THE WONDROUS BIRTH OF CHRIST


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 SHALL BE A SIGN UNTO YOU: YE SHALL FIND THE BABE WRAPPED IN SWADDLING CLOTHES, LYING IN A MANGER.

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.

This is the season of the year the birth of Jesus Christ is called to the attention of the public. It is an opportunity we should seize to proclaim the truth about God's precious Son. All that we can ever know for sure about the birth, life, works and death of God's Son is what we read and study in the Bible. As we study about Jesus' birth our minds are filled with wonder and amazement. We are caused to marvel and wonder at the glory of our great God who loved us so much.

The birth of Jesus means so much to the saved person. In fact, my whole life and hope depends on Jesus being who He said He was. He is either the divine Son of God, robed in flesh, and our Saviour and King, or He is just another man. If He is just a mere man we have no help or hope or salvation. The Bible is the final authority or truth. It states emphatically that our Saviour is God in the flesh.

I. A MIRACULOUS BIRTH

Miraculous in prediction. Isaiah prophesied several hundred years before the birth of Christ, "THEREFORE THE LORD HIMSELF SHALL GIVE YOU A SIGN, BEHOLD A VIRGIN SHALL CONCEIVE AND BEAR A SON, AND SHALL CALL HIS NAME IMMANUEL," Isaiah 7:14. The prophet Micah prophesied, "BUT THOU BETHLEHEM EPHRATHAH, 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," Micah 5:2. Before Jesus' birth Joseph was told Mary would bear a son and His name was to be Jesus, Matt. 1:21. God inspired the Old Testament writers to foretell many things about the birth of Jesus. This knowledge could not have originated in the mind of man. God announced the birth of His dear Son to the prophets. Many of these divine prophecies were confirmed in the New Testament.

Miraculous in conception. A miracle occurs when the natural law is set aside and the supernatural law imposed. The virgin birth of Jesus defied the natural law. The angel announced to Mary she would bear a son. Mary questioned, "HOW SHALL THIS BE, SEEING I KNOW NOT A MAN?" Luke 1:34. The word "virgin" has been questioned and challenged by some modern translations. Some render "virgin" as "young maiden" or "girl" which is an attack on the virgin birth of
Jesus. Mary described the experience of cohabitation. She frankly admitted she had not known a man.

The angel described the miraculous conception in these words: "THE HOLY GHOST SHALL COME UPON THEE, AND THE POWER OF THE HIGHEST SHALL OVERSHADOW THEE...." Luke 1:35. Joseph was informed, "...THAT WHICH IS CONCEIVED IN HER IS OF THE HOLY GHOST." Matthew by inspiration states before Mary and Joseph cohabited, "...SHE WAS FOUND WITH CHILD OF THE HOLY GHOST," Matthew 1:18. The language and terms used plainly and simply describe undeniably the conception and birth of Jesus by a virgin.

Miraculous in consummation. When Jesus was born, He was the finished product of God's divine work. Jesus' birth, life and death bear witness that He was most assuredly God manifested in the flesh. His works and miracles testified to His divinity and Sonship. God, angels, sinners and saints gave testimony to the world that Jesus was God with man. The Father breaks the silence of heaven to say, "THIS IS MY BELOVED SON, IN WHOM I AM WELL PLEASED," Matthew 3:17. Even the sun refused to shine in the hour of our Lord's awesome death.

II. A GLORIOUS APPEARING.

Glorious in that an angel appeared. A ministering spirit appeared for the glorious announcement. On special occasions angels appeared to men in human form. An angel appeared to Gideon in Judges 6:12. Gideon was informed by the angel that he would deliver Israel out of bondage. Two angels evidently accompanied the Lord when He talked with Abraham about the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. The two angels spoke with Lot and insisted he flee the city, Gen. 19:1. An angel spoke with Elijah the prophet of God about fleeing from wicked queen Jezebel, I Kings 19:7. Daniel spoke of one like the appearance of a man touched him and spoke to him, Dan. 9:16; 10:8. An angel spoke with Mary and Joseph concerning the birth of Jesus. For this wonderful and all-important event God sent an angelic messenger to make the announcement.

Glorious in that the glory of the Lord appeared. The glory of the Lord is astounding. It is more brilliant than the sun. It's brightness is almost blinding. Moses received the Ten Commandments in the presence of the Lord. His skin was affected by the glory of the Lord's presence, Exodus 34:29. God allowed Moses to see the train of His glory, Exodus 33:22. The glory of the Lord is so bright and great it no doubt would mean instant death to those who would look upon or into it's fullness. It is stated a number of times in the Old Testament that the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. Stephen saw the glory of the Lord, Acts 7:55. The glory of the Lord could have been the light that shone round about Saul on the Damascus road, Acts 9:3.

Read the scripture again. "AND, LO, THE ANGEL OF THE LORD SHONE ROUND ABOUT THEM: AND THEY WERE SORROWFUL," Luke 2:9. God's glory illuminated the darkness of the night. A divine manifestation and display of God's glory verified and testified of the truth of the angelic message on this night. My God, what a glorious and fearful sight that must have been to the lowly shepherds. It is a fact that often God's glory is revealed to the common or lowly people who seem to be more ready to receive the Lord and His message. Just reading about this glorious proclamation warms and comforts the hearts of God's people.

III. A JOYOUS ANNOUNCEMENT.


God's faithful remnant was looking and longing for the birth of the Saviour. Simeon, a just and devout servant of the Lord, waited for the consolation of Israel. He saw Jesus and said, "LORD, NOW LETTEST THOU THY SERVANT DEPART IN PEACE, ACCORDING TO THY WORD: FOR MY EYES HAVE SEEN THY SALVATION," Luke 2:29,30, Anna, who departed not from the temple and served God with fastings and prayers night and day, "GAVE THANKS LIKewise unto the Lord, and Spoke of Him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem," Luke 2:38.

The joyous message was "the Saviour is born. The time that you have been longing to see is finally here. God's promise of nearly 4,000 years has been fulfilled." What joy and gladness even we feel as we read about this great historical event and divine fulfillment. The angel announced, "FOR UNTO YOU IS BORN THIS DAY IN THE CITY OF DAVID A SAVIOUR, WHICH IS CHRIST THE LORD," V. 11.

Joyous because of the people. The glorious and joyous event not only affected every Jew, it also affected every human being. Listen to the angel, "FEAR NOT: FOR, BEHOLD, I BRING YOU GOOD TIDINGS OF GREAT JOY, WHICH SHALL BE TO

God has made provision for all men to be saved in Christ. Jesus died for all that all might live, II Cor. 5:14,15. God will have all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth, I Tim. 2:4. There is one mediator between God and man who gave Himself a ransom for all men, I Tim. 2:5,6.

It rings the bell of joy and hope to realize our wonderful and glorious God wants to save every person regardless of who he is or what he has done. Jesus came to live and die for the whole world. Oh, the joy and glory of realizing in His wonderful plan He included me. Such an announcement would start the heavenly choir singing, "GLORY TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST..." V. 13. If this caused the heaven to ring with an angelic chorus how much more should we ever ring out with songs of praise for our Saviour who has saved our souls.

IV. A WONDROUS ACCLAMATION

Wondrous praise to God. "GLORY TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST." The angels were praising and exalting God to the highest degree of worship on the occasion of the birth of His Son and the purpose and plan He came to fulfill. When God the Son stepped down from heaven and turned from the majesty, glory and position with the Father, He manifested a divine heart full of love and holiness.

When we realize what Jesus has done for us, we also will sing out in songs of praise to our Redeemer. We realize what we used to be. We know where He brought us from. Truly, how can my praises ever find end. He did it all for me. He paid the price of God's just demands. Oh, what a Saviour! Paul said, "OR DESPISEST THOU THE RICHES OF HIS GOODNESS AND FORBEARANCE AND LONGSUFFERING: NOT KNOWING THAT THE GOODNESS OF GOD LEADETH THEE TO REPENTANCE?" Romans 2:4. God is so good. God is so good. God is so good to me.

Wondrous will toward men. "GLORY TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST, AND ON EARTH PEACE, GOOD WILL TOWARD MEN," V. 14. The birth of Jesus would start and one day complete peace on earth.

He who is the Prince of peace promotes peace among all men. God longs to have peace with those that He has created in Christ Jesus. The only way this peace is possible is for Jesus to die and satisfy God's justice.

The book of Genesis shows God seeking His fallen, sinful creation. The book of Revelation ends with the invitation, "COME, TAKE THE WATER OF LIFE FREELY." The Bible is a record of God's untiring endless effort to be reconciled to mankind. The sending of Jesus into the world displayed God's good will toward all men. It is by Jesus' birth, life and death that all men can be reconciled to God. In and through Him we find peace and good will. God offers man the greatest peace, pardon, position, power and promises. He desires man's complete redemption.

You talk about glorious and wondrous news! We should gladly tell it to the nations. The shepherds told the wonderful story abroad. They spread the glad tidings. May we seek diligently to sound out this word of hope, peace and joy. May we let people know the truth about the glorious news of this blessed season.

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Special Speaker: Bro. Luther Crawford

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Special Speaker: Bro. Luther Crawford

FEBRUARY 17 - 21
ON THE WAY TO THE CROSS

The Subject for our consideration today is "On The Way To The Cross." In noticing this subject we'll develop the exposition of scripture as found in Matthew 27:1-32. The fascinating reality in all of this experience that Christ faced was that he knew that all of this was going to come about. All of this ungodliness did not take him by surprise. A general view of this chapter is as follows: I. The Remorse - Matthew 27:1-10; II. The Redeemers Silence - Matthew 27:11-14; III. The Request - Matthew 27:15-26; and IV. The Ridiculing - Matthew 27:27-32.

As we notice the section of scripture that deals with the Remorse, we notice two areas: The Planning and the Position that one puts himself in when they rebel against the Lord.

Their planning is seen in Matthew 27:1-2 which states, WHEN THE MORNING WAS COME, ALL OF THE CHIEF PRIESTS AND ELDERS OF THE PEOPLE TOOK COUNSEL AGAINST JESUS TO PUT HIM TO DEATH: AND WHEN THEY HAD BOUND HIM THEY LED HIM AWAY, AND DELIVERED HIM TO PONTIUS PILATE THE GOVERNOR." Their evil deeds proved the evilness, depravity, and ungodliness of their heart. It also substantiates the doctrine of the Total Depravity of Mankind as exemplified and taught in Jer. 17:9 and Rom. 5:13-16.

Jer. 17:9 "THE HEART IS DECEITFUL ABOVE ALL THINGS, AND DESPERATELY WICKED: WHO CAN KNOW IT."

Rom. 5:13-16 "THEIR THROAT IS AN OPEN SEPULCHRE: WITH THEIR TONGUES THEY HAVE USED DECEIT; THE POISON OF ASPS IS UNDER THEIR LIPS: WHOSE MOUTH IS FULL OF CURSING AND BITTERNESS. THEIR FEET ARE SWIFT TO SHED BLOOD. DESTRUCTION AND MISERY ARE IN THEIR WAYS."

go out on Saturday Night and sow sin and then come to church on Sunday Morning and pray for crop failure. Surely God will forgive if we truly repent but this does not mean that all consequences of sin will be eliminated.

Next, we'll notice the Redeemers Silence as seen in Matthew 27:11-14. In this section we see the APPEARANCE Verse 11, the ACCUSATION Verse 12, and the ATTITUDE Verses 13 and 14.

First, we note the Appearance as seen in verse 11. "AND JESUS STOOD BEFORE THE GOVERNOR; AND THE GOVERNOR ASKED HIM, SAYING, ART THOU THE KING OF THE JEWS? AND JESUS SAID UNTO HIM, THOU SAYEST."

Next, you see the Accusation as noted in verse 12. "AND WHEN HE WAS ACCUSED OF THE CHIEF PRIESTS AND ELDERS, HE ANSWERED NOTHING." This, by the way, is the fulfillment of Isa. 53:7 which declares "HE WAS OPPRESSED, AND HE WAS AFFLICTED, YET HE OPENED NOT HIS MOUTH: HE IS BRINGED AS A LAMB TO THE SLAUGHTER, AND AS A SHEEP BEFORE HER SHEARERS IS DUMB, SO HE OPENETH NOT HIS MOUTH.

Then we notice the attitude as seen in verses 13 and 14. "THEN SAID PILATE UNTO HIM, HEAREST THOU NOT HOW MANY THINGS THEY WITNESS AGAINST THEE? AND HE ANSWERED HIM TO NEVER A WORD: INSOMUCH THAT THE GOVERNOR MARVELLED, GREATLY." Jesus remained silent. He knew there was no need to answer the foolish questions. He knew who He was and where He stood. He could afford to wait.

The next section of this Now, let us notice the POSITION that one puts himself in when they rebel a-

GLEN E. TROPP

gainst the Lord. This is seen in Matthew 27:3-10. "THEN JU-DAS, WHICH HAD BETRAYED HIM, WHEN HE SAW THAT HE WAS CONDEMNED, REPENTED HIMSELF, AND BROUGHT AGAIN THE THIRTY PIECES OF SILVER TO THE CHIEF PRIESTS AND LEDERS, SAYING, I HAVE SINNED IN THAT I HAVE BETRAYED THE INNOCENT BLOOD, AND THEY SAID, WHAT IS THAT TO US? SEE THEE TO THAT. AND HE CAST DOWN THE PIECES OF SILVER IN THE TEMPLE, AND DEPARTED, AND WENT AND HANGED HIMSELF. AND THE CHIEF PRIESTS TOOK THE SILVER PIECES, AND SAID, IT IS NOT LAWFUL FOR TO PUT THEM INTO THE TREASURY, BECAUSE IT IS THE PRICE OF BLOOD. AND THEY TOOK COUNSEL, AND BOUGHT THEM THE POTTER'S FIELD, TO BURY STRANGERS IN. WHEREFORE THAT FIELD WAS CALLED, THE FIELD OF BLOOD, UNTIL THIS DAY. THEN WAS FULFILLED THAT WHICH WAS SPOKEN BY JEREMIAH THE PROPHET, SAYING, AND THEY TOOK THE THIRTY PIECES OF SILVER, THE PRICE OF HIM THAT WAS VALUED WHOM THEY OF THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL DID VALUE: AND GAVE THEM FOR THE POTTER'S FIELD, AS THE LORD APPOINTED ME."

Sin is pleasureable but only for a season. The heart-ache and the guilty conscience that comes afterward is always so bad. He repented because he got caught. Will we ever learn the truth about the consequences of sin. The Bible says, "BE NOT DECEIVED, GOD IS NOT MOCKED: FOR WHATSOEVER A MAN SOWETH, THAT SHALL HE ALSO REAP." Gal. 6:7. Be sure your sin will find you out. Another thought here is that you can't erase the bad or destroy the crop. Many people
passage deals with the Request as seen in verses 15-26. In this part you see the Custom - verses 15-18; the Concern - verse 19; the Conspiracy - verses 20-21; and the Cry of the people - verses 22-26.

First, we notice the Custom as seen in verses 15-18. "NOW AT THAT FEAST THE GOVERNOR WAS WONT TO RELEASE UNTO THE PEOPLE A PRISONER WHOM THEY WOULD. AND THEY HAD THAN A NOTABLE PRISONER, CALLED BARABBAS. THEREFORE WHEN THEY WERE GATHERED TOGETHER, PILATE SAID UNTO THEM, WHOM WILL YE THAT I RELEASE UNTO YOU? BARABBAS, OR JESUS WHICH IS CALLED CHRIST. FOR HE KNEW THAT FOR ENVY THEY HAD DELIVERED HIM." It was a custom in those times to give the people an opportunity to release a prisoner if they so desired. According to the text Barabbas was notable prisoner which means that all of the people knew without a shadow of a doubt that he was guilty. The scripture bears out that he was a robber - John 18:40. "THEN CRIED THEY ALL AGAIN, SAYING, NOT THIS BUT BARABBAS. NOW BARABBAS WAS A ROBBER." The scriptures also refer to him as a murderer in Mark 15:7. "AND THERE WAS ONE NAMED BARABBAS, WHICH LAY BOUND WITH THEM, WHO HAD COMMITTED MURDER IN THE IN-SURRECTION" It was a known fact that Barabbas was guilty of these things as well as insurrection against the king or government. This was something that they had tried to accuse Jesus of but yet, were unsuccessful. He called upon them to make a decision concerning these two - Barabbas or Jesus. Notice also the sin that had caused this feeling of hatred. This is seen in verse 18. That sin was envy. Let's notice some things about this monstrous sin because it causes more heartache, hurt, harm, and hindrance to the work of the Lord than any other sin. Envy is a sin - Rom. 1:29. It is of Satan-John 8:44; it's sensual, which means it is of the flesh - Gal.

5:21; it involves selfishness; it sours ones life and the degeneration of life itself starts until the individual becomes completely bound up in this horrible sin. Envy also causes other evil works - James 5:9. Envy must be dealt with or you'll hurt others and ruin yourself. Prov. 28:15-14 substantiates, this truth, "HE THAT COVERETH HIS SINS SHALL NOT PROSPER: BUT WHO SO CONFESSETH AND FORSAKETH THEM SHALL HAVE MERCY. HAPPY IS THAT MAN THAT FEARETH ALWAYS: BUT HE THAT HARD-EÑETH HIS HEART SHALL FALL INTO MISCHIEF.

In Matt. 27:19 you see the concern. "WHEN HE SET DOWN ON THE JUDGMENT SEAT HIS WIFE SENT UNTO HIM SAYING HAVE THOU NOTHING TO DO WITH THAT JUST MAN: FOR I HAVE SUFFERED MANY THINGS THIS DAY IN A DREAM BECAUSE OF HIM.

Then in verse 20-21 you see an example of what will happen if we do not confess our sin as pointed out in the preceding verse of scripture in Prov. 28:15-14. They sought to do a mischievous deed. This is seen in the Conspiracy as noted in verses 20-21 of Matthew 27. "BUT THE CHIEF PRIESTS AND ELDERS PERSUADED THE MULTITUDE THAT THEY SHOULD ASK BARABBAS, AND DESTROY JESUS. THE GOVERNOR ANSWERED AND SAID UNTO THEM, WHETHER OF THE TWAIN WILL YE THAT I RELEASE UNTO YOU? THEY SAID, BARABBAS.


This last section of this study deals with the RIDICULING. In this section we notice the SOLDIERS - Matt. 27:27, the SHAME - Matt. 27:28-30 and the SUFFERING - Matthew 27:31-32.

We'll not list the verses at this time but you might like to compare Matt. 27:28-30 with Isa. 53:3-11. Matthews account here is a fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy.

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III. REMEDY PROVIDED
A. "Call upon me in the day of trouble and I will deliver you."
1. This is a promise from God.
2. Join in earnest prayer to God for deliverance from ungodly men.
B. Present state of affairs could be attributed to our neglecting to call on God as we should.
C. God is able to change the minds of the worst of mankind.
   1. He changed Pharaoh's mind.
   2. He has always delivered His people, II Corinthians 1:9,10.

IV. PURPOSE OF DELIVERANCE TO GLORIFY GOD.
A. Celebrating His delivering goodness.
B. Trusting Him for all things.
C. Consecrating self to His service.
   1. Help others find deliverance from sin and death.
   2. Tell others about Jesus, the Mighty to Save.

HE IS
COMING
AGAIN
BY
M.F. DOWNING

II Peter Chapters 3 and 4

Introduction: There are some things I do not understand, but there are FIVE things I know for sure. Rather FIVE ways I know his coming is sure.

I. BECAUSE OF THE SCRIPTURES.
   John 14:1-3; II Thess. 4:16; Acts 1:10.

II. BECAUSE OF THE SLEEPING.
   A. Many have died in faith and hope of a glorious resurrection.
   B. Abraham looked for a city. John saw one coming down from God out of heaven.
   C. The Bible tells us the dead in Christ shall rise first. I Thess. 4:16; I Cor. 15:51.

III. BECAUSE OF SIN.
   A. Sin is now abounding.
   B. Evil men are worse and worse.
   C. Mideast problem.
   D. Christ's coming is the answer.

IV. BECAUSE OF THE SAINTS. John 17.
   A. Jesus said, "...where I am there shall ye be also." John 14.
1. Trials—we will climb over the last hill.
2. Tears—they will all be wiped away.
3. Training—we will graduate to heaven.
4. Troubles all past.

V. BECAUSE OF HIS SUFFERING.
A. He went to a manger that we might go to a mansion.
B. He carried a cross that we might wear a crown.
C. He took our sins that we might have salvation.
D. He took our HELL that we might have HEAVEN.
E. His back was lashed that we might hold our head up.
F. He lead that we might belong.
G. He was buried that we might be raised.

Conclusion: Praise the Lord! He shall return.

GOD'S GREAT SALVATION
BY EDD RHODES

Psalms 126:3

I. Great because of it's author.
II. Because of it's scope.
III. Because of its endurance.
IV. Because of the glory it brings to God.
V. Because of its simplicity.
VI. Because of its effect.
VII. Because of the cost.

(EDITOR'S NOTE: Bro. Edd Rhodes last message was just a brief outline. He preached it at Fellowship Baptist Church, Pasadena, Texas. Our thanks to Mrs. Rhodes for providing this message for us. --Charles Swilling)

CONSIDER THE WORK OF GOD
BY MARVIN GARDNER

TEXT: Ecc. 7:11-14
INTRO:
A. God works in many mysterious ways.
   1. Man cannot understand God's ways.
   2. We would be in bad shape if we had to depend on our understanding of God.
B. The Word "consider" means -- to think about with care or attention.
   1. The work of God should be considered seriously.
   2. It is something to think about with care or attention.
C. May we consider or treat with great attention the work of Almighty God.
I. CONSIDER THE WORK OF GOD IN CREATION.
A. "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.
   1. I believe He made it all.
   2. If a person cannot believe Gen. 1:1, he cannot believe any of the Bible.
B. The attention of the whole world is upon the astronauts.
   1. Some of the smart-alec scientists are going to try to determine where the moon came from as a result of their trip. 1 Cor. 1:19-21a.
   2. They don't know one thing as far as God is concerned.
   3. A little child that has placed his faith in Christ has pleased God more than the whole crew put together. Heb. 11:6.
C. When God reconstructed the world, on the fourth day, the sun, moon, and stars became visible. Gen. 1:14-19.
   1. The sun to rule the day--the moon to rule the night.
   2. God is plain about it. Scientists are wondering where it came from.
D. It is time people considered or treat with attention the work of God in creation.
II. CONSIDER THE WORK OF GOD IN CONVICTION.
A. The Holy Spirit is in the world to convict sinners of their sin and need for Jesus. John 16:7-11.
   2. They must feel their unrighteousness.
B. It is the work of the Holy Spirit that convinces an individual he is lost. Many people come to church feeling things are all right between them and God.
   1. The preacher preaches, something happens, and they cannot seem to understand their heart being troubled.
   2. God is dealing with them. This is the very reason they won't come back to the services of the church.
C. God also convicts saved people who are out of His will.
   1. God's people cannot live like the devil and satisfy God.
   2. God wants His children to bring honor and glory to Him. Saved for service,
I. Live a holy and dedicated life to God.

III. CONSIDER THE WORK OF GOD IN SALVATION.
A. God had to have a perfect sacrifice to satisfy his righteousness for the sin of man.
1. God said if man sinned they would die. This happened and God kept His word.
2. But he wanted to make provision for man to be saved.
3. Christ was the perfect sacrifice that was needed to make way for redeeming man from sin. 1 Peter 2:24.
B. It cost God His very best—only one of His kind—"Who knew no sin." 1. We cannot say that about ourselves or our kinfolks.
2. His blood was spotless—no sin at all.
C. Jesus is the only Saviour. Acts 4:12.
1. Only nourishment, John 6:35.
2. Only remedy, John 3:14, 15.
D. Consider the work of God in Salvation. Man cannot be saved on what he has done but by what God did when He gave His only begotten Son to die for hell-deserving sinners.

IV. CONSIDER THE WORK OF GOD IN THE PRESERVATION OF THE SAINTS.
A. When a person is saved (His soul) He is saved forever, Ecc. 3:14.
1. Jesus said, "Ye must be born again."
2. You cannot be unborn physically or spiritually.
B. The soul of man that is born of God cannot commit sin. 1 John 3:9.
C. John 3:36
1. Man cannot work for everlasting life. Paul said it is not by works.
2. Man must receive Jesus to have everlasting life. "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is everlasting life."

CONCLUSION: HAVE YOU CONSIDERED THE WORK OF GOD IN YOUR LIFE? You can be saved from sin, death and hell this day if you will do what God wants you to do. You must receive Jesus. John 1:12.

"A tithe is too much."—Really! Most of us spend an amount equal to or more than the tithe on housing or clothing. Many people spend more for "extras" than on the Lord's work. A tenth may seem like too much to you but it is really the minimum required by the One who gave himself for you.

"I'm in debt."—Yes, you really are. You are indebted to the Lord for all He has given. If you received a loan of one thousand dollars and were required to repay only one hundred dollars, you would be getting an unheard-of "deal." The Lord doesn't make "deals" but He does require at least one-tenth in return, plus the Christian use of what is left.

"I'm too busy now."—Then you are far too busy. If you are too busy to listen to God's stewardship message you're probably too busy to pray, to read from the Scriptures, and to worship in His house. Oh! excuse me. Could It be that you meant to say "too lazy." I just misunderstood.

"I'll give when I come."—Thank! How generous you are. I suppose you fail to pay your bills when it's inconvenient, or to eat when not at home at your table, or to care for your family while away on business. The Lord's work goes on whether you attend church or not.

"I live under grace."—Good, you will want not only tithe, you probably will give far more than the required tenth. Anyone who lives under grace will be so grateful he simply will not be able to share enough. We need more Christians like you.

"I don't have enough."—Neither did the disciples who gave their lives, nor women who ministered to Jesus, or the widow who gave her mite.

No one of us really has enough to give but we can give the minimum and pray that the Lord will give us the faith to do more.

"I don't like the way the church spends its money."—You don't! Why don't you do something about it? As a church member you can, and you will if and when you bear your share of the load. The spare tire shouldn't stripe about the heavy load, the rough road, or the destination.

"I don't know how much I really make."—If you really don't know, then estimate it. Would it be an amount somewhere between what you tell your friends and what you tell your wife?

The Lord will help you decide if you ask. Give what you and the Lord agree on.

Tithe! Who, me? Sure, you. Won't you decide to dedicate your possessions to God in 1982?
CELEBRATING CHRISTMAS

BY DEBORAH RIPLEY

Luke 2:1-20

With the holiday season approaching I would like for us to think just a moment on what Christmas really is.

Christmas has become so commercialized that I sometimes wonder just how many people ever stop and give some thought to the birth of our Lord. I know that I am guilty of getting so wrapped up in buying just the right perfume for Aunt Susie or just the right color tie for Uncle George, that I forget to stop and really meditate on what a great event Christmas is and what it should mean to everyone.

I would like for us to notice some questions on the subject of celebrating the birth of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

I. Why should we celebrate the birth of Jesus?
   A. Because He was born to die a ransom for many, Matthew 20:28; Mark 10:45.
   B. Because He took our sins upon Himself, Hebrews 9:28.
   C. Because He endured the horrible death of the cross for us, Matthew 20:19; Mark 10:33.

II. How should we celebrate the birth of Jesus?
   A. Offerings. Don’t we usually give our mom’s, dad’s, sister’s, brother’s and our children a gift on their birthday? Why not give Jesus a gift on His birthday?
   B. Attend church. Church is Jesus’ house. We should visit it every time the door opens and not just on His birthday, Hebrews 10:25.
   C. Obey His commandments, Ephesians 5:15-17.

III. Who should celebrate the birth of Jesus?
   A. The saved should because of what He has done for us, Romans 5:6.
   C. The unsaved should but they cannot because they cannot spiritually discern, I Cor. 2:14.

In conclusion I would like to say, if you are not saved and are unable to spiritually celebrate the birth of Jesus that you come and be saved today, for now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation, II Cor. 6:2.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone a very safe and Merry Christmas.

THE STORY OF CHRISTMAS

BY BRENDA COOPER

In Bethlehem
One starry night
God decided
The time was right.

It was time
For His Son to come down
Born in a manger
Outside of town.

This was a babe
Wrapped in swaddling clothes
Then laid down to rest
While His mother's face glows.

For this was a night
Prophets foretold
When wise men
Would bring Him myrrh and gold.

Shepherds heard from
Angels on high
Then led by a star
In the Eastern sky

A star above the manger
To show them the way
How to get
To where the Christ child lay.

Glory to God
The angels sang
And through the Heavens
Their voices rang.

He was called Jesus
As the angel had said
He was a king
With no crown on His head.

A king to the Gentiles
A king to the Jews
He has been born
Go spread the news.

The story of Christmas
As we know it today
It is a celebration
Of Christ's birthday.

A WILLING SACRIFICE
JESUS, MORE THAN JUST A MAN

D. B. WRIGHT

Matthew 1:18; Luke 1:30-35; Luke 2:10-14

Introduction: As one reviews the glorious announcement of the birth of the One called Jesus he readily sees that Jesus was "More than a man!" Jesus was indeed an example worthy of one's following; but He was more than a perfect example. He showed great concern for humanity, with all the heartache, suffering and sorrow; yet He was more than a "social worker," sent to alleviate hunger and pain. If mankind would only heed and apply His philosophy there would be reformation unlimited; but Jesus was more than a reformer! Many accept Jesus as their hero who will not receive Him as Saviour of their soul and Lord of their daily lives. Jesus, needless to say, was one of the world's greatest teachers; but He was more than a man setting forth His own ideas. He was God, bringing God's Word to man! John 17:8.

Jesus did leave heaven and the glory with the Father to come to earth in humility, taking upon Himself "the form of a servant, and likeness of men," Philippians 2:5-8. Hebrews 2:17 so states that "...in all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliations for the sins of the people." He Who was in the beginning with God and by and for whom all things were made, including man, "was made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons," Galatians 4:5.

I. JESUS WAS MORE THAN A MERE BABY AT BIRTH.

A. He was a "promise kept," a prophecy fulfilled! God had told Satan long, long ago that "...her seed; it shall bruise thy head," Genesis 3:15. God had Isaiah to write, "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given," Isaiah 9:6. Jesus was the fulfillment of these passages.

B. Jesus was indeed a miracle of God! The prophet Isaiah had written, "Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, A VIRGIN SHALL CONCEIVE, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel," Isaiah 7:14. This contradicts the laws of physical birth and staggers the human wisdom. God's power did accomplish what He had promised in the birth of Jesus. Galatians 4:3-4, "But when the fulness of time was come, GOD SENT FORTH HIS SON, MADE OF A WOMAN." This may be a mystery to human minds but a mission and a miracle possible to God!

C. Remember, the angel had said to Mary, "That the Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee, therefore that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God," Luke 1:35. Also, the angel had told Joseph, "Fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost," Matthew 1:20. The mystery of the virgin birth of Jesus into the human family fades into the background when one remembers it was the work of God the Holy Spirit! It behoves us to remember that it is by this same "power" that one is born into the family of God with eternal life. John 3:6.

D. Baby Jesus was God in human form! Matthew 1:23, "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." Is this not what John was inspired of the Holy Spirit to write? John 1:1.

E. Baby Jesus was God's greatest "gift" to mankind by Whom we have many other gifts. John 3:16; Romans 6:23.

II. JESUS WAS MORE THAN A LAD!

A. He was an obedient and submissive son to His mother and Joseph. Luke 2:51, "And He went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them." He lived in obedience to His heavenly Father's command by living in obedience to His earthly parents. Much of His boyhood life is unknown but truth concerning His submissiveness is very revealing as to the kind of person He was in family life.

B. He was taken up with the serious and spiritual side of life in the early years. Luke 1:46 reveals that in Jerusalem at age twelve Jesus was concerned about spiritual matters. One would expect a young boy to be found sightseeing, involved in the lighter side of life at age twelve. Not so with Jesus. When He was found in Jerusalem after three day's absence from His parents, "...they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions. And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers," Luke 2:46.

C. At age twelve the lad Jesus was concerned with His heavenly Father's business. Luke 2:49. Jesus did not waste precious years of His young life "sowing wild oats" which are reaped in heartache and sorrow, even shame. He asked of Mary and Joseph, "know ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" This spirit of dedication to God's business prevailed in the life of Jesus.
until He could say from the cross, "It is finished."

D. Boy Jesus lived a sinless life! He faced the tests and temptations which a boy His age faces in His time without sin. He was tempted with the same sins that we are tempted with but "He did no sin neither was guile found in His mouth," I Peter 2:22. As a youth Jesus left an example worthy of imitation. Jesus was indeed more than a man-child. He was God in man!

III. JESUS WAS MORE THAN A MAN IN ADULT LIFE!

A. He was human, and as such He hungered, thirsted, and grieved in sorrow. He needed food, water, rest and love. However, let it be remembered that these physical needs were number one in His list of priorities. Remember how He said, "I came down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him that sent me," John 6:38; John 4:34. He wasted no time in getting on with His assignment. John 9:4.

B. Jesus, as a man, was more than a man! He was the heavenly Father's "well pleasing Son." Matthew, Mark, Luke and Peter each record this fact. I like the way Peter writes it. "For He received from the Father honour and glory, when there came a voice to Him from the excellent glory, THIS IS MY BELOVED SON, IN WHOM I AM WELL PLEASED," II Peter 1:17. As the Father's Son, Jesus set His face to the aim or goal of glorifying the Father. He prayed, "I have glorified Thee on earth: I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do," John 17:4. Facing the hour of agony and death He prayed, "Father, the hour is come; glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son may also glorify Thee," John 17:1.

C. Peter preached in the home of Cornelius that Jesus was One "who went about doing good," Acts 10:38. He fed the hungry, opened blinded eyes, bathed tired human feet made the lame to walk, healed the sick and raised the dead. His life was indeed a life of "ministering" to the needs of others, Matthew 20:28.

D. He was the sinner's Friend and Compassionate Teacher! His enemies and rejectors had many ungodly things to say of Him. I particularly like what they said about His going to be "guest with a man that is a sinner," Luke 19:7. He was known as A FRIEND OF PUBLICANS AND SINNERS: Matthew 11:19. A man! That includes you and me! Moved by an heart of compassion for sinners He taught them many things, Mark 6:34.

E. Jesus was Victor over sin and Satan and Conqueror of death, hell, and the grave.

F. Jesus was the greatest manifestation of God to man. Hebrews 1:3 speaks of Him as "the express image of the Father." He made known to man the Father's love, mercy, power, attitude and will. He loved the vilest of sinners. (Galatians 2:20) He showed mercy to the fallen. (Luke 7:48-50).

G. Jesus was the greatest example of the Father's love for mankind! He was God's love gift to lost sinners! John 3:16, I John 4:8-10. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends," John 15:13. Jesus laid down His life for both friend and foe. He never quit loving, John 13:1.

IV. JESUS WAS MORE THAN A MARTYR IN HIS DEATH!

A. He was God's sacrificial, substitutionary Lamb, to take away the sins of mankind, This is how the man sent from God presented Him to the Jews. John 1:29, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." Jesus was indeed, as John presented Him, "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." Rev. 13:8. Paul writes of Him as, "Christ, our Passover," I Cor. 5:7.

B. Jesus voluntarily sacrificed Himself in the sinner's stead. He said, "I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep," John 10:11. John 10:18. Any man may give his life for a good cause but he cannot take it again. Jesus was more than man. He was GOD IN MAN, sent to man to sacrifice Himself for fallen mankind, to conquer death and LIVE AGAIN TO JUSTIFY MAN'S FAITH IN HIM. Hebrews 9:26 tells us that He sacrificed Himself to put away our sins! Let us hasten to add that Jesus was THE ACCEPTED SACRIFICE for our sins! He was the satisfying sacrifice! Isaiah 53:11, "He shall see the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied." If man died for man that would only be sinner dying for sinner; but Jesus, GOD IN MAN DIED FOR MAN that He might bring us to God.

C. Jesus, on the Cross of Calvary, was JOB'S REDEEMER AND FULL PAYMENT OF OUR SIN DEBT! Job believed in and spoke of One Whom he called "My Redeemer," Job 19:25. When Jesus was first carried to the temple by Mary and Joseph, there was an eighty-four year old saint of God there. She, seeing Jesus, gave thanks to God and went out telling the people of Jerusalem of "REDEMPTION," Luke 2:36.

D. Indeed Jesus was the AUTHOR AND GIVER of eternal life! Hebrews 5:9; John 10:28.

E. Jesus, the Son of man, the Son of God, is the ONE AND ONLY SAVIOUR OF BELIEVING MANKIND! He is the Saviour of all men in the sense that He died for all. (I Timothy 4:10). He is the ONLY Saviour! (Acts 4:12). He assured one believer of being saved! Luke 7:50.

In this Christmas season, believe, receive, think and speak of Jesus as GOD IN FLESH, the sinner's Friend and Substitute and acceptable Sacrifice, and the believer's SAVIOUR! He was indeed MORE THAN A MAN! As Paul wrote in Colossians 2:9-10. "For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him which is the head of all principality and power...."
TEN GOALS FOR TEACHERS

1. I am a saved individual and will strive to be an active supporting member of my local church.

2. With God's help I will strive to be the kind of person a Christian ought to be at all times.

3. I will strive to pray fervently and persistently about my Christian work.

4. I will strive to read my Bible daily and meditate on what I have read.

5. Realizing that I am to set an example will cause me to strive to attend the Sunday morning, evening and Wednesday night services.

6. I will set forth an example as a leader by supporting the Lord's work through the church with tithes and offerings.

7. In public, I will strive to make my dress, words and general behavior such as to bring honor to my Lord.

8. I will strive to enroll my class.

9. I will attend the quarterly teachers and officers meeting.

10. I will strive to not miss my class more than five times a year realizing that if I do, I will be subject to replacement unless extenuating circumstances exist.