

Surprised by Advent

Matthew 1:18-25

18 ¶ Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit. 19 Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly. 20 But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. 21 "And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins." 22 So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: 23 "Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel," which is translated, "God with us." 24 Then Joseph, being aroused from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took to him his wife, 25 and did not know her till she had brought forth her firstborn Son. And he called His name JESUS.

I hope this is not a shock to anyone but Christmas will be over in less than two weeks. I tried to warn you months ago but you did not want to listen.

No I doubt that anyone will be surprised by Christmas. We have had 12 months to think about it.

But the first Christmas was different. Everyone knew that it was coming but they did not know the exact day. That is until God began to reveal His will to certain people like Mary and Joseph. And He also revealed it to the Magi from the East.

But most people were just going on with their lives never considering that world history was about to take a big curve. The most important event since the creation was about to spring upon them, as we used to say when we were kids, "Ready or not."

Luke records how that the angel first appeared to Mary to let her know that she was God's chosen vessel to bring forth the Christ Child.

Next in our text the angel appeared to Joseph, Mary's betrothed husband after he was reluctant to believe Mary's story.

But why was he surprised? Because he was surprised by Christmas.

I am sure like every good Jew his prayers included calls for the Messiah to come to His people Israel. But he didn't really think that it could happen now. Now was filled with many things. Getting his household set up in preparation for his marriage to Mary. Trying to provide for his future family.

He was like most of us consumed with the daily events and required duties. Just going through life, getting it done.

But God was moving even though Joseph was unaware of that fact. God was finally moving. God's prophets had foretold of this event since the beginning. God had revealed it to His people Israel over and over again.

But maybe that was the problem. It became something that they had always heard was going to happen someday. But they never thought of it taking place in their day.

But now it was upon them. I want to consider this idea this morning that we would not be surprised by the advent of Jesus Christ.

- I. Mary was surprised.
- II. Joseph was surprised.
- III. The shepherds were surprised but they believed and went.
- IV. Herod was surprised and determined to end it.
- V. The Jewish leaders were not surprised but they didn't believe or care.
- VI. The Jewish people were surprised and did not believe.
 - A. For their rejection of Jesus there would be a heavy price to pay.
 1. Luke 19: 43 "For days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment around you, surround you and close you in on every side, 44 "and level you, and your children within you, to the ground; and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not know the time of your visitation."
 2. As a week ago today I stood on the temple mount the verse that came to my mind was; Mt 24:2 And Jesus said to them, "Do you not see all these things? Assuredly, I say to you, not one stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down."
 3. And so it is today, the temple, the beautiful temple is gone and the Jews have be scattered around the world.
 - B. No one defies God and succeeds.
 1. Even the powerful Romans, for their cities also lay in ruins, as I saw over and over again last week.
 2. I entered the ancient city of Petra that once contained some 30,000 people living in a fortress thought impenetrable, but my mind went to Obadiah v-3 The pride of your heart has deceived you, You who dwell in the clefts of the rock, Whose habitation is high; You who say in your heart, 'Who will bring me down to the ground?' 4 Though you ascend as high as the eagle, And though you set your nest among the stars, From there I will bring you down," says the LORD.
 3. The USA will not succeed in her defiance of God.
 4. What should we do?
 - a. Get right with God yourself.

- b. Get into God's Word seriously.
- c. Worship with God's people.
- d. Get involved in the church.
- e. Live out your faith every day.
- f. Let the world know that this same Jesus that they celebrate His advent this Christmas is going to return.
- g. Don't be surprised by ADVENT.