

LENEXA EDIFIER

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BIBLICAL INFORMATION ON THE BIRTH AND ROLE OF JESUS OF NAZARETH

Jim Stauffer

Songs are sung in worship of the birth of Jesus as if His birth were the major event in His appearance on earth. Make no mistake about the value of the birth of Jesus. Without His birth, His mission could not have been completed. Furthermore, God and the Holy Spirit played active roles in His sacrifice of His place at the right hand of God in heaven to be born of flesh on earth by the power of the Holy Spirit.

It seems we are often distracted from that which is most important by the elevation of something to which we can attach our emotions. Jesus did not come to earth to establish a holiday where men can sing of peace on earth while not even understanding the phrase as taught in Scripture.

When the heavenly hosts praise God in **Luke 2:14** by saying, "*Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased.*", what do you suppose the phrase to mean? Please note, the passage indicates the peace on earth is among men with whom He is pleased.

Let us compare this phrase to the expression Jesus, Himself used concerning peace. **Matt. 10:34** "*Do not think that I came to bring peace on the earth; I did not come to bring peace, but a sword.* The sword Jesus brought was the sword of the Spirit, the very word of God. This sword was able to, divide *soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.* (**Heb. 4:12**)

The truth is Jesus never intended or believed His

message would bring peace on earth between men or between nations. His mission was to reconcile sinful man to God through the justification made possible by His blood shed on the cross of Calvary. The peace He brought was peace between God and man. **Rom. 5:1** *Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,* The celebration we are authorized to participate in is the Memorial to the death of Christ, the Lord's Supper which the New Testament church observed on the first day of the week.

The Birth of Jesus - A Chronology by Bill Crews

Both **Mark** and **John** skip over the birth and youth of Jesus as well as the birth of John the baptizer. **Mark** begins his account with the ministry of John the baptizer, followed immediately by the ministry of Jesus. After a prologue (**1:1-18**) in which he emphasizes the eternity and deity of the one who became Jesus, John does the same.

Matthew begins his account with the genealogy of Jesus back to Abraham through David (**Matt. 1:1-17**). Then he gives a brief account of the birth of Jesus with the focus on Joseph. Mary is already with child, and an angel appears to Joseph to explain and to tell him what he is to do. The marriage proceeds, and the child is born (**Matt. 1:18-25**). The birth of Jesus in Bethlehem of Judaea is followed by the visit of the wise men from the east. **Matthew** also tells of Joseph with Mary and Jesus fleeing to Egypt and Him. He came to make God known to man and to reveal the grace and the truth.

Luke gives the background of the birth and then tells of the birth of John (who would become the baptizer).

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While he has nothing to say about the appearance of the angel to Joseph, the visit of wise men, Herod's attempt to slay *"the young child"*, or the flight to and sojourn in Egypt, he, with the focus on Mary, has more to say about the background of the birth of Jesus, the actual birth of Jesus, and the events that closely followed the birth of Jesus.

Here are the events in chronological order:

1. John's prologue. Read **John 1:1-18**. Jesus is the Word that became flesh and dwelled among men. That Word was in the beginning with God and was God. All things that were made ("Jehovah's Witnesses" falsely teach that He was the first thing that was made or created) were made through Him. He came to make God known to man and to reveal the grace and the truth.

2. An angel appears to Zacharias. Read **Luke 1:5-25**. In the temple at Jerusalem the angel Gabriel appears to the priest Zacharias to inform him that his wife Elisabeth will conceive and bear a son whom they are to name *"John."* That child will become the man who in the spirit and power of Elijah will prepare the Jewish people for the Lord. She conceives and hides herself for five months.

3. An angel appears to Mary. Read **Luke 1:26-38**. At Nazareth of Galilee the angel Gabriel appears to a virgin named *"Mary"* who was betrothed to a man named *"Joseph"* to inform her that she has been chosen by God to conceive a son by the power of the Holy Spirit. She is told of the great role to be played by that child and that she is to name him *"Jesus."* She is also told that her kinswoman Elisabeth is now in her sixth month with child.

4. An angel appears to Joseph. Read **Matthew 1:18-24**. At Nazareth of Galilee an angel of the Lord appears to Joseph who has learned that Mary his betrothed is with child and is considering putting her away privately. Joseph is told of Mary's miraculous conception, instructed to proceed with the marriage, and told why the child is to be named *"Jesus."* Joseph marries Mary. This event may have occurred after the next event listed.

5. Mary visits Elisabeth. Read **Luke 1:39-56**. Mary leaves Nazareth and goes to the hill country of Judaea to the town where Elisabeth lives. She stays there three months and then returns to Nazareth. (The marriage of Joseph and Mary may belong here.)

6. The birth of John. Read **Luke 1:57-65**. We are told of the birth of Elisabeth's son and of his being named *"John."*

7. The birth of Jesus. Read **Luke 2:1-7**. Joseph and Mary journey from Nazareth of Galilee to Bethlehem of Judaea to be enrolled in the census ordered by the emperor Augustus. There Mary gives birth to her baby (apparently in a stable because there was no room in the inn), wraps him in swaddling cloths and lays him in a manger (a feeding trough). **Matthew 1:25** goes with

this passage.

8. The visit of the shepherds. Read **Luke 2:8-20**, which tells of the visit of the shepherds that very night to see the babe in a manger.

9. Jesus is circumcised and named. Read **Luke 2:21**. Joseph and Mary apparently stay at Nazareth, finding a house for that purpose. When Jesus is eight days old He is circumcised and given his name *"Jesus."*

10. Joseph, Mary and Jesus go to Jerusalem. Read **Luke 2:22-24**. When Jesus is forty days old, they take Him to the temple at Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord as their firstborn son and to offer the required sacrifices for Mary's cleansing.

11. Simeon and Anna see Jesus. Read **Luke 2:25-39a**. While Joseph, Mary and Jesus are there in the temple, they encounter the righteous and devout Simeon (who holds the infant in his arms) and the aged prophetess Anna.

12. The visit of the wise men. Read **Matthew 2:1-21**. Joseph, Mary and Jesus apparently returned to Bethlehem and the house where they were residing. A few or more months pass. Then we are told of the visit of the wise men from the east (they are not identified as kings, nor is their number given). Following a star, they go first to Jerusalem and then to Bethlehem where they find *"the young child"* (not *"babe"*; eight times in this section Jesus is called *"the young child"* in a *"house"* (not a stable or a manger). There follows their flight into Egypt, Herod's order to slay all male children (in and around Bethlehem) two years old and under (according to the time the wise men first saw that guiding star in the east), the death of Herod, and the return of Joseph, Mary and Jesus to Judaea.

13. Joseph and Mary return to Nazareth. Read **Matthew 2:22-23** and **Luke 2:39b**. It is then that Joseph and Mary go back to Nazareth with their son Jesus. Friend, the traditional "Christmas story" is a garbled version of the Biblical account which most people will never read or hear in their entire lives. Please read these passages for yourself and get others to read this article and those passages.

The Birth of Jesus Jump Start # 1750 by Roger Shouse

Luke 2:11 *"for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord."*

Among all the festive events surrounding the Christmas holiday is a connection that some believe is tied to Jesus' birth. You'll see posts on Facebook that plead, "Keep Christ in Christmas," or, "He is the reason for the season". Catchy expressions, but not necessarily very Biblical. The word "Christmas" is not in the Bible. Jesus was born of Mary, but we are not told when, nor

do we find any reference to anyone "celebrating" that birth. The shepherds were in the field and Caesar had called a census of the empire, which probably would not be in months which travel was difficult. Historically, sometime in the spring is the most likely time of Jesus' birth. We simply do not know. Our verse today, one that is often read during this holiday season, was spoken by the angels to the shepherds in the field. There are several specifics or declarative statements in these few words.

First, WHEN. TODAY. Not some day. Not sooner or later. Not wait and see. But Today. Not tomorrow.

Second, WHERE. In the city of David. That meant one place to Jewish shepherds. They didn't have to Google a location. They knew.

Third, THE EVENT. There has been born. It's already happened. A birth announcement from Heaven. Has been born, tells us what they were looking for. No one has ever seen an adult born. Even in the animal world, what is born is small and undeveloped. Colts are born to horses. Little elephants are born to big elephants. Cubs are born to bears. Babies are born to humans. The shepherds were looking for something that was born today. That tells them what they were looking for.

Fourth, WHY. What was born, was for them. A savior was born for the shepherds and for all the world. They may not have understood completely what was meant by the expression, Savior. For us, on this side of the cross, we understand it means a redeemer. One that would pay the cost for our sins. For the shepherds, they may have thought of a future king who would deliver Israel from the hands of the Romans. That was the most common thought of the day.

Fifth, WHO. Christ the Lord. Christ is the Greek word for Messiah. Those Jewish shepherds knew about the Messiah. "Lord," implies authority and ruler. The ruling Messiah had been born. Generations had been waiting for that moment and now, it happened.

Interestingly, when news first broke from Heaven, it wasn't rushed to the palaces, the Temple or the Sanhedrin. The first to be told were shepherds in the field. Common, plain, everyday, poor men who were simply doing their jobs. They were not powerful land barons. Had these men been rich, they would have had servants watching the sheep for them. They were common. They were everyday folks who get up each day and simply go about their jobs. It was that fiber of person that Jesus appealed to. The Gospel was for all. They seemed to understand the message from the angels. They were not agnostic nor atheistic. They were not pagans. They understood the expression, "Christ," and "Lord." They knew. Years later, when this same Christ is risen from the grave, the first to know it were a group of women. Had we written this story, we'd have reporters there, staff from the Roman palace on site and a crowd of the elite and powerful. We didn't write this story. God did.

This time of year, we witness manger scenes in yards and a lot of interest in the baby Jesus. Songs on the radio play "Away in the manger," and "Silent night." It seems more attention is given to the baby Jesus, than the Savior who grew up. We've had babies born recently in our family. Within ten days we had two grand babies born. They are about a month old. Cute. Adorable. And grandma loves to hold them. Everyone loves cute babies. Babies don't demand much other than feed me and change me. Babies need us. You can't leave a baby alone and dash off to the store. You'll be jail if you do that these days. Something could happen. They need big people around them. They can't talk. They can't move on their own. They can't dress themselves. Intake and outtake is about all they can do. But they are certainly cute.

The baby Jesus that everyone adores wasn't any different than that. Helpless. Needing us. Dependent. It was Mary and Joseph who filled that role. But the pages of the Bible are slim when it comes to the details of the baby Jesus. We don't have recorded, "He turned over today." We don't read, "He said his first word today." All of that is bypassed. That baby grew. He learned obedience. He became a man. The emphasis of the Scriptures is upon Jesus the Savior.

A baby in the manger is cute. The bloody Savior on the Cross is horrific to look at.

A baby needs us. We need the Savior.

A baby has few demands. The Savior demands our obedience and commitment to Him.

A baby can't do much for us. The Savior forgave us through His death.

A baby can't speak. The Savior has left volumes of words for us to cling to.

A baby isn't an example for us. The Savior is our example in all things.

Jesus in the manger is cute. We must remember that the baby grew and has become our Savior. He is the Lord. That is why He came. The world that loves the baby in the manger would like to keep Him there. He is not a threat to anyone as a baby. He can be controlled as a baby. We can live as we want as long as Jesus remains a baby. But as a Savior, Jesus will judge us one day. He wants to change you, save you, and help you.

The song of the season, and all seasons ought to be, "On a hill far away, stood the ole' rugged cross..." It is because of the cross we have hope. It is because of the cross that Heaven is possible. It is because of the cross that we have forgiveness.

The babe in the manger is the opening lines of the story. It is the first paragraph of a powerful message. Move on to the rest of the story. Get past those first lines. Find out what happens. See the Savior as He became a Savior. That's the story. That's the picture God wants you to see.

Eph. 2:19 So then ye are no more strangers and sojourners, but ye are fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, 20 being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief corner stone; 21 in whom each several building, fitly framed together, groweth into a holy temple in the Lord;

1 Pet. 2:9 But ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that ye may show forth the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:

Psa. 1:1 Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the wicked, Nor standeth in the way of sinners, Nor sitteth in the seat of scoffers: 2 But his delight is in the law of Jehovah; And on his law doth he meditate day and night. 3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the streams of water, That bringeth forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also doth not wither; And whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. 4 The wicked are not so, But are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. 5 Therefore the wicked shall not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. 6 For Jehovah knoweth the way of the righteous; But the way of the wicked shall perish.

HOURS OF WORSHIP

Sunday A.M. 9:30 Bible Study

Sunday A.M. 10:20 Assembled Worship

Sunday P.M. 5:00 Assembled Worship

Wednesday P.M. 7:00 Bible Study and Worship

Visitors welcome

We conduct in home Bible Studies

We offer Correspondence Courses

Evangelist and Editor Jim Stauffer

Elders Ron Peck and Jim Stauffer

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NEWS AND NOTES: REMEMBER THE SICK IN PRAYERS AND VISITS. JAN PATRICK, STEVE WIMP AND L.A. STAUFFER AND STEPHEN KIMKER.

THE FUNERAL SERVICES FOR J R DANIEL WILL BE HELD IN PATTONSBURG, MO., FRIDAY 12/30. MORE DETAILS TO FOLLOW.

SUNDAY MORNING BIBLE CLASS: CHRISTIAN PARENTING - RON PECK

WEDNESDAY BIBLE CLASS: THE BOOK OF ROMANS - J STAUFFER

SUNDAY SERMON: HAPPINESS: THE PROMISE OF GOD



What Must I Do To Be Saved?

Hear the gospel - Romans 10:17

Believe in Jesus Christ - Hebrews 11:6

Repent of sins - Acts 17:30

Confess Christ as Lord - Romans 10:9,10

Be Baptized for remission of sins - Acts 2:38

Be Faithful unto death - Revelation 2:10