

## *The Birth of Christ - God Becomes Man*

Matthew 1:22–23 (NKJV)

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

<sup>23</sup>“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.*
- *Once, as my brother Harvey was sharing the Gospel with someone, the person stated emphatically, “I don’t believe that a man can be God.” Harvey’s response was simple, “I totally agree with you. I don’t believe that a man can become God but I believe that God is able to become a man!”*
- *Liberal “Christian” theology begins by denying the authority of Scripture, removing any possibility that God has given us revelation or that absolute truth exists. They have relegated the Bible to being man’s limited and flawed opinions about God. They have created God in their image, rather than believing God created us in His image.*
- *Then, liberal “Christian” theology denies Jesus Christ’s virgin birth stating it is a mythological and fictitious story.*
- *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 for 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 political 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 who is both the Son of Man and the Son of God and all that it entails. In this modern age Jesus as a teacher can supersede Jesus as Saviour. Until we know Jesus as Saviour, His teachings will have little impact.*

- *The miracle of the virgin birth makes the powerful declaration that Jesus Christ is God!*
- *Liberal theology removed the heart of the gospel message, Jesus Christ, and left only the empty shell of a philosophical and social gospel.*
- *Most people are no longer satisfied with religious rituals and humanistic philosophy; they are looking for truth and reality. When people come to a church they are looking for three things: Is there really a God; Can I know Him; Can He change my life?*
- *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 and centrality of Jesus Christ can be seen by the details and numerous prophecies given in the Old Testament and fulfilled in the New Testament.*
- *There are at least 353 Old Testament prophecies about Jesus. The importance of Jesus Christ's entrance on the scene of history as a Man is seen in the number of prophecies concerning Him found in the Old Testament. Below are a few prophecies specifically surrounding Jesus Christ's birth:*
- *Jesus was to be a descendant of Abraham. Prophesied in Genesis 12:1-3 and fulfilled in Matthew 1:1-2; Luke 3:3:34.*
- *Jesus was to be a descendant of the tribe of Judah. Prophesied in Genesis 49:10 and fulfilled in Luke 3:33.*
- *Jesus was to be a descendant of King David. Prophesied in Jeremiah 23:5 and fulfilled in Luke 2:4.*
- *Jesus was to be born in Bethlehem. Prophesied in Micah 5:2 and fulfilled in Luke 2:4-5,7.*
- *Jesus was to be born of a virgin. Prophesied in Isaiah 7:14 and fulfilled in Matthew 1:22-23 and Luke 1:26-31.*
- *The exact timing of Jesus' life on earth was prophesied in Daniel 9:25.*
- *Although the birth of Jesus Christ is an essential part of the Gospel message it is interesting to note that the New Testament does not give any instructions on celebrating the birth of Christ on a specific day. The New Testament also does not*

*record that the early church celebrated a specific day commemorating Jesus' birth nor a specific day remembering His sacrifice at Calvary.*

- *The celebration of Christmas and Easter began around the fourth century. The date for the celebration of Christmas was derived from the pagan festival for the Roman god, Saturn, and the “rebirth” of the sun which occurred at the time of the winter solstice.*
- *Scholars agree that Jesus' birth did not take place in December. In fact His birth probably took place around September or October and possibly coincided with the biblical Feast of Trumpets.*
- *Often people think Christmas is about Jesus as a baby in a manger and Easter is about Jesus hanging on a cross. The reality is Jesus Christ the Son of the Living God is no longer in a manger and He is no longer hanging on a cross.*
- *The Lord Jesus Christ is resurrected, is alive, and is seated at the right hand of God the Father.*
- *However, it is essential that we do not ignore either the reality of His virgin birth or His suffering and sacrificial death at Calvary.*
- *Then how should Christians remember and celebrate Jesus' birth and His sacrifice at Calvary? The same way that the early church did—through communion. “and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, “Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me.”” (1 Corinthians 11:24).*
- *Our celebration of Jesus coming as a man and dying for our sin and being raised from the dead is not to be relegated to once a year but should be a daily remembrance.*
- *Communion not only celebrates Christ's birth, death, and resurrection but it is meant to stir up an expectation of His return deep within our hearts. “For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes.” (1 Corinthians 11:26).*
- *What is the very first sacrifice Jesus Christ had to make to redeem mankind? To take on human form by being born as a man.*
- *Even the circumstances of Jesus' birth underline the sacrifice He made. The King of Kings, the Lord of Lords, the Creator of the Universe, the One who dwells in eternity was not only born as a helpless baby but He was born in the most humbling of circumstances to a poor Jewish girl who gave birth to Him in a stable and placed Him in a feeding trough for animals and wrapped Him in swaddling clothes.*

- *What a paradox that the Shepherd of the sheep became the Lamb who sacrificed Himself. Jesus came as one of us and became the sacrifice for all of us. He came as a man to identify with us so we could identify with Him. Isn't God AMAZING!?!?!?*
- *Philippians, Chapter two, provides a glimpse into what it cost Jesus to become a man and to born into this world.*

#### Philippians 2:5-8 NKJV

<sup>5</sup> Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus,

<sup>6</sup> who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God,

<sup>7</sup> but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men.

<sup>8</sup> And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.

#### Philippians 2:5-8 (The Message)

Think of yourselves the way Christ Jesus thought of himself. He had equal status with God but didn't think so much of himself that he had to cling to the advantages of that status no matter what. Not at all. When the time came, he set aside the privileges of deity and took on the status of a slave, became human! Having become human, he stayed human. It was an incredibly humbling process. He didn't claim special privileges. Instead, he lived a selfless, obedient life and then died a selfless, obedient death—and the worst kind of death at that—a crucifixion.

#### Philippians 2:5-9 (God's Word Translation)

Have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had. Although he was in the form of God and equal with God, he did not take advantage of this equality. Instead, he emptied himself by taking on the form of a servant, by becoming like other humans, by having a human appearance. He humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, death on a cross. This is why God has given him an exceptional honor- the name honored above all other names-

- *While Jesus was on the earth in human form and before His resurrection He limited Himself to being a man so He was totally dependent upon the Father. Jesus lived the same life that we all live and He experienced the same challenges, temptations, and difficulties that we all experience with one significant difference—He never sinned or failed. “For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.” (Hebrews 4:15).*
- *Jesus' humanity was not an illusion but a reality. Although Jesus is God, when He came in human form He took upon Himself the frailty of being human. He experienced hunger, fatigue, sufferings, temptations and all the other aspects that being human entails. “When the time came, he set aside the privileges of deity and took on the status of a slave, became human!” (The Message Translation). “Instead,*

he emptied himself by taking on the form of a servant, by becoming like other humans.” (*God’s Word Translation*).

- *Although in His spirit He had the full divine nature as the Son of God, in His soul and in His body He had to grow and develop from a baby, to a child, to a young man and ultimately to a fully mature man. “And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.” (Luke 2:52).*
- *Jesus was always fully submitted to His Father’s will and was sinless in every word, action and even every thought. However, He still had to grow and mature for “though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered.” (Hebrews 5:8).*
- *When it says Jesus “learned obedience” it does not imply He was ever disobedient but His obedience grew and matured even as the level of obedience and understanding a child has is not the same as that of an adult.*
- *When it says that Jesus “learned obedience by the things which He suffered” it means that Jesus’ obedience developed and deepened as He continually denied Himself and submitted Himself to the Father’s will, whether through fasting, prayer, or simply choosing to do those things the Holy Spirit was showing Him to do at a specific instant regardless of the self-sacrifice required.*
- *There is a cost to developing and growing in obedience. This is one reason some Christians never learn to be obedient to God’s Word and the leading of the Holy Spirit—they are not willing to pay the cost of learning to be fully obedient. However, Jesus paid the price daily as He submitted to the Holy Spirit and even when He faced the worst suffering possible, death on the cross, He was able to be fully obedient as He prayed to the Father, “nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done.” (Luke 22:42b).*
- *The cost of learning to be fully obedient to the Father is choosing to put God’s will first in our lives. The fruit of full obedience is God’s glory being fully manifested in our lives. Jesus made the ultimate act of obedience and He reaped the ultimate fruit of God’s glory. “Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” (Philippians 2:9-11).*
- *Jesus had a choice whether or not to go to Calvary. His love and obedience to His Father and to us gave Him the strength to say, “Yes” to His Father’s will to save mankind from sin.*
- *Jesus Christ is our example of how every born again believer can and should live.*

- *The glory, the power, and the life of Jesus Christ resides in the spirit of every born again Christian. The same Holy Spirit that empowered Jesus Christ to live an overcoming life when He walked the earth resides in each born again Christian. When we fully trust and obey God, His power is released in our lives so we can live a victorious life!*
- *We have the hope that the glory of Jesus Christ can be manifest in our lives if we are willing to submit to the leading of the Holy Spirit and the Lordship of Christ and the will of the Father. “To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.” (Colossians 1:27)*
- *Jesus became a man not only to save us and give us a victorious life but also to reveal to us the very nature and character of God through His own life. “Philip said to Him, “Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us.” Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father so how can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own authority; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works. (John 14:8-10).*
- *Everyone who came into contact with Jesus knew they had experienced something beyond the ordinary and Someone who belonged to the heavenlies. “Then the officers came to the chief priests and Pharisees, who said to them, “Why have you not brought Him?” The officers answered, “No man ever spoke like this Man!”” (John 7:45-46). Some were filled with awe and others reacted with envy and hatred. Jesus cannot be ignored—people are either drawn to Him or try to oppose Him.*
- *The only way we could know about God and the way to Heaven would be for the One who was in Heaven to come down to earth to make a way for us and show us the way. “No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man who is in heaven. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.” (John 3:13-15).*
- *When Jesus was born as a man and before His resurrection, He limited Himself to being human and He was totally dependent upon His Father, “Then Jesus answered and said to them, “Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner.”” (John 5:19).*
- *Many fail to grasp the full significance of this incredible truth. Even after His resurrection, and the fullness of His Divine power and glory was manifest in His resurrected body, Jesus retained His humanity—He retained a physical body! “Having become human, he stayed human.”*

- *Another incredible truth is that even as Jesus came in human form so that He could identify with us, in His resurrected body He declared that in our resurrection we can identify with Him because our resurrected bodies will resemble His! “Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.” (1 John 3:2-3).*
- *Although we will all have resurrected, immortal, and incorruptible bodies there is at least one immensely important difference between Jesus’ resurrected body and ours—He will carry the scars of His sacrifice of all eternity. “And after eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, “Peace to you!” Then He said to Thomas, “Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing.” And Thomas answered and said to Him, “My Lord and my God!”” (John 20:26-28).*
- *In our resurrected, immortal, incorruptible bodies there will not be a trace of the sorrows, sufferings, losses, and troubles we experienced in this earthly life because He “Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness—by whose stripes you were healed.” (1 Peter 2:24). Our minds, our emotions, and our bodies will be eternally perfected.*
- *Jesus came to show us the way to the Father. Now that Jesus is seated at the right hand of the Father He has called us to do the same because we are His Body and His ambassadors on the earth so others can be reconciled to God. “Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God.” (2 Corinthians 5:20)*
- *How can we be effective witnesses to the reality of the Gospel that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and that He was born as a man, lived the perfect life, died for our sins and is resurrected from the dead? By having Christ live through us!*

Testimony by Leonard Terry:

While I was attending Princeton Theological Seminary, I was studying under and with some of the greatest religious intellectuals in the world. In the context of a strongly neo-orthodox resistance to the gospel I often asked the Lord how I could effectively witness to my teachers and classmates. I had tried to speak on an intellectual level. It seemed absolutely fruitless. In this setting I began to understand that most of my life I had approached evangelism as a kind of informing others of the option and presenting a rational argument or even an emotional argument for acceptance of Jesus as Savior and Lord.

I came to a point of desperate desire to touch this very closed community but faced my inability to do so with some major examination of my evangelistic biases.

I was sitting in my Calvin class..... truly boring but not because of the subject!..... and I had a vision that forever changed my thinking on the root of evangelism. It was the kind of vision where you feel you are actually in the vision. I didn't fall on the floor but I did lose consciousness of the physical room I was in. This does not mean I thought that I physically experienced the vision. Anyone looking at me would have seen me with my eyes open sitting in class..... I only say this to help people understand that visions are not as strange as we sometimes make them.

I was sitting in a group of people, about thirty in number. We were sitting in a circle around a small fire. As I looked around I saw that we were in a large cave. It was a lot like Mermaid Caverns where the ceiling was very high and the whole cave was quite large. The only light was the flicker from our fire. It cast shadows all around the cave.

As I sat there I felt such a desire to get out of the cave but realized I really didn't know how. Anyone from the South knows about caves. We were always told as children to stay out them because some of the caves we had near our house were long enough and had enough tunnels to get lost in forever. Samuel Clemens immortalized this in his story of Tom Sawyer. Tom and Becky ventured into a cave and met a murderer that Tom had testified against. His murderer eventually died in the cave by getting lost. Tom and Becky almost got lost themselves. With this in mind I looked around the room to see if there was a way out.

In fact there were about twelve black holes at the edge of the room. I knew from experience that these black holes were tunnels leading away from the main room. One of them surely led to the outside but which one..... How could I know? If a person went down the wrong one they could get disoriented and end up lost forever. The limited companionship in the main room was better than being lost.

As I looked at the possible exits each one had a person right outside of it. As I looked carefully at the first one this person was jumping up and down saying, "this is the way out." As I moved on to the next the person was shouting at the top of his voice and waving his arms to get attention, "this is the way out..... this is the way out." While the style of the the message was slightly different it was basically the same. The people were doing their best to convince us that they knew the way out. Yet I was not convinced. In spite of their strong expressions I could still be lost forever in the labyrinth of our cave if I followed their direction and they were wrong.

At the next to the last "exit" I felt a great despair. I bowed my head and earnestly prayed that God would help me to get out of this terrible place safely..... but how could I know? As I lifted my eyes again I looked at the last person. He was dressed neatly and in every way just a normal guy. He was standing there saying quietly, "This is the way out." He did not jump up and down or do any of the things the others did to try and convince me that he knew the way out. At this I felt my heart was going to burst. At least all of the others did a good job at trying to convince me. This one wasn't even doing that! He would not be a good candidate.

I bowed my head again and begged the Lord, "Please show me how to know the way out." As I lifted my head the final time I felt again drawn to the man that didn't try to convince me except



to simply say he knew the way out. I looked first at his face but then my eyes lowered to see that he had something in his hand. There in his right hand was a branch of a tree with living leaves and a big ripe pear still attached to the branch. Suddenly I knew that he knew the way out.

You see pear trees don't grow in caves.

I understood from this vision that the passion of our evangelistic program..... the convincing arguments..... the motivation of our intended converts to find a way out of the darkness of this world..... all are meaningless unless we have the proof.

The man who knew the way out had already gone out and brought back proof of his knowledge. Anyone who really cared to know could have uncontroversial evidence that his way was the way. He held the proof in his hand. He went out of the dark world of the cave and came back with life and fruit from another world. A world of sunlight, rain and fruit bearing plants.

Above all Jesus was that man. He came from another world and brought with him fruit that does not exist in this world. Imagine a man dying with blessing on his lips for those who were killing him. The apostles continued that fruit bringing as they all gave their lives for Jesus and for others. We are called as well to go out to that wonderful world of fruit and bring back into the darkness of this present world the fruit of the Spirit of God within us.

I knew that God was saying to me that as I let His love, joy, peace, longsuffering goodness, faith, meekness and temperance flow through my life, it would do the work of convincing those who wanted to find the way out of this present darkness. Nothing else will substitute. Nor is anything else essential.

- ***We need to produce of the fruit of the Spirit for all the world to taste and experience—*** “You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles? Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Therefore by their fruits you will know them.” (*Matthew 7:16-20*).
- ***We are exhorted to abide in Christ and to produce the fruit of the Spirit,*** “For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth).” (*Ephesians 5:8-9*).
- ***We need to follow Jesus' example so we will also produce fruit that is from another world.*** “For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps: “Who committed no sin, Nor was deceit found in His mouth”; who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously.” (*1 Peter 2:21-23*).

- *The fruit of unconditional love, even for our enemies, is something that does not originate from this world but from Heaven. As Jesus hung on the cross the words He spoke over those who mocked and crucified Him were words from another world, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do.” (Luke 23:34a).*
- *Stephen the first martyr recorded in the New Testament spoke words that originated from another world, the Throne Room of Heaven, as he was being brutally murdered. “Then he knelt down and cried out with a loud voice, “Lord, do not charge them with this sin.” And when he had said this, he fell asleep.” (Acts 7:60).*

**1 John 2:6 NKJV**

**<sup>6</sup> He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked.**

- *Let us seek to abide in Christ and produce the fruit that comes from Heaven that will draw those around us to the reality of Jesus.*