

God prepared the World for the Messiah

The story of Bruce Olsen who reached the Motilone tribe of Colombia, South America for Christ. God had prepared the Motilone tribe to receive Christ through giving them a legend that God will come to them from the banana tree. On a day of frustration Bruce Olsen swung at a banana tree with his panga slicing it open so it fell open looking like a book. He then showed a young Motilone man the banana tree and then opened the Bible and shared Christ. This man believed in Christ but did not share what he found with the rest of the tribe to Bruce Olsen's frustration. Time went by and he still kept his faith to himself. Then one night it was a special gathering of the tribe where they got together and shared their stories and legends. In the course of the evening the young believer started to sing the Gospel in their own style of music with the tribe repeating each phrase in song after him. The whole tribe believed in Christ after that. Bruce Olsen learnt that in Motilone culture when someone has something extremely important to share with the tribe they wait for that gathering otherwise it will not be regarded as important. God had prepared the Motilone tribe to receive Christ in His way and in His time. He has also prepared the world beforehand for the coming of Christ – the Messiah.

Luke 24: 13 – 27

And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself. (27)

1) The need for God to prepare the world for the Messiah

- Due to man's sinfulness he is separated from God and does not know God
 - Romans 3: 11 There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God.
- It is like when we came from India. The church here didn't know us and if we just turned up and said we're taking over as the pastor we wouldn't have been accepted because no one knew who we were. The church was prepared by us first making contact from a distance through the interim pastor, then sending a family photograph of ourselves. The church started getting a general idea of who we were but still didn't know us. I then came from India and met everyone at a Bible study and then preached in the church. A relationship was formed and the church was ready to accept us.
- So God didn't just come into the world but took a process of preparing the world for His coming.
- God starts general and works towards specific or special revelation of Himself
 - God prepared the world through general revelation of Himself
 - He prepared a nation into which He would come into the world – Israel
 - He prepared a King from which line in the nation he would come – David
 - He prepared a virgin through whom He would come into the world – Mary

2) God prepared the world through General Revelation of Himself

- He has revealed Himself in creation
 - Psalm 19: 1 The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands.
 - Romans 1: 20 For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities--his eternal power and divine nature--have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.
- He has revealed Himself in the conscience of man
 - Ecclesiastes 3: 11 He has also set eternity in the hearts of men; yet they cannot fathom what God has done from beginning to end.
- He has revealed Himself in cultural beliefs
 - Acts 17: 23 For as I walked around and looked carefully at your objects of worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO AN UNKNOWN GOD. Now what you worship as something unknown I am going to proclaim to you.
 - It is common for many present day Hindus to claim that Hinduism is monotheistic.

3) God prepared the world through prophecy

- The prophecies that I will be looking at will only focus on His birth and childhood and not on His life, ministry and passion.
- Messiah was to be born of a virgin c.701 – 681 BC
 - Isaiah 7: 14 "Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call his name Immanuel."

- Matthew 1: 24-25 And Joseph arose from his sleep, and did as the angel of the Lord commanded him, and took her as his wife, and kept her a virgin until she gave birth to a son; and he called his name Jesus.
- Messiah will be in the line of David c. 626 – 587 BC
 - Jeremiah 23: 5 The days are coming," declares the LORD, "when I will raise up to David a righteous Branch, a King who will reign wisely and do what is just and right in the land.
 - In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) And everyone went to his own town to register. So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David.
- Messiah was to be born in Bethlehem c.750 – 686 BC
 - Micah 5: 2 "But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you one will go forth for me to be ruler in Israel. His goings forth are from long ago, from the days of eternity."
 - Matthew 2: 1 After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem
- Messiah would come out of Egypt c.750 BC
 - Hosea 11: 1 When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son.
 - Matthew 2: 13 – 15 When they had gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. "Get up," he said, "take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him." So he got up, took the child and his mother during the night and left for Egypt, where he stayed until the death of Herod.

4) God prepared the world through history

- The nation of Israel
 - Genesis 12: 2 (God to Abraham) I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing.
 - God created the nation of Israel to be a blessing to the world.
- The Davidic kingdom
 - David was anointed King of Israel
 - The main emphasis of His kingdom was that the Messiah would come in the line of David and His rule would endure forever. As we have already seen in prophecies.
- The Greek Empire
 - Alexander the Great conquered the known world from Greece to India which included Israel.
 - The Greek language was established as the language of the Greek Empire
- The Roman Empire
 - After the Greek Empire the Roman Empire was established and extended under the first Roman Emperor, Augustus Caesar. It was during his time that Jesus was born.
 - The significance of this is:
 - It was under the Roman rule that a census was called in the entire Roman world forcing Mary and Joseph to go to Bethlehem while Mary was pregnant so that prophecy could be fulfilled and Jesus was born in Bethlehem
 - The Messiah was to be crucified – the method of execution of the Romans – and not stoned – the method of execution of the Jews according to the Law of Moses.
 - Psalm 22: 14,16,17 I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint; my heart is like wax; it is melted within me. For dogs have surrounded me; a band of evildoers has encompassed me; they pierce my hands and my feet. I can count all my bones. They look, they stare at me.
 - The Romans retained the Greek language making a common language for the spread of the Gospel in the Empire and the language that the New Testament was written in

5) How has God prepared our hearts to receive Christ

- God speaks into our consciences making us aware of our own sinfulness (General revelation)
- He uses other people to speak into our lives and proclaim Christ (Prophecy)
- He uses our circumstances to work in us our need for Christ (History)
- When we know that Jesus is the Messiah – our Lord and Saviour what is our response to Him
 - Will be as Herod to reject Him and to seek to kill him
 - As the Magi and to bow down and worship Him