

The “Un” Christmas - Part One

Christ’s Coming was Unimaginable, but Not Unpredictable

Scripture Reading: John 1:1-14

Many people in Israel thought about the coming of the Messiah. They would speak of it, but no one could have imagined how it was going to actually happen. They could imagine a great leader, who would overcome the Roman government and establish Israel’s national sovereignty. They pictured some former glory or some transcendent future glory for their nation.

Who would have imagined:

- That a relatively poor couple from Nazareth would be the Messiah’s parents.
- That they would give birth to their child in a different city because of a taxation rule.
- That the city would be so crowded, the baby would be born in a stable.

Well, the story gets more incredible as it progresses... Jesus was first honored by shepherds, and then later, by foreign magi – not by the honorable religious leaders of Israel. Sight unseen, a Roman-appointed King gave an order to kill Jesus. This resulted in a wholesale massacre of children in the immediate area.

As Jesus began His ministry, He was announced by a rugged man of the wilderness and disregarded by the political and religious officials. Though Jesus spoke wonderful words and did miraculous works of benevolence, He was mocked and maligned. Several attempts on His life were made, culminating in a pre-dawn abduction and illegal trial. Jesus was condemned, based on false charges, and turned over to the Roman authorities, who had him crucified along with two thieves.

No one could imagine all this! Yet, it was all predictable, because Scripture, written hundreds of years earlier, had described these events. The story was written by different writers, at different times, here a little and there a little. See Isaiah 7:14; Micah 5:2; Jeremiah 31:15 (Matthew 2:16-18); Isaiah 40:3-5 (Mark 1:1-11; Luke 3:1-6) Isaiah 53; Psalm 22; 69. Everyone in Israel wanted a Messiah. No one could have naturally imagined that He would be someone like Jesus (Matthew 16:16-17).

In the first chapter of John, Jesus Christ is called “*The Word of God*” and “*The Light*” that “*shines in darkness,*” “*which lights every man*” (John 1:1-9). In this same passage, the world is described as “*darkness*” (John 1:5). We are also told that the darkness did not “*comprehend*” or “*overcome*” the light. Translations differ, here, but the verb means “*to understand, grasp, or overcome.*” Put it together and what we are being told is that the world could not figure Him out. The world couldn’t handle the coming of Christ. The world could not understand and receive Him. The world could not defeat Him. See John 1:10-11; 5:37-47; 16:33.

So, now we ask, “Why can’t this dark world understand, receive, or overcome Christ?”

The light of Christ was not / is not comprehended and received, because men naturally hate light – John 3:19-20

Those who love darkness and are accustomed to it are naturally irritated by bright light and avoid it. This is demonstrated by early man’s knowledge of the true God, which they suppressed. Those who knew the truth, rather propagated notions of other gods, to replace the knowledge of the true God. See Romans 1:18-32; Ecclesiastes 7:29; I Corinthians 2:14 (cp. 1:18-31).

The light of Christ was not / is not comprehended and received because Satan interferes and distracts them – John 8:42-45

Our enemy Satan hates Christ and the Gospel. His purpose is to lie and to deceive men, so that they cannot believe and be saved from sin (II Corinthians 4:3-4). Some men are blinded by Satan through terrible moral darkness and the pursuits of earthly pleasures and wealth (I John 2:15-16; Ephesians 2:2-3). Others are blinded by a competing false light. It can be philosophical, religious – even a falsely so-called “Christian” gospel, that appears to be righteous and holy (Galatians 1:6-12; II Corinthians 11:3,13-15; Colossians 2:8; I John 4:1-6; Jude 1:3-4; cp. Proverbs 14:12; 16:25).

The light of Christ can only be comprehended and received by the preaching of the Gospel and the work of the Holy Spirit – John 1:9-13

The Gospel is God’s power to break through to sinful men (Romans 1:16). God’s Spirit uses the Gospel to break through the darkness, overpower Satan’s influence, and draw men to Christ (Matthew 16:13-17; John 6:44-45,63; Acts 26:18; Ephesians 2:1-10). God also uses people to do this great work. We need to walk with the Lord. Our lives must demonstrate the example of what a person looks like, who is born again and following Jesus. The testimony of our lives must be accompanied with a humble, confident declaration of what the Gospel teaches. It is in this two-fold manner that we must let our light shine before men. See Matthew 5:14-16; Romans 1:14-18; 10:8-17; I Corinthians 1:18,21; 2:1-5; II Corinthians 4:1-6; Ephesians 3:8-9; Philippians 2:14-16; I Thessalonians 1:5-10; I Peter 3:15.