

Prayer Requests & Announcements

- Debbie's Mother had a stroke and his home now.
- Ross and Debbie will be traveling to AR for the Christmas break and to move their belongings to Idaho. They plan to start the drive back on 1/10.
- The Christians in the Philippines.

For prayer requests, call or text
Chad @ (208) 221-2587 or Ross @ (208) 680-6590

Assignments

Today Bible Study – Tom Mitchell Song Leader – David Porter Lord's Table – Tom Mitchell Sermon – Chad Mitchell	Wednesday Bible Study – TBD Song Leader – Chad Mitchell Invitation – TBD
Next Sunday Bible Study – Tom Mitchell Song Leader – Chad Mitchell Lord's Table – David Porter Sermon – Tim Woodside	Next Wednesday Bible Study – TBD Song Leader – David Porter Invitation – TBD

Blackfoot Church of Christ
370 North Shilling Ave.
Blackfoot, Idaho 83221

Meeting Times:

Sunday Morning Classes 10:00AM
Sunday Morning Worship 11:00AM
Wednesday Evening 7:30PM



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Christmas

By Tommy Thornhill

December 25 will be celebrated by many religious people as the birthday of Jesus Christ. Even though many in the world think otherwise, I do not believe God intended for man to celebrate Jesus' birth in a special religious way as many will do. No one knows the date of Jesus' birth for the Bible does not give the date. If God had wanted man to celebrate His Son's advent into the world He would have declared it on the pages of His book, the Bible. December 25 as Jesus' birthday comes from men seeking to speak where God has been silent. God chose not to reveal Jesus' birthdate, man should not presume to speak for Him in the matter Isa. 55:8; Gal. 4:10-11.

Even though the day of Jesus' birth is not revealed, something is revealed that is not emphasized very much as the so-called "Christian" religious world celebrates the birth of Christ with their man devised birthdate of Jesus Christ. While God chose not to reveal the day of Jesus' birth, He does reveal the place where Jesus was born, the city of Bethlehem Lk. 2:1-6. The place of Jesus' birth, Micah 5:1-3, was one of the clearest prophecies about Jesus in the OT. After Jesus was born, the wise men from the east came to find and worship Jesus Matt. 2:1-6. They first came to Jerusalem but learned this was not the place. Herod troubled by their searching sent for the chief priests and scribes to learn where the Messiah (Jesus) was to be born. They pointed to Micah's prophecy. They journeyed to Bethlehem and found Him along with Mary and Joseph in a house, not the stable Matt. 2:11. Let's think about the significance of insignificant Bethlehem.

What about Bethlehem?

How remarkable is the significance of this insignificant city, located about 6 miles SW of Jerusalem. It was never an important city in OT times. When Joshua listed over 100 cities of Judah after the land conquest, Bethlehem was not even

mentioned. Yet, later, Micah 5:1-3 names it as the coming birthplace of the coming King and it was so understood by the priests and scribes Matt. 2:4-6; Jn. 7:42. Yes, an insignificant city to man, but not to God. It was to become the most famous birthplace in the world. None of us were able to choose the place of our birth, but Jesus did so.

Think about the manner by which God brought about the fulfillment of this prophecy. Mary, the earthly mother of Jesus didn't live in Bethlehem. She lived in the other end of the country. Yet by God's providence He brought her to the right place at the right time, Lk. 2:1-6. After Jesus was born, Joseph, his stepfather was told to flee to Egypt with his family. When they returned they lived in Nazareth and Jesus was called a "Nazarene" Matt. 2:23; Acts 24:5. This fact confounded His enemies later, for they knew the Messiah was to be born in Bethlehem Jn. 7:40-42.

An insignificant city like Bethlehem, and especially a stable, would be not be considered by men to be a suitable place for God to introduce His Son into the world, the One destined to be the Savior of the world, the Messiah, King and High Priest. This is even more remarkable when one realizes that when Micah made his prophecy, the "Davidic lineage" of kings were residing in Jerusalem, not Bethlehem.

To be born in the insignificant town of Bethlehem identified Jesus, the future King of Kings, with the common people. For His sojourn on earth He was born in a lowly stable, of lowly parents, growing up with lowly people Phil. 2:6-7; 2 Cor. 8:9. As a preacher He was "meek and lowly" Matt. 11:29. Think of it, a rich God allowing His Son to be born to poor parents in a poor village in poor surroundings, Godhood taking on manhood.

Micah 5:2 says, "Yet out of you shall come forth to Me, the One to be ruler in Israel, whose going forth are from of old, from everlasting." Jesus' birth in Bethlehem was not just a birth, it was an incarnation. A man coming forth from Bethlehem, is also the Ruler coming forth from eternity. This verse declares Jesus, pre-existence Deity. "Shall come forth" is future tense, but "whose goings from of old" is past tense Jn. 8:56-58; 3:13; 6:62. Micah 5:3 continues "Until the time that she who is in labor has given birth," which refers to God's first promise Gen. 3:15, later Mary's virgin birth Isa. 7:14, at the time God ordained Gal. 4:4. Thus Jesus was "the earthly Son of the Heavenly Father, the Heavenly Son of an earthly mother, as Divine as if not human at all, and as human as if not Divine at all." (anon). No wonder then, at His birth the angels announced, "for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people, for there is born to you this day in the city of David, a Savior who is Christ the Lord" Lk. 2:10-11.

People might ask, "Well, what do you do on December 25?" My family and I will observe the day as a civil holiday (not a holy day). We use it as a time to be with family and friends, to enjoy the bright lights and festive occasion and a season of rejoicing and good-will, wishing along with others for peace on earth. While we do not observe "Christmas" in a religious way, we do celebrate each first day of the week throughout the year as the time of Jesus' resurrection bringing the promise of salvation and hope to the world. This is the day God has proclaimed for us to remember. It was on this day that Jesus arose from the dead to become our Savior and King Matt. 28; Mk. 16; Lk. 24; Jn. 20. This was the day, Pentecost (50 days after the Passover- Lev. 23:15-16), that the church Christ had promised to build was established Acts 2. This was the day Christians assembled to partake of the Lord's Supper, to remember the Lord's death until He comes again Acts 20:7, and to lay be in store 1 Cor. 16:2. "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men" Lk. 2:14.

Other Common Miss-Understood Idea About Christmas:

1. The Bible does not specify the number of wise men who went to worship Jesus (Matthew 2:1-2).
2. The wise men never saw Jesus in a manger. They met Him in a house (Matthew 2:11), nearly two years after His birth (verse 16).
3. The shepherds did not follow a star to Bethlehem to find Jesus. An angel informed them of His birth (Luke 2:8-10), when they were in the fields with their flocks, which would not have been in the winter time. They were the ones who saw Jesus in a manger (verse 16).
4. God did not institute a celebration of Jesus' birth in Christian worship. Jesus wants His disciples to remember His death every Sunday in the Lord's Supper (Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26). He said to "do this in remembrance of Me" (verse 24).
5. "The first notice of a feast of the nativity of Christ occurs in a Roman almanac...which indicates that the festival was observed by the church in Rome by the year 336" (**New Encyclopedia Britannica**, Christmas, p. 383).
6. "December 25th was already a festival day for the sun god Mithra and appealed to the Christians as an appropriate date to commemorate the birth of Jesus" (**The Lincoln Library of Essential Information**). [See also Feast of Saturnalia.]