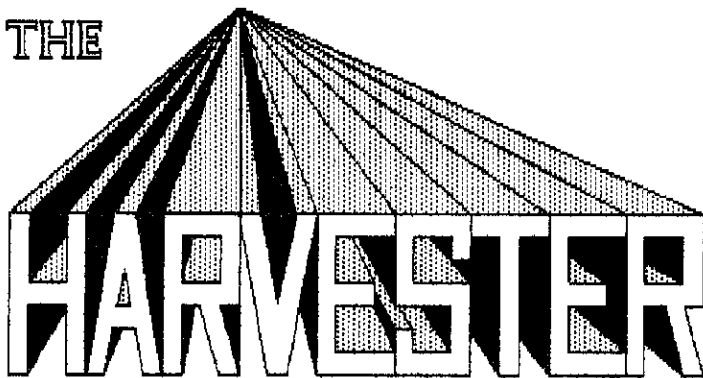


THE



*"The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth laborers into his harvest." (Luke 10:2)*

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## THE BIRTH OF CHRIST

Now this is the heart of the Christian religion. Something we must believe if we ever expect to reach heaven. Matthew, after having traced the genealogy of Jesus from Abraham to Mary and Joseph, now begins his story of the birth of Christ.

Mary had been visiting Elizabeth and had returned. Before her visit she had become betrothed, or engaged to Joseph, and at that time in history, sometimes the time between the engagement and marriage was a considerable amount of

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time. The bride remained in the house of her father until the groom came after her.

Along about the time of Mary's return from her visit, she became aware of her pregnancy. Soon after this her relatives became aware of it and Joseph learned about it. Matthew is clear and definite in stating that she was found with child before she and Joseph came together. This excludes Joseph from any connection with her state of pregnancy. It seems that Mary's conception was not until after her engagement; it took place between the time of her engagement and her marriage. Mary's situation was humiliating. Her being conscious of her own integrity, and her virginity, and her strong faith in God supported her under such trying circumstances. Her reputation, her honor and even her life was at stake, that is if the law of Moses was carried out under such conditions.

Matthew states clearly that she was found with child of the Holy Spirit. Her friends and relatives did not know that she was with child by the Holy Spirit. It was a delicate situation for her. Luke 1:31-35 says that the angel said to Mary, *"thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus ... The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God."* The Holy Spirit is that which produced the human existence of Christ. Jesus was truly the seed of the woman. Jesus was as human as His mother Mary, and as

divine as His Father God. This record testifies that Mary was a virgin; even after she is found to be with child she is still a virgin.

Joseph now was in a dilemma, for he was convinced that Mary had committed adultery. So he at once resolved to put her away. But he hesitated as to how he would dispose of this matter. The Law required that he make a public example of her, but his righteousness and his mercy and his affection for Mary caused him to seek another course, and that was to put her away privately. But an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a vision while he was sleeping and said: "*Fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife.*" Here Mary is called his wife though they had not been married because at that time a betrothal was equal to marriage. The angel addressed Joseph in a dream as, "*thou son of David.*" This would remind Joseph of the promised seed and the expectation of the Messiah to come through the lineage of David.

It would also stamp the message on Joseph's mind as the announcement of the birth of the Messiah. Since Mary was also of the lineage of David, she could be called the daughter of David. The angel assures him that he should take "*Mary thy wife,*" for she was innocent of any crime. He explained to him, "*that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.*"

We are to understand from the announcement to Mary by the angel, and now by the statement of the angel to Joseph that the human nature of Jesus Christ was a real

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creation in the womb of the virgin by the power of the Holy Spirit. "*Thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.*" (Matt. 1:21) This expresses briefly the mission of Jesus. His name carries within itself no promise to save those who refuse to become His people. Neither is He to save all men regardless of character, and of their relation to Him; He is to be the Saviour of His believing, penitent, obedient people.

Isaiah 7:14 was spoken about seven hundred years before its fulfillment of these words: "*A virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us* (or God in the flesh)." (Matt. 1:23) So the angel convinced Joseph of his duty, and he is ready to take her as his wife. He is ready to obey the divine command. He now sees that Mary's condition was not of her choice only, but was imposed by divine action; she had no other choice in being faithful to God than to accept conception by the Holy Spirit. Joseph is now convinced that she is faithful to Jehovah in becoming the mother of the Son of God; he must be as faithful to Jehovah in

taking her as his wife. Joseph did not delay, but arose from his sleep and did as the angel of the Lord commanded him, but knew her not until she had brought forth her son.

There have been different groups that have denied the virgin birth. But let me say this here and now: that the deity of Jesus is involved in the virgin birth. A denial of it robs Jesus of His divinity. Luke declares in 1:35 that He should "*be called the Son of God.*" SON OF GOD marks Him as a divine product. If the virgin birth is denied, Jesus is reduced to the low level of an ordinary man. So much depends on the virgin birth that to reject it is to reject the divinity of Jesus, and therefore the power to save.

There is a reason why Christ sacrificed His home in heaven and came to this sinful earth and be born of the virgin Mary. Men have failed on every occasion when they have tried to work without God, and they must be doomed to such failures. The question remains: How can God be just, that is, true to himself in nature, and true to himself in holiness, and yet justify the sinner? Because each man had to bear his own sins, all mankind was excluded from helping, since each was contaminated with the same disease. The only solution was for an innocent party to volunteer to die physically as a substitution before God.

This innocent party would have to take man's judgment, penalty, and death. But where was such an individual? Certainly there was none on earth, for the Bible says, "*All have sinned.*" (Rom. 3:23)

There was only one possibility. God's own Son was the only personality in the universe who had the capacity to bear in His own body the sins of the world. The very purpose of Christ's coming into the world was that He might offer up His life as a sacrifice for the sins of men. He came to die. The shadow of His death hung like a pall over all of His 33 years. The night Jesus was born, Satan trembled. He sought to slay Him before He was born, and tried to slay Him as soon as He was born. When the decree went forth from Herod ordering the slaughter of all children, its one purpose was to make certain of the death of Jesus.

CHARLIE KIRBY (deceased)  
reprinted from The Lifeline

## **SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES**

1. On whom did God put a mark so that he would not be killed?
2. After entering Jerusalem triumphantly, where did Jesus go?
3. Who did Ezekiel say was like a young lion of the nations, and as a whale of the seas?
4. Which account of the gospel records the birth of John the Baptist?
5. As found in Judges 1. why couldn't

Judah drive the inhabitants out of the valley?

ANSWERS NEXT MONTH ...

and remember last month's questions?

1. Who was the first child born to Adam and Eve?   CAIN (Gen. 4:1)

2. According to Rev. 11 there was a great earthquake after the two witnesses went up to heaven. How many men were killed? 7,000 (Rev. 11:13)

3. By whom does God swear?       BY HIMSELF (Gen. 22:16)

4. What happens if one member of the body suffers?   ALL SUFFER (1 Cor. 12:26)

5. When did God start being David's God, according to Psalm 22?       FROM HIS MOTHER'S WOMB (Psa. 22:10)

[Editor's Note: As we come to the end of another year, it is time to remember those who have contributed to this paper. Thanks to all who have expressed an interest in our work, to those who sent in articles, to those who encouraged me and to those who corresponded. This was an especially difficult year as I relocated again and found myself busy with extra matters. Special thanks to the following congregations located at: Sun Hill Road, Hokes Bluff, Taylors Crossroads, and West Broad Street. Please continue to pray for The Harvester.]

# GOSPEL MEETINGS

<u>DATES</u>	<u>PLACE &amp; TIME</u>	<u>SPEAKER</u>
Dec. 4 - 6	Summerfield Rd. Church Selma, AL	James McDonald (Woodbury, TN)
Dec. 11 - 13	Ephesus, GA 7:00pm E.S.T.	John Yost (Newnan, GA)
Jan. 8 - 10 TN)	Lizella, GA	James McDonald (Woodbury,

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## *I ATTEND WORSHIP SERVICES*

- 1. Because I know that it is my duty as a Christian to attend.*
- 2. In order that I might have an influence upon others.*
- 3. In order that the work of the Lord might continue to grow.*
- 4. To worship God in Spirit and in Truth.*
- 5. To sing, pray, study, give, and partake of the Lord's Supper.*
- 6. So that I might prepare myself for the world to come.*
- 7. Above all, because I love God and I want to do his will.*