

THE BIRTH THAT CHANGED THE WORLD!

#3097 1224 23P
Christmas Eve

That moment in history when God visited earth and Jesus was born in Bethlehem is much *more* than the beginning of His life—it fulfilled the divine plan of God. It is about the King of kings who walked and talked with His subjects. He came to *serve* and to make a *sacrifice* for us. That *moment in history* is never to be *ignored* or *forgotten* or *misunderstood*.

Two thousand years have passed, but the *significance* of Jesus' birth; the *life* He lived; the *Truth* He taught; His *sacrifice* at Calvary; and His *resurrection* to life becomes ever more important, as the world becomes ever more wicked and corrupt!

The birth of Jesus divides time by—B.C. and A.D. His birth is linked to eternal life for all who realize the importance of it, and who allow it to bring the *change* it *must* bring. Self has to *die* in us so that Christ can *live* in us.

There is no other birth like it because there is no other One like *Jesus*—sinless! God was visiting His creation—to be *Light*; to pay a *debt*; to give His Truth; and to bring *change* to all who *want* to change!

With all the distractions of the holiday, we must guard against being too busy, and guard against forgetting that this *birth* can *bring* change—a change everyone needs and everyone must want! If we are not careful we can forget that Jesus came to make the sacrifice *for* us and to bring that change *in* us. Let us not be preoccupied with less important things.

Angels appear in the sky to proclaim—AV Luke 2:14 “*Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.*” It was a momentous event like no other—it was God visiting our world. This moment in history is *central* to the Christian faith.

Before Jesus was born at Bethlehem there had been four hundred years of—no announcements; no prophets or prophecies; no angels or visions from God—it was four hundred years of silence.

Caesar Augustus sent a decree that the world would be taxed. AV Luke 2:3 “*And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city. 4 And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:).*”

Luke was *not* one of the twelve disciples, and was *not* an eyewitness to the ministry of Jesus. Luke was *not* Jewish but a *Gentile* who wrote one of the gospels—in which he pens much detail of the time God visited earth.

Caesar Augustus was the great-grand-nephew of Julius Caesar—Augustus *forced* his way to power—but he did give the Roman Empire

a solidarity that lasted for centuries. Caesar Augustus was the first to consider himself a god, and as time went on, the Caesars began to accept worship—leading many into idolatry.

Emperor worship caused many difficulties and persecution. The government *demand*ed that people say: *Caesar is Lord*, but followers of Christ would *not worship* anyone except the one true God.

The birth that changed the world was announced to shepherds AV Luke 2:11 “*For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.*” Caesar was *not* lord and *not* anyone's *savior*.

Jesus is the *only* Savior and Lord for all who put their *trust* on Him—for *change* of attitude, for physical healing, protection, daily needs and eternal life. Caesar Augustus was only a pawn in the hands of the true King.

God planned that Caesar would give the decree for people to be taxed—that would bring Joseph and Mary to Bethlehem as prophesied. AV Luke 2:6 “*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.*”

God chose this time in history when there were few military conflicts, so the people had time to discover literature, art, religion, and philosophy. Roman Roads made travel easier and the Greek language made *learning* increase. God knew it was the right moment for the Messiah to arrive.

Simeon waited in the temple to see Jesus—he took AV Luke 2:28 “*Him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said, 29 Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: 30 For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, 31 Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; 32 A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.*”

The apostle penned NKJV Galatians 4:4 “*When the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, 5 To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.*” *This is the birth that could **change the world!***

It was a *riches to rags* story—Jesus went from a *mansion* to a *manger*; from the *highest* place in Heaven to the *lowest* place on earth. He went from a *palace* in *Paradise* to a *crib* in a *cave*. *That* is the example of humility He gave everyone!

The Christmas story that is pictured on cards is far from reality. Many things have been added that are not part of the original scene. We can miss the *reason* for *season* if we don’t know of these additions to holiday cards. Lyrics: *It is not in the snow that may or may not fall; and it is not in the gifts around the tree; but it is the Gift that heaven gave, the night our Savior came* unquote.

Mary may have been a teenager when the angel Gabriel made the announcement. AV Luke 1:28 “*Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women.*” It would be difficult for her to understand all that would take place, but it was all part of the divine plan.

Mary and Joseph were living in Nazareth as the day approached. The government decree for taxation was a surprise to most people, but Joseph and Mary were willing to make the difficult journey. It was to fulfill the prophecy that the Messiah will be born in Bethlehem.

The scene is pictured of quiet nights under a bright moon, with silhouettes of Mary and Joseph making their way to Bethlehem. The journey was much different than what is portrayed on cards—the 90-mile trip would be strenuous and difficult at best.

Temperatures at night would be near freezing, with wild animals and bandits along the way. A warm room awaiting them was not the reality. Every place was *full* and every inn *packed*—a *No Vacancy* sign was out front when Jesus arrived.

Christmas cards show the baby wrapped in linen, while Joseph and Mary look on smiling—but the reality was a cold and dark cave—a very unpleasant place to bring a child into the world. Our Savior did *not* have a comfortable room and warm blankets.

AV 2 Corinthians 8:9 “*For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.*” Jesus went from a *mansion* in *Heaven* to a *manger* in a *cave*.

The story of God leaving Heaven to arrive at a dark stable on a cold night, is just the beginning of God’s plan to *change the world* by this miraculous birth! The first blankets were coarse cloth of the *poor*—not soft cashmere of the *rich*.

The King of kings came to our world to die on a cross so *payment* and *atonement* could be made for our sins and our many wrong attitudes. He came to lay down *His* life so *our* life *would* be changed—forever! Our attitudes *must* change by the removal of *self* from our heart.

This *change* in us would give the *desire* in us to *trust* God in faith; the desire to *love* our neighbor and everyone else; the desire to have a *forgiving* heart; and a desire to treat everyone as we want to be treated—kindly, with patience, and letting them know they are loved; they are appreciated, and they are special.

This change in us would be noticed by everyone around us—we would *act* so differently than we had; we will *talk* and say *things* that are so different from before! Everyone will *notice* the change and will *glorify* God who brought it about.

Jesus now beckons us to *follow* His example. God wants that birth to *change* the world, and it begins by our allowing Him to change *us first!* And tomorrow morning will be *your time* to *prove* that *He did!*



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