

12.22.13 - Jesus Christ: Who Is He?

About 2700 years ago, two of God's prophets (Isaiah & Micah) wrote about the future birth of a male child to a virgin, in Bethlehem, in Judea. About 2000 years ago, a young woman named Mary, said to be a virgin, gave birth to a boy in a stable at Bethlehem, in Judea. The baby was named Jesus "Yeshua" [God's salvation] and He was called Immanuel [God with us].

Mary's conception by the Holy Spirit is a mystery, the virgin birth of Jesus would be a sign from the LORD Himself, in order to point men to God's Salvation: God's One and Only Son. **Isaiah 7:14**, "The Lord Himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call Him Immanuel."

Micah 5:2, "But as for you, Bethlehem [House of Bread] Ephrathah [Fruitful Land], Too little to be among the clans of Judah, From you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel. His goings forth are from long ago, From the days of eternity."

God told the world ahead of time about the coming of His Son, the Messiah/Christ [Holy One], so that when it happened the world would believe and trust Him for salvation.

Some Rabbis, long before the birth of Jesus, wrote, "The Messiah is to have no earthy father, for his birth will be like that of no other man." That is exactly how Christ was conceived, apart from any human action or will; this was done by the power of God! (see **Matthew 1:18-21**).

Mary was pregnant before she and Joseph had a sexual relationship, her virginity protected her moral character and the legitimacy of Jesus' birth as the divine Son of God.

Joseph and Mary were pledged to be married at the time of the angel's announcement. Joseph, being a just man, had a problem, Mary was pregnant and he knew it was not his child.

Joseph must have been a kind and loving man, for there is no evidence that he ever felt anger or distrust toward Mary; instead, the Scripture tells us (v. 19) that Joseph didn't want to disgrace Mary by publicly exposing her "condition," [pregnancy] so he planned to "put her away" (divorce her) quietly.

An angel came to Joseph (v. 20) declaring Mary's pregnancy to be from God. The angel tells Joseph that the child will be a son (v. 21), and although Joseph is not the biological father, he will have the responsibility for naming the baby and being His earthly father.

Both genealogies (**Matthew 1:1-16**, Joseph's ancestry; and **Luke 3:23-38**, Mary's ancestry) establish Christ's legal and blood right to the throne of David.

Jesus was a fully human descendant of David; He was also God in the flesh. The incarnation of Christ (i.e., God putting on flesh) is the central and foremost fact of Christianity: God became man, yet remained God.

This child would be the only source of salvation for mankind; He would be the fullness of God in human flesh.

Jesus is not called the son of Joseph in the Scriptures (cf. **Matthew 1:16**), neither is Joseph called the father of Jesus (cf. **Luke 3:23**); and yet Joseph was divinely chosen to raise God's Son as a his very own.

Read Matthew 1:22-25. Sovereignly, the virgin birth of Christ was predicted in the Old Testament. "All this"(v.22), refers to the many specific facts about this birth that had been spoken of through the prophets (v. 23).

When Joseph awakened from his sleep, he did as the angel had told him. Joseph could now honorably take Mary as his wife, without questioning her virtue; he could also care for God's Son, as his very own.

Soon after the angel's announcement (v. 24), Joseph took Mary home as his wife, and (v. 25) he kept her a virgin until after Jesus' birth, but Mary did not remain a virgin, as some wrongly teach, for clearly Jesus had other brothers and sisters who were conceived naturally through their father Joseph (**Matthew 13:55-56**).

The supernatural birth of Jesus validates His divinity; Christ the Savior of all was conceived in the womb of a virgin by the power of the Holy Spirit, and this was sovereignly determined by God, just as God had purposed, at just the right time (**Galatians 4:4-5**).

Spiritually - The world was accepting of many religious philosophies at this time; and the Jews had a renewed interest in the OT Scriptures that pointed to God's One & Only Son.

Culturally - The world's people were much more unified and educated, and even common people spoke Koine Greek (NT).

Politically - Rome, as the world Ruler, provided roads and relative safety for travel, therefore the message of Christ could be taken to the rest of the world.

Jesus was not just a male baby born in Bethlehem to a young Jewish virgin, named Mary, whose husband, named Joseph, was as a carpenter from Nazareth.

So, what do people say about who Jesus is?

Some say He was a **good teacher**, but then good teachers don't claim to be God. Some say He was a **good example**, but good examples don't mingle with thieves and prostitutes. Some say He was a **liar**, but liars don't speak the Truth. Some say He was a **lunatic**, but lunatics aren't allowed to hold children nor do they reach out to touch lepers and heal them.

Some say He was a **religious phony**, but phonies don't rise from the dead. Some say He was a **phantom**, but phantoms can't bleed nor can they give up their lives as payment for the sins of others. Some say He was a **myth**, but myths don't determine the calendar date for the world (B.C., before Christ; A.D., Anno Domini, in the year of our Lord), nor do they have a day of the week set apart to honor & worship them.

This child, born to a virgin through the divine plan, power, and intervention of God, is God's One and Only Son Who came from heaven to earth to save us from our sins.

2Corinthians 5:21, "He who knew no sin became sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God."

You have to work really hard to believe all of this is a coincidence or some fabricated story that was put together over a period of 1500 years, in three different languages, on three different continents by 40 different authors, instructing us to love God and love one another.

Mark 12:30-31, "Love the Lord with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength; and love your neighbor as yourself"

John 3:16-18, "God so loved the world that He gave His One and Only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life. He who believes in Him is not condemned, he who does not believe is already condemned, because he has not believed in the name of God's One and Only Son."

Acts 4:12, "Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved."

In Acts 2:36-38, when the people realized that Jesus, Who had been crucified, was both Lord and Savior, they cried out to Peter, pleading with him, "what shall we do?"

Peter replied, "Repent [confess your sins] every one of you, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins [i.e., professing God's Son as Savior and Lord], and you will receive the Holy Spirit."

So, who do you say Jesus is? Is He a liar or a lunatic or a phony or a myth, or is He, as the Scriptures proclaim, God's Son, who came to earth to save us?

Do you believe the Scriptures?

Have you called upon Jesus for forgiveness of your sins, that you might receive eternal life?
1John 1:9, "If we confess our sins, He [Jesus] is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us of all unrighteousness."

Acts 2:21, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

1John 5:11-13, "And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life."

If there is any doubt in your heart today, that you have not received God's free and divine gift, forgiveness and eternal life, please, as we bow our heads to close in prayer, confess to God that you are a sinner, ask Him to forgive your sins and save your soul, granting you eternal life.

Jesus is the only Savior, He is the only Way to heaven, and He turns no one away who comes to Him for forgiveness; but you must Confess your sins, Believe in Jesus as Savior, and He will Grant you eternal life; your life will be changed for eternity. Only then can you genuinely know and proclaim, "Merry Christmas!"

Pastor Mike