

# Preparations for Christmas

*“For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.”*

*1 Thessalonians 4:16 (NIV)*

**M**any are the preparations we engage in—in order to have a good celebration of Advent or Christmas. A Christmas tree to grace the room in our home, possible coloured lights on the exterior of our home, presents for loved ones, carols sung in church, reading the familiar Christmas stories in Matthew and Luke—all combine to make us joyful about the first coming of our Lord.

So every year we go about doing special things to celebrate and make the season festive and joyful. But who has ever thought about God’s preparations for the first Christmas?

Around 330 B.C. God raised up a pagan army general named Alexander the Great to conquer the known world. Alexander spread the Greek language everywhere he went. So when God wanted the world to have a written account of His Son’s time on earth the documents could be written in Greek and distributed to the world to be read in the language Alexander made all nations learn. Marvel at the sovereign God Who controls all things for His glory.

Then the Romans took control of the known world and built road systems so the missionaries could more easily travel and spread the Good News. Romans made a postal system so letters could be carried all over the world to further spread the message of Christ.

If you were a Roman citizen you could expect preferential treatment when you went from one country to the next. This made things better for the apostle Paul as he moved from country to country preaching and teaching about Christ and the resurrection.

God had made a promise (Micah 5:2) that the Messiah—the Expected One—would be born in Bethlehem. This meant the Lord had to plant in the mind of Caesar the notion that all the world should be taxed in the hometown of their ancestors. The decree went out at the time Mary was close to delivering a child Who would become the Saviour of the world. Joseph then had to take his wife Mary all the way from Nazareth to Bethlehem—the town of his ancestors—to register. While they were there Jesus was born and truly became the Messiah

from eternity.

So much more went into the preparation by the Lord for the first Christmas. This should be enough to awaken in us a sense of holy awe at how the Lord controls history to accomplish His holy will. Nothing God wanted to do to prepare for and have the first Christmas was not accomplished.

We may be truly thankful for God reigns. This year if one or another of your plans fails to be accomplished, relax—God is in control and what is most important shall certainly happen. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad that God has created the first Christmas, or Advent, and soon enough the second Christmas will happen and the King will come to reign and rule in righteousness. Let your hearts sing for joy, Jesus has come and soon will come again!

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