

SEVEN FACTS ABOUT THE BIRTH OF CHRIST

TEXT: MATTHEW 1:18-25

INTRODUCTION:

1. Every year the battle rages between traditionalists who love Christmas, and the secularists who despise it. The secularists want to replace "Merry Christmas" with "Happy Holidays."
2. Many so-called "Christians" deny the supernatural virgin birth of Christ.
3. Defending the supernatural virgin birth of Christ, Ian Paisley has written: "This assault on the doctrine of the Virgin Birth is, however, but one phase of a great battle to evacuate the supernatural from Christianity and to reduce it to the plane of natural religion. These naturalists in religion are out to destroy supernatural Christianity and to reduce it to the plane of natural religion. These naturalists in religion are out to destroy supernatural Christianity. They go through the Bible and tell us there is no supernatural revelation there; they go through the Birth of Christ and tell us there is no supernatural incarnation there; they go through the Person of Christ and tell us there is no supernatural deity there; they go through the sinless Life of Christ and tell us there is no supernatural purity there; they go through the Works of Christ and tell us there are no supernatural miracles there; they go through the Words of Christ and tell us there is no supernatural wisdom there; they go through the Death of Christ and tell us there is no supernatural atonement there; they go through the Blood of Christ and tell us there is no supernatural cleansing there; and they go through the Tomb of Christ and tell us there is no supernatural resurrection there. Having jettisoned the supernatural from the Gospel Ship they have reduced her to an old hulk of man's manufacturing, a mere plaything for the storms of unbelief and the reefs of infidelity."
4. This Christmas morning I will give seven important facts about the birth of Christ.

I. A VIRGIN BIRTH

1. Our Lord's birth was a miraculous birth because His was a virgin birth.
2. Luke 1:26 and 27 says, "the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary."
3. This is plain enough, and yet there are scoffers who deny the virgin birth of Christ.
4. No other man was ever born without an earthly father (Matt. 1:18-25; Luke 1:30-35).

5. Scoffers ask, "How can a man have no father? It is a biological impossibility!" Well, Adam had no father or mother!
6. If you read carefully the genealogy in Matthew 1, you see over and over the word "begat" (1:2, 3, 4, etc.). But when you come to verse 16 you will notice that Joseph did not begat Jesus (1:16).
7. Galatians 4:4 says, "But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman..."
8. Our Lord had to be born of a woman because He had to be human in order to be our Saviour. But He also had to be born of a virgin in order to be our sinless Saviour.
9. He also had to be born of a virgin to fulfill Isaiah's prophecy (Matthew 1:22, 23).
10. "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).
11. Matthew 1:24 and 25 says Joseph, "took unto him his wife: And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name JESUS."
12. Only a sinless Saviour, born to a virgin, could die as our perfect substitute.

II. A PROPHESED BIRTH

1. Our Lord's virgin birth is just the first of many Old Testament prophecies that were fulfilled on that first Christmas day 2,000 years ago (Isaiah 7:14; cf. Isaiah 9:6; Micah 5:2).
2. Later on, many other Old Testament prophecies would be fulfilled in the life of Christ.
 - His betrayal
 - His crucifixion
 - that men would gamble for His clothes
 - He was buried in a rich man's tomb
 - His resurrection from the grave
 - Any reasonable person, whether Jew or Gentile, who studies the evidence, would have to be convinced that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God.
3. Actually the first Messianic prophecy is found way back in Genesis 3:15, where we read that the LORD God said unto the serpent, "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed."
4. "Her seed" is an unusual term, because the word "seed" always refers to the seed of a man, not a woman. Biologically, a woman does not produce seed.

5. In the Bible, the word "seed" always refers to the seed of a man. For example, we read in Genesis 12, "And the LORD appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land."
6. "Thy seed" refers to Abraham and his son Isaac, and his son Jacob, etc. The Bible speaks of the seed of David, and the seed of Israel, etc.
7. This is the normal usage of the word.
8. Revelation 12:17 says, "And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed..." However, this is symbolic. The dragon represents Satan, and the woman represents the nation Israel.
9. The promised seed of the woman, referred to in Genesis 3:15 was miraculously implanted in the womb of Mary by the Holy Spirit.
10. You may recall that when Mary was told by the angel Gabriel that she was going to give birth to the Messiah, she replied, "How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?" (Luke 1:34).
11. "And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God" (Luke 1:35).
12. In this way, the Lord Jesus would not inherit the sinful nature which would disqualify Him from becoming our Savior.
13. Romans 3:23 says, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." All except, the sinless, spotless, virgin-born Son of God.
14. Genesis 3:15 is a biological impossibility, because it is supernatural and miraculous.

III. A HOLY BIRTH

1. So far we have seen that everything about the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ was unusual and unique – He was born to a virgin in fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies that were written over 700 years before His birth.
2. Here is another unusual factor about Christ's birth that sets Him apart from all men – He was born without sin. His was a holy birth.
3. Every other baby born into this world is born with a sinful nature. David wrote, "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity: and in sin did my mother conceive me" (Psalm 51:5).

4. And David also wrote, "The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies" (Psalm 58:3).
5. The apostle Paul wrote, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23).
6. Every baby that has ever been born is born with a sinful nature. Go out and buy a newspaper, and look at the photographs of some of the vicious psychopaths who rape and torture and kill with no remorse. Consider this: there was once a time when those villains were cute little babies sitting on the mother's knee or playing in their playpen.
7. Go into the nursery and look at the sweet little babies. Some day they will be lying and disobeying their parents. And if mom and dad are not careful they may start doing things far worse than that. Why? Because they are all born sinners.
8. But 2,000 years ago, when those shepherds looked into the face of the baby Jesus they were looking at a child who would never sin. They were looking at God manifest in the flesh.
9. "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" (Matthew 1:23).
10. This was a baby who was not born with a sinful nature.
11. Our Lord said, "Who convinceth me of sin?" (John 8:46), and of course there was none.
12. First John 3:5 says, "And ye know that He was manifested to take away our sins; and in Him is no sin."
13. Hebrews 4:15 says Christ "was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."
14. Second Corinthians 5:21 says, "For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him."
15. First Peter 2:22 says, "Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth."
16. Peter said that Christ "hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust" (I Peter 3:18).
17. So we see our Lord's birth was a virgin birth, a prophesied birth, and a holy and sinless birth.

IV. A PRE-EXISTENT BIRTH (ISA. 9:6, 7)

1. "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given..." (Isa. 9:6). For the Son to be "given," means He already existed before His birth in Bethlehem.
2. Romans 8:3 says God sent "His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh." Not in sinful flesh, but "in the likeness of sinful flesh."
3. Referring to Christ. I Timothy 3:16 says, "God was manifest in the flesh." The word "manifest" assumes the fact of pre-existence – "God was manifested in the flesh."
4. You will recall our Lord said to the Pharisees, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was I am" (John 8:58). Not "I was," but "I am."
5. "Then they took up stones to cast at Him..." (John 8:59). Why?
6. Because they understood what our Lord was saying – He is the eternal Son of God.
7. There are many Scriptures which affirm the pre-existence of Christ. "In the beginning was the Word..." (John 1:1).
8. Consider Micah 5:2. "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."
9. It is interesting to note that our Lord never referred to His birth. Not even once. He always referred to Himself as being sent.
10. He said in Matthew 15:24, "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel."
11. He said in Mark 9:37, "Whosoever shall receive me, receiveth not me, but him that sent me."
12. Jesus said in Luke 4:43, "I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also: for therefore am I sent."
13. We see this many, many times in the Gospel of John. "For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me" (John 6:38).
14. His birth was like no other. The Ancient of Days became the babe in the manger. His was a pre-existent birth.

V. A ROYAL BIRTH

1. One of my favorite Christmas carols is Charles Wesley's grand old Christmas carol – "Hark the herald angels sing – glory to the newborn king."
2. You will recall what the angel Gabriel said to Mary -- "The Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David" (Luke 1:32, 33; cf. Isaiah 9:6, 7).

3. As a matter of fact, our Lord was descended from King David on both Mary's side and Joseph's side.
4. The wise men said when they arrived from the east, "Where is He that is born King of the Jews?" (Matthew 2:2). His was a royal birth.

VI. A WONDROUS BIRTH

1. Speaking of the wise men, consider their story! They traveled all the way from the east (Persia?) following a star (Matthew 2:1-12).
2. And when we consider how wonderful our Lord's birth was, think of the angelic host, praising God, and saying: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men" (Luke 2:14).
3. I have some beautiful Christmas music – Handel's Messiah, "The First Noel," "O Come, O Come Emmanuel," etc. – but can any of this compare to that first Christmas when the shepherds looked up into the sky and heard the angels praising God!?
4. What majestic sights and sounds! What a night those shepherds had!
5. Oh, our Lord's birth was a wondrous birth.

VII. A DOOMED BIRTH

1. The birth of our Lord was like no other in that He was born to die. He came into this world for one specific purpose and that was to die on the cross for our sins.
2. The Bible says, "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" (I Timothy 1:15).
3. Very little is said about the childhood of our Lord. We see Him in the temple when He was twelve years old, and that is it (Luke 2:41-52).
4. It was at the age of thirty that He began His public ministry. And most of this was in the shadow of the cross. The big emphasis of the New Testament is not the birth of Christ, nor is it the life of Christ.
5. The emphasis in the New Testament is the death of Christ. Way back in Luke 2:35, Simeon said to Mary, "Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also."
6. Later, John the Baptist introduced Jesus by saying, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29).
7. This is what is in line with all of the Old Testament types and prophecies.
8. The Old Testament is filled with animal sacrifices, including Passover lambs, goats on the Day of Atonement, and many pictures and types of the Lord Jesus Christ, who was born to die upon the cross.
9. One thousand years before Calvary, David wrote these familiar words: "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?... I am poured out like water,

and all my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels... they pierced my hands and my feet " (Psalm 22:1, 14, 16b).

10. And seven hundred years before the cross, the prophet Isaiah said, "But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed" (Isaiah 53:5).
11. After our Lord was crucified, buried, and rose from the dead, the apostle Paul said, "For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified" (I Corinthians 2:2).
12. But this aspect of Christmas is completely ignored by the world. It does not fit in with their worldly festivities. They think a jolly fat Santa Claus is better company than a despised and crucified Saviour.
13. If a person brings this up at the office Christmas party, people get upset. They say, "Let's just have a good old time and forget all this talk about Jesus dying for sinners, and the blood of Christ, and judgment for sin, and salvation, and atonement, etc."
14. But sinners are not saved by a baby in a manger. They can only be saved by a Saviour who died on the cross.
15. *Hark! The herald angels sing, "Glory to the newborn King: Peace on earth, and mercy mild: GOD AND SINNERS RECONCILED."*
16. And how can wicked, rebellious sinners be reconciled to a holy God? Only by the blood of the cross. "And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself (Colossians 1:20a).

CONCLUSION:

1. I saw something on the Internet the other day. It said, "The greatest gift wasn't placed under a tree. But He was hung on a tree."
2. This is the real message of Christmas, but sadly very few seem to really understand it.
3. Carl mentioned a Hindu coworker who was "giving up on Christmas because she couldn't afford it." But her concept of Christmas was materialism and covetousness and consumerism, etc.
4. When people do not understand the Gospel, they miss the true meaning of Christmas.
5. We need to see beyond the manger to the cross.
6. If you can see the reason why Christ came into the world, and if you can believe that He died in order that you might receive eternal life, then you can be saved today.

