

The Christmas Story Declares God's Amazing Love

I. Review: Luke 1:26-38

A. The Christmas story declares that God does the impossible.

1. Mary submits to the God of the impossible.

Luke 1:37-38 ... "For nothing will be impossible with God." And Mary said, "Behold, the bondservant of the Lord; may it be done to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.

2. Salvation is the result of believing that God does the impossible

Luke 18:27 But He said, "The things that are impossible with people are possible with God."

3. Faith believes God to do the impossible

Mark 9:23-24 ... And Jesus said to him, " 'If You can?' All things are possible to him who believes." Immediately the boy's father cried out and said, "I do believe; help my unbelief."

B. Our walk in Christ requires of us dependency on God:

A. To keep us from deception.

Matt 24:24 "For false Christs and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect.

B. To live in repentance

Acts 8:22 "Therefore repent of this wickedness of yours, and pray the Lord that, if possible, the intention of your heart may be forgiven you.

C. To be at peace in all of our relationships.

Rom 12:18 If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men.

II. The power of God is released in our life as we believe that He is able to do what He has promised.

A. The Word of God never fails

Isa 55:10-11 For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, And do not return there without watering the earth And making it bear and sprout, And furnishing seed to the sower and bread to the eater; So will My word be which goes forth from My mouth; It will not return to Me empty, Without accomplishing what I desire, And without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it.

B. He desire to give us all things freely.

Rom 8:32 He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?

C. His power is released in our life through faith and revelation of His will.

Eph 1:18-19 I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe.

III. God limits His power to the expectation of His church.

A. He is able to do the impossible but limits Himself to what is working in us.

Eph 3:20 Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us,

B. He gives to us the Holy Spirit so that we believe for the impossible, the things He freely given to us.

1 Cor 2:9-13 but just as it is written, "Things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard, and which have not entered the heart of man, all that God has prepared for those who love Him." For to us God revealed them through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God. For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so the thoughts of God no one knows except the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God,

C. We work out our salvation in partnership with God.

Phil 2:12-13 ...work out your salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.

D. We labor through His power.

Col 1:29 For this purpose also I labor, striving according to His power, which mightily works within me.

IV. My thoughts on the (virgin birth) miraculous birth of Jesus

Luke 2:1-7 At that time the Roman emperor, Augustus, decreed that a census should be taken throughout the Roman Empire. (This was the first census taken when Quirinius was governor of Syria.) All returned to their own towns to register for this census. And because Joseph was a descendant of King David, he had to go to Bethlehem in Judea, David's ancient home. He traveled there from the village of Nazareth in Galilee. He took with him Mary, his fiancé, who was obviously pregnant by this time. And while they were there, the time came for her baby to be born. She gave birth to her first child, a son. She wrapped him snugly in strips of cloth and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the village inn (NLT).

A. Often, God is in the circumstances of our life to arrange situations for His own purposes.

Luke 2:1 At that time the Roman emperor, Augustus, decreed that a census should be taken throughout the Roman Empire.

Rom 8:28 And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.

Gen 50:20 "As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive.

Augustus Caesar was ruling, but God was in charge, for He used Caesar's edict to move Mary and Joseph eighty miles from Nazareth to Bethlehem to fulfill His Word. Rome took a census every fourteen years for both military and tax purposes, and each Jewish male had to return to the city of his fathers to record his name, occupation, property, and family. 1

All of this occurred just as the Scriptures said, and Caesar unknowingly played an important part. A.T. Pierson used to say, "History is His story," and President James A. Garfield called history "the unrolled scroll of prophecy." If God's Word controls our lives, then the events of history only help us fulfill the will of God. "I am watching over My word to perform it," promises the Lord (Jer. 1:12, NASB).

B. The significance of the place of His birth (Bethlehem):

1. That Jesus would be born in Bethlehem was ordained by God long before Caesar Augustus made his decree (Micah 5:2; Acts 15:18). 7
2. Bethlehem = "house of bread."
Bethlehem means "house of bread," the ideal birthplace for the Bread of Life (John 6:35). Its rich historic heritage included the death of Rachel and the birth of Benjamin (Gen. 35:16-20; also see Matt. 2:16-18), the marriage of Ruth, and the exploits of David. It is worth noting that the name Benjamin means "son of my right hand," and the name David means "beloved." Both of these names apply to our Lord, for He is the Beloved Son (Luke 3:22) at God's right hand (Ps. 110:1) 1
3. The difficult three-day journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem
The journey must have been very trying for her, but she rejoiced in doing the will of God, and she was no doubt glad to get away from the wagging tongues in Nazareth. 1

C. And while they were there, the time came for her baby to be born.

Gal 4:3-5 So also we, while we were children, were held in bondage under the elemental things of the world. But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.

Eph 1:9-10 He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him with a view to an administration suitable to the fullness of the times, that is, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things on the earth.

Rom 5:6 ...at the right time Christ died...

D. The significance of the place of His birth (in the stable):

- His being born in a stable: 7
[1.] Of the poverty of his parents. Had they been rich, room would have been made for them; but, being poor, they must shift as they could.

[2.] Of the corruption and degeneracy of manners in that age; that a woman in reputation for virtue and honor should be used so barbarously. If there had been any common humanity among them, they would not have turned a woman in travail into a stable.

[3.] It was an instance of the humiliation of our Lord Jesus. We were become by sin like an out-cast infant, helpless and forlorn; and such a one Christ was.
- Many scholars believe that our Lord was born in a cave where animals were sheltered and not in a wooden shed such as you see in modern manger scenes. The "inn" was probably a typical Eastern "caravansary," a two-story structure (the lower level was for animals) built around a courtyard where travelers could camp. Jesus must have been born in one of the cattle stalls; the feeding trough was His bed. 1
- Jesus was born in either an enclosed courtyard or, as tradition says, a cave, because there was no room in the inn (Luke 2:7). The point is that he was born in obscurity and poverty as a son of David. 4
- In the inn (ἐν τῷ καταλύματι). Only here, ch. 23:11; Mark 14:14, on which see note. In both these passages it is rendered guest-chamber, which can hardly be the meaning here, as some have maintained. (See Geikie, "Life and Words of Christ," i., 121.) In that case the expression would be, they found no κατάλυμα, guest-chamber. The word

refers to the ordinary khan, or caravanserai. Tynd., hostrey. "A Syrian khan is a fort and a mart; a refuge from thieves; a shelter from the heat and dust; a place where a man and his beast may lodge; where a trader may sell his wares, and a pilgrim may slake his thirst.... 5

- He was born at an inn. That son of David that was the glory of his father's house had no inheritance that he could command, no not in the city of David, no nor a friend that would accommodate his mother in distress with lodgings to be brought to bed in. Christ was born in an inn, to intimate that he came into the world but to sojourn here for awhile, as in an inn, and to teach us to do likewise. An inn receives all comers, and so does Christ. He hangs out the banner of love for his sign, and whoever comes to him, he will in no wise cast out; only, unlike other inns, he welcomes those that come without money and without price. All is on free cost. 3
- He was born in a stable; so some think the word signifies which we translate a manger, a place for cattle to stand to be fed in. Because there was no room in the inn, and for want of conveniences, nay for want of necessaries, he was laid in a manger, instead of a cradle. 3

E. The significance of being wrapped in "strips of cloth."

- The word which we render swaddling clothes some derive from a word that signifies to rend, or tear, and these infer that he was so far from having a good suit of child-bed linen, that his very swaddles were ragged and torn. 3

F. The significance of "the manger."

- The word translated "manger" (Luke 2:7, 12, 16) is translated "stall" in Luke 13:15, and can mean either a feeding trough or an enclosure for animals. You see ancient stone troughs even today as you travel in the Holy Land, and it is probable that such a trough cradled the Infant Jesus. 1
- a manger-the manger, the bench to which the horses' heads were tied, on which their food could rest [WEBSTER and WILKINSON]. 6
- Jesus must have been born in one of the cattle stalls; the feeding trough was His bed 7
- And laid in a manger, thus he would answer the type of Moses, the great prophet and lawgiver of the Old Testament, who was in his infancy cast out in an ark of bulrushes, as Christ in a manger. 3

V. Conclusion:

Rom 5:6-10 For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him. For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.

- Christ (was born and) died for us at the right time.

God's timing for the sacrifice of Christ was the "most perfect timing."

right = worthy

time = occasion, opportunity, season

- Christ died for those who were:
 1. Helpless = without any strength
 2. Ungodly.
 3. Sinners.
 4. Enemies
- God demonstrates His righteous love.
Demonstration (apodeiknimi) = a pointing out.
He dies for His enemies and not the righteous.
Human love 'will hardly (lit. with much difficulty) die for a good man

References: Notes from my Libronix Bible program:

1. Wiersbe, Warren W.: The Bible Exposition Commentary. Wheaton, Ill. : Victor Books, 1996, c1989, S. Lk 2:1
2. Willmington, H. L.: Willmington's Bible Handbook. Wheaton, Ill. : Tyndale House Publishers, 1997, S. 581
3. Henry, Matthew: Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible : Complete and Unabridged in One Volume. Peabody : Hendrickson, 1996, c1991, S. Lk 2:1
- 4 Hughes, Robert B. ; Laney, J. Carl: Tyndale Concise Bible Commentary. Wheaton, Ill. : Tyndale House Publishers, 2001
- 5 Vincent, Marvin Richardson: Word Studies in the New Testament. Bellingham, WA : Logos Research Systems, Inc., 2002, S. 1:268
- 6 Jamieson, Robert ; Fausset, A. R. ; Fausset, A. R. ; Brown, David ; Brown, David: A Commentary, Critical and Explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments. Oak Harbor, WA :
- 7 Wiersbe, Warren W.: Wiersbe's Expository Outlines on the New Testament. Wheaton, Ill. : Victor Books, 1997, c1992, S. 150