

## UNDERSTANDING THE “ONE STORY” OF SCRIPTURE

Week 1 – Comprehending Eternity!

September 9, 2025

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Where in Scripture does the Christmas account begin?

What is the backstory to the Christmas account? What led up to Jesus’ incarnation/His birth in Bethlehem Ephrathah?

Luke 1:5-22 (READ) - WHY did the people marvel? WHY did they perceive that Zacharias had seen a vision? What was going on in the world of the Jewish people at this time? More marveling when the people heard that the newborn’s name would be “John” and not “Zacharias”!

Luke 1:65-79 (READ) - Zacharias praised God for His promises to Israel recorded in the Hebrew Scriptures/the OT.

Are you surprised at how much Zacharias’ benediction is based on what God had promised the Jewish people that we read in the Hebrew Scriptures, while at the same time loving the Promised One of Israel, Jesus? Zacharias didn’t even *know* Jesus – person-to-person. Jesus had not as yet been birthed in Bethlehem. Yet, Zacharias praised Jesus, and yes, he loved Jesus, and he was passionate about Jesus.

(NOTE: when I read this section during our class on 9/9, I’m going to comment on Zacharias’ statements. My comments will be my observations re: the text. You might want to jot down your observations re: Zacharias’ statements.)

The virgin birth is found in Isa. 7:14. We read about the birth of Jesus in Isa. 9:6. His birth specifically in Bethlehem Ephrathah is highlighted in Micah 5:2. The prophecy speaking about the massacre of Hebrew male children two years and younger ordered by Herod after the Magi visited Herod can be read in Jer. 31:15. When Herod sent his soldiers to Bethlehem to murder young Hebrew male children 2 years and younger... Mary, Joseph, and Jesus fled to Egypt...

Matt. 2:13-15 - ...an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, ‘Arise, take the young Child and His mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I bring you word; for Herod will seek the young Child to destroy Him.’ <sup>14</sup> *When he arose, he took the young Child and*

*His mother by night and departed for Egypt, <sup>15</sup> and was there until the death of Herod, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, ‘Out of Egypt I called My Son’ (Hosea 11:1).*

Jesus’ coming to earth as a newborn baby was prophesied in the Hebrew Scriptures through Isaiah, Hosea, and Micah - 700-800 years before His advent/arrival. The Son of God coming to earth in the flesh was prophesied in the OT 1,000 years prior to His lying in a manger (Psa. 2:7, 12; Prov. 30:4). The book of Ruth also spoke of the Kinsman Redeemer circa 1,000 years prior to Jesus’ birth. And, Job spoke of His Redeemer approx.. 2,000 years before Jesus’ birth! The “Seed of the woman” – in Genesis – 4,000 years before Jesus’ first coming!

The “one story” of the Scripture is evident in the Christmas account and much prior to... and there’s more that we’ll study.

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We read of the role of John the baptizer as the forerunner/the herald of the Messiah – declaring the coming of the Messiah...in Isa. 40:3-5 and in Malachi 3:1a - *Behold, I send My messenger, and he will prepare the way before Me!*

Luke 2:25-32 speaks of Simeon who connects Jesus’ birth to the Hebrew Scriptures. Simeon was a just and devout Jewish man in Jerusalem waiting for the “Consolation of Israel.” The “Consolation of Israel” is a Messianic title – speaking of JESUS! Isa. 40:1-3 – *Comfort, yes, comfort My people!... <sup>3</sup> The voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the Lord;* God the Holy Spirit revealed to Simeon that he, Simeon, would not see death before he had seen God’s anointed, the Messiah. And, Isa. 40:3 is speaking of John the Immerser!!

Luke 2:27 – *Simeon came by the Spirit into the Temple...* at the very moment when Mary and Joseph had brought Jesus into the Temple for the dedication of their firstborn (Ex. 13:2) and Mary’s purification...40 days following the birth of a male child (Lev. 12:1-8) Simeon took Jesus up in his arms and blessed God and said,

Luke 2:29-32 - *Lord, now You are letting Your servant depart in peace, according to Your word; <sup>30</sup> For my eyes have seen Your salvation <sup>31</sup> which You have prepared before the face of all peoples, <sup>32</sup> A light to bring revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory (honor; praise of God’s plan for Israel) of Your people Israel.*

Simeon clearly understood through the Holy Spirit that the birth of this baby began with the eternal purpose of God – even before the world was created.

John's gospel begins, *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.* Who is the "Word"? JESUS. John 1:1 places Jesus before the creation of the world. If we do not understand the pre-existence of Jesus – His "eternality" – that Jesus is eternally the Son of God...if we don't grasp that truth, we can come away thinking that Jesus' birth is God's Plan B...that Jesus is something new – thinking that God has come up with a new plan rather than fulfilling all He had already promised! God's plan is always Plan A!

We first learn about Jesus in the Hebrew Scriptures! We are privy to a conversation between God the Father and God the Son in Isa. 53:10 - *The Lord was pleased to crush Him* (the Suffering Servant – the Messiah – Jesus), *putting Him to grief; if He would render Himself as a guilt offering,* He offered Himself as a guilt offering on the cross for us! When was this decided??? In ETERNITY PAST!!

The "one story" of the Bible points to this essential truth: God determined to bring glory to Himself through the salvation of a people redeemed and purchased by His own Son, the anointed One, the Messiah, through His own blood.

Bethlehem (where Jesus was born), and Golgotha, where Jesus was crucified – ARE essential parts of God's plan from the beginning, before the creation was brought into being.

Consider this with me, if we only had the New Testament, we would read the Gospels and not know why the Jews were looking for a Messiah (a Redeemer/Savior). We would not understand why this Messiah was coming. And, if we did not have the Hebrew Scriptures, we would not, in our reading of the Bible, be able to identify Jesus of

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Nazareth as the Messiah through the many detailed prophecies that were given concerning Him. God the Holy Spirit inspired the authors of the Hebrew Scriptures to record clearly and precisely the details about the Messiah Jesus so that the Jewish people would recognize Him when He arrived in the flesh!

Did all the Jewish people receive Jesus as the promised Messiah? No! But MANY did. AND, we have the completed Scripture up through today and moving forward until - ???

Jewish people and Gentile people are still reading of this Messiah Who reconciles us to God and gives us eternal life with Him. Praise God that COUNTLESS Jews and Gentiles CELEBRATE JESUS – many of whom are already in the presence of God in heaven – and many yet on this earth – because of the life-giving "one story" of Scripture!

The “one story” of Scripture is based on WHO GOD IS and on His PROMISES.

### QUESTIONS

Introduce yourselves.

When you first read the title of this class, what did you think?

How did the prophecies and their fulfillment mentioned in this handout impact you?

What are you desiring to learn through this study in Scripture?

What are your questions re: the “one story” of Scripture? Please write them out and give them to your Table Leader.

What is your favorite verse regarding JOY?

### SUGGESTED HOMEWORK

Reread Week 1 w/ Bible references.

Jot down observations and questions re: the Bible references.

Read Week 2’s handout when you receive it.