

SOME WONDERS OF JESUS' BIRTH

The Biblical record of the birth of Jesus Christ notably omits the date of its occurrence, so it is appropriate to turn our thoughts to it at any season of the year. Likewise, there is no hint in the New Testament that His disciples did or should engage in any special observance of the occasion. However, it is surely fitting for us to meditate on the Scriptural record of some of the wonders associated with it, even twenty centuries distant from its occurrence. Note:

- **The simple and delicate record:** Inspired historians consistently treat events of surpassing significance with brevity and succinctness (e.g., Creation, the Flood, Jesus ascension to Heaven). In a scant forty verses (Mat. 1:18–2:12; Luke 2:1–20), we read the facts of Jesus' parentage and the place and purpose of His birth. The means of His conception is simply and matter-of-factly reported, providing the true purpose and perspective for the event.
- **The humble circumstances:** Men expect kings to be born in pomp and splendor and in great cities. The Baby Jesus began His earthly life in the poorest of circumstances. Bethlehem was a humble village overshadowed by nearby majestic Jerusalem. There was not even house (much less a palace), no hospital, no doctor, nor even a vacant room to welcome Him into this alien world. His birthplace was a cowshed, His bassinette a feed trough. Nevertheless, He would become "King of kings" and "Lord of lords" (1 Tim. 6:15).
- **The heavenly announcements and praise:** The angel Gabriel announced the impending conception and birth to Mary. Another angel reassured Joseph of Mary's purity, although she was with child. An angel alerted the shepherds to this miraculous event, and a grand company of angels performed a chorus of praise in honor of the occasion. No other birth has ever excited such attention and interest from Heaven.
- **The attraction of foreign sages:** Weddings, funerals, and births of known princes have long attracted notables from distant nations, but Jesus was unknown, even in His own nation. The magi traveled hundreds of miles to honor Jesus' birth, in spite of knowing nothing of his royal lineage. His humble circumstances did not deter them from laying their gifts before Him.
- **The political jealousy and murder it stirred:** King Herod's insane jealousy could not abide any thought of a political rival. In his effort to eliminate the imagined threat, he slaughtered several defenseless infants and broke the hearts of perhaps dozens of parents. (Before we judge Herod too harshly, may we reflect on the 58 million defenseless babes that American mothers, judges, and doctors have shamelessly sacrificed on abortion's bloody altar since 1973.)

- **It occurred without a human begettal:** Mary's conception of Jesus was by means of the Holy Spirit, apart from a human husband, as two angels announce and both Matthew and Luke straightforwardly record. Isaiah foresaw this singular event seven centuries in advance (Isa. 7:14). Only by the Divine begettal could the Word become flesh and dwell among us and die for us (John 1:14, 29).

He deserves the praise, honor, and obedience of all humanity.

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[**Note:** I wrote this article for and it was published in *The Lighthouse*, weekly bulletin of Northpoint Church of Christ, Denton, TX, September 27, 2015, of which I was editor.]