

CHRISTMAS PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

Acts 1:11

I. INTRODUCTION-

- a. Today I want to look at the three tenses of Christmas...Christmas past, present and future.

II. CHRISTMAS PAST-

- a. It is right and good that we celebrate the “past tense” of Christmas...to look back and remember the wonder and the miracle of the first Christmas.
- b. The story of the first Christmas is beautiful...the prophesies that were fulfilled ...the incarnation...the miracle of the virgin birth...Mary and Joseph...the manger...the shepherds...the star in the sky...and the wise men.

III. CHRISTMAS PRESENT-

- a. Christmas also has its “present tense”...because the One who was born on that first Christmas Day...continues to live...He is the eternal God.
- b. After Jesus was born...He grew up in a humble and unnoticed way in a town called Nazareth of Galilee.
- c. At the age of 30...Jesus began a public ministry...and for 3 ½ years He traveled throughout the Holy Land...teaching, preaching, doing good and performing miracles.
- d. And even though Jesus had committed no sin and had done no wrong...He was rejected by His people... and even though Jesus was fully God and fully man ... He allowed Himself to be arrested and executed on a cross.
- e. All of this was done according to the plan and foreknowledge of God...because when Jesus was on the cross...the Bible says that He literally took the sins of the world upon Himself ...and by His death He paid the penalty for all the wrong that we have done.
- f. The sacrifice of Jesus was confirmed three days later ...when He arose from the dead.
- g. After His resurrection...Jesus appeared to His disciples over a period of 40 days ... before He ascended into Heaven.

- h. From that time until this present day...Jesus has been saving from the penalty of sin any and all...who will receive Him as their Savior and the Lord of their life.
- i. What began on that first Christmas Day...continues to now.

IV. CHRISTMAS FUTURE-

- a. While Christmas has a past and present tense...it also has a "future tense"... because the same One who was born on Christmas Day...is coming again...the Second Coming of Jesus will be vastly different from His first.
- a. In His first coming, Jesus came as a baby in weakness, humility and obscurity...at His second coming, Jesus will come in power and great glory.
- b. In His first coming, very few bowed before Jesus...when Jesus comes again, every knee will bow before Him...and every tongue will confess that He is Lord.
- c. In His first coming, the door of an inn was shut in Jesus' face...at His second coming, the door of Heaven will open...and out of it will ride Jesus as the "King of kings and Lord of lords."
- d. In His first coming, the arrival of Jesus went largely unnoticed...when Jesus comes again every eye will see Him.
- e. In His first coming, Jesus came as a servant...at His second coming, Jesus will return commanding the armies of Heaven.
- f. At His first coming, Jesus came to wear a crown of thorns...in His second coming, Jesus will wear a crown of power and glory.
- g. The Bible tells us where we are in history...and it tells us what is going to happen next.
- h. We are now in the Age of Grace...in the Age of the Open Door...the time of the Great Gospel Invitation... *Revelation 22:17 (NIV) "The Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life."*
- i. This Age of Grace will continue until the next great event on the calendar of God ...what we call the Rapture of the Believers...at the Rapture every living believer ...will be supernaturally caught up out of this world and taken to Heaven.
- j. *1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 (NIV) "For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 After that, we who*

are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever.”

- k. Soon after the Rapture...the Bible says there will be seven years of Judgment and Great Tribulation upon the earth...some will be saved during the Great Tribulation...but most will continue in their rejection of Christ...and rebellion against God.
- l. At the end of those seven years...the defiant and God-hating armies of the world will gather to do battle against God in the valley of Megiddo...and at that moment the Bible says that the same Jesus who was born in Bethlehem...will come again in great power, glory and victory.
- m. That moment is described in *Revelation 19:11-16 (NIV)* “*I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges and makes war. 12 His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head are many crowns. He has a name written on him that no one knows but he himself. 13 He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is the Word of God. 14 The armies of heaven were following him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean. 15 Out of his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. "He will rule them with an iron scepter." He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty. 16 On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.*”

V. CONCLUSION-

- a. As we celebrate Christmas let us remember and celebrate the “past tense” of Christmas...let’s realize the “present tense” of Christmas...let’s rejoice in the “future tense” of Christmas.
- b. Eventually someone will ask if we are “ready” for Christmas...they mean have we bought all the gifts we are going to give...have we put up all of our decorations...are we ready for our Christmas guests...or ready to make our Christmas trips.
- c. No one is truly “ready” for Christmas...until they have believed the truth about the Christ of Christmas...and have committed their life to His control.
- d. The greatest gift of all is forgiveness and eternal life through Jesus Christ... how do you receive that gift?...a poet wrote these words... "*What can I give Him, poor as I am? If I were a shepherd I'd give Him a lamb. If I were a wise man I'd do my part, but what can I give Him? I must give Him my heart.*"