



Empowering People to Change the World

The Christmas Code – Christmas Eve

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The Christmas Code

Christmas Eve Service 2020

We now have baby/child dedications we are going to do. My wife, Liz, and I are excited to bless these families...

Magical Nature of Christmas

- From Charles Dickens' The Christmas Carol to Robin Williams in Hook, there seems to be something magical about Christmas.
- I remember as a kid dreaming about Santa coming down our chimney.
- I remember wondering at night if I would get the cowboy outfit, the train set, or the shotgun.
- For the secular, the word many use is “magical;” but for the Jesus follower, we would use “supernatural.”
 - There is something about Christmas that captures the imagination of believers and unbelievers worldwide.
 - It is supernatural! It has woven into the story so many supernatural elements: angels, dreams, and visions.
 - A Baby Who would be a King.
 - A mother who was supernaturally made pregnant.
 - A carpenter who loves a peasant girl and has to consider “putting her away.”
 - Drama!

Most historians believe there IS something beyond the story...

The Christmas Code

- All of us have locks on our doors in our homes, and each one has a code that unlocks it.

- Like a combination that opens a lock, I was thinking about what makes Christmas so special in the hearts of Christians around the world.
- Do you realize that no other single faith has so impacted the world? There are over 2 billion worshippers tonight, around the world. Amazing, especially when you consider the inauspicious beginnings. The actual Christmas story:
 - Not the Christmas trees and decorated houses.
 - Not the Christmas sales.
 - Not the presents under a tree.
 - But I mean the REAL, BIBLICAL Christmas.
 - What is the CODE? There must be some code! For Christ to make such a worldwide impact, what is the code?

Probably few poems can capture the significance of Jesus's life more than the now famous poem by Dr. James Allan:

One Solitary Life

**He was born in an obscure village, the Child of a peasant woman.
He grew up in another obscure village where He worked in a carpenter
shop until he was thirty.**

He never wrote a book.

**He never held an office.
He never went to college.
He never visited a big city.**

**He never travelled more than two hundred miles from the place where
He was born.**

**He did none of the things
usually associated with greatness.
He had no credentials but Himself.**

He was only thirty-three.

**His friends ran away.
One of them denied Him.**

**He was turned over to His enemies
and went through the mockery of a trial.
He was nailed to a cross between two thieves. While dying, His
executioners gambled for His clothing, the only property He had on
Earth.**

**When He was dead,
He was laid in a borrowed grave through the pity of a friend.**

**Nineteen centuries have come and gone,
and today Jesus is the central figure of the human race and the
Leader of mankind's progress.
All the armies that have ever marched,
all the navies that have ever sailed,
all the parliaments that have ever sat,
all the kings that ever reigned, put together,
have not affected the life of mankind on Earth
as powerfully as that One Solitary Life.**

Dr. James Allan © 1926.

**So, what might be the Christmas Code? What is the combination to
understanding why 2 billion people all over the world are worshipping
Jesus tonight?**

- I would like to share here, on Christmas Eve, what I want to call “the Christmas Code” and what all the symbols, letters, and figures really mean. Because if you can crack the code, the true meaning of Christmas, it just might change your life.

The 1st Christmas Code: God Watches

- The First of the Code is that God watches! God is watching, always watching, observing. His eyes are gazing upon the wicked and the righteous. He has a timing to everything.
- ***Proverbs 5:21***, “*For a man's ways are before the eyes of the Lord, and He ponders all his paths.*”

- **Psalm 139:2**, “You know when I sit down and when I rise up; You discern my thoughts from afar.”
- **2 Chronicles 16:9**, “For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him.”
- God was watching for the fullness of time.
- **Galatians 4:4**, “But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law.”
- He is watching Zacharias and Elizabeth trying to have a child.
- God is watching Joseph propose to Mary and their abiding love for each other.
- God is conducting secret interviews in difficult times. God is watching the heart of Mary, the heart of Joseph.

God does His most important interviews in most difficult times:

The Passion translation, **Hebrews 12:1-2**, “As for us, we have all of these great witnesses who encircle us like clouds. So we must let go of every wound that has pierced us and the sin we so easily fall into. Then we will be able to run life’s marathon race with passion and determination, for the path has been already marked out before us.

We look away from the natural realm and we fasten our gaze onto Jesus who birthed faith within us and who leads us forward into faith’s perfection. His example is this: Because his heart was focused on the joy of knowing that you would be his, he endured the agony...”

- The difference between a stumbling block and a stepping stone is how you use them.
- Winston Churchill: “If you’re going through hell, keep going!”

- God is always doing interviews! He is interviewing you and me through struggles and difficulties. Are we talking behind peoples' backs? Are you in a relationship you shouldn't be in?
- We are all being tested. God is watching...God comes into the ordinary in order to do the extraordinary.

God Watches

The 2nd Christmas Code: God Speaks

- It was prophesied 465 times of His coming in the Bible thousands of years before He came to the Earth. The Jews believed this.
- The chance of just eight of those prophesies coming true in one Man, is 10^{^21}st power. Are you kidding me? That's impossible!
- Unless the magical is the supernatural, this Book, the Bible, is a supernatural book speaking of a supernatural God Who came 2,000 years ago in a supernatural way.
- God was foretelling and forecasting the Messiah, His Son's birth,
 - Where He would be born—Bethlehem Ephrathah.
 - When He would be born—before the destruction of the Temple.
 - To whom He would be born—a virgin
 - What He would be—a King.
 - What He would do—redeeming humanity through a new Kingdom.
 - How He would be designated—Son of Man, Son of God, Son of David, and King of the Jews.

Just listen to a few of these incredible prophesies:

Micah 5:2 Born in Bethlehem

*“But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah,
Though you are little among the thousands of Judah,
Yet out of you shall come forth to Me*

*The One to be Ruler in Israel,
Whose goings forth are from of old,
From everlasting.”*

Isaiah 7:14 Born of a Virgin

“Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel.”

Genesis 22:17-18 A King Who Would Possess the Gates of Hell

“Then the Angel said to Abraham...blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies. In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice.”

- In the Christmas story, we have this Christmas Code continuing as the Angel Gabriel comes to Zacharias in the Temple and comes to Mary, announcing she will bear a Son.
- The angels, the hosts of heaven, come to the shepherds in the fields and announce that a Ruler, a King, is coming.
- A kingly star appears, and the astronomers come from distant lands to worship the One Who they say is the “King of the Jews.”
- God is still speaking today! God is still watching and speaking to those who will listen.
- God is interviewing Zacharias and Mary in troubling times—and as they are found faithful, He speaks to them.
- God is interviewing you and is longing to speak to you.

The 3rd Christmas Code: God Partners

- What amazing mystery! There is nothing weaker, more helpless, more dependent, than a *child*.

- Theoretically, the Messiah could have come as a fully-grown man, created as an adult even as Adam was created.
- But for Jesus to fully identify with humanity and to display in His life the servant nature that is in God, He *made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men.*
- The Christmas Code is God partnering with Zacharias in the birth of John, the forerunner to Jesus.
- Partnering with Mary to be willing to bear His Son.
- Partnering with Joseph to not divorce Mary. Mary needed Joseph—he was of the tribe of Judah, the distant relative of David.
- Partnering with some shepherds, some astrologers.
- God partners with us today. God always uses people, willing people.
 - He is watching.
 - He is interviewing.
 - He is speaking.
 - He wants to partner with you.
- God Partners—He is going to accomplish His will with or without you.

Galatians 4:4-7, “*But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!” So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God.*”

