

Just Checking In
JCI #191 December 2017
Christmas in All Four Gospels

Friends, we have just moved to a new ministry. We would appreciate your continued prayers. Our new ministry is at **Niemonds Independent Church** <http://www.niemonds.org> My new email address is pastorron@embarqmail.com while Val will retain hers as valberrus@comcast.net Our new home address is 82 Longview Drive, Mifflin, PA 17058

Reading through the four gospels, it is quickly evident that Matthew and Luke contain the narratives of Christ's birth. It would seem logical that Matthew, the gospel directed to the Jews, would include the genealogy of Messiah through His legal father Joseph, and the events of His birth and early life that fulfilled the OT prophecy. Likewise Luke, writing to the Greeks, would also include the human genealogy of Jesus through Mary, to ensure communicating the truth that Jesus is fully human, yet sinless, and the events of His birth with times, locations, and key individuals that confirm the accuracy and reality of all that happened. Mark and John do not record the birth events, yet also have key texts that speak of His coming. We will briefly survey these four gospels and encourage you to meditate more fully on each one as you consider the greatness of God's amazing grace in giving His only Son to save you and me from our sins.

Matthew 1:18-25 Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit. Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly. But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. "And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins." So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: "Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel," which is translated, "God with us." Then Joseph, being aroused from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took to him his wife, and did not know her till she had brought forth her firstborn Son. And he called His name JESUS. Virgin conception by the Holy Spirit Name (Jesus = Jehovah saves) pre-ordained from heaven to declare **who He is**.... Jehovah; and **what He will do**.... Save His people from their sins. Fulfills Isaiah 7:14 Virgin conceives giving birth to Immanuel... God with us.

Mark 10:45 For the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.

Son of man: this title used by Jesus almost exclusively of Himself (the exception being four times He refers to Himself as the Son of God in John) highlights His full humanity and prophetic identity. This title used to identify **prophets** like Ezekiel, the divine **Messiah** in Daniel, and **humans** elsewhere. And Jesus is all three – fully human, divine Messiah, and Prophet of God bringing the truth from heaven to men.

Luke 1:26-28 Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And having come in, the angel said to her, "Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women!" But when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and considered what manner of greeting this was. **Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. "And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name JESUS. "He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. "And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end."** Then Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I do not know a man?" And the angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God. "Now indeed, Elizabeth your relative has also conceived a son in her old age; and this is now the sixth month for her who was called barren. "For with God nothing will be impossible." Then Mary said, "Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.

Luke 2:1-17 And it came to pass in those days that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This census first took place while Quirinius was governing Syria. So all went to be registered, everyone to his own city. Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be registered with Mary, his betrothed wife, who was with child. So it was, that while they were there, the days were completed for her to be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. And behold, **an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid. Then the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. "For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. "And this will be the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger."** 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, goodwill toward men!"** So it was, when the angels had gone away from them into heaven, that the shepherds said to one another, "Let us now go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has come to pass, which the Lord has made known to us." And they came with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the Babe lying in a manger. Now when they had seen Him, they made widely known the saying which was told them concerning this Child.

Luke's account is by far the longest and most detailed. It is wonderful in its description of the angelic announcements to Mary and the Shepherds. The angels declare that Jesus is **Savior**, prophetic **Messiah**, and **Lord**. And let us never forget that there is only one that angel's acknowledge as Lord, and that is their Creator!

John 1:1-14 **In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.** He was in the beginning with God. **All things were made through Him**, and without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.

And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all through him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. That was **the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world. He was in the world**, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. **And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.**

John's declaration of Christ is complete and all comprehensive. Eternal...Distinct...Divine... Creator...Light...Made Flesh... Here.... Glorious...Grace.... Truth! He is worthy of worship, God in the flesh, the only Son, the only Savior, the Truth Revealer, the Grace Giver.

As you read through these verses from the four gospels, let the glory and grace of Jesus Christ fill your heart and lead you to worshipping Him with greater awe and reverence day by day. Let not the busyness of the season rob you of the blessing of the One who is the focus of it all!

Self Check

- 1) Matt 1:21 you shall call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins. Has He saved you? **Thank Him!**
- 2) Mark 10:45 The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give His life a ransom for many. Has He ransomed you from sin's enslavement and set you free? **Praise Him!**
- 3) Luke 2:11 For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ, the Lord. He came for you! **Bless Him!**
- 4) John 1:14 The Word became flesh... He is God in the flesh! **Worship Him!**

For Further Study

John 12:20-33 Meditate on this most amazing account of Jesus wrestling with His coming suffering for our sakes. His full commitment to obey the Father overcomes the full reality of the wrath He was about to take to rescue us from eternal fire. O the love of Christ for sinners!

***Remember, you are very special to us and we pray for you.
Living with leaving in view.... John 9:4 Ron & Val***

Seeing the Invisible,
Embracing The Unapproachable,
Declaring the Unexplainable,
Changed by the Immutable,

Running after the Irresistible
With inexhaustible joy
In our inexpressible sorrows,
Spending our time on eternity,
Owning nothing yet possessing everything
That matters and lasts.
We are Pilgrims in Paradox.
Welcome to THE JOURNEY