

- **\*READ John 1:1-14\*** These first fourteen verses of John's Gospel are quite possibly some of the most substantive that we find within Scripture. The substance of the verses obviously refers to Christ, yet it does so without His name ever being mentioned. However, we are quite certain that Jesus is the subject of John's writing because the descriptors put forth could fit no one but Jesus the Christ.
- John says that the Word was with God and that He was God. The Word was with God in the beginning, and He had a firm hand in the creation of the world. He is also the Light of men, and He was witnessed by the man John the baptist. It was through Him that men could become sons of God. Then John includes in **v.14** that *"the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth."* Surely, this Word and Light is Jesus the Christ, the Son of the living God.
- If I asked for a show of hands, I feel confident in believing that there wouldn't be a person here this morning who has not had at least some thought of the birth of Jesus over the past few weeks. Of course, this is because tomorrow the vast majority of the world celebrates the holiday of Christmas, and to many this holiday revolves around a celebration of the coming of the Word in the flesh. While this church might not and while the people that make it up might not recognize Christmas as the day in which Jesus came in the flesh, that doesn't mean that we should try to take away from or ignore the significance of such an occurrence, regardless of when it happened.
- The fact that the Word came in the flesh and dwelt among mere men is in no way, shape, or form a happening of insignificance. In fact, we need to recognize that the day that we do celebrate and memorialize an occurrence of our Lord Jesus, His death, would not have happened unless the birth and incarnation had first taken place. This doesn't mean that we must have a yearly celebration of such, but we must recognize the truth that the death and birth of Jesus are so very much intertwined. Yes, Jesus was crucified. Yes, Jesus was born. Our salvation, as it stands, cannot be unless these two things are true. Jesus had to die, but He first had to be born. Yet, He was only born so that He could die. Jesus was born to die. This...all of this is the true story of Jesus. I want to talk about this idea this morning, and recognize how important that birth was, how important the type of life Jesus lived was, how important the death that He died was, and what it all truly means for us as His disciples.

## I. The birth of Jesus Christ was a monumental event in the history of mankind.

### A. The birth of Jesus was foretold centuries before it happened.

1. Matthew makes mention of this very thing in **Matthew 1:22**, *"All this took place to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet..."* Here, Matthew is speaking specifically about what is mentioned in the next verse which is a quotation from **Isaiah 7:14 & 9:6** concerning the fact that the Messiah would be born of a virgin, that the Messiah would be a male, and that His name would be Immanuel. These prophecies are vague or general in nature, but they are quite specific and wouldn't happen just by chance.
2. This continues on in **Matthew 2:5,6** where the prophecy from **Micah 5:2** concerning the city Bethlehem being the place from which the Messiah would come from is seen to be true, as well. The fact that all of these prophecies had to come together for such a thing to take place is no small occurrence. This is not something that could just happen by chance, but we can see that the birth of this child in this manner was an event of extreme significance simply because it happened how it did and if fulfilled all of these prophecies.

### B. There was a tremendous presence of miracles and the supernatural in His birth.

1. Of course, the most well known miraculous aspect of Jesus's birth is the fact that the Bible tells us that His mother Mary was found to be with child without her and her husband Joseph having ever come together. (**Matthew 1:18**) Matthew records that Mary was *"found to be with child by the Holy Spirit."* There was only one human involved in this conception.

2. But also miraculous and of the supernatural sort in these events were the appearances of angels to both Joseph and Mary. **Matthew 1:20** details for us how an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream to let him know that the child within Mary was conceived in her by the Holy Spirit. Then in **Luke 1:26-38**, we read where Gabriel, another angel, appears before Mary and informs her of everything that was about to take place. Mary herself is very confused as to how she could be with child knowing that she was a virgin and had not known a man, but Gabriel comforts her and lets her know that she had found favor with God.
3. Certainly these events were not random or by chance, but God was surely working to bring about the fruition of His plan for mankind's redemption.

### C. This was deity coming in the flesh.

1. This plan that was foretold of and that involved numerous miraculous and supernatural elements was culminated in the fact that God came to earth and took on flesh. Above all else, this is what puts this event of Jesus's birth at the pinnacle of all things in human history. This fact of God becoming flesh is referenced in the text we opened with, *"the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us."* (**John 1:14**)
2. Unfortunately, there are some who would deny the humanity of Jesus, and there are some who would deny the deity of Jesus. However, New Testament writers were very clear as to their belief that Jesus of Nazareth born in Bethlehem was truly and and God.
  - a) *"looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ."* (**Titus 2:13**)
  - b) *"By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God."* (**I John 4:2**)
  - c) *"For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is the deceiver and the antichrist."* (**II John 7**)
  - d) *"Thomas answered and said to Him, 'My Lord and my God.'"* (**John 20:28**)
3. To these writers and other men, the question of whether Jesus was God and/or man wasn't much of a question. He was clearly in the flesh. Jesus became tired (**John 4:6**), He became thirsty (**John 19:28**), and He became hungry (**Matthew 4:2**) just as we do, yet He was still deity as He walked among men. Without the birth, we wouldn't know Jesus as we do.

## II. The earthly life of Jesus was not filled with splendor and majesty.

### A. Jesus's earthy family came from humble stock.

1. Yes, Jesus's parents were both of the lineage of royalty. **Matthew 1:1-16** and **Luke 1:26,27** tell us that both Joseph and Mary were descendants of David, yet they led anything but royal lives. Think about the fact that the census brought them to Bethlehem, yet they couldn't even get a room at the inn and ended up with the animals. They weren't exactly treated as royalty.
2. Then Jesus Himself didn't live a life fitting of the King that He was. Do you remember when He went back to His hometown of Nazareth to teach in the synagogue in **Matthew 13:54-58**? Do you remember the reception that He received? He wasn't treated as a King in any way, shape, or form...but instead He was mocked. *"Where did this man get this wisdom and these miraculous powers? Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not His mother called Mary, and His brothers, James, Joseph and Simon and Judas? And His sisters, are the not all with us? Where then did this man get all these things?"* His own people disbelieved Him and treated Him as just another person when the truth was that He was so much more.

### B. Jesus wasn't expecting to live the life of a king.

1. Yet, this wasn't a surprise for Jesus because He didn't expect to live a life that was fit for a King. It seems to be the case from Scripture that Jesus knew that coming to earth would mean that He would lead a difficult life. **Philippians 2:5-8** tells us that Jesus *"emptied Himself."*

2. To me, at least, the fact that the Scripture tells us that He emptied Himself gives me the idea that He willingly gave up the majestic life in heaven to come and to serve man in their deepest need for salvation from their sins. In fact, Jesus stated that He did not leave heaven to come and to be King while on earth where He might have every one of His needs met, but He left heaven and came to earth so that He might be a servant to others, and so that He might ultimately give His life as a ransom for many. (**Matthew 20:28**) Both in **Philippians 2:5-8** and here in **Matthew 20:28**, it seems clear that Jesus knew that His purpose for coming was to give the ultimate sacrifice of Himself for man.

### III. Jesus knew that His coming to earth was for the purpose of Him dying for the sins of man.

- A. Jesus's knowledge of what He would have to go through and the fact that He still went through with it is remarkable.
  1. It is completely against human nature for us to be able to know of impending suffering or harm, and yet still be willing to go through with it. That just isn't how we usually operate, yet Jesus in His omniscience and with knowledge of the prophecies of the suffering of the Messiah was still willing to go through the coming ordeals.
  2. Think about the things that are written in **Isaiah 53**. The picture that it paints for what the Lamb of God certainly wasn't a pretty one. This chapter doesn't contain descriptions of things that anyone would normally willingly go through...yet Jesus, well aware of what is said here, was the exception to this rule.
  3. I say He was the exception to the rule because we can look to His disciples and see the normal response for how people normally react when they learn that something troublesome is on the horizon. In **Matthew 16**, after Peter acknowledges Jesus as the Christ, the Son of the living God, Jesus begins to tell them of what was about to happen to Him. He tells them plainly that he would have to go to Jerusalem to suffer and the hands of the Jewish leadership. He tells them that He would eventually be put to death, yet He also foretells of His resurrection on the third day. (**Matthew 16:21**) Yet, what is Peter's response to this? Jesus Himself acknowledged that it would happen, but was willing to go through with it. Peter on the other hand, refused to accept this, and he tried to stop it from happening. (**Matthew 16:22**) This is the natural response that we don't see from Jesus. He was willing to die for us.
  4. But that doesn't mean that Jesus was excited or looking forward to going through these things. We remember following this event that Jesus prayed in the garden that *"if it is possible, let this cup pass from me"* (**Matthew 26:39**) Remember, Jesus was human and no one would look forward with excitement to such a horrible experience
- B. Yet, He was willing to do it all because of His unending love for us and faith in His Father.
  1. Yes, Jesus asked for these things to pass by Him if it was at all possible, but at the end of the day his main concern was doing the will of His Father. *"Yet not as I will, but as You will."* (**Matthew 26:39**)
  2. It was the will of God, from before the foundation of the world (**Ephesians 1:4**), that the Messiah be born of woman. It was His will that the Messiah grow up in humble means. It was His will that He be mistreated by so many. It was His will that He die at the hands of godless men so that the sins of the world might be forgiven through faith and obedience. His will was for Jesus to go through this horrible event, and Jesus was ready to do so.
  3. But let's also not miss out on the fact that Jesus, too, wanted for man to be saved. Notice how many times our benefit is mentioned back in **Isaiah 53:4-6**. Jesus did everything He did because He wanted for His creation to be forgiven of their sins and set on a path that would lead to an eternity with Him. He did all of this for us, so that we might one day be with Him forever.

#### IV. What Jesus did should move us to be willing to die so that we, too, might be born again.

- A. The love of Christ towards man is what motivated and drove Paul in everything he did.
1. In **II Corinthians 5:14**, Paul says, *"For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died; and He died for all, so that they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf."*
  2. Jesus's sacrifice of His life controlled or compelled Paul to die to himself so that Jesus might live through Him. With this passage in mind, I believe **Galatians 2:20** makes so much sense. *"I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I love by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me."* This was Paul's mindset and motivation as he lived this life, and it should be ours, as well.
- B. Jesus willingly being born of flesh and dying for us, should move and motivate us to be willing to do the same for Him.
1. All of us who are here listening to these words have already been born of the flesh, yet the message to us is the same as was delivered to Nicodemus by Jesus in **John 3:2-7**. We must be born again! We must be born of the water and of the Spirit, but how does that happen?
  2. **Romans 6:4-10** tells us that if we want to live, then we must die so that we might be born again. Just as Jesus died and was raised, so too we must die so that we, too, can be raised. However, we must recognize that this isn't a one time deal, but that we must continue to live as Christ would live. We must allow Christ's character to be our character, we must strive to live just as He lived. His willingness to die for us, should be more than enough to motivate us to do the same for Him.

While the death of Jesus is where the ultimate power can be found in regards to His blood being shed for us, let's not forget to recognize that He first had to be born of flesh so that His blood could be shed. The two events are truly inseparable. One demands the other for God's plan to be carried out as He intended for it be. As we look at this plan from birth to death to resurrection, let's remember that it was all done for us. All of it was planned and executed so that we might have the opportunity for salvation. May we this day, and every day be thankful for the Son of God coming in the flesh so that He might offer it up to a people who are most unworthy.

**\*PRAYER\*** *Our Father in heaven, we indeed are so very thankful for the fact that You love us as You do and that You would send Your only begotten Son to be born of flesh only so that He might die on the tree. Father, may Your love compel us to give ourselves wholly to you. May you help us to die to self, so that we might live for Your Son. May those who have not done so, have the courage to give themselves up for the love and cause of Christ, and may all things be done to Your glory alone. We love you Father, we love this church, and we love our shepherds who seek to lead us in Your way. Bless us all Father, and in Jesus we pray...amen.*