

The Birth of Jesus Christ- One of the Cornerstones of the Gospel

Matthew 1:22–23 (NKJV)

²²So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying:

²³“Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,” which is translated, “God with us.”

- *The virgin birth of Jesus Christ is one of the cornerstones of the Christian faith.*
- *Without Jesus Christ’s birth, He could not have become the Son of Man.*
- *Without Jesus Christ’s virgin birth, He could not have been the Son of God.*

1 Timothy 3:16 (NKJV)

¹⁶And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh, Justified in the Spirit, Seen by angels, Preached among the Gentiles, Believed on in the world, Received up in glory.

“without controversy” – There is no question and it is uncontestable that the great mystery of godliness is Jesus Christ and His redemptive work.

*“Great is the mystery of godliness” – The English word for mystery has the underlying meaning, “a secret which people have tried to uncover but which they have failed to understand,” but the Greek word μυστήριον (*mystērion*) means “that which was not known before,’ with the implication of its being revealed at least to some persons.”*

Matthew 7:7 (NKJV)

⁷“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.

- *This great mystery of godliness is not something that God has hidden so that no one can find it. It is something God reveals to those who respond to the wooing of the Holy Spirit and begin to ask, seek, and knock.*

“Great is the mystery of godliness” – The Greek word for godliness refers to living a life devoted to God, is victorious, and pleasing to Him in every way.

- *Many religions and people have tried to find the secret to living a godly life that is pleasing to God.*

- *Some have tried to please God through good works, religious rituals, and self-sacrifice. But in themselves all these things fail to deal with the true root issue—their hearts are contaminated by sin.*
- *No matter how hard a person tries to live a godly life, still hidden deep in their hearts are sinful, lustful, selfish desires, and thoughts.*
- *However, in the gospel is “hidden” the mystery of godliness that will transform us into the righteousness of God.*

Receiving the mystery for living a godly life begins with “God was manifested in the flesh,” His miraculous birth, and concludes with “received up in glory,” His redemptive death and His glorious resurrection and ascension into Heaven.

- *The beginning of the great mystery of godliness is Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who was incarnate as a man through the virgin birth.*
- *If one negates the virgin birth then the entire gospel falls apart and becomes totally powerless and invalid.*
- *Liberal “Christian” theology begins by denying the authority of Scripture, removing any possibility of absolute truth.*
- *Liberal “Christian” theology then denies Jesus Christ’s virgin birth as a mythological fictitious teaching.*
- *The conclusion to this path of unbelief is not only denying the deity of Jesus Christ, but seeing His crucifixion—not as the sacrifice for the sins of all of mankind, but simply a man being murdered because He challenged the religious and political leaders of His day.*
- *The ultimate result of this type of theology is that Jesus Christ was just a man who was murdered for a cause and remains dead—there is no resurrection and there is no salvation through Jesus Christ.*
- *The great deception of modern liberal Christian theology is that it is not Christian.*
- *The Bible makes it very clear that someone cannot be a Christian by simply trying to adopt certain aspects of Jesus’ teachings while ignoring the very person of Jesus Christ as the Son of God and all that entails.*
- *The miracle of the virgin birth makes the powerful declaration that Jesus Christ is God!*
- *Liberal Christianity was most influential with [mainline](#) Protestant churches in the early 20th century, when proponents believed the changes it would bring would be the future of the Christian church.*

- *However, liberal or mainline churches in America experienced a decline in membership of 70%—from 40% of the American Christian population to 12%—between 1930 and 2000, now being no longer "mainstream," but a small minority, where the [evangelical](#) denominations have greatly increased in number.*
- *Liberal theology removed the heart of the message of the gospel, they removed the "mystery," and left only the empty shell of a philosophical and social gospel.*
- *Most people are no longer satisfied with religious rituals and humanistic philosophy, but they desire to know if there really is a God with whom they can have a relationship, and who will intervene in their lives.*
- *In short—IS GOD REAL?*

The entire Old Testament has been crafted around the truth that God the Father was going to send His Son, Jesus Christ, into the world to be born of a virgin to redeem mankind through His sinless life, His sacrificial death, and His victorious resurrection.

The profound importance of Christ's birth can be seen by the details and numerous prophecies given in the Old Testament and fulfilled in the New Testament.

- *Why is it so important that Jesus Christ be born as a man?*
- *Why couldn't God redeem us another way without Jesus Christ coming?*
- *While the answer to this question has many facets, we are going to explore only a few of the most important points.*

Isaiah 45:18–21 (NKJV)

¹⁸For thus says the Lord, Who created the heavens, Who is God, Who formed the earth and made it, Who has established it, Who did not create it in vain, Who formed it to be inhabited: "I am the Lord, and there is no other.

¹⁹I have not spoken in secret, In a dark place of the earth; I did not say to the seed of Jacob, 'Seek Me in vain'; I, the Lord, speak righteousness, I declare things that are right.

²⁰"Assemble yourselves and come; Draw near together, You who have escaped from the nations. They have no knowledge, Who carry the wood of their carved image, And pray to a god that cannot save.

²¹Tell and bring forth your case; Yes, let them take counsel together. Who has declared this from ancient time? Who has told it from that time? Have not I, the Lord? And there is no other God besides Me, A just God and a Savior; There is none besides Me.

- *In Isaiah 45:18-21 we see a couple of themes which are reinforced and emphasized.*

- *God did not create the Heavens and the Earth in vain.*
- *Those that seek God do not do so in vain but can be assured they will be rewarded.*
- *The Lord speaks righteously.*
- *God is just and He is a Saviour to those who call upon Him.*
- *In God's economy righteousness, justice, and purpose are foundational.*
- *In other words, God always acts true to His character in a righteous and just way and everything He does conforms to these principles.*
- *If God cannot violate any of these principles and truths because He is just and righteous, how can God then forgive transgressions and sins?*
- *In any economy everything has to balance out or the economy fails.*
- *The balance sheet must always balance between liabilities and assets.*

Psalm 85:10 (NKJV)

¹⁰Mercy and truth have met together; Righteousness and peace have kissed.

- *Mercy and truth are two opposing principles in the economy of God's balance sheet.*
- *Mercy extends forgiveness when laws and statutes have been broken and transgressed.*
- *Truth is black and white and demands that every sin and transgression be exposed and the full price be paid.*
- *Righteousness means that justice, judgment, and punishment have been fully meted out.*
- *Peace speaks about security, tranquility, and freedom from the fear of judgment and punishment.*
- *Righteousness and peace are also opposing principles when it comes to those who have sinned and transgressed God's laws—which includes every single human being.*
- *Psalm 85:10 clearly states that in God's economy, mercy and truth are able to meet together and be in total agreement.*
- *It also states that judgment and peace have actually kissed each other!*
- *Only God can reconcile mercy and truth and actually have judgment and peace embrace one another.*

How can God reconcile these opposing principles of mercy and truth so they are in harmony, and justice and peace so that they can warmly embrace one another?

- *Forgiveness does not simply mean that the sin, the wrong, or transgression has simply been disregarded or has disappeared, because in reality that can never happen.*
- *Just like a balance sheet with liability and assets, nothing disappears. It is just moved from one side of the ledger to the other.*
- *When a person who has been wronged willing forgives someone, he gives up his right for judgment, vindication, and punishment and agrees to absorb the loss himself and release the other person from shame and guilt.*

2 Corinthians 5:18–21 (NKJV)

¹⁸Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation,

¹⁹that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.

²⁰Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God.

²¹For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

- *I refer to 2 Corinthians 5:18-21 as "God's ledger sheet."*
- *The words reconcile or reconciliation are used five times in these verses.*
- *The Greek word reconcile can mean "to reestablish proper friendly interpersonal relations after these have been disrupted or broken," "to make things right with another."*
- *The Greek word reconcile can also be used in an accounting term to exchange coins of equal value or make things balance in terms of exchanging money.*
- *"who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ" – We see God Himself reconciled us to Himself through His Son, Jesus Christ.*
- *God reestablished friendly interpersonal relations after we had broken them through our sinfulness.*
- *How did God, through Jesus Christ reconcile us to Himself?*
- *"that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them" - We see that the first step in us being reconciled to God was that He didn't "impute" or "account" our trespasses to us.*

- *But if God did not account our trespasses and sins to us then what did He do with them?*
- *“For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.” – God took all our sins and put them on Jesus and in return He gave us all His righteousness and placed it within us and then called it an even trade—we were reconciled!*
- *Jesus Christ at Calvary became that sin offering for us.*
- *Upon the cross of Calvary, Jesus took upon Himself our sins, curses, disobedience, and rebellion. He died in our place, suffering what we should have suffered for all eternity.*
- *“By His stripes were healed” (1 Peter 2:24) – Jesus took all our sickness and pains upon Himself and He gave us His divine healing and health and the Father also called that an even trade—reconciled.*

“He has given us the ministry of reconciliation” – God has given us something more. He has given us His ministry of reconciliation, that through Jesus Christ, God would use us to bring others into right relationship with Him.

- *“Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ” – We are Christ’s representatives on this earth and we have been entrusted to share this message of reconciliation.*
- *One of the ways we share about how Christ has reconciled us to God is by extending the same forgiveness to those who have wronged us and being willing to allow Christ in us to absorb the hurts and pains that others have inflicted upon us.*
- *We can forgive them, because we know that Jesus died for their sins also.*
- *As we forgive them we show them the way to come to Christ and have their sins forgiven, so they can be reconciled to God and saved.*

“as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ’s behalf, be reconciled to God” – As believers we are not only justified and thus have Christ’s imputed righteousness, but now we must daily learn to submit to His Holy Spirit and walk in a righteous way, so our fellowship with God is unbroken.

- *Why did Jesus Christ have to be born of a virgin and become a man?*
- *God can neither die nor take upon Himself our sins because He is holy, so He became a man to pay the full price for our sins and die in our place.*
- *If Christ was not born as a man He could not be our Redeemer, because He had to take upon Himself the sins of mankind and only a man can pay that price.*
- *If Jesus Christ had not been born of a virgin, He wouldn’t have been God and only God has the purity, the power, and the righteousness to live a perfectly sinless and righteous life, and one which He could impart to all those who put their faith in Him.*

Jesus Christ being born of a virgin points to the reality that He was both fully human and fully God.

1 Timothy 2:5 (NKJV)

⁵For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus,

- *“the Man Christ Jesus” – the humanity of Jesus Christ is essential for Him to be our Mediator.*

To be a mediator, one has to be able to converse and relate to both parties and thus Christ as the Son of God could approach God His Father, and as a Man Jesus could reach out and sympathize with our humanity and frailties and take upon Himself our sins.

Genesis 3:14–15 (NKJV)

¹⁴So the Lord God said to the serpent: “Because you have done this, You are cursed more than all cattle, And more than every beast of the field; On your belly you shall go, And you shall eat dust All the days of your life.

¹⁵And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel.”

- *The first Messianic prophecy in the Bible is found in Genesis 3:15 and speaks about Jesus Christ’s birth, ministry, and victory.*
- *God put enmity between Satan and his seed (our sinful nature) and the seed of the woman (Jesus Christ who was to be born of a virgin).*
- *When man sinned, the very sinful and rebellious nature of Satan was planted in our mortal flesh.*

God’s solution was to send His Son, Jesus Christ, born of a woman to destroy Satan and his works—our sinful nature.

- *“You shall bruise (crush) His heel” – This signifies that the sinfulness and rebellion of mankind would join with Satan to crucify Jesus Christ. Although Jesus suffered greatly it did not result in defeat for God, it actually resulted in victory.*
- *“He shall bruise (crush) your head” - This signifies that in the process of Satan crucifying Christ, he and his kingdom of darkness would suffer a fatal blow.*
- *The crushing of Jesus’ foot and the crushing of Satan actually occurred concurrently.*
- *While Jesus was hanging on the cross for our sins (His heel being crushed), Satan’s kingdom and the power of sin was being destroyed (his head being crushed).*
- *Through Jesus Christ’s suffering, death, and resurrection sin and Satan were totally defeated.*

Hebrews 2:14 (NKJV)

¹⁴Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil,

At Calvary we could say that God put His foot down once and for all against Satan's plans to destroy all of mankind. In the process, His heel was crushed (Jesus suffered and died for us), the head of Satan was crushed (his kingdom and power was destroyed).

What a wonderful Saviour and how wonderful that God Himself would come to be born through a virgin as a helpless baby to become the Saviour of mankind through His supreme sacrifice at Calvary.

After studying only one small aspect of Jesus Christ's birth we can respond with breathtaking awe at the perfection and beauty of God's love and His plan of redemption for us.

Even though Jesus Christ's birth is so wonderful it is noteworthy that nowhere in the New Testament is it recorded that His "birthday" was ever celebrated.

- *In fact for the first three centuries the Church never had a specific day to celebrate Christ's birth.*
- *It wasn't until the fourth century that Christmas was celebrated and the date was chosen to coincide with the celebration of the pagan god—Saturn and the winter solstice.*
- *In the fourth century, religious rituals such as Christmas and Easter were established, but they did not reflect scriptural commands. They were actually a mixture of pagan rituals and scriptural principles.*
- *Christians began to celebrate different aspects of Christ's life because they failed to see the whole picture.*

If we dissect Christ's ministry into pieces we lose the full impact and picture. Jesus is not a baby in a manger and He is not still hanging on a cross. Nor is He still lying in tomb. He is resurrected and seated at the right hand of the Father.

2 Corinthians 5:16 (NKJV)

¹⁶Therefore, from now on, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him thus no longer.

- *We now see Jesus not as a baby, or even as the One hanging on the cross, but as the glorified Son of God seated at the right hand of the Father.*