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The Twelve Ways of Christmas

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The Twelve Ways of Christmas

by Harold L. Willmington

But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law (Gal. 4:4).

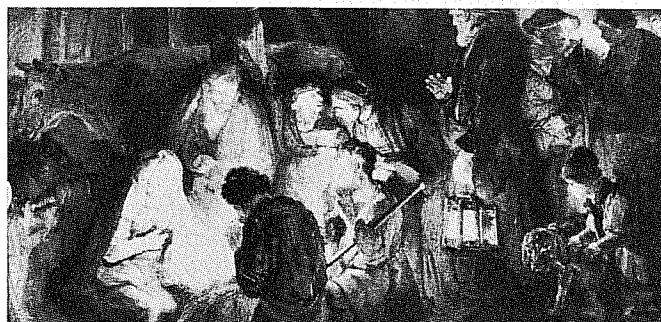
One of the most popular Christmas songs enjoyed by Americans is "The Twelve Days of Christmas." The song, of course, has absolutely nothing whatsoever to do with the real story. On the contrary, the Christmas story tells of a Babe in a manger, and not of a partridge in a pear tree!

God shows us in the Old Testament prophecies His 12 ways that would prepare for and lead to the Incarnation of Christ!

- The Messiah would come. Immediately following Adam's sin God spoke these words to Satan, who had prompted the Fall of man: "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel" (Gen. 3:15). Devout Bible students claim to see a thrilling prediction of the Cross and the Resurrection in this verse—the Saviour's great victory over Satan. Theologically, then, verse 15 may be translated: "And

there will be intense hatred between Satan and Christ. Eventually Christ will crush the head of Satan, while suffering a heel wound in the process." This all-important verse is known as the "Proto-Evangel," the first gospel.

- The Messiah would be born. Unlike Adam and Eve who were created, the Messiah would be born!
- The Messiah would be born of a woman. Eve, especially, may have pondered this statement in amazement, for she had come from the side of a man. Why could not the Christ child come from man?
- The Messiah would be a male. For reasons known



only to God, in the councils of eternity it was determined that the coming Messiah would take upon Himself the flesh of a male, and not a female.

- The Messiah would suffer. Note the phrase in Genesis 3:15, "thou [Satan] shalt bruise his [Christ's] heel." Isaiah would later provide the ultimate description of the agony of His suffering (Isa. 53).
- The Messiah would, nevertheless, emerge victorious! The "heel wound" suffered would be as nothing when compared to the crushing head injury He would inflict upon Satan. Paul later reminds us: "And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus

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Christ be with you. Amen" (Rom. 16:20).

- The Messiah would come from the nation Israel. By comparing Genesis 12:1-3 with Matthew 1:1 we learn Israel was the nation selected by God to accomplish the Incarnation.
- The Messiah would come from the tribe of Judah. The dying patriarch

give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel" (Isa. 7:14).

- The Messiah would be born in Bethlehem. "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah . . . out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose going forth has been from of old, from everlasting" (Micah 5:2).
- The Messiah would be visited and honored by wise men. Both David (Ps. 72:10) and Isaiah (Isa. 60:3,6,9) predicted this, and Matthew 2:1 records its historical fulfillment.

Sermon Outline

The Birth of Jesus—
Luke 1:5-2:52

- I. Gabriel's announcement to Zacharias (1:5-25)
- II. Gabriel's announcement to Mary (1:26-38)
- III. Mary's visit to Elisabeth (1:39-56)
- IV. Jesus' Birth in Bethlehem (2:1-21)

Word Study

Jesus is an adaptation of the Greek form of Jeshua, which was formerly Jehoshua or Joshua (Jehovah is salvation). Jesus was given his name by direction of the angel to Joseph (Matt. 1:21) and Mary (Luke 1:31). Jesus is his personal name while Christ is his title (the Christ); though Christ has been and continues to be used as a proper name, either alone or as Jesus Christ.