

Words of Grace Seasoned With Salt
BIBLE STUDIES, PERSONAL OPINIONS ABOUT CURRENT AND
FUTURE EVENTS

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The Amazing Birth of Christ

Luke 2:1-20

1 And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed.

2 (*And* this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.)

3 And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city.

4 And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:)

5 To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child.

6 And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered.

7 And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.

8 And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.

9 And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid.

10 And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

11 For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

12 And this *shall be* a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,

14 Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

15 And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us.

16 And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger.

17 And when they had seen *it*, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child.

18 And all they that heard *it* wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds.

19 But Mary kept all these things, and pondered *them* in her heart.

20 And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.

(Written as preached at Coden Bible Church)

The Bible does not tell us to observe the birth of Christ. It tells us to observe the Lord's Supper which is a memorial of the death and resurrection of Christ. (1 Cor.11:23-26) But yet, without the birth of Christ there would be no crucifixion of Christ. If there was no crucifixion there is no salvation for sinners like us. This is why God inspired Matthew, Mark, Luke and John to give us all the details of his birth. The birth of Christ is one of the major doctrines of the four gospels and it has a place of equal importance with his death. The manner in which he was born is of extreme importance to us. His birth was like no other birth before or after him. His birth was one of a kind and for some very good reasons.

The Invisible Conflict of Christ's Birth

See verses 1-7

It was the will of God for Christ to be born in Bethlehem because the prophets said he would. Micah 5:2 says:

But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.

When Caesar gave the decree for all the world to be taxed, everyone had to go to their home town to be taxed. Joseph's home town was Bethlehem and so when Caesar gave the decree to be taxed he went up to Bethlehem with Mary to be taxed and while in Bethlehem Christ was born and the prophecy of Micah 5 was fulfilled. You can see the divine providence of God in this for it was necessary for Mary to be in Bethlehem when Christ was born to fulfill the prophecy of Micah.

Not only was the hand of God in this, but the devil was at work also. (He always is) Notice the time they went up to be taxed. It was when Mary was great with child. She was ready to have her child when they made the trip up to Bethlehem from Nazareth. Notice it says they went up from Galilee to Bethlehem. It says up, because Bethlehem was 1500 feet above Galilee. Mary walked the elevation of 1500 foot on bad roads a full 9 months pregnant. But that is not all: When they got to Bethlehem they could not find a place to stay and ended up in an animal stable where Christ was born in a manger. A manger is a crib for animals. He was born under the worst conditions. Why did all this happen? It was the devil trying to kill the promised seed before he was born. It is a miracle that Mary and Christ survived the trip and the conditions under which he was born.

Prophecy was fulfilled and God's will was done when Christ was born in Bethlehem, but at the same time Satan was busy trying to kill the baby in his mother's womb. Two years later, the devil tried to kill Christ again when Herod gave a decree to kill all the children two years and under in Bethlehem. (Matt.2:16) But God intervened by warning Mary and Joseph to flee to Egypt.

There is an invisible conflict between God and Satan today. If you have spiritual discernment you can see it. Where the work of God is going on, the devil will show up to oppose it and he will use anyone who is available to help him. When anyone sets out to do the will of God, Satan will always resist it. For example: It was the will of God for Paul to preach the gospel of grace to the Gentiles, but according to 1 Thess. 2:15-18 he was hindered and at times forbidden to speak to them by the devil. He said Satan hindered him, but he used people to do it, religious people.

Any time you set out to do the will of God, you can count on Satan to oppose it. The devil always shows up when there is revival or signs of revival in a church. When God begins to work in a church, look for the devil to hinder the work. When God begins to bless a church, look for the devil to put a stop to it. There is always a spiritual invisible conflict going on between God and Satan. (Don't let the devil use you to oppose the work of God.)

If you are lost there is an invisible conflict between God and Satan over your soul. God's will is to save you from sin and hell, but at the same time the devil wants to damn you to hell. God's will is for you to believe the gospel and be saved, but Satan's will is to blind you from seeing the gospel to keep you lost. God's will is to give you everlasting life, but Satan's will is for you to suffer everlasting torment. God's will is for you to be with him throughout eternity in the kingdom of God, but Satan's will is for you to be with him throughout eternity in the lake of fire. It was God's will for Christ to be born in Bethlehem, but Satan tried to kill him on the way and after he got there.

The Miraculous Conception Of Christ

Joseph was not the physical father of Christ. Christ is God's son conceived by God's Spirit in the womb of Mary. (Matt.1:20-23) Therefore, his birth was a miracle. He did not have a human father. No one was ever born that way. His mother was a virgin who knew no man and his Father was God.

Why was he born this way? Couldn't he have come into the world another way than by birth? There are many liberal preachers who say the virgin birth was not necessary and many deny his virgin birth because it is miraculous. There are also these UFO freaks who believe Christ was an alien who came here from another planet.

First, he had to be born to become flesh. He had to have a physical body with flesh and blood like ours. Why? To die for us sinners.

Hebrews 2:14 says; ***Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also took part of the same; that though death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil.***

Second, he not only had to be born, but he had to be born free from sin. Why? To be a ***perfect*** sacrifice for sinners. If Joseph was his real father, he would have inherited his sinful nature. If Christ inherited Joseph's sinful nature, he would not

be a perfect sacrifice. If he was not a perfect sacrifice, you would still be in your sins and on the way to hell with no hope of ever being saved. But, because his father was God and his mother was a virgin, he was born without sin and when he died, he died as a perfect, sinless sacrifice for sinners.

Hebrews 9:14 says; ***How much more shall the blood of Christ, who though the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?***

Don't let someone tell you that the virgin birth is not important. Your salvation depends upon the virgin birth. If Joseph was his real father, you are still lost because Christ would be a sinner like you and his death was meaningless.

Notice also, the Holy Spirit is careful to show us that Christ was the *first born* son of Mary. (Luke 2:7) If he was the first born son of Mary, she must have had other sons after Christ. The Roman Catholic Church says that Mary was a perpetual virgin all of her life. They teach that she was immaculately conceived, lived a sinless life and ascended back up into heaven and never died. It's true Mary was a virgin when she had Christ, but contrary to what the Roman Catholic Church teaches she had other children after Christ, which means that Christ had brothers and sisters. Read about them in Matthew 13:55-56.

Christ had the same mother as his brothers and sisters, but he had a different father. (Mary was also a sinner who needed a Savior like the rest of us sinners; See Luke 1:47)

The Curious Sign Of Christ's Birth

Verse 12: **And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.**

A sign is something that gets your attention. It is something out of the ordinary. It stands out to get your attention. Why was this a sign? There are two reasons: First, animals are born in mangers not children. When was the last time you ever heard of a baby being born in a crib for animals? That would get your attention.

Secondly, babies are not wrapped in swaddling clothes. In times past dead people were wrapped in swaddling clothes. Swaddling clothes were long strips of cloth that dead bodies were wrapped in for burial. (Read Acts 5:6) Mary and Joseph were away from home and the only thing they could find to wrap the child with was swaddling clothes which is what dead people were at times wrapped with in those days.

The shepherds were told that Christ was born in Bethlehem. Bethlehem was a fair sized city with many babies, how could they locate him? They were given a sign. The sign was they would find this baby in an animal crib wrapped up in clothes that dead people were buried in. With that description I imagine he was easy to find. How many babies in Bethlehem were wrapped in dead men's clothes living in an animal stable? That was the sign the shepherds were given that night.

It is a sign to us today. Being born in an animal stable is a sign that he is the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world. (John 1:29). Being wrapped in swaddling clothes was a sign that Christ was born to die. In 1 Tim.1:15 Paul said; ***This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.*** To save them he had to die for them. (John 10:17-18) He was marked for death at birth when his mother wrapped him in swaddling clothes.

The World's Cruel Reception Of Christ

Verse 7: ***There was no room for them in the inn.***

This was the first time the world had a chance to show kindness and love for the Son of God, but what did they do? They shut their doors and their hearts to him. This world had no room for Christ in its inns, hotels, houses, homes or hearts. Surely, somebody could have opened their home and heart to Mary and Joseph and took them in. But they didn't. They shut the door in his face and they forced the Son of God to be born in the lowest place a person could be born, in a stable for animals. This world had no room for Christ and never will. As far as they are concerned he was no better or different than an animal. When the Son of God first appeared in this world he was forced to be born in a stable for animals and at the end of his life in this world, the world forced him to die on a cross. ***This world has never and will never be a friend to the Son of God or you either if you are saved.***

This world still has no room for Christ. Christ has been kicked out of the school house, the court house, the white house and has been excommunicated from some church houses. Hollywood hates him, TV despises him, newspapers shun him, and radio mocks him. This world hated Christ from his birth and they still hate him today. In John 15:18 Jesus said; ***If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. But this cometh to pass, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, They hated me without a cause.***

The world loves a baby, but they hated this baby. They had a chance to show kindness to the Son of God, but they were cruel and mean to him. They had no place for him in their homes or hearts. They shut him out and still do.

The reason men are lost today is because they do not want Christ in their home, their life, their heart, their mind, their conversation, their thoughts or their future. They have shut the door to the Son of God just like these people did in Bethlehem. That's why he said; Behold I stand at the door and knock. (Rev.3:20) He is on the outside knocking to get in. He knocks at the door of lost men's hearts every time the gospel is preached and sad to say the majority never open the door.

The Angels Glorious Revelation Of Christ

Verse 11: ***For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.***

The birth of Christ was the birth of a Savior. But this Savior was not like any other for he is Christ the Lord. He is the Lord, God, Jehovah. That's the mystery of the incarnation of Christ. That baby in that animal crib wrapped up in dead men's clothes, surrounded by animals, hay, dust, dirt and filth was God manifest in the flesh.

He is the same God who created heaven and earth in Genesis 1:1.

He is the same God who drowned this world with a flood in Genesis 6.

He is the same God who fed Israel with manna and meat from heaven in Exodus.

He is the same God who sent plague after plague upon Egypt until they let Israel go.

He is the same God who rained fire and brimstone down upon Sodom and Gomorra in Genesis 19.

He is the same God that opened the Red Sea for Israel to walk across on dry ground.

He is the same God who caused the sun and the moon to stand still in the heavens for a whole day to allow Joshua to win a battle in Joshua 10.

He is the same God who stopped the mouths of Lions when Daniel was thrown into the Lion's den in Daniel 6.

He is the same God who appeared in the fiery furnace with the three Hebrew children and protected them from the fire in Daniel 3.

He was no ordinary baby, he was Christ the Lord. This was God himself in a body of flesh. The baby born in the manger in Bethlehem is the one who is called; Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father and The Prince of Peace in Isaiah 9:6-7.

He is the great I AM of Exodus 3:14.

He is the God who in the beginning created heaven and earth in John 1:1-3.

It's no wonder the angels and the heavenly host praised God saying, ***Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace and good will toward men.*** They knew who that baby was. They knew he was Christ the Lord.

Notice also to whom this revelation was made known. It was made known to shepherds in verse 15. The fulfillment of one of the most important prophecies in the Bible was made known to a group of uneducated, poor, lowly shepherds watching a bunch of sheep in the back side of nowhere.

It was not made known to the ministerial association or the religious leaders or the scribes or Pharisees. It was not made known to the great universities or scholars of that day. It was not made known to the kings and rulers. It was not made known to the wealthy elite. It was made known to a group of lowly shepherds keeping watch over their sheep by night. This reminds me of what

Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 1:25-31;

But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to naught things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence

These are the kind of people that God reveals his secret things to. God will reveal anything in the Bible to a man who is willing to believe it and obey it. The Bible was not written for the highly educated. It was written in 6th grade English. It was written for the weak, base, despised, lowly. It was written for shrimpers, mechanics, painters, garbage men, maids, oil field workers, deck hands, carpenters and shepherds keeping watch over their flock by night.

What has happened today is that the religious system has taken the Bible out of the hands of the common people. They have set themselves up as the grand interpreters of the Bible. They have led people to believe that the Bible is too complicated for ordinary people to understand, so you must come to them to understand it because they have the "education" to understand it.

But when Christ was born into this world God ignored the religious leaders and chose a bunch of lowly uneducated shepherds to give this great revelation to. They believed what God said and went to see it.

The Shepherds Joyous Response To The Birth Of Christ

See Verse 15-20

In verse 17 it says: ***They made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child.*** What were they told about this child? They were told by the angels that Christ the Lord was born in Bethlehem. They were the first men God revealed it to and they were the first men to preach it. They made it known everywhere. They had a positive response to his birth. It made them glad and happy. Verse 20 says: ***And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.***

I wonder how folks today would have responded to the news of Christ's birth?

*If they were charismatics they would have been more excited about the angels and the visions, than Christ. They would have told everybody about the angels that appeared unto them and the vision they had of the heavenly host.

*If they were modernists and liberals they would have been more interested in the poor conditions under which Christ was born. They would have started a crusade to clean up the stables in Bethlehem.

*If they were Catholics they would have worshiped Mary instead of Christ. They would have built an altar in Bethlehem and dedicated it to Mary.

*If they were politicians they would have taken the credit for the birth of Christ.

*If they were college professors they would have criticized the birth of Christ.

They would have found fault with his birth.

*If they were members of the NAACP they would have said he is too white for us.

*If they were members of the KKK they would have said he is too Jewish for us.

*If they were rich and wealthy they would have said he is too poor for us.

That is why God was careful as to who he gave this revelation to. God foreknew these shepherds would believe the baby in the manger was Christ the Lord. He also knew they would preach it and never doubt it. He knew they would glorify him, which they did. Think about these things this week leading up to Christmas.

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