

BRYAN STATION BAPTIST CHURCH

THE PIONEER BAPTIST

INDEPENDENT • MISSIONARY • ESTABLISHED 1786

“Preaching the same truth since before Kentucky was a state”

VOLUME 37, NO. 4

JANUARY, 2006

THE BIRTH OF JESUS

By: C. D. Cole

Matthew 1:21, “And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.”

A child was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the land of Palestine. This child was of humble parentage, born in a stable and had a manger for His first cradle. Luke 2:7, “*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.*” In obedience to the command of an angel, the child was named JESUS. He grew to manhood in the despised village of Nazareth, and at the age of thirty publicly entered upon His divine mission, completing it and crowning it with glorious success in death and resurrection.

Jesus never traveled beyond the border of the small country where He was born. He never wrote a book, and yet more books have been written about Him than about any other personage of all time. He never invented anything, and yet all inventions date their patents from the time of His birth. He never owned anything, and yet every man is eternally poor without Him. He was poor, yet made many rich. He did not have enough influence with men to keep from being put to death as a criminal, and yet He has power enough with God to keep men from reaping the just deserts of their sins.

The birth of Jesus was unique. It was different from all other births. He is called the only begotten Son of God.

UNIQUE IN ITS NATURE

His birth was supernatural. 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 Ghost.*” There is nothing known to science that can explain the birth of Jesus. It is true that Isaac had a supernatural birth, but Abraham was his father and Sarah was his mother. But Jesus had no human father. He was born of a virgin, begotten of the Holy Spirit. As a Spirit, He was the eternal Son of God; as a man, His body was prepared for Him by God. Hebrews 10:5, “*Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me.*”

He was the only sinless person ever to be born of woman. Luke 1:26-35, “*...the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin’s name was Mary. And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women. And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be. And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the*

Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end. Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.”

Other babies are innocent of any personal transgression, but the child Jesus was free from any sinful nature. Psalm 58:3, “*The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies.*” Jesus never had any deceit in His mouth. Jesus said in John 14:6, “*...I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.*”

The birth of Jesus was heralded by angels. Luke 2:8-11, “*And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. 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. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.*” And this announcement was followed by the angelic chorus. Verses 13-14, “*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, good will toward men."

There were no cards mailed out of Bethlehem the next day bearing the picture of a stork with a baby in its mouth. There was no announcement by the high priest of Israel that their Messiah was the world's Saviour and had just been born. Lowly shepherds were the first to hear the good news.

PROPHECY FORETOLD

Virgin birth - The birth of Jesus was in exact fulfilment of many Old Testament prophecies. In the very dawn of human sin and misery when it seemed that the devil had for ever ruined the masterpiece of creation, God announced that the seed of the woman would bruise the serpent's head. Genesis 3:15, "*And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.*" Isaiah 7:14, "*Therefore the LORD himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.*"

To Abraham God promised that one of his decedents should be a blessing to all nations. Genesis 22:15-18, "*And the angel of the LORD called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time, And said, By myself have I sworn, saith the LORD, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice.*"

Race, Shem - Genesis 11:10, "*These are the generations of Shem:*"

Nation, Israel - Genesis 28:13-14, "*And, behold, the LORD stood above it, and said, I am the LORD God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed; And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and*

in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." Galatians 3:16, "*Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.*"

Tribe, Judah - Genesis 49:10, "*The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.*" This scripture predicts that Shiloh would come of the tribe of Judah.

Family of David - II Samuel 7:8, 16, "*Now therefore so shalt thou say unto my servant David, Thus saith the LORD of hosts...And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever.*"

Place, Bethlehem - Micah prophesied that the Messiah was to be born in Bethlehem of Judea. Micah 5:2, "*But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.*"

Time of Birth - Daniel had said that the Messiah would come 483 years (69 weeks or prophetic years) from the time of the commandment to restore and rebuild Jerusalem. Daniel 9:24-26, "*Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy. Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined.*"

All these prophecies put Israel on the tip-toe of expectation. The people were expecting some great person to

come. They were looking for the long promised Messiah. They had lost their freedom again and were looking for a Deliverer. But when He arrived they missed Him. They did not expect to find Him among the lowly. None of them thought of going to a stable to find the Messiah and King. They expected Him to be found among the great and noble. The lowly birth of Jesus in Bethlehem and His childhood spent in the despised Nazareth were always against Him in the eyes of the people. This is another way God throws contempt on human pride.

UNIQUE IN ITS PURPOSE

Why was the Christ born into this world? Why did the Ancient of Days become an infant? The purpose of the birth of Christ was different from the purpose of the birth of any other man.

We hear much said about men of destiny. One man seems to be born to rule, another is born a genius, and another is born for some other great purpose. We think of Moses as the chosen of God to lead Israel out of bondage. Elijah is remembered as the prophet of God to call a sinful nation to repentance. David was God's choice to be king of Israel. Cyrus, although a heathen ruler, was God's anointed to rebuild the temple at Jerusalem. Alexander is known as the one who wept because there were no more worlds to conquer and as the one who spread the Greek language over the whole world. Washington is known by every school boy as the saviour of his country. Lincoln is appreciated as the emancipator of four million slaves and preserver of the union. But Christ was born for a greater work than any of these men performed. His mission to this earth was different from that of any other man.

Jesus was born to die. The purpose of the birth of all other men is to live a little while, do their little task, fill their little niche in human affairs and then die. In death they relinquish their tools and cease from their works. But death was the supreme task of Jesus. He said, when speaking of His death, John 10:18, "*...This commandment have I received of my Father.*"

Jesus was born to give; others are born to get. We are all, more or less,

devotees of the Gospel of Getting. And the desire to get has been terribly abused. The desire to get riches has produced thieves and murderers. The desire to become popular has filled men and women with envy of others. The desire to get has filled the world with war and bloodshed; it has made of mankind a race of competitors when it ought to be a race of cooperatives.

But Jesus came with the new philosophy, that it is more blessed to give than to receive. And Jesus practiced what He preached. He climaxed a life of giving by giving Himself a sacrifice for sin. Matthew 20:28, *“Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.”* He who has not given enough to know that it is more blessed to give than to receive is indeed poor in his soul’s experiences.

The pastor who does not try to develop in his people the grace of giving is keeping from them the sweetest experiences of life and robbing them of rewards in the world to come. Paul wrote to the Philippians about giving: Philippians 4:15-17, *“Now ye Philippians know also, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only. For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity. Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account.”*

There is much we can give this sin-cursed world, but the best thing we can give it is the good news the angel gave to the lowly shepherds. Luke 2:10-11, *“And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.”* This is the task left the church by Jesus when He returned to the Father. Mark 16:15, *“And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.”*

Jesus was born to save. The name Jesus means Jehovah saves. Appropriate name for One with such a mission. Matthew 1:21, *“And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his*

name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.”

There have been many who have been named Jesus, but no one has the right to it but Him, for there is none other among men who can save except the Jesus of Nazareth.

Christ is the most indispensable man of all history. Other men have been a blessing to the world, but Jesus Christ is the world’s necessity. If other men had not lived we would have been terribly inconvenienced in this life, but if Jesus had not been born we would have to suffer indescribable pain in eternity. Other men have given us things useful for a little while, but Jesus gives everlasting life. Edison gave us the incandescent lamp; Marconi gave us the wireless telegraph; the Wrights gave us the first airplane; Elias Howe gave us the first sewing machine; Bell gave us the telephone; but Jesus Christ gives us the one and only salvation from sin. Louis Pasteur gave us the remedy for mad-dog bite; Jesus gives us the remedy for sin bite.

Our text tells us that Jesus shall save His people from their sins. Who are His people and how does He save them? The Scriptures give implicit answer to both questions.

The people of Christ are those given Him by the Father in covenant engagement. John 6:39, *“And this is the Father’s will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.”* John 17:2, *“As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.”* John 6:37-40, *“All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father’s will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.”*

Now here is the sure way to settle whether you were given to Christ by the Father. If you belong to that number

you will repent of your sins and believe on Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord. You will not sit still in sin, but you will become aroused over your lost condition and trust Christ as Saviour.

Christ’s people are His both secretly and openly. They are His secretly by the Father’s choice of them and gift of them to Christ. Paul was much discouraged by the opposition in Corinth; Acts 18:9-11, *“Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace; For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city. And he continued there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.”* The much people had not at that time been saved, but they were known to God and were saved through the ministry of Paul. Those who are Christ’s people secretly become His openly through faith.

Jesus saves His people from the penalty of their sins by suffering the penalty in Himself. He died for them as their substitute so that they might escape the second death and have everlasting life. Christ as the Surety for His people pays their sin debt. He settles with Justice and obtains His people’s pardon.

“Jesus, my Saviour, to Bethlehem came,
Born in a manger to sorrow and shame;
Oh, it was wonderful—blest be His name!
Seeking for me, for me.

Jesus, my Saviour, on Calvary’s tree,
Paid the great debt, and my soul He set free;
Oh, it was wonderful—how could it be?
Dying for me, for me.”