

University Heights Church of Christ

BULLETIN

December 21, 2008

The Birth of Jesus of Nazareth

Matthew 1:18 "Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit. 19 Then Joseph her husband, being a just [man], and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privately. 20 But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, Joseph, you son of David, fear not to take to you Mary your wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. 21 And she shall bring forth a son, and you shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins. 22 Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, 23 Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us. 24 Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took to him his wife: 25 And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name JESUS. 2:1 Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, 2 Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him."

The conception of Jesus was a miraculous event in which God came to dwell on earth in a body of human flesh in order to share in and overcome the temptations of the flesh. (**Hebrews 2:9, 14, 17, 18, 4:15**) The coming of Jesus was long anticipated and the subject of prophecies for many generations, but the first bed for the newborn child was a feeding place for animals, not a golden silk lined crib. The animals would have their manger back as soon as Mary the mother of Jesus got through using it as a baby bed for the Savior of the world.

Luke 2:4 "And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, to 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."

Angels of God announced the event and used the manger to identify the child to those who went to see.

Luke 2:8 "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 to them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. 11 For to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord. 12 And this [shall be] a sign to you; You 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 to Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord has made known to 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 to them."

This conception and birth of this child had been foretold by fifteen hundred years of prophecies that are preserved in the Hebrew Scriptures. Those prophecies so completely describe the event that there is no chance for a mistake in identifying the Christ. This Jesus, son of Mary the wife of Joseph is Christ the Messiah the Savior of the world. There is no way to overemphasize the importance of the conception and birth of Jesus, but in the New Testament this event is never made the object of religious observance. In the New Testament the death and resurrection of Jesus are made the object of religious observance but the conception or birth of Jesus is not. Jesus himself instituted the simple ceremonial meal of unleavened bread and grape juice to commemorate His death and resurrection, but nothing to commemorate His conception or birth.

In the religions of men, services and ceremonies to commemorate the conception and birth of Jesus constitute the major events of each year's religious calendar. In the New Testament there is not a single solitary religious observance of the conception or birth of Jesus. There is the historical record of the events taking place and references to the prophecies that those events fulfilled. But never is there the slightest indication that Christians under the guidance of the inspired apostles ever engaged in any religious activity to remember, memorialize or to commemorate the conception or birth of Jesus. If they had observed any such religious activities memorializing the conception or birth or Jesus the record of those activities would be found in the New Testament just as observing the Lord's supper is found there.

If God had intended for the day of the birth of Jesus to become an object of religious observance the New Testament would tell us what day. But the New Testament does not tell us what day. When God wanted the Israelites to observe the day they came out of Egypt God recorded the day (the fifteenth day of the first month of their calendar) and told the Israelites how He intended for them to go about observing it. If God had intended for us to memorialize the birthday of Jesus, God would have told us what day to observe, and how to go about observing that day. We cannot go beyond what God has told us and remain faithful to God. (**2 John 1:9**)

What the New Testament teaches us to observe is the victory of Jesus over sin and death. When Jesus died without ever sinning He gained victory over sin and became the Redeemer of us all. When Jesus was raised from the dead He gained victory over death and became the eternal proof to each of us that what God has promised God is able and willing to do.

Jesus said, "If you love me, keep my commandments," (**John 14:15**) and if we love Him that is what we must do.

Remember To Pray For

Dallis and Alma Isaacs
Francis Nations
Mary Jane Frost
Melanie Bilye
Rick Shamas
Bonnie Wells
Sarah Phillips
David Alford
Carol Bach
Marian Lyda
Edith Tirey
Lucy Hale
Pamela Clayton
Ella Wells, and her family
Lorene Pagan
Freddie Ward
David and Chessie Harwell
Donna Caldwell
Mabel Greene
Tony Tyree
Ruth Brundige
Cindy Miller
Christie Ellis
Shirley Lewis
Brady Gibbons
Gail Hunter
Larry Flannery
Donnie Joseph
Cheryl Spear
Lanny Hiller
Charity and Abdiel Pallafox
Helen Stephens
Chris Handshoe
Jeffrey Howerton
Addison Pervine
Carl Stripplehoff
Tom Kemp
Freda Blakey

It is good to remember that we are all short-timers here on Planet Earth

Job 14:1 *“Man [that is] born of a woman [is] of few days, and full of trouble. 2 He comes forth like a flower, and is cut down: he flees also as a shadow, and continues not.”*

James 4:13 *“Go to now, you that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: 14 Whereas you know not what [shall be] on the morrow. For what [is] your life? It is even a vapor, that appears for a little time, and then vanishes away. 15 For that you [ought] to say, If the Lord wills, we shall live, and do this, or that.”*

Thoughts

To Timothy the apostle Paul once wrote, *“But godliness with contentment is great gain. 7 For we brought nothing into [this] world, [and it is] certain we can carry nothing out. 8 And **having food and raiment let us be therewith content.”*** (1 Timothy 6:6-8)

Paul’s statement was made in a time in which many Christians had to serve God acceptably in dreadfully negative circumstances. In those, often unpleasant, circumstances they understood how bad things could get because they were either experiencing or seeing others experience living in bad circumstances, every day. We can think of places in the world today where a large part of the population could be expected to be more than content with adequate food and clothing (especially if “food” included a plentiful supply of pure water) because of the destitute circumstances in which they live. Food and clothing in good supply would be a step up and it is usually not too hard to be content (at least for a little while) with a step up.

Did Paul mean to say that the extreme limit of what a human should, in dire circumstances, be content with is also the limit of what every human should have?

That does not seem reasonable since **the only way a person can be without things is to not do anything. If a person does not have things to do with it simply means that they must depend on someone else who does have things to do with to do the doing for both of them.**

As an example, attempt to prepare a meal with nothing but food and clothing. Go out in the backyard with no pot, no fire, no knife, no table, no roof, no nothing but food and clothing and see what kind of meals you can prepare.

In the Bible Aquila, Pricilla and Paul were tent makers. For those three to be employed with tent making somebody had to have some tent making tools and some materials from which to make tents. Food and clothes was not enough to enable them to make tents. Lydia the seller of purple had to have purple to sell or she could not sell purple. If your food and clothing and that of your employees and their families is the result of your tent making empire, you might wind up being legitimately required to own a whole lot more property than food and clothing or than any one of your employees does. So, if Paul is not saying that the total lawful limit of the property owned by the faithful is food and clothing what is Paul saying?

One thing that Paul is saying is that the faithful must put in place guidelines and limits on desires to acquire. Another thing is that each of us should be aware of what a huge blessing we are enjoying if we have a steady supply of adequate food and clothing. Another thing that Paul is saying is that we must understand the difference between life and property and be prepared to serve God thankfully whether in good times or in bad.

This is an outstanding time to remember and give thought to what Paul said about property and contentment. Goods are tools for serving God not the end we serve.

Notes

The information business meeting for December has been postponed until January at which time both the December and the January men’s meetings will be addressed.

Sheets

There is a sheet on the bulletin board in the front hall on which to list requests for song selections for the first Friday night singings.

There is another sheet on the bulletin board by the office on which to list maintenance items that need to be addressed.

Of God **Psalms 135:8** says, *“Who smote **the firstborn of Egypt, both of man and beast.**”*

That means that God knew who was born first to every generation of every genealogical line of every person and of every beast then residing in Egypt. With millions of beasts throughout Egypt the first born of each beast and only the first born died that night. That allowed all that were involved, Egyptians, Israelites and all others that heard to know that this God whom the Israelites wished to serve knows absolutely everything and controls absolutely everything.

Schedule of Services

Sunday Morning

Bible Classes 9:45 AM

Worship Service 10:45 AM

Sunday Evening

Worship Service 6:00 PM

Wednesday Evening

Bible Studies (all ages) 7:30 PM

Monthly Song Service

First Friday each month 7:30 PM

University Heights

Church of Christ

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**COME STUDY THE BIBLE
AND WORSHIP WITH US**

HELP GOD’S WORD GROW

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