

SPECIAL DAYS - CHRISTMAS

"THE BIRTH OF BIRTHS"

Scripture: Luke 1:26-35

Text: **Luke 2:7**
"And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn."

Over 2,000 years ago there was born in Bethlehem of Judea, a Babe whose birth, life and death were destined to affect the entire world for all time and eternity. The babe was God the Son, The Son Of God, The Lord Jesus Christ. The world had taken a long journey into the night of sin. Then that first Christmas came as a sunburst and the world has not been the same dark place since!

The Birth of Births is the most wondrous birth of all: it stopped a star, broke all laws of reproduction and changed the calendar of the world so that today, over 2,000 years later, time is still reckoned from His birth. It is the birth of this One that holds the interest of millions at this season of the year and with which we are particularly interested.

I can think of no person better qualified to describe this birth than a doctor. So, let us see what Dr. Luke has to say about this miraculous birth. He was called "the beloved Physician" in Scripture. (Col. 4:14) Dr. Luke tells us that this birth was:

I. A HERALDED BIRTH. Luke 2:9-10;13-14

"And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid. Then the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying: "Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!"

When there is a new birth in the immediate Royal Family in England, a herald appears outside Buckingham Palace and makes a public announcement to waiting crowds of well-wishers. However, the world at large did not know nor acknowledge the birth of the King of Kings. Work went on as usual. There was no official earthly pomp or ceremony accompanying this event. Only Heaven seemed to be interested. In fact God had to arrange a welcome for Himself.

It Was A Birth Announced By Angels.

"There was a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying: "Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!" What an entrance by this heaven-sent Celebrity! And yet, apart from a few peasant folks in an obscure village, no one knew of this history making, world changing event. God could have sent angels around the world to every village, town, city and country announcing the good news, however, He has reserved that privilege to those of us who believe the Christmas Story and have been changed by it.

It Was A Birth Accentuated By A Star. Matt.2:1-2

“Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, saying, “Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him.”

The appearance of this celestial phenomenon not only attracted the attention of early astronomers, called wise men, but the account of the appearance of *“His star”* in scripture has been and continues to be a point of speculation and debate. We must not become so fixated upon a mysterious light appearing in the heavens that we overlook the Light of the world, Who was born that night! He was born into earth’s night, both literally and figuratively, that He might *“give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death.”* (Luke 1:79) It is fitting that a special light appeared in the heavens to mark the appearance of the Light of life (John 1:4) coming to earth!

It Was A Birth That Attracted Astrologers. Matt.2:10

“When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceedingly great joy.”

The Magi studied astrology and astronomy. No reliable authority can prove with accuracy the country from which they came. Matthew 2:1 says *“wise men from the East came.”* Ancient travelers studied the stars and were guided by them as were the ancient mariners. No doubt these men saw some strange and unusual formation in the heavens. Jewish tradition held that the Jews expected a star as a sign of the birth of the Messiah.

That these men saw an extraordinary luminary in the skies and followed it is well established. It led them to the area where the Christ child was and *“they rejoiced with exceedingly great joy.”* It can be said that the birth of the Savior was heralded by a special sign in the heavens, even if earth was largely unaware of His entrance.

It Was A Birth Attended By Shepherds. Luke 2:15-16

“So it was, when the angels had gone away from them into heaven, that the shepherds said to one another, “Let us now go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has come to pass, which the Lord has made known to us.” And they came with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the Babe lying in a manger.”

After the angelic announcement to the shepherds outside Bethlehem, the shepherds came into town and saw the Christ child. It is interesting to contemplate those to whom the birth announcement was not made: the angels did not appear to the religious leaders; to the political leaders; to the wealthy or the guests at the Inn from which Mary and Joseph were turned away that night.

The angels appeared to shepherds outside of the town. The announcement of the birth of the One Who said, *“I am the Good Shepherd”* (John 10:11) was made to shepherds! Yes, legions of angels circled the sky; a star stopped in its orbit to mark the birthplace; wise men came from afar; humble shepherds bowed in adoration. That was centuries in the past. What about today?

It Is A Birth Acknowledged By Believers The World Over!

and we are enthralled by the story these many centuries later and annually sing:

*“O come all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant,
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem!
Come and behold Him, born the King of angels!
O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
Christ the Lord!”*

The Birth of Births was a Heralded Birth because it was a Heavenly Birth.

II. A HEAVENLY BIRTH. Luke 2:10-11

“Then the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.”

The angelic choir birth announcement was most fitting for it was the birth of One Who was coming from Heaven itself: from the bosom of the Heavenly Father to the bosom of an earthly Mother. The angel’s announcement contained several history-altering pieces of information. It was a heavenly birth in that it was a:

A Biologically Unusual Birth. *“Behold, a virgin shall conceive”* (Isa.7:14)

This birth was in a class all its own. There are four ways God has made a human body:

- (1) The way God brought Adam’s body into existence;
- (2) The way God brought Eve’s body into existence;
- (3) The way Jesus’ body was brought into existence;
- (4) The way all other human bodies are brought into existence, by procreation.

The virgin birth of the Lord Jesus was most unusual for it was the result of a biological miracle.

- ***The virgin birth was predicted by Isaiah*** – Isa.7:14 *“Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel.”*
- ***The virgin birth was revealed to Joseph*** – *“After His (Jesus’) mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins.” So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: “Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,” which is translated, “God with us.”* (Matt.1:18,20-23)
- ***The virgin birth was restated to Mary*** - *“Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin’s name was Mary. And*

having come in, the angel said to her, "Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women!" But when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and considered what manner of greeting this was. Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name JESUS..... Then Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I do not know a man?" And the angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God." (Luke 1:26-31; 34,35)

For centuries Israel had been looking forward to the coming of the Messiah. Now, as the time drew near for His appearance, God sent an angel to Joseph to forewarn him and the angel Gabriel to Mary to inform her of the imminent miraculous event. These two, yet unmarried, were to be given the blessing of parenting the Son of God. What an awesome assignment; what a stupendous honor, what an unusual birth!

A Singularly Unique Birth. *"there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior which is Christ the Lord"* said the angels to the shepherds. (Luke 2:11)

Matthew's account records these additional words from the angel to Joseph: *"And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins."* (Matt.1:21)

Jesus Christ the Lord is the only Savior from sin and that makes His birth singularly unique. Only God can save His fallen creatures from the chasm and curse of sin. If His birth was not the birth of the Saviour, then heaven has perpetrated the greatest farce ever known upon mankind, and His birth did not bring light but darkness!

The fact that this birth was the birth of the *"Savior which is Christ the Lord"* is what makes the event history changing and so meaningful for so many! Jude's benediction is therefore fitting: *"To God our Savior, Who alone is wise, Be glory and majesty, Dominion and power, both now and forever. Amen."* (Jude v.25)

*"Wonderful birth, to a manger He came,
Made in the likeness of man to proclaim
God's boundless love for a world lost in sin,
Pleading for sinners to let Him come in.
Wonderful name He bears;
Wonderful crown He wears;
Wonderful blessings His triumphs afford.
Wonderful Calvary, wonderful grace for me,
Wonderful love of my wonderful Lord!"*

What a birth! What a Savior! It is more than amazing that such a One Who came from the heights of heaven to the depths of earth would come in the manner in which He came. His humble birth still amazes us and it is this Birth of Births that we celebrate at Christmas-time.

III. **A HUMBLE BIRTH.** Luke 2:7

“And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.”

The most unique Person in all history was not born in a palace with marble walls and great halls; He had no clean, soft bed; no doctors or nurses; no church bells rang; no trumpets played. It was a birth in a humble place, to humble parents of a humble Person.

This Was A Birth In A Humble Place. Micah 5:2 *“But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall come forth to Me The One to be Ruler in Israel, Whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting.”*

Jesus Christ was not born in the city of Jerusalem, the seat of religious power, but in the small and rather obscure village of Bethlehem as foretold by the prophet Micah. When King Herod heard the news of the birth *“he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. So they said to him, “In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it is written by the prophet: ‘ But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are not the least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you shall come a Ruler Who will shepherd My people Israel.””* (Matt. 2:3-6)

And where in Bethlehem did the Birth of Births take place? Again, Luke tells us:

“And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.” (Luke 2:7)

Did you ever stop to think how we have changed the real truth about Christmas? Take this matter of Christ being born in a stable: With our songs, pageants and pictures we make it sound as though a stable is a wonderful place to start life! But when we try to put ourselves in that scene, how different things look.

The Son of God was actually born in a barn and was cradled in a feeding trough; His mother lay on the hay and animals were His companions. When you get right down to it there is not one of us who didn't have a better birthplace than our Lord from the standpoint of comfort. What a humble birth!

This Was A Birth To Humble Parents.

Mary and Joseph were from Nazareth in northern Galilee, of which Nathanael asked, “Can anything good come thing come out of Nazareth?” (John 1:46) Nazareth did not have a good reputation. And Joseph practiced an honorable but humble trade in Nazareth, that of a carpenter. Mary and Joseph were peasants just visiting Bethlehem. Humble parents of humble means in a humble place.

This Was A Birth Of A Humble Person. Phil. 2:7,8 *“He made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.”*

When the Lord Jesus made another entrance, the Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem, the prophecy of Zechariah was fulfilled which stated: *“Behold, your King is coming to you, lowly, and sitting on a donkey, a colt, the foal of a donkey.”* (Zech.9:9; Matt. 21:4,5)

Jesus Christ was humility personified! When He entered physically into our existence:

- God became a man;
- Spirit became flesh;
- Immortal became a mortal;
- Creator became a creature;
- Master became a servant;
- Shepherd became a sheep!

And He humbled Himself for us:

*“In a manger on the hay,
With the cattle Jesus lay;
Not as Monarch with a crown,
Not as person with renown;
Nay, He came the Holy One,
Came the meek and lowly One,
Came that Shepherds might abide
Unembarrassed by His side.”*

The Birth of Births was a heralded birth, a heavenly birth and a humble birth. There is one last thought that makes the story complete and that is, it was a hope-filled birth.

IV. A HOPE-FILLED BIRTH. *“O the Hope of Israel, his Savior in time of trouble, why should You be like a stranger in the land,”* (Jer.14:8)

The world of mankind had taken a long journey into the depths and darkness of sin and souls longing to see light and freedom looked for God’s salvation in the person of the promised Savior. Jesus Christ was and is the Hope of the world. Biblical hope means to anticipate and look forward with confidence, to that which is predicated upon the promises of God.

Jesus Christ Is The Promised Hope Of Israel. *“O the Hope of Israel, his Savior in time of trouble, Why should You be like a stranger in the land,”* (Jer.14:8) Israel had long looked forward to the coming of Messiah, the Hope of Israel. Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist, praised God saying, *“the Dayspring from on high has visited us; to give light to those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.”* (Luke 2:78-79) Jesus Christ came as the fulfillment of that hope.

Jesus Christ Is The Personal Hope Of Believers. *“Christ in you, the hope of glory.”* (Col.1:27) There is, however, a condition that must be met if we are to be partakers of the Hope that Christ is in and of Himself and which He offers us freely. That is, the Christ Who was born in Bethlehem’s manger, must be born into our lives. Paul wrote to the Colossians saying, *“Christ in you, the hope of glory.”* Many celebrate the child’s birth in the manger, but have not welcomed the Christ into their lives.

A Christian is “Christ In” – Christ within is Hope residing in the life of the believer. How is it that Christ comes into a life? John 1:12,13 tells us: *“But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.”*

Jesus Christ came into a hopeless world. Kings and kingdoms had come and gone, each temporarily giving a hint of hope to the world of mankind. The Roman Empire was dominant in Christ’s day, but Israel was downtrodden and made subservient to godless rulers. Hope had waned until the appearance of the Messiah-Savior.

Simeon expressed joyous hope at the appearance of the Christ-child when he was brought to the temple. Taking Him up in his arms he blessed God and said, *“ Lord, now You are letting Your servant depart in peace, according to Your word; For my eyes have seen Your salvation which You have prepared before the face of all peoples, a light to bring revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of Your people Israel.”* (Luke 2:28-32)

Summation

The Birth of Births was a heralded birth, a heavenly birth, a humble birth and a hope-filled birth. What a birth! What a Savior! No wonder His birth leaves us starry-eyed! It is that birth that we celebrate at this season. Let us remember that He came:

- from the celestial to the cradle;
- from riches to poverty;
- coronations to condemnations;
- excellencies to execution;
- hallelujah’s to hisses;
- joys to jeers;
- majesty to miseries;
- a crown to a cross. It was a long way down!

Conclusion

Did, for you, He come in vain? Have you invited Him into the cradle of your heart as your Savior and Lord? The following song sums up the Birth of Births:

*“Down from His glory, Ever living story
My God and Saviour came,
And Jesus was His name;
Born in a manger, to His own a stranger
A man of sorrows, tears and agony.
O, how I love Him, how I adore Him,
My breath, my sunshine
My all in all;
The Great Creator became my Saviour
And all God’s fullness dwelleth in Him.”*

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