**January 1, 2017 “Christmas in History” Revelation 12: 1-5**

Whenever we enter into the Christmas season, I think there is always an opportunity for deception to rears its ugly head. For example, how many times haven’t we seen nativity scene where all appears to warm, cozy, clean and inviting? I really doubt if this was a reality.

Do we ever stop to think what it must have been like for Mary to be 9 ½ months pregnant and walking or even riding on a donkey the miles and miles of dusty roads to Bethlehem maybe with contractions occurring, maybe on a daily or hourly basis? Can you imagine the discomfort of trying to balance on a donkey, let alone trying to get on one when you are in that condition only to find that at the end of your journey you cannot even find a room in which to give birth the “Holy One who is to be called the Son of the Most High?” Would you think that the reality of the situation maybe didn’t quite meet your dreams of how things should be?

Those thoughts bring us to our Scripture today which opens our eyes to the reality of the stupendous impact of the birth of Christ which was more far-reaching than our finite minds can comprehend in all its fullness.

Revelation 12: 1-5

Note there are three entities mentioned in this passage

1. The woman
2. The great red dragon
3. The male child

We will look at all of these today in the light of Christmas…..the day we celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ our Lord

1. The woman
	1. Note sami-on-is the word for sign (vs 1 & 3)
		1. Symbol of something greater
			1. It is a symbol of something else…..that is a reality
			2. That is the case with the Book of the Revelation
			3. Many symbols of other realities
				1. Things that we often do not take time contemplate
				2. Things that are only revealed in Scripture to those who are seeking to know the truth that will set them free
			4. Revelation gives us a panoramic view of God’s plan from eternity past to eternity to future…that is why this is called a “great” sign.”
			5. Rather than look at Christmas through our normal horizontal view……look at in a spiritual view
2. Who is this woman?
	1. Three views
		1. Roman Catholic view
			1. This Mary…..clothed in her divinity
				1. With the sun
				2. Moon at her feet
				3. Crown of 12 stars
		2. Reformed view
			1. This is the church
			2. Part of the replacement theology
				1. Problem

Church is never referred to as a “woman”

Church did not give birth to Christ

* + 1. This woman is Israel
			1. Genesis 37: 9-11
				1. Dream of Joseph

Sun and moon and 11 stars bowing down to him

* + - * 1. She has a crown of 12 stars

The twelve tribes of Israel

* + - 1. She is in labor
				1. Throughout the O.T.
				2. Israel is describes as “woman in travail”

Isaiah 26 (pregnant women)

 Isaiah 54 (the one who was desolate)

 Isaiah 66 (the one who travailed and gave birth to a son), you can go into Hosea, Micah, and Jeremiah

1. The great, red dragon
	1. Also described in Revelation 17
		1. Seven heads
			1. 7 kingdoms
		2. 10 horns
			1. Ten nation confederacy
		3. He is not alone
			1. 1/3 of stars of heaven were swept away by him
	2. To devour her child
		1. Satan has always tried to kill this child
			1. Abraham with Hagar
			2. Joseph sold into slavery
			3. Moses….every male child killed
			4. Esther….wicked Haman
			5. Saul tried to kill David
			6. Athaliah tried to kill Joash
			7. Herod……Bethlehem
2. The male child
	1. She give birth to a son…….
		1. Isaiah 9: 6….”for unto us a child is born and unto us a Son is given”
		2. Incarnation…a Son is given
	2. Rule with a rod of iron
		1. Coronation a “King of Kings and Lord of Lords”
	3. Satan tries to destroy Him in every way
		1. Herod
		2. Tempts Him with all the riches of this world
		3. Nazareth throw Him off a cliff
		4. Tried to kill Him on a cross
		5. 2016……90,000 Christians martyred (Vs 17)
	4. Child was caught up to God and His throne
		1. Resurrection and Ascension

So what does the birth of Jesus show us?

* + - 1. No matter what occurs in your life or mine
				1. God is on the throne and in control
				2. He is absolutely Sovereign over things in heaven and earth and under the earth
			2. Satan is a defeated foe
				1. No matter what…..Satan and all his hordes will spend an eternity in the lake of fire
				2. No ifs ands or buts about
			3. No earthly being had a hand in this cosmic battle
				1. We are saved by grace alone, through faith alone in Christ alone

The great and glorious plan of God…..is this………the Lord Jesus Christ will reign forever and ever and ever and those who are “in Him will live and reign with Him in glory.”

Amen