

The Life of Christ— The Build-up to the Birth of Jesus

Introduction: The birth of Jesus Christ is one of the most crucial events that has ever occurred. If the birth of Jesus had not happened the **exact** way that it did, there would be no way that Jesus could have become the Saviour of all mankind. We know the “Nativity Story”, but we are going to learn the “why’s” of the Nativity Story.

I. Mary was a virgin

The term “virgin” is translated from the Greek word “parthenos”, which means *a marriageable woman who had never known a man*. It was critical that Mary be a virgin in order for Jesus to be the Messiah or Christ, Who would save us from our sins.

A. Mary had to be a virgin in order to meet the conditions of prophecy. In Isaiah 7:14, the Bible says that “a virgin shall conceive.” The term here for “virgin” is “almah” in Hebrew and means exactly the same thing that “parthenos” means in the Greek. The prophecy of Isaiah was written between 740 to 680 B.C. Isaiah’s prophetic statement was written over 700 years before Jesus was born, and in order to give credibility to the Bible, the birth had to happen exactly the way that Isaiah predicted it would—***and it did!***

B. Mary had to be a virgin because the Bible tells us that by one man’s sin, death came to all mankind (Romans 5:12, 17 and I Corinthians 15:21-22). That “one man” was *Adam* and through him our sin nature was passed from generation to generation. If Jesus would have been born of *man*, He also would have had the sin nature that plagues each one of us. The Bible tells us in II Corinthians 5:21, that Jesus “knew no sin.” In order for that to be true, Jesus could not have had an earthly father. The only way this could happen was for a virgin to conceive a son.

C. The Holy Spirit was the One Who came upon the virgin Mary (Matthew 1:18 and Luke 1:35). This is why the Bible calls Jesus the “Son of God”—His Father was **literally** God. **This fact is very important.** Mary was a virgin—she had never known a man—therefore, when the Holy Ghost came upon her and placed the Seed of Jesus into her womb, she was a pure, untainted vessel. Thus, the sinful nature, which comes from man (Romans 5:12), never entered into Jesus. He was the **perfect** Son of God—thanks to a young lady that kept herself pure and ready to be used by God.

II. Joseph’s obedience was critical in fulfilling prophecy

Luke 2:1-5 tells us that Caesar Augustus wanted everyone to be *taxed*. The term “taxed” here means *registered*. This was actually a type of census that was taken. Everyone was to report to the city of their lineage to be properly counted. Joseph obeyed the decree of Caesar. Mary, who was also of the lineage of David, had to report with Joseph. Mary was “great with child” (Luke 2:5), yet she and Joseph went to obey their leader by reporting to Bethlehem. Bethlehem is about 80 miles from Nazareth, which is where Joseph and Mary lived. This means that a woman, 9 months pregnant, traveled 80 miles on the back of a donkey to follow the rules! Because they did follow the rules, the prophecy of Micah 5:2 was fulfilled. Micah prophesied that the Messiah would come from Bethlehem. If this couple had not followed the

rules, they would have destroyed the prophecy laid out in the Bible. We, too, should follow the rules set for us. This would certainly keep us out of trouble and make us more useful to God.

III. Jesus' birth

Jesus' birth, the event we in our society celebrate as Christmas, was actually a picture of the death that Jesus was going to suffer. Jesus was born in a manger because there was no room for Him anywhere else. This is indicative of His entire earthly life, as He was reviled and hated by the very people He came to save (even Peter, His trusted disciple, turned his back on Jesus). Jesus, in His birth, was just as in His death—an outcast. Jesus was also wrapped in *swaddling clothes* at His birth (Luke 2:7). “Swaddling clothes” were strips of linen cloth that were wrapped around Him to keep Him warm. In John 20:6-7, we read of an eyewitness account inside of the tomb of Jesus and find that He was wrapped in linen clothes while in the grave. God so wanted to place a high degree of importance on the death of Jesus, that, *even in His birth*, there were many pictures of His death. He truly was “**born to die.**”

Conclusion: The birth of Jesus is one of the most important events to have ever happened in the history of mankind. We owe a great debt of gratitude to Joseph and Mary—their sacrificial obedience allowed God to send His Son to die for our sins. But what a sacrifice God *Himself* made on that day, when He allowed His only Son to leave His side in Heaven and come down to Earth as a helpless little baby, knowing that He would grow, only to die on a cruel cross. He did all this to pay *our* sin debt so that we could go to Heaven and be with Him one day!

Questions:

- 1. What 2 Old Testament prophets prophesied of Jesus' birth in this lesson?**
- 2. Why was it important that Mary, Jesus earthly mother, be a virgin?**
- 3. Why did Jesus come to Earth?**
- 4. Why is everyone born with a sin nature?**
- 5. Why did Jesus not have a sin nature?**