

THE BOOK OF MATTHEW  
"The Birth of Jesus Christ"  
Matthew 1:18-25

Introduction

1. So Christmas is the time for the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ our Lord. As things have developed, materialism has replaced the spiritual emphasis so that gifts, trees, tinsels, etc. have taken center stage and Christ is behind closed doors.

2. However, for those committed to the Scriptures, the birth of Christ still has its significant place. It is a worthy subject of study and worship. Consider four specific statements of the Bible regarding the Lord's actual birth:

a. "In the days of Herod" Mt. 2:1

This is the dreadful Herod the Great who murdered his wife. He was hated by the Jews. Josephus says he died in March, B.C. 4, having been a king of great barbarity. Allowing for the birth event of Christ, it is safe to say he was born B.C. 5.

b. "taxing . . . when Cyrenius was governor of Syria" Luke 2:1, 2. There have been extremely aggressive efforts to disprove Luke's reliability here. However, no one has yet succeeded in proving him wrong. Luke's trustworthiness and accuracy of this taxing are legitimate.

c. "46 years . . . building" John 2:20. The Herodian temple had been in process of construction 46 years. By noting Christ's age at that time (Luke 3:23), the date of B.C. 5 is again achieved as the year of our Lord's birth.

d. "His star in the east . . ." Mt. 2:2. Some have concluded that certain stellar phenomena support this "star in the east." While it is not critical, it is interesting to note this possibility.

NOTE: Scripture clearly indicates 1) a king, 2) a taxing, 3) a building, 4) a star - - all giving historical evidence for the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ. While these historical events give support to the fact of Christ's birth, the actual account of the event is included in the inspired Word of God. Give attention to these particulars of Jesus' birth:

1. The PERSONS of His birth.

a. Mary Mt. 1:18

Very little is known of her personal history (cf. Acts 1:14). Her sister is alluded to (Jn 19:25) and a kinswoman is identified (Luke 1:36), but of her mother, father, and extended family, nothing further is known. The utterly unscriptural veneration of her must be avoided, without denying the incredible role she had in God's program -- a role which has never been repeated.

b. Joseph Mt. 1:19

Little is known of him as well, but he is declared to be just ( /dikaios). This must relate to Joseph's respect of the law of Moses. He did all that was humanly possible as expressed by God. Two Greek verbs are employed to show Joseph was not willing ( /thelo) to embarrass Mary, but rather was minded ( /boulomai) to put Mary aside privately. It is obvious that Joseph genuinely loved and respected Mary. One genealogical feature is mentioned about Joseph -- he was "son of David."

c. Holy Spirit Mt. 1:18, 20

Two unbelievable (but Scriptural) statements are made about the Spirit in this text: 1) The child in Mary's womb was "of ( /ek) the Holy Spirit." This marks the origin of the child -- by divine intervention. 2) That which is to be begotten in Mary was of ( / ek) the Holy Spirit." These two statements are solemn protests against any profane thoughts. According to the law, Mary should have been stoned (Lev. 20:10), but the inspired record avers what has happened is "of the Holy Spirit." Because this is true, Joseph is told by an angelic messenger not to "become afraid (ingressive aorist) but to take Mary his wife to his side ( /paralambano). The drama was heavenly; earth must acquiesce.

2. The PROPHECY of His birth

a. By quotations Mt. 1:22

The quotation is from Isa. 7:14. The events here are a direct fulfillment of the prophecy. The full telic idea is recorded "that" or "in order that" ( /hina). The perfect tense of the verb "was done" shows that there is a standing historical fact for anyone who really wants to believe it. Anything in addition to the Messianic meaning of Isa. 7:24 is subordinate to its main thrust.

b. By explanation Mt. 1:23

The noun virgin ( /parthenos) is self-explanatory. The Hebrew word is found seven times in the O.T. and always refers to an unmarried woman ( /almah; Gen. 24:43; Ex. 2:8; Psa. 68:25; Prov. 30:15; Songs 1:3; 6:8; Isa. 7:14). This is a powerful testimony to the absolute sinlessness of our Lord. Sin is procreated by natural generation. Jesus was born "out of" the Holy Spirit in the womb of the virgin Mary.

c. By signification Mt. 1:23

The male progeny of Mary is to have the Name "Immanuel" meaning God ( /el) with us ( /I manu). Not only is this His Name, but a description of His character and station. It is only found in Matthew in the N.T.

3. The PURPOSE of His birth

a. Salvation Mt. 1:21

The name "Jesus" originally was Jehoshuah (Num. 13:16; 1 Chron. 7:27) but it was contracted. It is frequently rendered Joshua (Acts 7:45; Heb. 4:8) and means "Jehovah is Helper." Like Joshua leading Israel into the Promised Land, Jesus is the "captain of our salvation" (Heb. 2:10).

b. Selection Mt. 1:21

The immediate intent of Jesus' birth was the salvation of "His people," the Jews. They were His original objective (Mt. 15:24), but through their rejection of Jesus, the door to the Gentiles was opened (Mt. 23:37, 39; Acts 15:15-18).

c. Intention Mt. 1:21

Political deliverance, advanced by current liberation theology, was not the purpose for Christ's birth. Rather, it has deliverance from sin ( /apoton hamartion). Jesus' mission was for separation from the penalty, power, and presence of sin (Jn 5:24). Hallelujah!

Conclusion

Jesus Christ is the Saviour. Have you received Him as your Saviour? Now is the day of salvation! Believe on Jesus Christ as the One Who died in your place.