

Christmas, from Creation to Bethlehem Part 3: The Birth

I really count it a privilege each week that I can bring you the Word of God. What a privilege it is for me to be able to share God's Word with you, and I appreciate you so much for listening in and for paying attention to God's Word. God's Word is quick and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword.

Today we want to continue our study about "Christmas, from Creation to Bethlehem." We've seen in past studies how that Christ was before the foundation of the world. We did not have to wait for Him to be born at Christmastime in order to understand that He was, that He was with the Father before the foundation of the world. Now, it was important to us, very important to us, that He did come into this world. The Bible says in Luke chapter 19 and verse 10 that the Son of Man came to seek and to save those who were lost. That's the reason Jesus was born of a virgin, and that's the reason we celebrate this time of year. And we should be celebrating all year long, celebrating the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ. Christmas, from Creation to Bethlehem. Let's look briefly today at the birth.

Now, the Jews were not looking for a Savior. The Jews were looking for a king. The Jews continued in their unbelief of what Isaiah was telling them. So in Isaiah chapter 7 and verse 14...now Isaiah was a prophet of God. He was telling them about Jesus even back then. He was telling them that they need to turn their life around by asking Jesus, by asking God to save them, but they wouldn't believe. So, he said this in Isaiah 7:14. He said, *Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.*

In Matthew 1:23, the Bible says, *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.*

Jesus Christ is God. He is God, a very God. No one is able to deny that who believes in the Word of God. Now, during Christ's ministry, the Jews did not believe Jesus either. Just like they would not believe Isaiah, they did not believe Jesus, so He said this to them, in Luke chapter 11, verse 29: *And when the people were gathered thick together, he began to say, This is an evil generation: they seek a sign; and there shall no sign be given it, but the sign of Jonas the prophet.*

Well, what is the sign of Jonas? In Jonah chapter 1, verse 17, it talks about Jonas, or Jonah. *Now the LORD had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.* Now as Jonah, or Jonas, was three days and three nights in the belly of the fish and came out, so the body of Christ would be three days and three nights buried and then come out alive.

Folks, that's all we need today. That's the only thing we need. That's all we need. There is no other sign given other than Jonas, the prophet. There is no other thing needed today except the death, burial, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. Christ Himself said that's all we're getting. That's all we need to understand about salvation is His death, burial, and resurrection.

Now the prophecy of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ was prophesied before He was even born. Remember, Isaiah 7:14 and many other verses in the Old Testament talks about the

birth of Jesus Christ, His death, burial, and resurrection.

Well, the time of Christ's birth...what was the time of Christ's birth? We don't have to know the exact time because the Bible tells us that in due time He came. In other words, He didn't come too early; He didn't come too late; He came just at the right time.

Well, let's look at a couple of things. The 70-mile journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem would probably have been too difficult for Mary in the winter. Remember, they were in Nazareth. She and Joseph and they had to go to Bethlehem because there was a taxation that was going to take place. But it would have been too cold and probably too difficult a trip for Mary to make in the winter; in other words, December. A more probable time for the journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem would be late September. And this was the time of the annual Feast of Tabernacles. So it's no wonder that there was no room for them at the inn at that time because, not only was the taxation taking place, but also the Feast of Tabernacles.

Now, the conception of Christ may have taken place in late December of the year preceding Christ's birth. Now, this is not a certainty, but if we stop to think that our Christmas celebration in December could well be recognized as an honored observation of the incarnation of the Word made flesh. In other words, what I'm trying to say is this. It's not wrong to celebrate Christmas in December. Whether we understand that He was actually born in late September or in December, the fact of the matter is, He came. He was made flesh and dwelt among us, according to John chapter 1 and verse 14.

Well, what about the place of His birth? If you've read the Bible, you know and you've heard stories throughout your life that the place of Jesus' birth was in Bethlehem. In Micah chapter 5 and verse

2, the Bible says, *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.* Before the foundation of the world, Christ was.

In Luke chapter 2, verses 4 through 7, the Bible says, 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: ⁵To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child. ⁶And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered.* Well, we know that, after His birth, Christ was laid in a manger. Luke chapter 2 and verse 7 says, *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.*

Well, the time, the place, and what about the manner of His birth? The conception of Christ by Mary was supernatural. Matthew chapter 1, verse 18, says, *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.*

Once again, in Isaiah chapter 7 and verse 14, the Bible says, *Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.* And remember, the name "Immanuel" means God with us. Jesus came into the world to seek and to save those who were lost.

Well, what about witnesses to the birth of Christ? Well, of course, we know that Mary and Joseph were there. They were witnesses to the birth of Christ according to Luke chapter 2, verses 15 and 16. It says, *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*

unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us. ¹⁶And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger.

So we see that Mary and Joseph were there as the shepherds came, and Luke chapter 2, verses 10 through 14, it talks about this, as well. And we understand that there were shepherds, witnesses, to the birth of Christ in Luke, chapter 2 and verse 8, *And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.*

Luke chapter 2, verses 10 and 11, ¹⁰*And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. ¹¹For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.*

Luke chapter 2 and verse 20, *And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.* They were told about Christ. They saw Him. They saw the Babe lying in the manger.

Not only do we have the witness of Mary and Joseph and the shepherds, we also have the witness of Simeon. Simeon, named for the son of Jacob in the Old Testament, gave witness to Christ as the salvation of God. You can read that and you can find out that this old man waited for the glory of God. He wanted to see the Savior. And in verse 32 of Luke chapter 2, it says, *A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.*

And Genesis 49:18 says, *I have waited for thy salvation, O LORD.* This is the first mention of the word "salvation" in the Bible. The Hebrew word *Yeshua* is actually the same as the name "Jesus." And there are only three adjectives used in the New Testament to describe our salvation. It is so great salvation according to Hebrews 2:3. It is an eternal salvation according to Hebrews 5:9,

and it is the common salvation in Jude 3. It's a great salvation because of a great Savior. It's eternal salvation because we are saved forever, and it is a common salvation because it's for whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

Well, who else gave witness to the birth of Christ? God the Father Himself gave witness to the birth of Christ in Luke chapter 3 and verse 22. Luke chapter 9, verse 35, talks about this. Second Peter chapter 1 in verse 17 says, *For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.*

Many witnesses were witnesses to the birth of Christ. Many prophecies concerned the birth of Christ. He would be a righteous branch according to Jeremiah 23. He would have a kingdom according to Daniel chapter 2. He would reign on the throne of David, I Samuel 7:16. He would rule the nations with a rod of iron, Psalm 2:6-9. His reign was to be glorious, Psalm 72, Isaiah chapter 2, and so forth. We need to understand that Jesus did come into the world. He didn't have to come, but He came. He would have still been God had He never come. But you see, we would not have the opportunity to receive Him as our Savior had He not come. He came. He was made of a woman. Overshadowed by the Holy Spirit, a virgin gave birth to our Lord and Savior. He was made flesh and dwelt among us.

Have you trusted Him today? Do you know Jesus as your Savior? My prayer for you today is that you will call upon His name and receive Him today. Celebrate Christmas every day of the year by saying, "Yes, I've trusted Jesus as my Savior." If you've never done that, ask Him to come into your heart right now. Live for Him because He died for you and He's living for you right now. He's waiting. Call upon His name right now and ask Him to save you.

Well, it's been good being with you today, and let me remind you to write to me, Lewis Woodard, 497 Judith Avenue, Fruitland Park, FL 37431. If you'll write me today, I'll send you some charts showing you and helping you to understand better the life, the birth of Jesus Christ.

Go to our website, www.LRWM.org and you can download transcripts of this program free of charge.

Until this same time next week, this is Lewis Woodard saying that I'll be praying for you, and may the Lord bless you richly is my prayer.