

“THINK ON THESE THINGS”

Philippians 4:8

Baby Jesus

By Jerry Fite

Jesus, the eternal Word, became flesh through physical birth. He did not enter the world like Adam, full grown and mature; but as an infant or as a baby. What does the Bible teach us as to the meaning of Jesus' birth?

The miraculous nature of Jesus' birth emphasizes His Divine nature as the Son of God. The Scriptures tell us that Jesus was *“born of a woman”* (Gal. 4:4). Jesus was conceived in Mary by the Holy Spirit, not by Joseph (Matt. 1:18, 20; Lk. 2:34). She understood, *“...the holy thing which is begotten shall be called the Son of God”* (Lk. 2:35).

When Jesus became a baby, He identified with man. Like man, He partook of flesh and blood. This had a definite purpose. By partaking of flesh and blood, Jesus could die and therefore *“...through death bring to naught him that had the power of death, that is the devil”* (Heb. 2:14). Because Jesus is the *“son of man,”* God gave Him authority to execute future judgment upon man (Jn. 5:27).


Baby Jesus emphasizes His dual nature of being both God and man. Baby Jesus is both the *“Son of God,”* and the *“son of man.”*

Jesus' birth also tells us that Old Testament prophecy was fulfilled. Isaiah prophesied that a *“virgin”* would bring forth a child (Isa. 7:14). Baby Jesus fulfilled this prophecy. Indeed, His name *“Immanuel”* was fitting, for God was literally with man in the person of Jesus, the Son of God (Matt. 1:23). Micah prophesied that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem of Judea (Micah 5:2).

The birth of Jesus took place in Bethlehem as prophesied some 750 years before (Matt. 2:1). God's miraculous hand is behind the birth of Jesus.

Those who were close to baby Jesus were able to bear witness to facts as to what Jesus would become and accomplish. These would not be accomplished as a baby. He would grow to maturity (Lk. 2:52); yet on the day of Jesus' birth, angelic voices unite to send praise to God in the highest part of heaven in anticipating the peace that would come to those who believe in His Son (Lk. 2:14; Rom. 5:1). The shepherds were told to witness the new born baby wrapped in swaddling clothes lying in the manger, knowing that he was the *“Saviour”* who is *“Christ the Lord”* (Lk. 2:11). Simeon, being led by the Spirit, held the forty-day old baby Jesus and blessed God for allowing him to see God's *“salvation”* for all people (Lk. 2:28-32). Anna, the prophetess gave thanks to God, *“and spake of Him to all them that were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem”* (Lk. 2:38). Jesus would fulfill all these reasons for thanking God through His death and resurrection from the dead (Acts 2:23-36; 1 Pet. 1:18-19).

The wise men came to worship the King of the Jews. Jesus was by then a young child, not a babe in swaddling clothes. He was in a house, not a manger (Matt. 2:8, 11). Jesus, referring to His kingship before Pilate, said, *“to this end have I been born, and to this end am I come into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth”* (Jn. 18:37). Jesus was born to be King, and reigns now in His kingdom (Lk. 1:32-33; Col. 1:13).

While we rejoice in the birth of Jesus, knowing it was essential in God's plan to save us, we assemble every first day of the week to remember Jesus' death (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 11:26). Through Jesus' death Christians have peace (Eph. 2:13), and commemorate such weekly. – *Glad Tidings*, December 4, 2016. 

Care For The Troubled Heart

By Kyle Campbell

The opening of Paul's second letter to the Corinthians is unusual. After stating his greetings from himself and Timothy, and expressing God's grace to the readers, he exalted the comfort he had received from God (2 Cor. 1:3-7). "**Comfort**," used 10 times in this text and translated as "**comfort, comforteth**" and "**consolation**," causes someone to be encouraged or consoled (Acts 13:15; Eph. 6:22; Phil. 2:1). His encouragement came in the form of deliverance from a distressing experience in Asia (2 Cor. 1:8-10), and for the Corinthians' righteous response to his harsh letter about their conduct surrounding the immoral man (1 Cor. 7:5-11).

Because of his personal need, he was glad to highlight two aspects of God's character he had come to value in deeper measure: God's limitless compassion (Psa. 145:9; Micah 7:19) and never-failing comfort (Isa. 40:1; 51:3, 12; 66:13). To experience God's consolation and encouragement in the midst of all one's affliction is to become indebted and equipped to communicate the divine comfort to others in any kind of affliction or distress. Whenever Christ's sufferings were multiplied in Paul's life, God's comfort was also multiplied through Paul's work in Christ. The greater the suffering, the greater the comfort and the greater the ability to share with others the divine sympathy.

One way that God can comfort us is through His holy scriptures. The people who went through suffering record, via inspiration, their deepest thoughts. For example, the beautiful shepherd psalm can lift the broken heart: "**The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever**" (Psa. 23:1-6). The record of Christ's words assure me of God's care. He said, "**Consider the ravens: for they neither sow nor reap; which neither have storehouse nor barn; and God feedeth them: how much more are ye better than the fowls?**" (Lk. 12:24).

A second way that God can comfort us is seeing that the people of the scriptures had difficulties in their lives, assuring me that there is "**no new thing under the sun**" (Eccl. 1:9). Romans 15:4 is truly applicable here: "**For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.**" The use of the scriptures promotes "**patience**" and supplies "**comfort.**" Both may be learned by precept and example from the records of the past. These two elements are intimately connected with "**hope,**" for the endurance is worthwhile if it takes place on a course that leads to a glorious future, and the encouragement provides exactly that assurance. For example, David, one of the greatest men in the Old Testament, had to endure a gruesome amount of suffering: (1) he was hunted by a jealous king; (2) he had to leave his best friend; (3) he had to face the death of three children and the rape of another; and, (4) he had to live through the guilt of committing sin against God with Bathsheba. But David was not alone. Elijah was lonely (1 Kings 19:18), Hezekiah was sick (2 Kings 20:1), and Hannah was barren (1 Sam. 1:10). If God can help these worthy people make it through their suffering, He will help me through my suffering.

A third way for God to providentially comfort us is through faithful, spiritual brethren. Galatians 6:2 says, "**Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.**" These "**burdens**" are heavy — they are crushing, emotional weights that we feel cannot be carried any longer. In fact, we may not even want to go on living. After the vicious trip across the Mediterranean Sea, fearing for his life because of the shipwreck, Paul came to Italy and Acts 28:15 says, "**And from thence, when the brethren heard of us, they came to meet us as far as Appii forum, and The three taverns: whom when Paul saw, he thanked God, and took courage.**" You can only imagine how much these brethren would have meant to them in that moment! These "**burdens**" are different than the "**burden**" of Galatians 6:5. The word in that verse was a load which one is expected to bear. It was used as a military term for a man's pack or a soldier's kit.

When our hearts are brought low by any of the aforementioned reasons, let the "**God of all comfort**" comfort you. Call Him to your side and let Him give you the strength to handle all the troubling issues of your life. He cares for you and loves you, and wants to bless, not curse. Philippians 4:6-7 promises, "**Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.**" As we have been comforted, let us then turn and be a comfort for others like Paul was so willing to do. — **Knollwood Church of Christ**, November 2016.



Service Times - Sunday: 9:00 & 10:00 AM; 6:00 PM - Wednesday: 7:00 PM

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