jesus is the answer, the fulfillment, to all of God's promises.

Christ has already fulfilled God's promise of salvation, but we do not yet experience salvation as we one day will in its fullness after the resurrection. Christ is already the King, but we do not yet experience His reign in its fullness. And Christ has already received His kingdom, but He has not yet received it in its fullness. We are awaiting a future consummation, when, once and for all, Satan is defeated, and we reign with Jesus forever.

While the war has been won, and God's promises are all ours, we must realize that we are somewhat like our fellow saints from the Old Testament. We are awaiting the promise of Christ's coming, the fullness of salvation, and perfected bodies. As we tarry, sin pursues us, and Satan buffets us. It is in those moments, when we want to give in and give up, we need to remember the point of Christmas and stand firm on the promises of our Lord. All God's promises are ours, because all of God's promises are His, and we through faith belong to Him.

Jesus was born to fulfill the promises of God. May this truth be our anchor not only at Christmas, but in all times and circumstances.



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