

The Uniqueness of Jesus' Birth

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The Bible is the only source of information on the birth of Jesus, and it has two notable omissions:

1. When it occurred – it could have easily been specified, but it was not.
2. Any religious observance of the occasion in all the first century.

It is not unreasonable to conclude that God did not intend for men to memorialize His Son's birth. The statement of these facts is not intended to minimize the importance of Jesus' birth, however. Indeed, it would seem to come only after His death and resurrection in importance. We will do well to consider some elements that made the birth of Jesus unique.

It is simply and delicately recorded. This is a characteristic of inspired historians. Such colossal events as the creation and the flood are reported in less space than secular journalists use to describe a football game. Matthew and Luke combined use only about 55 verses to give the simple, salient facts about the parentage, place, and purpose of Jesus' birth. The accounts give the facts with artistic delicacy. Unspiritual reporters would have made literary fodder of the drama of an unmarried maiden carrying a Child and leaving her hometown for its birth, if they had given any notice at all. The Gospel writers do not ignore these facts, but they handle them with appropriate decorum, emphasizing their purpose and cause.

Jesus' birth was in very humble circumstances. Men deem it inappropriate for their kings to be cast in humble surroundings. They are born in the gilded palaces of great cities. But in Baby Jesus we see the King of kings who began life in humble and miserable circumstances. No palace, nor even a house, but a shelter for animals was His birth room and a feed trough, His first cradle. Not in glorious Jerusalem, but in little Bethlehem, six miles to the south, did God bring His Son into flesh. Even from His birth the fact is emphasized that His kingdom did not pertain to or depend on outward affluence or the pomp and pageantry of men. The ignominies surrounding his birth are curiously prophetic of the events that later surrounded his death.

The homage of foreign sages was attracted by Jesus' birth. Wise men came from afar, drawn by the guiding star over Bethlehem, to pay Him honor. Such would normally come for the coronation, wedding, or funeral of a known prince, but here is one unknown among His own people, whom the wisest of another far away land came to honor at His birth. That men of great power and respect would travel a long distance and prostrate themselves before and offer their gifts to an unknown Babe of another land is indeed unique.

The birth of Jesus provoked Heavenly announcement and praise. True, other births were heralded by angels (Isaac, John), but none so gloriously as Jesus'. By angels, Mary, Joseph, and the shepherds received the word. God led the wise men to the birthplace by a star. A host of angels sang in heavenly chorus as astonished shepherds stood breathless in the Judean night. No other birth has ever excited such Heavenly attention and interest, showing convincingly that this was no ordinary birth or Babe.

The most unique fact about the birth of Jesus is that it occurred without human begettal. God had provided for miraculous conceptions in other women, as Sarah, Rachel, Hannah, and Elisabeth could all testify. In all of those, God used the natural begettal procedure of a husband planting the seed. Both Matthew and Luke record the totally singular conception of the Lord Jesus in Mary's womb apart from a human husband, and they do it in a very matter of fact, almost routine way. The angel that announced this occurrence to Joseph declared that it was the fulfillment of what Isaiah had said seven centuries before (Isa. 7:14). Jesus was virgin-conceived and born of seed implanted by the Holy Spirit so that He retained His full Deity, while obtaining His full humanity. Jesus' birth was the culmination of all of God's plans for man's redemption (Gal. 4:4-5). He came to give Himself as a sacrifice for the sins of the world, which no mere man was sufficient to do. To deny the virgin birth of Christ is to rob the world of its only Savior and Redeemer.

Like the wise men of old, wise men today will be drawn by these wonders surrounding the birth of our Lord to seek Him out, even at great personal inconvenience, and bring their gifts to lay at His feet. The great gift that He desires of those who believe in Him is loving obedience: "Not everyone that saith unto me Lord,

Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven" (Mat. 7:21); "If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments" (John 14:15). The benefits Jesus came to bring – and brought – cannot be found by merely gazing in amazement at Him from a distance. We will receive the eternal salvation He offers only if we obey Him (Heb. 5:9).

[Note: I wrote this article for an it was published in the September 14, 1979, edition of *Light of Life*, of which I was editor. This monthly paper was published and mailed to every address county-wide by Granbury Church of Christ, Granbury, TX.

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