

Two thousand years ago God gave to mankind a priceless gift of a unique baby born in a stable in a little town called Bethlehem. We celebrate this birth worldwide at Christmas. An angel revealed to Joseph of this baby's miraculous conception in the womb of the virgin Mary, and His unique purpose:

"...the Child who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a Son; and you shall name Him Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins." Matthew 1:20,21

So extraordinary was this birth that the heavens opened up in the presence of shepherds to herald His birth!

"And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.'" Luke 2:13,14

The supernatural and miraculous would accompany Him everywhere. He would raise the dead. Give sight to the blind. Cast out demons. Heal all manner of sickness. Feed thousands with just a couple of loaves and a few fishes. Walk on water. Even the weather was subject to his bidding. He would even forgive sins and accept worship.

Jesus would be far greater than any prophet or teacher. Luke 1:32 says,

"He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High..."

He was the long promised Messiah that the prophets of old spoke that would come as a deliverer and king.

In fulfillment of the Old Testament prophet Isaiah, Matthew 1:23 says of Jesus:

"... they shall call His name Immanuel," which is translated, 'God with us.'"

Jesus is not only human but God as well: the God-man. (See John 1:1, 14). The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit make up the one triune God. One God in essence but in three persons — not three gods. The invisible God, which cannot be seen, is displayed in our flesh. Colossians 2:9 explains this great mystery like this:

"For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form."

Jesus would speak as no other prophet. He claimed not simply to show us the way to the Father, but to BE the way, the ONLY way to God. When Thomas asked Jesus,

"Lord, we don't know where you are going; how can we know the way?"

Jesus said to him, **"I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father except through Me."** John 14:6

The means that God uses to rescue sinners is the hearing of God's Word. Romans 10:17 says, **"So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of God."**

The gospel is heard in the mind, but there is a supernatural work that must take place in the heart. A lifeless heart must be made alive by the new birth. We call it being born again. Jesus described this transformation as the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit:

"You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You

must be born again.' The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit." John 3:7,8

Jesus bids all to come to Him for salvation and eternal life!

"I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me will never die." John 11:25

Man's problem is that we have broken God's commandments and are sinners by nature and practice. The law and our conscience convict us of sin. Romans 3:10-12 and 23 say:

"None is righteous," "none understands," "none seeks God," "none does good, no, not one." "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."

We deserve to be punished for our sins. Divine justice demands it. For our sins are against an infinitely Holy God. Romans 6:23 says **"For the wages of sin is death..."** Death is spiritual in our a broken relationship with God; physical in that we will all one day die; and eternal for we have earned the wrath of God in hell.

But despite this helpless and hopeless condition, the last half of the above verse (Romans 3:23) says:

"...but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

God provided a perfect, sinless remedy. From the beginning of creation, God has spoken through the prophets that the Messiah, the Christ, the Savior of the world,

would come in the fullness of time (Galatians 4:4-5). A holy righteous one. One of infinite value and worth. Sinless and perfect in every way. A substitute. One that would obey the law perfectly in thought, word and deed in behalf of His people. They would be credited with His righteousness. God would save His people by the shedding of the blood of Jesus on the cross. He would become sin for me. A curse in my behalf. My substitute.

This “gift” could not be earned by works, but must be embraced by repentance and faith. The Apostle Paul sums it up like this:

I have declared to both Jews and Greeks that they must turn to God in repentance and have faith in our Lord Jesus. Acts 20:21

Salvation, including saving faith, is a gift of God by His loving grace and NOT of works:

“For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not a result of works, so that no one may boast.”
Ephesians 2:8,9

This wonderful message of salvation is called “the gospel.” Good news! The death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus is the gospel by which we are saved. The first 4 verses of 1 Corinthians 15 is probably the greatest, clearest and most concise description in the Bible of the gospel:

“Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you—unless you believed in vain.

“For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures.”

Jesus bids you come, not to an organization or religious system, but to Him.

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”
Matthew 11:28

Life is fragile. You have today. You may not have tomorrow. The bible stresses the urgency of responding. Please do not let another day go by without getting right before God.

“Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.” 2 Corinthians 6:2

May God grant you wisdom and understanding.

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