

THE CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

12/25/11

The four gospels were written by four different authors.

Each focuses on a different aspect of Jesus' nature and ministry.

Matthew presents Jesus as the person who fulfills the Old Testament prophecies of the coming Messianic King.

Mark features Jesus as the suffering servant.

Luke focuses on Jesus as the perfect man.

John emphasizes that Jesus is God, the Son.

We see these unique features in the way Matthew, Luke, and John present the Christmas story.

Matthew mentions the visit of the Magi who are thought to have been part of a royal Persian priesthood.

Mark has no Christmas story.

After all, who cares about the genealogy and birth of a simple servant?

Luke mentions the visit of common ordinary shepherds at the manger scene to visit the man-child, Jesus.

John begins by telling of Jesus' eternal existence as God the Son.

1. Matthew's Christmas Message

a. Jesus has the genealogy of the Messiah. 1:1-17

Everyone is interested in the lineage of royalty.

So Matthew begins with Jesus' genealogy which shows His right to ascend to the throne of David.

Matthew's birth story focuses on Jesus' royal right to rule.

The Magi are recording saying,

Matthew 2:2 "Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we saw His star in the east and have come to worship Him."

b. He will save His people from their sins. 1:18-21

21 The name Jesus literally means, “Jehovah saves”.

21 Jesus came to save us from the eternal consequences of our sins.

He came to save us from the righteous judgment of God which we deserve.

c. He is “God with us.” 1:22-23

Immanuel literally means, “God with us.”

God took up residence among His people.

At Christmas God was born as a baby in a barn, became a man and experienced what it is like to live as a human.

In 2:1-12 we see three responses to Christ’s coming.

4-6 The Jewish religious leaders were indifferent to Christ

3,7-8, 16 Herod threatened and hostile toward Christ.

1-2,9-12 The Magi worshiped Him.

2. Luke’s Christmas Message 1:26-35; 2:8-14

a. Luke gives us Jesus’ human lineage. 2:23-38

It goes back before David to Adam.

b. Jesus will be called the Son of the Most High. 1:30-32a

c. The Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. 1:32b-33

d. His kingdom will have no end. 1:33

e. He is the Savior. 2:1-11

This tells us why He came.

Luke 19:10 "For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost."

1 Timothy 1:15 . . . Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost *of all*.

Romans 5:9 . . . having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him.

f. He is Christ. 2:11

Christ is the Greek rendition of the Hebrew word for Messiah.

Jesus is the promised Messiah of the Old Testament

g. He is Lord. 2:11

Kurios is the same word used in the LXX to translate the Hebrew name for God. (Yahweh)

Jesus is God.

2:12-20 The angels and shepherds' responded by glorifying and praising God.

The account of the visit of shepherds shows Jesus' association with the common man.

3. John's Christmas Message 1:1-18

a. Jesus is God. 1:1

The Jewish Targums used "Word" to describe the OT appearances of God.

John is saying that Jesus is both the essence and expression of God.

b. Jesus is eternal. 1:2

c. Jesus is the Creator of all things. 1:3

d. Jesus is the source of life. 1:4

e. Those who receive Him become children of God. 1:9-13

Romans 1:18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness

John 1:12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, *even* to those who believe in His name

f. Jesus is God in human flesh. 1:14, 18

Jesus reveals God to us in a form that we can understand.

In Jesus we see:

How God thinks, acts, and feels

How God loves and demonstrates compassion

How God responds to sin and hypocrisy

How God reaches out to the downcast and sinners

g. Your eternal destiny depends upon what you do with Jesus. 3:18, 36

John 3:18 "He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

John 3:36 "He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."

4. The Christmas story in stereo

The four gospels were written to focus on four aspects of the nature of Jesus.

Matthew presents Jesus to us as the one who fulfills the Old Testament prophesies of the Messiah.

He begins with Jesus' Messianic genealogy from the line of David.

He uses a fulfillment motif.

Matthew 5:17 "Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill.

Mark features Jesus as the suffering servant.

Mark has no genealogy.

Who cares about the genealogy of a servant?

Mark emphasizes Jesus' servant mentality

Mark 10:45 "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

Luke presents Jesus as the perfect man.

Luke gives Jesus human genealogy, beginning with Adam.

He shows Jesus identifying with our humanity.

Luke 19:10 "For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost."

John emphasizes that Jesus is God the Son and Savior.

Jesus is God

John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

John 1:14 And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.

John 1:18 No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained *Him*.

Jesus is the one and only Savior.

John 14:6 Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.

John's gospel climaxes with a declaration that Jesus is both God and Savior.

John 20:28 Thomas answered and said to Him, "*My Lord and my God!*"²⁹ Jesus said to him, "Because you have seen Me, have you believed? Blessed *are* they who did not see, and *yet* believed."³⁰ Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book;³¹ but these have been *written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name.*