

The Birth of Jesus Christ

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12/9/2007

Introduction

The entrance of Christ into the world is a major theme of the Bible. Let us consider God's actions and man's reactions as they related to this great event.

God's Action

A Prophesied Time

The birth of Jesus Christ was a prophesied time. Moses foreshadowed that salvation would come through the seed of woman (Gen. 3:15; Gal. 4:4-5).

Genesis 3:15 ... 15 And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, And you shall bruise him on the heel." (NASB95)

Galatians 4:4-5 ... 4 But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, 5 so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. (NASB95)

Isaiah anticipated the entrance of deity into the fleshly world (Isa. 7:14; 9:6-7; John 1:1-3, 14).

Isaiah 7:14 ... 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. (NASB95)

Isaiah 9:6-7 ... 6 For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. 7 There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, On the throne of David and over his kingdom, To establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness From then on and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will accomplish this. (NASB95)

John 1:1-3 ... 1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. (NASB95)

John 1:14 ... 14 And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth. (NASB95)

Micah predicted the lowly circumstances of the Messiah's birth (Mic. 5:2; Luke 2:1-7; Phil. 2:1-8).

Micah 5:2 ... 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." (NASB95)

Luke 2:1-7 ... 1 Now in those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus, that a census be taken of all the inhabited earth. 2 This was the first census taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. 3 And everyone was on his way to register for the census, each to his own city. 4 Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the city of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David, 5 in order to register along with Mary, who was engaged to him, and was with child. 6 While they were there, the days were completed for her to give birth. 7 And she gave birth to her firstborn son; and she wrapped Him in cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. (NASB95)

Philippians 2:1-8 ... 1 Therefore if there is any encouragement in Christ, if there is any consolation of love, if there is any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and compassion, 2 make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose. 3 Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; 4 do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. 5 Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, 6 who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. 8 Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. (NASB95)

A Perfect Time

The birth of Jesus Christ occurred at the perfect time. Jesus came preaching, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel" (Mark 1:14-15).

*Mark 1:14-15 ... 14 Now after John had been taken into custody, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God, 15 and saying, "**The time is fulfilled**, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel." (NASB95)*

Paul described the first century as "the fullness of time/times" (Gal. 4:4-5; Eph. 1:9-11).

*Galatians 4:4-5 ... 4 But when **the fullness of the time** came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, 5 so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. (NASB95)*

*Ephesians 1:9-11 ... 9 He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him 10 with a view to an administration suitable to **the fullness of the times**, that is, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the*

heavens and things on the earth. In Him 11 also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will, (NASB95)

Elsewhere, this epoch is described as “the right time” (Rom. 5:6) or “the proper time” (1 Tim. 2:5-6).

*Romans 5:6 ... 6 For while we were still helpless, at **the right time** Christ died for the ungodly. (NASB95)*

*1 Timothy 2:5-6 ... 5 For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, 6 who gave Himself as a ransom for all, the testimony given at **the proper time**. (NASB95)*

Man’s Reaction

A Perplexing Time

The birth of Jesus Christ was/is a perplexing time. The people were mystified at the events associated with John’s birth (Luke 1:5-25, 57-66).

*Luke 1:5-25 ... 5 In the days of Herod, king of Judea, there was a priest named Zacharias, of the division of Abijah; and he had a wife from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. 6 They were both righteous in the sight of God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and requirements of the Lord. 7 But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and they were both advanced in years. 8 Now it happened that while he was performing his priestly service before God in the appointed order of his division, 9 according to the custom of the priestly office, he was chosen by lot to enter the temple of the Lord and burn incense. 10 And the whole multitude of the people were in prayer outside at the hour of the incense offering. 11 And an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing to the right of the altar of incense. 12 **Zacharias was troubled when he saw the angel, and fear gripped him.** 13 But the angel said to him, “Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your petition has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will give him the name John. 14 “You will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth. 15 “For he will be great in the sight of the Lord; and he will drink no wine or liquor, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit while yet in his mother’s womb. 16 “And he will turn many of the sons of Israel back to the Lord their God. 17 “It is he who will go as a forerunner before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers back to the children, and the disobedient to the attitude of the righteous, so as to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.” 18 Zacharias said to the angel, “How will I know this for certain? For I am an old man and my wife is advanced in years.” 19 The angel answered and said to him, “I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to bring you this good news. 20 “And behold, you shall be silent and unable to speak until the day when these things take place, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their proper time.” 21 The people were waiting for Zacharias, and were*

wondering at his delay in the temple. 22 But when he came out, he was unable to speak to them; and they realized that he had seen a vision in the temple; and he kept making signs to them, and remained mute. 23 When the days of his priestly service were ended, he went back home. 24 After these days Elizabeth his wife became pregnant, and she kept herself in seclusion for five months, saying, 25 “This is the way the Lord has dealt with me in the days when He looked with favor upon me, to take away my disgrace among men.” (NASB95)

Luke 1:57-66 ... 57 Now the time had come for Elizabeth to give birth, and she gave birth to a son. 58 Her neighbors and her relatives heard that the Lord had displayed His great mercy toward her; and they were rejoicing with her. 59 And it happened that on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child, and they were going to call him Zacharias, after his father. 60 But his mother answered and said, “No indeed; but he shall be called John.” 61 And they said to her, “There is no one among your relatives who is called by that name.” 62 And they made signs to his father, as to what he wanted him called. 63 And he asked for a tablet and wrote as follows, “His name is John.” And they were all astonished. 64 And at once his mouth was opened and his tongue loosed, and he began to speak in praise of God. 65 **Fear came on all those living around them; and all these matters were being talked about in all the hill country of Judea.** 66 **All who heard them kept them in mind, saying, “What then will this child turn out to be?”** For the hand of the Lord was certainly with him. (NASB95)

Mary wondered at the report of the shepherds (Luke 2:15-20).

Luke 2:15-20 ... 15 When the angels had gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds began saying to one another, “Let us go straight to Bethlehem then, and see this thing that has happened which the Lord has made known to us.” 16 So they came in a hurry and found their way to Mary and Joseph, and the baby as He lay in the manger. 17 When they had seen this, they made known the statement which had been told them about this Child. 18 And all who heard it wondered at the things which were told them by the shepherds. 19 But **Mary treasured all these things, pondering them in her heart.** 20 The shepherds went back, glorifying and praising God for all that they had heard and seen, just as had been told them. (NASB95)

King Herod was troubled at the message of the Magi (Matt. 2:1-8; cf. Luke 2:41-51).

Matthew 2:1-8 ... 1 Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, saying, 2 “Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we saw His star in the east and have come to worship Him.” 3 **When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.** 4 Gathering together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. 5 They said to him, “In Bethlehem of Judea; for this is what has been written by the prophet: 6 ‘And you, Bethlehem, land of Judah, Are by no means least among the leaders of Judah; For out of you shall come forth a Ruler Who will shepherd My people Israel.’ ” 7 Then Herod secretly called the magi and determined from them the exact time the star appeared. 8 And he sent them to Bethlehem and said,

“Go and search carefully for the Child; and when you have found Him, report to me, so that I too may come and worship Him.” (NASB95)

A Presumptuous Time

The birth of Jesus Christ has become a presumptuous time. God has never allowed mankind to change the message of truth (Deut. 4:1-2; Gal. 1:6-9).

Deuteronomy 4:1-2 ... 1 “Now, O Israel, listen to the statutes and the judgments which I am teaching you to perform, so that you may live and go in and take possession of the land which the Lord, the God of your fathers, is giving you. 2 “You shall not add to the word which I am commanding you, nor take away from it, that you may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you. (NASB95)

Galatians 1:6-9 ... 6 I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel; 7 which is really not another; only there are some who are disturbing you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. 8 But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed! 9 As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to what you received, he is to be accursed! (NASB95)

Unauthorized preaching and practice results in condemnation (Matt. 7:21-23; 15:8-9).

Matthew 7:21-23 ... 21 “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter. 22 “Many will say to Me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?’ 23 “And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.’ (NASB95)

Matthew 15:8-9 ... 8 ‘This people honors Me with their lips, But their heart is far away from Me. 9 ‘But in vain do they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the precepts of men.’ ” (NASB95)

This principle specifically applies to those who bind the observance of days, months, seasons and years (Gal. 4:8-11; Col. 2:16-17).

Galatians 4:8-11 ... 8 However at that time, when you did not know God, you were slaves to those which by nature are no gods. 9 But now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how is it that you turn back again to the weak and worthless elemental things, to which you desire to be enslaved all over again? 10 You observe days and months and seasons and years. 11 I fear for you, that perhaps I have labored over you in vain. (NASB95)

Colossians 2:16-17 ... 16 Therefore no one is to act as your judge in regard to food or drink or in respect to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath day— 17 things which are a mere shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ. (NASB95)

Conclusion

Trust in all that Scripture teaches about the birth of Jesus Christ. Rejoice that God sent his only begotten Son into the world. However, let us avoid the unauthorized Christmas observances so widely practiced in the denominational world (Colossians 3:17; 1 Peter 4:11).

Colossians 3:17 ... 17 Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father. (NASB95)

1 Peter 4:11 ... 11 Whoever speaks, is to do so as one who is speaking the utterances of God; whoever serves is to do so as one who is serving by the strength which God supplies; so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. (NASB95)