



The Greatest Announcement in the History of the World Part 2 December 14, 2025 Luke 1:26-38

(Video 51:04)

Well, Merry Christmas, again, from our house to yours, and I would ask you to turn to the Gospel of Luke chapter 1. We left off last time sharing what I referred to, or titled at least, *The Greatest Announcement in the History of the World*. You may recall, last time I started off by sharing some various life-changing announcements from history, mine as well as the history of the world, if you will, most of them very short, most of them very direct, many of them profoundly simple. And as I continue to say when we come to this announcement of the angel Gabriel straight from the face of Almighty God to a Jewish virgin, a Jewish teenager by the name of Miriam, that not only is a profoundly simple announcement, but as I've been saying, it's an announcement which is simply, simply profound.

We pick it up again in Luke chapter 1:26. It says, ***Now in the sixth month***, as you know, that's the sixth month of her cousin Elizabeth's pregnancy with John the Baptist, ***in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city in Galilee called Nazareth***, and as we pointed out last time, just to show you the humble nature of the beginnings of Almighty God, nobody on the planet who didn't live in the area of Palestine at the time would have a clue where Nazareth was. And therefore, the inspired writer tells us it's Nazareth in Galilee, because when you give them the region, they know. Now you might recall last week, I used an example. I said, if I said that the Messiah was born in Smithville, you'd go, where's Smithville? But if I said Smithville, Texas, well, at least you'd know, oh, that area in the southwestern part of the United States, and you'd know where it was. Well, interestingly enough, I don't know if she's here today, but Ruth Vandervoort came up to me afterwards, and she was stunned, and I said,



she says, I had no idea you knew about Smithville. I said, what? There actually is a Smithville, Texas, and she had relatives there, and she was shocked that I knew about it. But in any event, she sort of demonstrated the point. You may not know where Smithville was, but if you say Texas, you get it. You may not know where Nazareth is, but if you say in Galilee, you would know where it was. As a matter of fact, I left this out last week, but I used the example of a profound, amazing announcement on the attack on Pearl Harbor, and I said, "Air raid Pearl Harbor, this is no drill". And the thing I forgot to mention, just to show you why this text does what it does, is that I asked my dad, who was obviously alive at the time when Pearl Harbor was attacked before he died, and talked to Manny Statini a couple weeks ago about it. I've talked to him about it several times in the past. You talk to anybody who was alive and cognizant at the time they got the news that Pearl Harbor was attacked, and you know what 99.9% of Americans, their first question was? "Where is Pearl Harbor?" Nobody knew where Pearl Harbor was for the most part, but they were, oh, it's in the Hawaiian Islands. Oh, it's out there. Same concept here. No one knew where Nazareth was, but it's in that area, that region called Galilee.

Now that is important for another reason as well. It's because right off at the get-go, it's Jewish, and it's maybe predominantly Jewish, and the Messiah came first to the Jew, but it was also an area that was heavily populated with a Gentile population, and as a matter of fact, Isaiah even refers to it as Galilee of the Gentiles will see a great light. The point being what? Right off at the get-go, even at the announcement of the birth of the Messiah, let alone the birth of the Messiah, he was born in a place where the Gentile population intersected with Judaism to underscore the fact that He came to be the Savior of the whole world, the whole world.



Now we left off last time in talking about this great announcement. Let's continue on a few more things. The announcement from Gabriel came, verse 27, **to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the descendants of David;** both Mary and Joseph, descendants of David, **and the virgin's name was,** Miriam in the Hebrew, **Mary.** By the way, we underscored again, espoused, engaged, betrothed in the King James, and the analogy, some people had questions about that afterward. I was making an analogy of the Jewish custom, marriage custom, and ritual and ceremony, to the spiritual life. The parents organized and orchestrated and determined who was going to get married. What happened in eternity past? The Father determined who His bride-to-be, if you will, was going to marry, His Son. You and I are referred to in scriptures as the bride of Christ, and Christ is referred to as the bridegroom, and then what happens? They get engaged, if you will, and while the bride-to-be does what? For a full year, before they come together for a full year, they're betrothed, and what's happening during that year? She's proving out her purity. What happens as we walk through our earthly life? God through the person of the Holy Spirit is conforming us more and more to Christ and ultimately our purity, if you will, our relationship with Christ, our genuine salvation in Christ is proved out, if you will, the preservation, the perseverance of the saints. During that year period of time, what's the engaged bridegroom doing? He is at his father's house preparing an adjunct living quarters, if you will, so when he gets his bride and they get married in a year, they'll have a place to go to. What does Jesus say as the bridegroom? ***In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you,*** my bride, so that one day I will come again, take you to Myself, and then ultimately, at the point in time that we're betrothed to Christ, if you will, at the point in time you came to know Him as your Lord and Savior, what does He give you? He gives you Himself, really. You endued, the Holy Spirit is given to us, and it's referred to in Scripture,



carrying through this marriage analogy, as a down payment, an earnest money deposit, or an engagement ring, so that when the time comes for you to leave this earth and go to Christ, whether you're alive when He returns or you die a physical death and your spirit goes to be with Him, you will be united with your bridegroom, and you and I forever, and what does Revelation say? We will enjoin in what? The wedding supper of the Lamb, the marriage analogy. That is exactly why, among other reasons, the LGBTQ and all of this transgender stuff and everything that they try to do to destroy common sense, let alone male and female roles and the nuclear family and so forth, Satan loves confusion. He loves chaos. He loves to denigrate the word of God, and you can understand how people would get confused and the power of the message is lost when male and female roles are totally destroyed, let alone the concept of the virgin birth. You got people telling you that men can have children now, and all of this insanity, you know that right is being called wrong, wrong is being called right, and as you said, Lia, we are literally seeing the insanity of our culture as prophesied on the pages of Scripture lived out before our very eyes, but take hope, the Lord is still in control. He comes here in verse 28 and says, **and coming in, he says to her**, Mary the virgin, **"Hail favored one!..."** Some of your translations might say, "Hail Mary full of grace". The mistranslation of that verse, as we said before, has caused so much cultic confusion and Mariolatry to go on. Mary is not the repositior of grace. Mary received grace from Almighty God, and so **"... The Lord is with you."** And, by the way, that's the only time we ever get grace; when the Lord is with us. And what's it say? **And she was greatly troubled at this statement** (It actually means mentally distressed) **and kept pondering what kind of salutation this might be. And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; for you have found (grace) favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb, and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus."**



Now we left off last time talking about certain of these aspects, okay, and we said that, first of all, we had a *divine messenger* in Gabriel. We had *God's divine choice* in picking out this virgin teenager, and she no doubt was striving to live a righteous life. I don't think God would pick somebody who wasn't. But it's very interesting, we're told nothing about her, "qualities". This has got nothing to do about Mary's merit. This has got everything to do with the grace of God on her and on the rest of us in coming into time, space, dimension, history as the Savior of the world. Then we were told about the *divine blessing*, which we just discussed, was grace. Grace is being showed to her. And then we talked about, or started to talk about this divine, *divine child*.

By the way, before we get to that, she makes a comment in verse 34 I thought was interesting, one to underscore for you. It said, ***And Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" And the angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of (El Elyon) the Most High will overshadow you, and for that reason the holy offspring shall be called the Son of God."*** Then he talks about her cousin Elizabeth being with child, and then look at verse 37. ***For nothing will be impossible with God.*** I wanted to underscore that, because you hear people use this phrase, 'nothing's impossible with God'. I sure hope I get that job. Well, why don't you pray about it? After all, nothing's impossible with God. I sure hope so and so decides to marry me. Well, why don't you pray about it? After all, nothing is impossible with God. Now that's true. Nothing is impossible with God by definition. He's God, but I wanted you to see that that phrase, *nothing is impossible with God*, is used in three specific contexts in scripture, and they're all tied together. It's used right here in talking about the virgin birth of Christ, the literally the advent of God into the human race as the God-man absolutely had to be done by Almighty God. It's impossible with man, but not with God. However, the other two contexts in which that phrase, *nothing is impossible with God*, are



found. Two of them are found in Matthew 19:26, and Mark 10:27, and they both relate to the same thing. Jesus is talking about the salvation experience, the conversion experience, and talking about how difficult it is for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven, and the disciples sit there and they turn to them and say, oh my goodness gracious, because they all thought that being wealthy was a sign of God's favor, and if they thought if rich people have a hard time getting into the kingdom, they're exasperated, and they say, how can anyone be saved? And what does Jesus say? He says, with man, it is impossible, but with God, all things are [possible], meaning the virgin birth, impossible unless God acts, the new birth, the spiritual birth of a believer in Christ, impossible unless God acts, underscored again. And the third time it's used is back in Jeremiah 32:27. It's used in reference to the redemption of a remnant in Israel, and the phrase is, quote, I will make a new covenant with them, and I will give them a heart that will not turn away from me, Jeremiah 32:40. What's the point? The new birth, if you will, of the remnant of Israel coming back to Messiah, the literal new birth of believers in Christ, and the virgin birth of Christ are the three contexts in which that phrase, *it is impossible with man, but it is possible with God*. And I hope that every time you hear that in the future, you'll always harken back to God's grace in saving your own soul, God's future grace that He's going to show on the nation of Israel, at least the remnant of Israel, as the end time prophecies unfold, and harken back to what we come to today in talking about the virgin, virgin birth of Christ, a divine child.

The divine child is described for us in verses 31 through 33. At the end of verse 31, there's four things that are said about it. We talked about this first one last week. The first thing is you'll call his name Jesus, and we did all those verses of scripture. Why? Because he's a redeeming God. He's a saving God, the Son of man came not to be served, but to serve and to give his life a ransom for many. He's the suffering savior. He's a redeeming God. So on and so



forth. Jesus saves. Jehovah saves, the meaning of His word. So the first thing we're told about, this child, this divine child, that He's going to be a savior. It's a saving word.

Then the second thing we're told about is that ***He will be great.*** Underlined, circle that word *great.* We're going to come right back to that in a second. We skipped over that last time. We said he'll be called the son of the Most High, the son of El Elyon. For the Jews, that was a powerful, powerful term. They didn't want to use the Hebrew tetragrammaton. They were fearful that they might mispronounce the name of God. So they would use various names that described his characteristics. El Shaddai, El Elyon, most as a common, as a matter of fact, I was thinking it was Christmas time 35, 40 years ago when I first heard that song. El Shaddai, El Shaldai, El Elyon, El Adonai. Age to age, you're still the same by the power of your name, by the power of everything you are. And it reminded me, yeah, they use all those descriptive terms for Him because they don't want to mispronounce His holy name, which is really a sign of reverence. But the thing I wanted to underscore is that the most common one they use is El Elyon, Most High. That's why, as a matter of fact, the angel Gabriel says, and the power of El Elyon, the Most High, shall overshadow you. And later on, when it talks about Elizabeth being with child, he says the power of El Elyon, the Most High, has conceived this, has overpowered, has given them the ability to have a child as well. So he's going to be what? He's going to be literally God in human form. He says He'll be called the Son of God. So he's going to be a savior. He's going to be deity.

There's also another aspect to the whole thing that you need to underscore. It says what? Actually the fourth thing that's said about Him, we haven't talked about great. He's Jesus. That's the first thing. He's a savior. The third thing is that Most High, He's God, and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David, and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom shall have no end. The gospel story doesn't end, friends, with the



death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. It ends when history ends, if you will. It ends when He returns. He is going to rule and reign on the throne of David in a new Jerusalem, a new earth forever and ever and ever, and that is a part of the overall gospel message. One commentator said that he was raised in a Christian home, and he says, you know, I had Catholic friends, and he said, I could never understand it. They would have these rosaries, and at the end of the rosary beads, there'd be this cross, and it would have a crucified man on it, and he says, and then I visited, as I got a little older, Catholic friends in their homes, and I would see a cross with a crucified image of Christ on it. That's a crucifix as opposed to a cross, and he says, you know, I thought, don't they believe in the resurrection? They could never get Jesus off the cross, if you will, and he goes on in his commentator and says, you know, we've done a pretty good job as evangelicals getting Jesus off the cross, getting Him buried and resurrected and risen and off the, he says, but we haven't done a real good job getting him on the throne and living out lives of personal holiness and emphasizing the life to come and the rule and reign of Christ forever and ever and ever. So He's three things. He's going to rule on the throne of David forever. He's going to be a savior. Jesus, His name, points to His death, and He's going to be God in human form, but He's also going to be good. That word good points to His life, and that's where I wanted, excuse me, he's going to be *great*, and that word *great*, I'm sorry, I said good, *great* refers to the life that He's going to live. It points toward His life.

Now what about Him is going to be great, or why the word *great*. And I left off last week by saying it's an overworked, overused word in English, you know, it's a great sandwich, it's a great day, you know, have a great day, and it loses something. The Bible says ***He shall be great***. What it's actually saying is He will manifest the glory of Almighty God. John 12:37-41, I just wanted to read them for you. Jesus speaking says this, but though he had, excuse me, John speaking of Jesus says in verse 37 of John 12, ***But though He, Christ, had performed so***



many signs before them, yet they were not believing in Him; that the word of Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled which he spoke, "LORD, WHO HAS BELIEVED OUR REPORT? AND TO WHOM HAS THE ARM OF THE LORD BEEN REVEALED?" For this cause they could not believe, for Isaiah said again, "HE HAS BLINDED THEIR EYES, AND HE HARDENED THEIR HEART; LEST THEY SEE WITH THEIR EYES AND PERCEIVE WITH THEIR HEART AND BE CONVERTED AND I HEAL THEM." That's a quote from Isaiah. Now here we go. *These things Isaiah* (the prophet) *said because he, Isaiah, saw His glory* (Isaiah saw the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ), *and he spoke of Him.* When did Isaiah, I know he spoke of the coming Messiah. We know in Isaiah 7 he talks about a virgin shall conceive and be with child. We know in Isaiah 9 and he says He'll be called Wonderful Counselor, the Mighty God and so on and so forth. We know he spoke about Messiah, but when did Isaiah the prophet actually see the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ and the answer is Isaiah 6 when it says on the, in the days of King Uzziah, I beheld, he saw a vision, I beheld and I was in the temple and I saw the Lord high and lifted up on His throne, et cetera, and the entire temple was filled with His glory and the cherubim starts saying "holy, holy, holy Lord, the earth is filled with Thy glory", and so he sees the glory of God which is the glory of Christ. You say, "Well what's the point?" What is glory? We said over and over and over again the glory of God is the manifestation of His character, His attributes, His personhood, all that He is. That's why John says in John chapter 1:14, *And the word, Jesus Christ, became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we what? beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.* The Mount of Transfiguration in Matthew 17, he pulls back somehow a portion of His physical skinly facade and lets a glimpse of His nature come through and it's like blinding light and He reveals His "glory" if you will. Spiritually, the glory of God is manifested by His being, His personhood, His character qualities. Physically, and this is what I wanted to get to, in a physical sense the glory of God is



manifested to you and me by light, generally by light. When he says **He will be great**, what he's saying is He will manifest My glory. He'll manifest My attributes. He will do, speak, and say, and so forth. It's exactly what it says in Hebrews 1:3 which is one of the best descriptions of it. Excuse me, I said 1:13. In Hebrews 1:3 is a powerful passage of scripture that lays it out perfectly for us. In Hebrews 1:3 the writer says this, **He, Christ, is the radiance of His glory...** I like the fact he used the word *radiance* because I'm going to tie this into light in a second. The radiance of His glory **...and the exact representation of His nature** in what He said, what He did, His heart, how He acted is the exact representation of the glory of God in the sense of His character qualities and His nature and so forth, that we could see it in fleshly form. However, He's also the radiance of all that God is in its physical manifestation to us which comes through as light. In a spiritual sense, Isaiah 9:1 & 2 says what? Those who lived in darkness, Galilee of the Gentiles, it says, **will see a great light**. He's talking about spiritual terms. Jesus terms it says, you are the light of the world. Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify Me. They'll see your glory because your good works are My good works and therefore a manifestation of My character and therefore when you manifest God's character you give Him glory and men will see your glory. Spiritually, that's the way men see the glory of God, your good works.

Physically, it comes in this whole issue of light. Go to Matthew chapter 2. This is the fun part. I've been wanting to get to this. This is what I love about Christmas. All of these things we get to revisit in Matthew chapter 2. Take a look again. This is why I had Ben read this account about the birth of Christ because in Matthew chapter 2, I think it's in Matthew, I'm in Luke. In Matthew chapter 2, we have these wonderful individuals show up called the Magi, the Magi. Now Ben read it for us, but let me reorient you to Matthew chapter 2 verses 1 and 2. **Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem**, and by the way, if you wonder where I'm going with this,



physical manifestation of the glory of God coming about through light. Physical manifestation of the glory of God in a spiritual sense is the good works. Whenever you live out the character qualities of Almighty God. Jesus Christ is a physical manifestation of the glory of God because He's God in human form. So all of God's character qualities are wrapped up in Him, but what I want you to see is that when Almighty God in the person of Christ or Almighty God Himself appears, if you will, in doing different things with men, light is a huge issue. So it's spiritual light to show lost darkened sinners the way to God and spiritual right relationship with God, which is called light, but also there's physical darkness and physical light that is used as symbolic of all of this. Interestingly enough, just to set the scene for you a little bit, I found this fascinating. At the time of the birth of Christ, the whole world actually was anticipating something special to come. They didn't know what it was, and I don't know what caused this, but there was a general feeling, a mindset among the peoples of the world that something special would come. Now say, how do you know that? Well, one way we know is from a historian named Suetonius. A Roman historian acknowledged this. He says this: *There had spread over all the Orient an old and established belief that it was fated at that time*, meaning approximately the time of the birth of Christ, *for men coming from Judea to rule the world*. Here's another one. Tacitus, a famous Roman historian writing about 100 years after Christ, says: *There was a firm persuasion that at this very time*, meaning around the birth of Christ, *the east*, that's east of Rome, okay, *the east was to grow powerful and rulers coming from Judea were to acquire a universal empire*. A Jewish historian by the name of Josephus writing in his War of the Jews. And you say, well, why did they feel this way? I don't know, but it's recorded in histories. Josephus says this in his Wars of the Jews about that same time period when Christ was born. *The Jews believed that one from their country should become governor of the habitable earth. A short time later, Tiridates, king of Armenia, goes and visits Nero in Rome*. This



is shortly after the time of Christ, and he, with several wise men, is inquiring as to the savior of the world. A man, there were Magi in Athens, and we'll talk about that in the future, who were worshipping at this time the memory of Plato, and they had a strong belief that something special and significant was going to happen in the world. The Roman poet Virgil writes in his histories that at that point in time, meaning around the time of the birth of Christ, the Romans were anticipating a new golden age to come across the entire world and so forth. So and even Caesar Augustus, at the time of Christ's birth, took upon himself to declare himself not just emperor, but declare himself the savior of the world. How fascinating to think that all of that is going on. Now, these Magi from the east, and you know, it was a couple of years ago, we studied the Magi in great detail. They were a priestly tribe. They were an ethnos. They were a group of people who were in the Babylonian empire when Daniel was taken off in captivity. And Daniel, as you know, becomes the head, the chief Magi, if you will. Why? Because Nebuchadnezzar is going to kill them all because they can't interpret his dreams. Daniel interprets the dreams, spares the life, spares the lives of all the Chaldeans, spares the lives of the Magi, and so he becomes like their hero. Well, he's Jewish, and he knows the Jewish Old Testament, the scriptures, the only scriptures that existed at the time. And he, of course, evangelizes them, and you've got Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, and all the other Hebrews, I might add, who are taken into captivity in Babylon, and they share the belief in the one true God of the scriptures, and they talk about the prophecies and the Messiah to come. And so these Magi are evangelized, if you will, 500 years before the time of Christ. Now, they're not all believers in Christ. Just like the world is not all believers in Christ, but the world is evangelized. Our world is evangelized today, and they were evangelized. The message was given to them, and there was a certain believing remnant among those Magi, among that priestly tribe, who were looking for the prophecies to be ultimately fulfilled in this Jewish



Messiah. And there's all sorts of parallels that we shared in the past about them. Now, one of the prophecies, of course, was about His being born in Judea, in that part of the world. So here's these Magi, and by the way, they didn't, don't think some pseudoscience stargazing is how they ultimately end up here. They were told the truth of the word of God by Daniel and others, and those truths were passed down for the four or five hundred years under the Babylonian empire, and later the Medo-Persian empire, and so forth. And they knew about the scriptures, and a certain number of them, like I say, became a part of the believing remnant, because God has His people out of every tribe, out of every nation, every tongue, and the Magoi, the Magi, literally were a tribe. So, so what? So some of these faithful individuals looking for the prophecies of the Jewish Messiah to be fulfilled, something happens. Yes, they did observe stars, and they did observe planets and all that stuff in their basically pagan cultic practices that they were known for, but in their doing so, something happened. What was it? They say in verse one, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem, verse one of chapter two of Matthew, ***...the days of Herod the king, behold, Magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, saying, "Where is He who's been born king of the Jews? For we have seen, here we go, His star, His astēr [G792] in the Greek. Now the word astēr there, interesting meaning, that's the word for star in Greek. It can mean a literal star, like we see at night, but the word actually means shining or blazing forth. It's often, sometimes I should say, referred to people or angels as having a light blazing from them. It's even referred to as the Lord Jesus Christ having a blazing or a shining going out from Him, and so his, the astēr, anything that has a blazing or a shining forth of light is an astēr. Now this star that they saw, the question becomes, well wait a minute, what really was it? Well, there's all sorts of theories that are out there. One was that it was a real star. Another one was that it's Jupiter, because the planet Jupiter is referred to as the king of planets, and they were looking for the king of the Jews, the***



Messiah to come, so it must have been the planet Jupiter. Another guy named Kepner, his theory was no, it actually was the convergence of Jupiter and Saturn. Those two planets converged together and created a bright star, and as a matter of fact in, which astrology is paganism, but when Jupiter and Saturn converge, it's referred to as the sign of the fish, which I thought was interesting given that fish is a sign for Christianity, but that's another theory. Another one was that it's just a comet. Another one was that it's a meteor, and then of course you get into all the theories about, well, it really wasn't a real anything. It was sort of the star of hope that was lodged in men's hearts, and you know, and you get into all these theories. What was it? I'm going to tell you, it wasn't any of those, it wasn't any of those. I'll tell you what I think it is. Look at the Gospel of Luke chapter two, the Gospel of Luke chapter two, and specifically at verse, let's go six through nine. Look at chapter two of Luke verses six through nine. ***And it came about that while they were there, the days were completed for her, Mary, to give birth. And she gave birth to her firstborn son; and she wrapped Him in cloths and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. And in the same region, there were some shepherds staying out in the fields, and keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord suddenly stood before them, and here we go, the doxa [G1391], the glory of the Lord shown around them; and they were terribly frightened.*** These angels show up to make this announcement, and what happens? There is a glory of the Lord shown around them. What was this glory of the Lord? It was manifested in light, okay? And if you go back and you look for the glory of the Lord, the glory of the Lord over and over and over again, it's manifested as light. When was the last time God's glory, if you will, the manifestation of God as light, the Jews referred to it, we referred to it, as the Shekinah glory. The word Shekinah is a Hebrew term that means the dwelling of His presence, His light, His manifestation, His character quality. God dwelling with us is represented in light,



otherwise a sinful man could not exist in the face of a holy God. So He manifests Himself in this physical character quality of a bright light. They call it His Shekinah glory. The last time the Shekinah glory of God visited the earth and visited Israel was in the temple right before the Babylonians came in and took the Jews into captivity. It was a little before 586 B.C. in chapters 8 through 11 of the book of the prophet Ezekiel, and over that period of time in those chapters of Ezekiel, the glory of God gradually leaves the nation of Israel. God's glory, God's manifestation to the people of Israel in the form of light hasn't occurred for 600 years, and now all of a sudden on this night, bang, God's glory shows up. And how does it manifest itself? In this light that shone around them. Numbers 24:17, don't go there, I'll read it for you. Numbers 24:17 is a fabulous prophecy about Messiah. And what's it say? It says, God says, ***I see him, but not now; the prophet says. I behold him, but not near; A star...*** (In Hebrew the word is *kôḱāb* [H3556], *kôḱāb*. It means the same thing, His light, His shining forth, His blazing forth.) ***A star shall come forth from Jacob...*** In other words, a blazing light, a shining forth will come forth from Jacob. And so it's a prophecy of the coming Messiah in context, and that prophecy is fulfilled right here on that night when the angel appears to the shepherds, and the brightness of God's glory engulfs all of them. And so the thing I want to tie into that as well is turn over now to Matthew 24. Go to Matthew, leave Luke for a moment, go to Matthew 24, and then I'll get you back because I want you to see this specifically in the text. In Matthew 24:29-30, Jesus is talking about end times, and He says something very important that underscores, and where are you in all this, John? We're talking about the physical manifestation of the glory of God coming in light. Verse 29, ***but immediately after the tribulation of those days, THE SUN WILL BE DARKENED, AND THE MOON WILL NOT GIVE ITS LIGHT.*** In other words, the whole world's going black, ***AND THE STARS WILL FALL from the sky***, total blackness, ***and the powers of the heavens will be shaken, and then the***, and that is



important, okay, it's not 'a', not a sign, 'the' ***sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky.***

Let's stop right there. What's a sign for? A sign is not the thing. You're driving down Thunderbird Road, and you see a sign, and it says, 'Scottsdale Road 1 mile'. The sign is not Scottsdale Road. The sign is telling you Scottsdale Road's coming. You drive a little farther, and you say, you know, one mile, Pima Road. The sign is not Pima Road. The sign tells you that Pima Road is coming. A sign points you to something of significance. So this says, everything goes black, and then all of a sudden, the sign, ***the sign of the Son of Man appears.***

Well, what is it? ***The sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see THE SON OF MAN COMING IN THE CLOUDS OF THE SKY with power and great glory.*** Notice that the sign of the Son of Man is attached to His glory, His personification, His personhood, all of His character qualities, everything that He is, okay? And He will send forth His angels and so forth. What's the point? The thing I want you to see is that the sign of the Son of Man is in heaven, and it is His blazing forth. It is His aster. It even says in Revelation 1:16 that Jesus' face ***was like the sun shining in its strength.*** Paul in Acts 9 is on the Damascus Road, and what happens? He's knocked to the ground, blinded, and it says in Acts 9:3, ***a light from heaven flashed around him.*** Every time God physically manifests Himself, it's always, most generally, associated with light. Moses is walking in the wilderness. God speaks to him from the burning bush as a bright light, okay? So light, the Son of God, His Shekinah glory, His presence is manifested in light. So when you go back to Matthew chapter 2:2, they say, we saw His *astēr*; we saw His blazing forth over, and where did they see it, by the way? In the east, and have come to worship Him, and I don't want to ruin your Christmas. I don't want to be this Grinch that stole Christmas. I want to be the Grinch that really brought you the real Christmas, okay? Nowhere in the Word of God does it say these guys wandered around for a month or two or three to get to the Holy Land looking



at this star, or that this star kept guiding them. It doesn't say that. Where did they see a star? They saw it over in the east, all right? And how did they know it was His star? They had been evangelized by Daniel the prophet and others, and His blazing forth, God makes known to seeking hearts how to find Him. But they knew the prophecies. They knew the Jewish Messiah was going to be born in the Holy Land, if you will. They knew that Jerusalem was the seat of Jewish kings, and so they knew to go because of the Word of God, Micah and other Old Testament prophecies that had been shared with them. They knew, bang, that is the Messiah's star. That's His shining forth. That's His blazing forth. They knew where to go. They got on their horses, and they went, and why did they go? It says they went to worship Him, to worship Him, okay.

So let me read the rest of the passage [Matt 2:3], ***And Herod the king heard and was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.*** Why? Because he didn't want anybody competing for his throne. The rest of Jerusalem was upset because if Herod's upset, heads will roll, and so they're nervous. ***And gathering together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he began to inquire of them where the Christ was to be born. And they said to him,*** in other words, they finally looked at the Word of God and said, ***"In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it has been written by the prophet, "AND YOU BETHLEHEM, LAND OF JUDAH, ARE BY NO MEANS LEAST AMONG THE LEADERS OF JUDAH; FOR OUT OF YOU SHALL COME FORTH A RULER WHO WILL SHEPHERD MY PEOPLE ISRAEL."*** ***Then Herod secretly called the Magi, and ascertained from them the time the star...*** (Now this is a very important fact here.) ***the time the star appeared, phainō*** [G5316] in the Greek. At the time the star, the word actually means to arise, to appear. Not that it existed before, it just flashed. It means to immediately rise into existence. What time did that blazing light pop up, and he wanted to know the time. And of course, we know he wanted to know the time because he was going to backdate and kill anybody who might be



this future king. Verse eight, ***And he sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and make careful watch for the child; and when you have found Him, report to me that I too may come and worship Him."*** Of course, that's a lie. ***And having heard the king, they went their way; and lo,*** the aster, the shining forth, ***which they had seen.*** That phrase there, which they had seen, means which they saw in its appearing. They actually saw it, the word means to be created out of nothing, to not have existed before and then a pops up in your appearance. So it wasn't Saturn or Jupiter or something they'd seen before in a different position. It wasn't even something that existed before in the natural realm. They literally saw it appear, if you will, in the sky. And so ***the star, which they had seen in the east, went on before them until it came and stood over where the child was.*** Why did it have to go before them? They knew He was going to be born in the environs of Jerusalem. They're now told and given better education, more proof from the scriptures that it's not just around here. It's actually about five miles south in this little village called Bethlehem. So they just go to Bethlehem. They don't need a star to do that. But when you get to Bethlehem, okay, now where? What particular dwelling? What particular stable? What particular cave? What particular house? And it says the star ***went on before them and stood over*** a house ***where the child was.*** Now, obviously, we know this is many, many, many months after the birth of Christ because they've gone from a stable wherever they were in the manger, they're now in a house. The other reason why we know it can't be an actual real star is because the house over which that star was under, I should say, would have been incinerated along with the wise men themselves if a star descended on it like that. This is the shining forth. This is the sign of the Son of Man. This is the Shekinah glory of Almighty God appearing, if you will, to show them exactly where Christ was.

Again, they come, and the star is there, and the key question I had was, okay, how come they see it and nobody else can see it? What's with that? Once again, everything in Scripture



ultimately gets back to Almighty God, and everything in Scripture ultimately gets back that He is the source of it all. Everything in Scripture ultimately gets back that God is sovereign in everything, and this is God making, once again, His sovereign choice. This is the doctrine of election, if you will, once again. John 12:37-41, let me just read it for you. John 12:37-41 says this, ***But though He had performed so many signs before them, yet they were not believing in Him;*** Again, this is what I read earlier, ***that the word of Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spoke, "LORD, WHO HAS BELIEVED OUR REPORT? AND TO WHOM HAS THE ARM OF THE LORD BEEN REVEALED?" For this cause they could not believe, for Isaiah said again, "HE (God) HAS BLINDED THEIR EYES, AND HE HARDENED THEIR HEART; LEST THEY SEE WITH THEIR EYES, AND PERCEIVE WITH THEIR HEART AND BE CONVERTED, AND I HEAL THEM." These things, Isaiah said, because he saw His glory and spoke of Him.*** What's the point? The point is that God hardens whom He will and softens whom He will, and yet man somehow is responsible for rejecting the truth, and the greatest illustration of this when it comes to this concept of God manifesting His glory as light is in Exodus chapter 14. Exodus chapter 14. What goes on in Exodus chapter 14? You got the children of Israel fleeing Egypt, and what's it say? A pillar, excuse me, a cloud of light, a cloud, light, leads them by day, and at night the angel of the Lord leads them, and along with him is what? A pillar of fire at night. It says in Exodus 14, the passage says in verse 19, ***and the angel of God,*** Exodus 14:19, who's the angel of God? It's a pre-incarnate appearance of Jesus Christ, okay? ***The angel of God, who had been going before the camp of Israel, moved and went behind them;*** The Egyptians are following. The angel of God is leading them, and the angel of God, Christ, He's there, personally there, and what is always attendant or appears with His appearing? Light. And now He moves behind the children of Israel to protect them from the coming Egyptians, and what's it say? ***The angel of God, who was going before the camp of Israel, moved and went behind them; and the pillar of the***



cloud moved from before them and stood behind them. The manifestation of God's presence in light, His Shekinah glory, if you will. Verse 20, **So it,** the pillar of fire, a cloud of fire, **came between the camp of Egypt and the camp of Israel; and there was the cloud along with the darkness, yet it gave light at night** to the Israelites, and yet it was darkness to the Egyptians, **thus the one did not come near the other all night.** If you look in the King James translation, the New American Standard leaves it out. It says **light to them,** referring to the Israelites, **and darkness to them,** referring to the Egyptians. What's the point? The angel of God, Christ, in His Shekinah glory, a manifestation, shows Himself as light to His chosen people, light to the Jews, and He manifests Himself as darkness, if you will, to the Egyptians and blinds them. Spiritually, it's the same way. We're all blinded spiritually, we're all spiritually in darkness, and only when God chooses to reveal the truth of the gospel to His children, the light, if you will, pardon the pun, clicks on, and we see it, and so right here, you have a manifestation of Almighty God and His glory and Christ, light to his chosen people, light to the believers, if you will, darkness to the non-believers. It's a classic example of the sovereignty of God in the pillar of cloud by day, in the pillar of fire by night. Israel saw it as light, Pharaoh saw it only as darkness, and it's the same way spiritually speaking, and again, nowhere does it say they followed the star. The star just appeared to them.

Okay, the point of all of this, interestingly enough, did you know that you and I as believers in Christ, in a sense, we've been saved, rescued, delivered, we've been given salvation in Christ to actually become stars, not stars in the sky, not stars seeking man's applause, stars in the sense of the blazing forth of the glorious gospel of Christ. I'm back to where I started. (Matt 5:16) **Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.** Jesus says we are the light of the world, and if anything that the Advent season, the Christmas season, should underscore upon us is that we have been



given this glorious truth in earthen vessels not made with hands. We are nothing but clay pots containing and designed to reveal to a lost world the light of the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ.

Let's pray. Father, thank You for this time in your word. Thank You for underscoring again that the manifestation of Your glory physically is presented so often in your word as physical light, as a bright light. So when we see the lights on trees and the lights that decorate houses and the candles and all of the other lighted decorations that underscore and proliferate really through our culture at this time of the year, let us always hearken back that what it really signifies is the truth that You, Your glorious character qualities, You in the living Christ appeared to mankind, and may the light of the gospel of Christ be more and more real to each one of us as we continue on our earthly sojourning to that one day when we will indeed sit at the wedding feast of the Lamb, the Light of the World, the Jewish Messiah, God in human form, Jesus our Christ. In His matchless name we ask it, and again God's redeemed people said, amen and amen.