

## The Birth

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Joseph Carty / General

Holidays / Christmas; Incarnation / Isaiah 9:6

The incarnation is one of the most praiseworthy and spectacular events in the history of the universe. It is mysterious, yet simple. It is awe inspiring, yet a most basic concept of Christianity. Let's take another look at the birth of Christ.

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- Everything about
  - incarnation is
    - unfair
    - borderline offensive
  - Yet
    - greatest gift
      - ever given
        - to humanity!

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## The Virgin Conception

**Luke 1:26–27** **ESV**

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary.

- Gabriel
  - greatest angel of heaven
  - most powerful
    - created being...
  - Stands in presence of God
- Comes a message to???
- Look at this
  - Bad track record
    - for a king...
- Galilee?
  - Northern Kingdom???
- Nazareth?
  - “Does anything good come out of Nazareth?”
- Joseph and Mary
  - Older man with kids

- Young girl barley marital age
  - Utterly poor
  - working class at best
- 
- Why do these parents?

Desire of Ages p. 49

Like every child of Adam He accepted the results of the working of the great law of heredity. What these results were is shown in the history of His earthly ancestors. He came with such a heredity to share our sorrows and temptations, and to give us the example of a sinless life. — Desire of Ages p. 49

- What is God thinking???
  - King of Kings
  - Lord of Lords???
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- If you are
  - educated Jew
  - starting all wrong...

- To this:
  - young
  - uncultured
  - unlearned
  - **unfavored**
    - woman is said:

[Luke 1:28](#) (ESV)

“Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!”

- Mary never thought
  - herself favored...
  - didn't know
    - how to answer...

Gabriel Speaks again:

**Luke 1:30–33 ESV**

And the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign

over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.”

- Perhaps greatest blessing
  - ever spoken
    - to mortal humanity!
- To whom?
  - **“the unworthy”**

## **Jesus**

- Greek version of Joshua
- Literally means:
  - "God is salvation"
- Name is prophetic:

### **Matthew 1:21** **ESV**

She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.”

- Also called

- Son of Most High!!
- Given a throne???
- Doesn't seem like
  - kingly story...
- Mary is Overwhelmed...
  - takes little vacation to
    - get thoughts together.
- Visits cousin Elizabeth

**Luke 1:40 ESV**

and she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth.

- Again,
  - supernatural prophecy:

## Elizabeth's Prophecy

**Luke 1:41-45 ESV**

And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the baby leaped in her womb.  
And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit, and she exclaimed with a loud cry,

“Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! And why is this granted to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For behold, when the sound of your greeting came to my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord.”

- “Blessed are you among women”
  - how blessed
  - mother of Lord???
- Not all was
  - blessing and Joy...

## Joseph’s Dream

### **Matthew 1:18–19** **ESV**

Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly.

- Such great blessing
  - looked like curse

- to unbelieving...
  
- Imagine parents
  - teenage pregnancy
- Imagine onlookers...
  - gaining weight???
- Imagine Joseph...
  
- No, no,
  - It's not that...
  - I've been impregnated by the Holy Spirit...
  
- Such a beautiful truth
  - yet hard to believe
    - for many...
  - including...
    - Joseph
    - her fiance...



- In these days...
  - death penalty...
- Joseph didn't want scene
  - break off engagement
    - quietly...
- Suddenly:

**Matthew 1:20-21 ESV**

But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins."

- Don't break engagement!
  - she's telling truth
- It's the Messiah...
  - fulfilment of Isaiah:

**Matthew 1:23 ESV**

"Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,  
  
and they shall call his name Immanuel"

(which means, God with us).

- I can imagine thinking...
  - “It sounds
    - too good to be truth.”
- It does sound too good.
  - “God with us???”
- Even to those
  - who had been
  - looking for the Messiah
- this sounded
  - too far fetched....
  - too crazy
  - too good!

Desire of Ages p.49

It would have been an almost infinite humiliation for the Son of God to take

man's nature, even when Adam stood in his innocence in Eden. But Jesus accepted humanity when the race had been weakened by four thousand years of sin.

Desire of Ages p. 49

- God with us??
  - infinite humiliation
- Human to ant..

- Continue Story:

**Matthew 1:24-25 ESV**

When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus.

- Virgin birth
  - he did not
  - “know her”
  - until Jesus was born
- Definitely not Joseph's son.

- The Son of God!!!

## The Census

### **Luke 2:1-5 ESV**

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. And all went to be registered, each to his own town. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child.

- Prophecy must be fulfilled
  - Birthplace of Messiah
    - to be Bethlehem

### **Micah 5:2 ESV**

But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah,

who are too little to be among the clans of Judah,

from you shall come forth for me

one who is to be ruler in Israel,

whose coming forth is from of old,

from ancient days.

- This prophecy
  - well understood by
    - priests and scribes
- Herod wanted to know
  - where Messiah born
- They quoted
  - this passage
    - say:
      - Bethlehem!

## The Birth

### **Luke 2:6** **ESV**

And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth.

- Imagine...
  - long journey for
    - very pregnant woman.

- **90 miles**
  - Week of travel.
  - One way.
- By the time,
  - get to Bethlehem
  - tired...
  - labor pain...

#### **Luke 2:7 ESV**

And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

- One of the saddest
- And Most Joyful Text...

### **Most Sad**

- Because
  - King of Kings

- Lord of Lords

“wrapped him in swaddling cloths”

- those are rags
  - birth is messy
- but royalty not left
  - in rags

“laid him in a manger”

- Manger?
- Didn't know what
  - manger was
  - until an adult.
- Manger is
  - feeding trough

- Our Lord's first bed
  - feeding trough!!!
- Not for royalty.

“no place for them in the inn”

- Yes, census
- Yes, busy
- Yes, no room....
- For a king???
  - make room!

Desire of Ages p.48

We marvel at the Saviour's sacrifice in exchanging the throne of heaven for the manger, and the companionship of adoring angels for the beasts of the stall.  
— Desire of Ages p. 48

- Fair?



- no
- Required?
  - no

## **Most Joyful!**

- Best gift of all time!!!
- Celebrate That!
- Worthy of Holiday!

## Christmas History

- Christ was not born
  - in the winter
- Shepherds in field
  - similar latitude
- Likely born in fall

- Dec 25th
  - connected to paganism
  - winter solstice
  - nativity of the sun
  - evergreen, holly
- Semitic lands
  - Astarte
  - Mithra
  - Unconquered Sun
- January 6th
  - Epiphany
  - Random date
  - Egyptian people
- 12 Days of Christmas
  - Dec 25

- Jan 6th
- Both days off
- Saint Nicholas
  - fraction true
  - mostly myth
  - mixed with paganism

## Should We Celebrate Christmas?

- Not directly sin
- Is connected with pagan traditions.
- Time period when
  - people giving
  - more receptive
  - thinking spiritually

- We Can and Should
  - capitalize on this

1. Speak of Jesus
2. Teach about Incarnation
3. Focus on His Gift
4. Focus on Giving

Is it wrong to:

1. Give gifts?
2. Have a party?

- No...
- Caveat:
  - Avoid or De-emphasize
  - Pagan Ideas
    - Evergreen
    - Lights

- Santa
  - Selfishness
  - Consumerism
  - Financial Waste
- Emphasize:
    - Christ
    - Incarnation
    - God's Gift
    - Service
  - Finish Story

## The Shepherds

### **Luke 2:8–12 ESV**

And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger."

# Good News of Great Joy

- Best New!
  - He is born!!!
- There is reason
  - to celebrate!
- Lets Party!!!
- The angels did!

## **Luke 2:13-14 ESV**

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 among those with whom he is pleased!”

- All heaven celebrated!
- We should too!
- Shepherds did too.

**Luke 2:20 ESV**

And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

- Let's Party Too...
- But lets remember
  - Why we party
- And
- What is the
  - true holy-day gift.
  - Jesus Christ.