



Christ - Preparing for His Ministry

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Ever since Adam's sin, which resulted in his fall from a perfect relationship with God, man has needed to be reconciled to God. He needed to have his sins washed away and his guilt removed. At just the perfect time and by the action of the Holy Spirit, God became flesh to dwell among men. The Holy Spirit performed a miracle allowing Mary to become pregnant without sexual relations with man. The angel Gabriel announced to Mary and later an angel announced to Joseph how God would be using them to bring the Messiah, God's anointed one, to earth to save mankind from their sins. Both were willing to become servants of God regardless of how people would treat them or what they would say about them. They only wanted to obey and be used by God. When John was baptizing in the Jordan River, Jesus came to be baptized. He saw "Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29-30) "When all the people were being baptized, Jesus was baptized too. And as he was praying, heaven was opened and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: 'You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased.' Now Jesus himself was about thirty years old when he began his ministry." (Luke 3:21-23a)

Following His baptism "Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the desert, where for forty days he was tempted by the devil." (Luke 4:1-2) He had overcome the Devil's temptations so he returned to His home in Nazareth. In their synagogue following His reading of Isaiah 61:1-2, he announced that He was the fulfillment of God's promise to send the Messiah. (Luke 4:21)

A short time later He began selecting those whom He would teach to be his messengers following his resurrection. At the appropriate time, **Jesus** would actively begin proving to all with whom He came in contact that He **was God who had come to earth to live among men and to become a perfect sacrifice for man's sins**. He did this by His perfect life, the miracles He performed openly before great crowds, and statements by John the Baptist and God himself.

Many people benefited from these miracles. Even those full of envy, jealousy, and covetousness had to acknowledge that miracles had been performed. The hypocritical religious leaders rejected him because of their desire for power and prestige. In doing so they even violated their own laws and traditions which they outwardly professed to uphold.

His followers had heard His message, His parables, and their explanations and witnessed His miracles. They had witnessed those raised from the dead, the blind made to see, the deaf to hear, and the denial of such by their religious leaders. But there were many things they needed to know so Jesus said "I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you." (John 16:12-14)

As He was preparing for His atoning sacrifice, he prayed; "... He looked toward heaven and prayed: 'Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you. For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him. Now this is eternal life: that they may know you,

the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do. And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began. I have revealed you to those whom you gave me out of the world. They were yours; you gave them to me and they have obeyed your word. Now they know that everything you have given me comes from you. For I gave them the words you gave me and they accepted them. They knew with certainty that I came from you, and they believed that you sent me." ... "I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world. My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. For them, I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified." (John 17:1-8; 14-19)

His mission to proclaim the message of reconciliation, redemption, and forgiveness of sin was nearing completion. At the right time Jesus would give his life as the atoning sacrifice for man's sins, the very thing He left Heaven to come to earth to do.

"He said to them, 'This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms.' Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. He told them, 'This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. I am going to send you what my Father has promised, but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.'" (Luke 24:44-49)

As He was ready to return to God, the Father "Jesus came to them and said, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age.'" (Matthew 28:18-20)

For the first time following the sin of Adam and Eve, man had a way open for them to be reconciled to God.

Questions

1. At what time did Jesus come to the Earth?
 - December 25, often referred to as Christmas
 - When Israel was powerful, so many people would praise Him
 - At just the right or fullness of time
2. Following Gabriel's appearing, Mary was pleased and honored to be used by God but Joseph was reluctant, fearing what people would say.
 - True
 - False
3. Different New Testament writers recorded Jesus' lineage showing how God was faithful in keeping His promise to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and David.
 - True

False

4. While Jesus was here on Earth, He proved He was God by

Testimony of John the Baptist

His perfect sinless life

The miracles He

All the above

5. What was the message Jesus preached during his ministry on Earth?

A message of redemption

A message of forgiveness of sins

A message of reconciliation to God

All the above

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