

The Birth of the Christ

Mark, Peter's scribe starts his Gospel with the beginning of Jesus' ministry as He is baptized by John.

The Apostle John ties Jesus back to Creation and also starts his coverage of Jesus' life with John the Baptist.

It is only Matthew, with his focus on tying Jesus to prophecy, and Luke, the physician and Paul's companion, that tried to give an account from as many eyewitnesses as possible, of Jesus' origin story, starting with His birth.

It was important to them, that people saw that Jesus was fully man and fully God. To do that, they didn't want to start their narrative of Jesus fully grown and fully formed. They wanted to start with Him at the beginning being born of woman as an infant and His subsequent growth as a child.

After addressing the character of Mary, and the parallels between Jesus and John the Baptist and His forerunner. Luke comes to the birth of Jesus.

1. The Birth of Jesus

Luke 2:4-7

And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, 5 to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. 6 And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. 7 And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

While Matthew concentrates on the fulfillment of prophecy, Luke focuses on the humble birth of the Son of God.

He was born in a stable and His first crib was a feeding trough.

Here is the God of the Universe made man, King of Kings and Lord of Lord, coming into this world in the most humble of circumstances.

Phil 2:5-9

Christ Jesus, 6 who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

This is why many have called Him, the Humble King.

2. The Fanfare accompanying His Birth

Luke 2:8-14

And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. 9 And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with fear. 10 And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy that will be for all the people. 11 For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. 12 And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger."

All throughout history, when the first male child of a king is born, there is great fanfare. Heralds proclaim his birth to the court and a great party is thrown to celebrate his birth and all the nobility is invited.

In the case of Jesus, while those things happen, they are in keeping with His humble birth. In his case the heralds are angels, and the court and nobility are the shepherds in the field. His birth announcement is made to those who will benefit the most from His birth, ministry, and ultimately, His sacrifice.

Instead of great fanfare in the court, there is great fanfare in the heavens and on earth.

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 among those with whom he is pleased!"

Understand that this peace is conditional. This peace is not for everyone, it is for those who look to Him and please Him. It is for those who surrender to His rule and reign.

Isa 9:6

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

3. The intimacy and personal impact of His birth

Luke 2:15-20

When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us." 16 And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. 17 And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. 18 And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them.

Let us first remember why these shepherds were in the field in the first place.

First, they were keeping their flocks together so they wouldn't scatter and get lost.

Second, they were there to protect their sheep from predators. They were there to protect their investment and livelihood.

And yet, so great was the impact of what they had just seen and heard, that they left their sheep to go and investigate this event they had just been told about. Without hesitation they went to look for this promised Savior.

Then when they found Him, they couldn't but share what they had seen and heard.

19 But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart.

Please understand that both Mary and Joseph had angels tell them the significance of the child she was carrying. They were both obedient and done what God had told them to do. But now, they found themselves in this barn, away from home, surrounded by animals, when this baby is born.

He's so tiny, so frail. Mary holds Him to her breast and suckles him. He is completely defenseless and dependent on her. It's her baby. The last thing she is thinking of is that this is the Son of God and the savior of the world.

Then these shepherds come and tell their story and suddenly, in a sobering instant, it changes the way she looks at Him.

It takes a moment for Mary to reconcile all these feelings.

On the one hand she is experiencing the joy of just having given birth to this perfect child that is, flesh of her flesh, and completely dependent on her.

On the other, the realization of who that baby is settles upon her like a ton of bricks. This baby is the Savior of the World.

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

The shepherds had no such conflicting thoughts.

They, lowly shepherds, had just had angels appear to them.

They had just seen with their very own eyes this child, which was spoken about, not only by the angels, but also by the prophets.

They, out of all the people in Israel had been chosen to experience this miraculous event.

All they could do was return to their flocks.

However, they were forever changed.

They glorified and praised God for the had seen their salvation with their very eyes.

Conclusion

Satan has done everything in his power to take the Christ out of Christmas.

Even though His birth is the demarcation of time in human history. Now people say BCE, or Before the Common Era, instead of BC, Before Christ. You can change the letters, but His birth remains the demarcation point.

Santa Claus has taken over as the central figure of Christmas.

Now every ethnic and religious group takes a claim to the celebration that takes place this time of year.

Hollywood and TV are intent on telling us the real meaning of Christmas. Family, love, peace, community, forgiveness, and selflessness. All of these are wonderful things, but they aren't the real meaning of Christmas.

The birth of our Savior is the core of Christmas. All these other things should be the result of that birth. Peace on earth and good towards mankind are the result of a relationship with Christ. They don't happen apart from Him.

As we celebrate the birth of Jesus, the Humble King, let us rededicate our lives to Him.

Let us do as the shepherds did after their world was shaken and transformed.

Let us glorify and praise Him, for in Him is our salvation.