

Encountering Jesus in the Nativity

I. Word Made Flesh

- A. The mystery of the incarnation of Jesus is one the greatest themes of beauty that we can gaze upon. The person of God the Son voluntarily took on human form and capacities in the identity of Jesus of Nazareth forever. There are three primary reasons given to us by the scriptures for the purpose of the incarnation.
1. Reveal God's Glory – The primary reason that scripture gives us as the purpose for the incarnation is so that we would behold His Glory. We were made to encounter God and behold His beauty, however we would know nothing of Him unless He had the desire to reveal Himself to us. The incarnation is a clear statement of His radical desire for us to know Him and to behold Him. As the Word made flesh, weather He is speaking or not, He is always revealing the glory of God for us to behold. (Eze. 37:27; Jhn 1:14, 17:24; 2 Cor. 4:6)
 2. Fulfill the Redemptive Promises – God promised a human seed who would restore all that was lost to humanity at the fall. All throughout the scriptures from Genesis to Revelation two major prophetic themes of restoration weaved their way through redemptive history. These two themes eventually came together to become the promise of the Son of David known as the Messiah. Establishing this truth was the main reason given for His 3 ½ year ministry. (Lk. 1:67-79; Jhn 10:24-25)
 - a. A human seed would come forth through King David's family line to eliminate Satan and wickedness from the earth, and usher an eternal reality of righteousness and peace.
 - b. Through this promised seed God would also restore the earth to its original intent and He would once again dwell upon the earth with man.
 3. Save us from our Sin - We are all very much convinced of the third reason given for the incarnation. We needed a sinless human sacrifice in order to satisfy the righteous demands of justice for our sins against God. In addition to that He broke the power of sin over us and positioned us to be created anew through the indwelling of His Spirit. (Jhn. 1:29; Rom. 6:4-6)

II. Tradition VS Biblical Record

- A. In my opinion much beholding glory has been lost in the traditional understanding of the birth of Jesus. As seekers of His beauty this morning I would like to reflect

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(Mat. 1-2; Lk 1-2)

upon a few of these details and encourage us to gaze upon them throughout this Holiday season.

- B. The most fruit that comes from encountering Jesus in the word comes from meditating on the why rather than the what, and in the unspoken rather than the spoken and in knowing everything He does or doesn't do reveals His glory to us.
1. **Mary** - Was most likely very young according to American culture but not according to Jewish culture. In Jewish tradition a girl would be betrothed in their 13th year and from that point on was considered married. Generally the wedding would be around 1 year from the time of the betrothal.
 - a. God entrusted His most precious possession to a young teenage girl who in our culture had no business raising a child. Then He positioned her in a first time mom's worst nightmare. The environmental circumstances were nearly unbearable, and the cultural circumstances of her pregnancy caused it to be seen as a shame rather than a glorious honor.
 2. **Joseph** - Was called an upright man for his merciful desire to put Mary away after finding out she was pregnant. However, after being visited by an angel he then bears the reproach of her pregnancy with her.
 - a. Can you imagine what God put Joseph through? God waited to send the angel to tell him Mary was innocent of unfaithfulness. What would it have been like to be Joseph struggling to provide for his fiancé and staying in a place only fit and designed for animals.
 3. **Birth** - God ordained that His Son, the long awaited hope of humanity and the one who deserves the highest place of humanities' honor to be born in obscurity and scandal, to an uncelebrated and rejected couple from a despised culture. He preferred that the King of earth would come into the world in lowliest of places and be placed in a filthy carved out rock.
 - a. In our Christmas tradition we celebrate the birth of Jesus on Dec. 25th but historically His birth was sometime in the fall. There are many scholar's who place the timing of his birth on the biblical feast of Tabernacles.
 4. **Shepherds** – Historical documents revealed that more than likely the flock of sheep that these men were watching were the property of the Jerusalem temple

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and were sold and used for temple sacrifice. Shepherds were social outcasts and had a reputation as dishonest thieves. They were not allowed to give testimony in the courts of that day.

- a. God ordained that the only individuals that He would break in upon to declare the wonders of the incarnation to would be some of the most broken and unvalued individuals in Bethlehem. He wanted them to be the first individuals apart from Mary and Joseph to behold God in flesh.
5. **Wise Men** - Misconceptions and legends abound about these wise men. They were not kings but rather they were astronomers. There were not only three, but probably a great company. They did not come on the birth night, but probably several months later. Historians believe that these men were decedents of the Jews who stayed in Babylon after King Cyrus offered freedom to the children of Israel. The star they followed actually moved in front of them and led them rather than them showing up to where it was.
- a. Their gifts they offered Jesus were also extremely prophetic and ordained by God. Gold speaks of His rightful identity of the great King of the earth. Frankincense is the incense of the temple and speaks of Jesus as the great High Priest. Myrrh was the main spice of that day used in burial, speaking of His identity as the Lamb.

III. Prophetic Fulfillment

- A. I also strongly encourage us to studying and meditate upon the prophecies that He fulfilled in the event of His birth. This not only fills us with wonder and life giving understanding but it also builds solid hope in us of the future fulfillment of the prophecy as a whole.

“Behold the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel.” (Excerpt Is. 7:14; The whole prophecy is Is. 7:13-25)

“But you Bethlehem, the land of Judah, are not the least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you shall come a Ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.” (Excerpt Mic. 5:2; The whole prophecy is Mic. 5:1-15)

“Out of Egypt I called my Son” (Excerpt Hos. 11:1; the whole prophecy is Hos. 10:9-11:12)