**The Birth of Jesus**

(by Doy Moyer)

Talking about the birth of Jesus Christ is needed at all times of the year, but it seems especially fitting to talk about it when people are thinking in that direction. If we are not careful, we may too easily dismiss an opportunity to speak about one of the most important events to occur in this world. There are extremes to avoid. On the one hand we may give little to no thought of the birth of Jesus because we are so convinced that His birth had nothing to do with the month of December. On the other hand, we can fall into the trap of paying all the attention to the birth of Jesus and not paying enough attention to His death and resurrection. Or, if the only time we think about Jesus is at this time of year, then we have truly missed the point of His coming into the world in the first place.

We must also be careful not to suggest that Scripture nowhere addresses the idea of celebrating the birth of Jesus. This is not to say that December 25th is the one day we are supposed to celebrate His birth. Indeed, our celebration of His birth ought to be year round. Yet we do not want to avoid thinking about it simply because of December 25th and faulty views surrounding this. One might say that there is no direct command telling us to celebrate His birth, but if we give any weight to examples then we must admit that Scripture does address this, and we should pay attention.

This is not about defending or denying the traditions surrounding Christmas. Every Christian needs to act in good conscience as informed by Scripture. This is about what Scripture teaches relative to the birth of Jesus and why we need to think about it. Two gospel accounts – Matthew and Luke – provide information about the birth of Jesus. This is no small matter to the purposes of these accounts. They both give us information about the circumstances under which Jesus was born and they both have something to say about the genealogy of Jesus. These accounts show the vital role of the Holy Spirit and provide foundational thinking to help us understand the divine nature of

the Son of God who came into this world in the flesh to save sinners like us.

Matthew’s account tells us about the wise men who came to worship Jesus after He was born. They recognized Him as King of the Jews and their expressed purpose was to worship (**2:1-2**). Herod was alarmed by this and tried to find out where Jesus was. The chief priests and experts in the law cited **Micah 5:2** as indicating that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem. The wise men continued in their search for Jesus, ***“And behold, the star that they had seen when it rose went before them until it came to rest over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. And going into the house, they saw the child with Mary His mother, and they fell down and worshiped Him”*** (**2:9-11**). The text shows that the birth of Jesus is sufficient cause to rejoice and worship. Shall we do any less today?

Luke provides more details. Upon the birth of Jesus, angels appeared to shepherds in the field. They informed the shepherds, ***“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”*** (**Luke 2:10-11**). Notice that the birth of Jesus is good news that should cause great joy. A multitude of angels then appeared to praise God: ***“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom He is pleased!”*** The shepherds found the baby and told everyone what had happened. This resulted in more glory and praise to God. Luke gives us more information about Jesus being taken to the temple and seen by Simeon and Anna with their responses of praising God for seeing the salvation and redemption being offered by the Lord through Christ (**Luke 2:22-38**).

The birth of Jesus was in fulfillment of God’s plan to carry out salvation and redemption in this sin-cursed world. Recognizing Jesus and His purpose is cause for worship, praise, and glory. We too ought to be moved to worship, praise, and glorify God for faithfully carrying out His promises through the incarnation of the Son of God. This can be a powerful starting point in talking to people who otherwise may not think about Jesus and His purposes. Let us not shy away from His birth simply because there are misconceptions at this time of year. Rather let us lean into the teaching of Scripture and emphasize His birth so that others may be moved to worship, praise, and glorify God. Don’t miss the opportunities before us!