

GOD IS UP TO SOMETHING

Text: Micah 5:2

In the church's timetable, the year doesn't end with Christmas, it begins with Advent. Advent is the season in which we observe (and celebrate) the birth of Christ.

These words were a promise — a promise from God — that someday One would come into the world to undo the damage that the serpent had set in motion. He had skewered history, but before it was all over, God would make it right.

Ref: Genesis 3:14,15

The final phrase of this prophecy, "he will crush your head and you will strike his heel," is a poetic way of saying:

"Satan, you may hurt him a little, but he will ultimately _____" In other words: "Mr. Serpent, your demise is imminent."

Some of the prophecies of Christ were specific, and some were more general in nature, but all of them offered hope.

Ref: Jeremiah 23:5; Isaiah 42:3

Throughout history God's people speculated often about these prophecies and how they might be fulfilled. They didn't always get it right — but what they didn't get wrong was the fact that someday God would send a Messiah to establish his kingdom forever.

It was believed that this great king, according to the writings of Suetonius, Tacitus, and Josephus, would come from an out-of-the-way, dirt-poor, often-overlooked province of the Great Roman Empire: J_____.

The Magi were a fraternity of scholars whose responsibilities included fulfilling the role of spiritual advisor to the kings of Persia.

Simeon knew that the Messiah was coming. It wasn't a matter of if, it was only a matter of when. And he knew it was soon, because he was no longer a young man.

Herod claimed to be Jewish, and followed some of the customs but he was r_____ with the Jewish people.

Herod was also a lavish spender and a prolific builder. In a mere 18 months he rebuilt the main structure of temple in Jerusalem — and then he named it after himself. Today sections of the Temple Mount, including the section known as the Wailing Wall, are still standing.

Most noteworthy about Herod is that he was deeply — you could even say pathologically — insecure. He considered everyone a t_____.

As it turns out, this arbitrary and ambitious urge to tax the whole world played a vital role in bringing God's plan together.

Though Bethlehem was a small town, it was also quite near to Jerusalem, which was a thriving metropolis, the great city of God. And Bethlehem had a claim to fame: It was the city of D_____.

Nazareth was not a region much respected among men, but this is something we will learn in the course of this series: God is not an elitist. It doesn't matter who you are or where you're from, you can be part of his plan. Ref: John 1:46

Joseph was a carpenter. The Greek word that describes his profession can also be translated stonemason.

This consensus was most often reached during the initial stage of the relationship, called the _____ or the engagement. .

And then came the betrothal. Betrothal lasted for one year. During this phase, the couple were considered man and wife. They were man and wife in every way, except one: They were not yet intimate.

After betrothal came the marriage. The marriage was made official with a community-wide celebration ceremony, followed by a honeymoon.

Joseph and Mary were b_____. They were legally man and wife, committed to one another for life, but they were not living in the same house or sleeping in the same bed.

Three things about this story that are relevant to your life today.

1. God is at work behind the scenes to make the details of your life _____ come together.

If you want him to ... and if you're surrendered to his will ... God can make these so-called random events conform to his eternal plan. Ref: Proverbs 16:9

2. The outcome of his work will certainly be good _____.

He can take any event — no matter how ugly or unplanned — and turn it into something beautiful, something good for all eternity. Ref: Romans 8:28; Genesis 50:20

3. For this reason, you can face the future with patient endurance _____.

We don't always know what God is doing, or why. We're not always sure how things will work out ... we can only be sure *that* things will work out. Ref: Psalm 138:8

