

The Birth of Jesus – Reprint 1673
Sunday, December 12, 2010 12:00 – 1:00PM
Br. Joe Megacz

1. Paragraphs 1-2: Explain the miracle of Jesus' birth and why it was necessary.

2. Paragraphs 3-4: What were the four conditions in the world at the time of the first advent and how were they favorable to the Savior's birth? Were there parallel conditions in the world at the time of Jesus' second advent, and if so, how were they favorable for his return? (This second part of the question is not covered in the article).

3. Paragraphs 5-7: Describe how the announcement of Jesus' birth was made. Is there a parallel at the time of his return?

4. Footnote: What is Br Russell's point in emphasizing the correctness of the word "toward"?

THE BIRTH OF JESUS

III. QUAR., LESSON II., JULY 1, `LUKE 2:1-16`.

Golden Text--"Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord."-
-`Luke 2:11`.

1. That our Lord Jesus existed prior to his incarnation, and in a more exalted nature and condition, is clearly stated in the Scriptures. See `John 17:5`; `2 Cor. 8:9`; `John 1:1-3,10`; `Eph. 3:9`; `Col. 1:15-17`; `Heb. 1:2`; `Rev. 4:11` . See also WATCH TOWER of August 1888 and April 15, 1893.

2. This change of nature was a miracle, the philosophy of which, like that of all miracles, transcends the limits of human thought; and, like all other miracles, it was performed to meet an emergency for which no natural law could

otherwise provide. The philosophy of the divine plan of redemption which required it is, however, very manifest to the thoughtful mind guided by the Scripture statements. The Son of God was made flesh that he might give his flesh--his humanity -- for the life of the world; that as by a man (Adam) came death, so by a man ("the man Christ Jesus") might come the resurrection of the dead. (`John 1:14`; `6:51`; `1 Cor. 15:21` .) In other words, he was transformed from the spiritual to the human nature, so that in giving his life for the world's redemption he might give the exact equivalent or corresponding price for that which was lost.

3. For the sake of brevity we must of necessity pass by many points of interest connected with this narrative of our Lord's birth, e.g., the prophecies of his coming (Gen. 3:15; 22:18; 49:10; 2 Sam. 7:12-16; Isa. 9:6,7; 11:1-9; Dan. 9:24, etc.); the announcement of his coming (Luke 1); the date of his birth (See M. DAWN VOL. II., page 54); his human lineage as a Son of David and of Abraham, and his divine origin as the only begotten Son of God; and, lastly, the condition of the world at his advent. But these the student can with profit look up for himself. On the last point, however, we would have none fail to observe the evidences of the Lord's preparatory overruling providence in so shaping the world's affairs as to accomplish the purposes of his plan at that time.

(1) The world was then for a time at peace, and quiet, the Roman dominion having brought all the world under its powerful control; and as all men were in expectation of Messiah's advent (Luke 3:15) according to the Jewish prophets whose fame had gone out into all the world, the sudden announcement of his birth attracted wide attention, as it would not have done in less peaceful times. (2) The Greek language, noted by all scholars as the most nearly perfect, exact and precise medium for human speech, had at that time been fully developed and widely disseminated. Thus was prepared **in due time** the very best medium for the communication of the gospel of the new covenant.

4. (3) The Old Testament had been translated into the Greek language three centuries before Christ (This version is called the Septuagint); and the Jews had been dispersed among all peoples, carrying the O.T. with them and bearing witness to its prophecies of a coming Messiah. (4) It was a time, too, of increased intellectual activity, which was ready to operate on this and every other question of public interest. Thus the circumstances of the time were peculiarly adapted to the announcement of this wonderful event,--the advent of the world's Redeemer. The fulness of time had come, and, under the overruling providence of God, the conditions were ripe.

5. It is worthy of notice that the announcement of the Savior's birth was not made to an assembled world, in whose most vital interest he had come; nor even to assembled Israel, the chosen people of God; nor yet to **all** of those who, like Simeon and

Anna, with devout hearts had long been looking for the hope of Israel. But it was made to only a few devout shepherds who were watching their flocks by night. The grand truth was one to be received **by faith**; and it was sent through humble, but trustworthy, human agents, who were the honored instruments in God's hands. And any who proudly despised the instruments were unworthy of the good tidings.

6. The announcement was one which modern "orthodoxy" could not justify; for it was the very reverse of its bad tidings of great misery to nearly all people. The Angels' message was, "**good tidings** of GREAT JOY TO ALL PEOPLE; for unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord."

7. The tidings are of redemption and restitution and everlasting life for all who will accept this blessing on the terms on which it is offered;--viz., faith in Christ as the Redeemer, and full repentance from sin, which of necessity implies the forsaking of sin and the cultivation of righteousness. Christ was born to be a Savior by subsequently giving his life a ransom for all. These good tidings --this miracle of divine goodness and mercy to fallen and doomed men--met a marvelously cold and indifferent reception. The world in general, though apprised of the fact and its import, manifested no faith nor interest in it, while it is written that he came unto his own people (the Jews), and they received him not. But the jubilant heavenly hosts, who were capable of appreciating what fallen men could not appreciate, and will not until their blind eyes are opened and their deaf ears unstopped, broke out in a rapturous strain of heavenly melody, saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."*

8. The full import of this song will not be fully realized by men until the Millennial reign of Christ shall proffer them full emancipation and deliverance from sin and its entailments.

*This expression--"good will **toward** men"--as rendered by a majority of translators is confirmed by the latest found manuscript, the Lewis manuscript of the Gospels, discovered in 1892 in the convent at Mt. Sinai.