

The Wondrous Birth of Jesus

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[0 : 00] I want you to go ahead and take your Bibles and open up to texts we just read a moment ago.

As a matter of fact, Luke chapter 2 starting with verse 8. And I guess I have to repent a second time. This is more topical than it will be expositional tonight.

And we'll get back to Judges after the holidays. In fact, we're not even going to be meeting for the next two Sunday nights. Boy, they'll start calling us Methodists.

No, just kidding. There are a lot of Baptist churches that don't have Sunday evening services these days. So we're one of the few still going at it.

But anyway, we'll get back to Judges after Christmas is over and pick that up where we left off. And tonight, I want to again carry the theme of not the virgin birth, but the birth, the wondrous birth of the Lord Jesus Christ.

[1 : 13] And using this passage as kind of a setting, the atmosphere, the stage, the kind of help us to imagine what it might have been like for those shepherds.

And I'm not talking about their experience there out there tending their flocks by night and the, you know, the experience of, you know, suddenly there's an angel and then the heavenly host and then all that transpired.

That would be pretty awesome to see that. We can't even begin to imagine what that might be like. But I'm talking about when they did go to that stable or whatever it was and found the baby Jesus there lying in the manger, just like the angel said they would.

And just kind of the wonder and awe of that. And just consider his wondrous birth. And we're going to be reading quite a number of passages from the Bible dealing with biblical prophecy as well as some other things from Scripture.

All of it related to the birth of Christ and a little more than just that. I heard a story, though, I want to begin this way tonight before we look at the text.

[2 : 34] The story about a pastor and this pastor got up really early on Christmas morning. And he's the one who's telling this story.

And got up early and he was reading Scripture, kind of meditating upon Scripture and specifically a passage in John chapter 15 verse 22 where Jesus is speaking to his disciples.

And he says, among other things, he says, if I had not come. And, of course, he had a reason for saying that from the text.

But this pastor read that, if I had not come. And he was meditating on that and thinking about that. And he kind of drifted off into a short little nap.

It was an early Christmas morning. And while he was sleeping, he had a dream. Dreaming of a world into which Jesus had never come.

[3 : 32] And this was his dream. And it was all kind of spurred on by, supposedly, now he's telling the story. You know, some preachers lie. I mean, they do.

They don't call it lying. Ministerially speaking. Anyway, and he dreamed this. And I hate to make light of this because it's really kind of a very serious message.

And he had this dream. And he found himself on Christmas. And he was in his home. And he was looking through his home. But there were no decorations in the home.

Not even the kind of standard decoration. No Christmas tree. No stockings hanging from the chimney mantle. From the fireplace mantle.

None of the trappings. And certainly no nativity. Anywhere in the house. Then he walked out into the street. And there was no church there. With its spire pointing up to heaven.

[4 : 36] It didn't exist. It wasn't there. And then he came back. And sat down in his library. And he was looking over at his books. And no books about Jesus.

The books that he had. About the life of Jesus. The ministry of Jesus. And books written about Jesus. None of them were there. In his library. And then the doorbell rang.

And he opened the door. And there was a young little lad. And he was crying. And he said. Please come and visit my mother. She's very sick. And so he went with a little boy.

To visit his mother. And when he reached the house. And got to the bedroom. And sat there by this woman. Took her by the hand. And he said. I've come to bring you great comfort.

And he opened up his Bible. And it ended with Malachi. There was no New Testament. And to his amazement. There was no gospel.

[5 : 33] No promise. No promise of hope. No promise of salvation. None of that was in his Bible. He could only then just bow his head. And just weep with her.

As she was lying there. On her death bed. And in his dream. He suddenly found himself. There beside her coffin. And he was conducting the funeral service.

But there was no message. Of consolation. No message of hope. No hope of heaven. Or anything. What a terrible dream. What a horrifying.

Terrifying. Dream. And then finally the pastor. Awakened from his dream. And the thought came to him. How much worse. Are those.

Who know. Christ came. And yet still live. As though he did not. So the message comes right back to us. Doesn't it? Kind of a.

[6 : 31] Obviously fictitious. Or a dream. That he dreamed. And you know. I wonder today. I've often wondered this. I guess every time Christmas rolls around. Preachers think about these things.

A lot of people think about it. A lot of believers think about this. But what. What would change. About Christmas today. If we took the birth of Jesus. Out of it. And we know the answer to that. Hardly anything would. Hardly anything would change. And because. In reality. We've just practically done that. At least most people. Have taken the birth of Jesus Christ. Completely out of the story.

So. I want us to think then. About. His wondrous birth. And think about the prophecies. Related to it. And. Thinking of. Fulfilled prophecy. Not only related to his birth.

But. To all of the various. Aspects. Of his life. And ministry. Even. Those prophecies. Concerning. Jesus. That are yet to be fulfilled.

[7 : 34] And we'll. Kind of touch on that a little bit. But. Think of his wondrous birth. If we were to. Talk about. Kind of lay out. The entire life. And ministry of Jesus. We would start with his wondrous birth.

We would move. You know. On to his life. His. Joyous life. We could then move from there. To his. Vicarious death. On the cross. Where he. Was a substitute.

For us. Died for us. We could move from there. To his. Victorious resurrection. Because he. Did not remain dead. That he was raised from the dead. And we could. Include also.

His glorious return. And. And really. We ought to. Know the full story. Of Jesus. And I. I think. We do. But since it is Christmas. Christmas season.

Then. We're going to focus. On his. Wondrous. Birth. All right. So now. The passage. And. I'm going to. Go ahead and read. Pretty much. What we read.

[8 : 30] A moment ago. Maybe a little bit. Further than that. But to. Imagine yourself. As one of these. Shepherds.

Now there were in the same country. Shepherds. Living. Actually 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. Shown round. Them. 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. Clothes. Or cloths.

[9 : 24] 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. Good will. Toward men. So it was. When the angel. Had gone away. From them. 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. And when they had seen him. They made widely known. The saying. Which was told them. Concerning this child.

And all those who heard it. Marveled. At those things. Which were told them. By the shepherds. But Mary kept all these things. And pondered them. In her heart. And the shepherds returned.

[10:18] Glorifying. And praising God. For all the things. That they had heard. And seen. As it was told them. And you know. This is just part of the familiar. Story.

Out of Luke chapter 2. And we love that story. And every time we read it. Especially when I read it in the King James. Because that's. You know. What I. You know. What I grew up with.

And of course. New King James. Comes close to it. But they're just such. Such a beauty. In the way that it's written. And Luke's description. Is so masterful. And so think about these shepherds.

Imagine yourself. In the place of one of these shepherds. I think it's a good thing to do that. To imagine yourself in the place. Of some of the major Bible characters.

That took part in some of the major events. In scripture. And so put yourself in their place. And particularly. Imagine yourself when they came to.

[11:18] Again. The stable. We don't really know what the setting was. We assume it was a stable. Because he was lying in a manger. And a manger is a feeding trough. And so. We know there was no room for them.

In the inn. And so very likely. It was an outdoor setting. Some have said it might have been a cave.

Others have said. It certainly was just. Maybe just a lean to.

Kind of rough. Just a shelter of some kind. That was primarily for animals. And so they came to this place. Whatever it was. It was in Bethlehem.

And you know. We're so familiar with the whole scene. Aren't we? Because you know. We probably. Most of you. If not all of you. Have you know.

A representation of it. Set up in your home. You know. A little nativity. I don't know how many we have. We have at least a half a dozen. I think. Not sure.

[12:13] Sherry knows exactly. Some of them are quite elaborate. You know. And so you're. We're familiar with it. Even though we have the wise men there.

And of course. They were not there. According to scripture. And I hate to bring that up. Because I just. You know. It just kind of ruins it. Because at home. We've got the wise men there.

And who's going to set up. You know. Another whole scene. With Jesus in a house somewhere. And the wise men are there. I mean. What's the beauty of that? It's more scriptural. But we're familiar with it.

And so. Let's just kind of in our minds. Approach the. The. This whole. Setting. Where Jesus is lying there. In. In. In the manger.

So. Then we need to just kind of. Step past the shepherds. And step past the animals. And the hay. And whatever else. May have been part of this setting. Step even past.

[13:08] Joseph. And Mary. And. And then. Kneel. Down. At this. Feeding trough. This manger. Where the baby is.

The baby is lying. You know. Wrapped in swaddling clothes. And look down into the face. Of. Of the baby Jesus. And.

And we should be in awe. When we. Kind of imagine that. Picture that. Be in awe about that. And the. And really. It's not just simply in awe.

Because we're filled with the emotion. And the. Scene. And the setting. And you know. This. Very. Very. Very neat. But we're in awe. Because of. Who he is. And we're in awe.

At God's incarnation. This is God. Incarnate. Clothed in human flesh. And so. As you do this.

[14:03] In your minds. We're going to consider a few things. About this little babe. Lying in the manger. And. And. The wonder of his birth. And so. I want to begin with the prophecies.

Concerning. His birth. There are many. Many. Very detailed. Prophecies. Concerning his birth. And we could. Really begin.

With. Not so much. Prophecy. As. As. Reality. As we look back. Over the Old Testament. And see his lineage. His lineage.

In a sense. Stands. As. Prophetic. Because. We see. How God. So deliberately. And so. Determinately. Preserved. The lineage. Of the Messiah. And as we. Kind of. Follow that. All the way back. To Genesis. And see. God. Bringing his people.

[14:58] In his line. And preserving. That line. And as we see. The various events. That take place. That threaten. To stop that line. And.

And they. In a sense. Stand. As. As. Prophetic. Of. Of the Messiah. Who would one day come. He's the seed of Abraham. Genesis 18.

18. All the nations. Of the earth. Shall be blessed. In him. He is also. Of Isaac. Genesis 17. 19. I will establish.

My covenant. With him. For an everlasting. Covenant. These are. References to. Ultimately. To. Messiah. Because. It will be in the Messiah. That these things.

These promises. To Abraham. To Isaac. And also Jacob. Numbers 24. 17. There shall come a star. Out of. Out of Jacob. These promises.

[15:53] These covenants. Made with Abraham. And Isaac. And Jacob. Jacob. Will be ultimately. Fulfilled. In the Messiah. The Lord Jesus Christ.

And we have. Luke's genealogy. Of course. Of Jesus. In Luke chapter 3. That traces his genealogy. All the way back to Adam. And. And.

It's interesting. It's. It's. It's. Very productive. To study the Old Testament. With this. Looking through this kind of lens. To. To see how God.

Providentially. Cared. For. And preserved. The lineage. Of the Messiah. And then. There's the timing. Of his birth.

The timing. Of his birth. We're talking about prophecies. Concerning his birth. Daniel 9. 25. And though not everyone. Looks to Daniel 9. 9. 25. To find prophecies.

[16:49] Concerning. The birth of Christ. But. But really. It's. He. He gives. Probably. The. The. Most exact. Not. Not. So much. Date.

Per se. But pretty close. To a date. Of Messiah's birth. You can look at Daniel 70 weeks. In Daniel. Daniel chapter 9. And find that.

Certain events take place. And then. So many weeks. Or so many years. And the Messiah. Will come. And so. It's not. Then. Amazing. When you think about it.

That the wise men. Were looking for the birth of the king. Where did they get the idea. That this was the time. For this birth. They said they saw his star. But they were. Also. Students.

Apparently. Of God's word. And they were part of. Of an expectation. That really had spread. Throughout. Israel. As well. An expectation.

[17:43] And it was a heightened expectation. Of the birth. Of the Messiah. Simeon was. Reveals that. He was looking for. The consolation of Israel.

He. He believed. That God promised him. He would see it. In his lifetime. And he was an old man then. So. There was this heightened expectation. Based upon. Biblical prophecy.

That. The time was right. For the Messiah to come. Now they misunderstood. About the ministry. Of his first coming. In fact. They didn't understand. A two part coming.

But. His coming. Was expected. At this time. Anna would be another. Example. Of someone. Who was part of this. Kind of overall. Expectation. Among the Jews.

That the Messiah. Would be born. Around this time period. So these are prophecies. Concerning the birth. Of Christ. His lineage. Stands as. Prophetic. And how God.

[18:40] Worked through that. Lineage. To preserve it. The timing. The very timing. Of his birth. Also the place. Of his birth. The place. Of his birth. In Micah 5. 2. That famous passage.

But you. Bethlehem. Ephrata. Though you are little. Among thousands. Of Judah. Yet out of you. Shall come forth. To me. The one. To be. Ruler.

In Israel. Whose goings forth. Are from old. From everlasting. Of course. That speaks of his. Of his eternity. His eternality. And really.

And I believe. Micah. Read this passage. This morning. Out of Isaiah 9. Even the place. Where Jesus. Would be a child. And a young man. Before he began. His ministry.

Is prophesied. In Isaiah 9. 1. By the way. Of the sea. Beyond the Jordan. In Galilee. Of the Gentiles. And then he says. Right after that. The people. Who walked.

[19 : 34] In darkness. Have seen a great light. Those who dwelt. In the land. Of the shadow of death. Upon them. The light has shined. So these are prophecies. Concerning. The first coming. Of the Messiah. His incarnation. The place. Of his birth. And also. The how. Of his birth. Is a part. Of biblical prophecy. For example.

What we talked about. This morning. The virgin birth. Is prophesied. That he would come. In that way. Uniquely. In a unique way.

A one of a kind way. He was born. Of a virgin. Born. Born of the seed. Of a woman. Again. Genesis 3. 15. We talked about. These passages. This morning. So.

His lineage. And God's preservation. Of it. Stands as prophetic. Of the coming. Of Messiah. The timing. Of his birth. The place. Of his birth. The how. Of his birth.

[20 : 29] The events. Surrounding his birth. Also. His flight. Of the family. Mary and Joseph. And the baby Jesus. Their flight. Into Egypt.

To escape. The wrath. Of King Herod. Hosea 11. 1. Prophesied this. And we know. It's prophetic. Of what.

Mary and Joseph. And little baby Jesus. Did when they fled. Into Egypt. Because Matthew. Is fulfilled. In Matthew. Chapter 2. Verse 15. And Matthew. Quotes this passage. Out of Hosea. 11. 1. Out of Egypt. I called my son. You know. Without Matthew's. Connection. Connecting that prophecy. With Jesus.

We would. We would not think of that. As prophetic. And it. Very clearly. Had a. An immediate. Sense. For the. For the time. It was given.

[21 : 22] But it was. Prophetic. Of a future. Event. And Jesus. Fulfilled that event. Herod's massacre. Of the infants. Around. In and around. Bethlehem. Age 2.

And under. In his. Desire. To snuff out. The life. Of this. Usurper. To his throne. This. This. This. One. Who would be. King of the Jews. And we have this.

Prophesied. In Jeremiah. 31. 15. And it's fulfilled. And quoted. In Matthew. 2. 18. A voice. Was heard. In Ramah. Lamentation.

And bitter. Weeping. Rachel. Weeping. For her children. Refusing. To be comforted. For her children. Why? Because. They are no more. And it's prophetic.

Of those. Children. Who were. Murdered. By Herod. In his jealousy. Of this. Would be king. And you know.

[22 : 17] And by the way. Think about. Really. The sheer. Number. Of prophecies. Fulfilled. In Jesus. You may not know them all.

But as soon as you start. Someone starts naming them. You say. Oh yeah. Oh yeah. Oh yeah. I remember that. And I could name. About 15 of them. That I've written down. Right here. Real quickly. I'm not going to.

Go into detail. About them. But Jesus. Rejection. By the Jews. Isaiah 53. 3. Jesus. Triumphant entry. Into Jerusalem. Zechariah. Chapter 9.

Verse 9. Jesus. Betrayal. By Judas. Psalm 41. And verse 9. Jesus. Being sold. Out of. For 30 pieces.

Of silver. Sold out. For 30 pieces. Of silver. Zechariah 11. And verse 12. The false witnesses. That accused Jesus. At his mock trial. Psalm 27.

[23 : 11] And verse 2. Jesus. Being silent. When he was accused. There at his trial. Isaiah 53. And verse 7. The beating of Jesus.

By the guards. And the guards. Spitting upon Jesus. Abusing him. Isaiah 50. And verse 6. Jesus. Jesus. Crucified. Alongside of sinners.

Isaiah 53. And verse 12. Jesus. Hands and feet. Being pierced. Psalm 22. And verse 16. Jesus. Side. Also pierced.

Zechariah. Chapter 12. And verse 10. The soldiers. Casting lots. For his garments. Psalm 22. Verse 18. No bones. Being broken.

At his crucifixion. Which was standard procedure. But they did not break his bones. That was prophesied. In Psalm 34. And verse 20. His resurrection.

[24 : 05] Is prophesied. In Psalm 16. Verse 10. As well as some other places. His ascension. Back into heaven. Psalm 68. And verse 18. Now that's just 15 of them.

And there are many. Many more prophecies. I've already named. Some of those. Related to his birth. And these related to. Various aspects. Of his life.

And death. And resurrection. And there are prophecies. Of course. Related to his coming again. That are yet to be fulfilled. But think about. All of these prophecies. That have been fulfilled. In this one man. And what do you suppose. Would be the mathematical probability. Of one man fulfilling. All of these prophecies.

Well we couldn't. We couldn't even imagine it. I don't care. If you're an expert. In mathematics. But as a matter of fact. In fact. I was reading. In a book. Entitled. Science Speaks.

[24 : 59] Man by the name. Of Peter Stoner. Applied the modern science. Of probability. To just. Eight prophecies.

Concerned. Just eight of them. And there may have been. More than eight. But he applied. These principles. Of probability. Mathematical. Principles. Of probability. To eight prophecies.

Record. Regarding Jesus. And here's what he said. He said. That the chance. That any. One man. Might have. Fulfilled. All eight prophecies. Is one.

In ten. To the seventeenth. You say. What's that? Well. It's. A one. Followed by. Seventeen zeros. What number is that?

One hundred. Quadrillion. That's the chances. And then. It's interesting. He illustrated. Just. Just. What that would be like. In terms. Well. I don't know. If it's in terms.

[25 : 52] That we could. Really get a grasp on. But think of it. He said. Think of it this way. Take. Ten. To the seventeenth. Silver dollars. That is. Take one hundred.

Quadrillion. Silver dollars. And. Lay them out. All over. Texas. All right. It would.

Fill. The entire state of Texas. To a depth. Of two feet. Now. It gives you. Some idea. Although. It's still. Beyond. Comprehension. An idea. Of one hundred. Quadrillion. But it gets better. He said. Then. Mark.

One of those. Silver dollars. Just mark. One of them. And then. Throw it back in there. And stir it all up. And then. Blindfold. Someone. And say.

[26 : 47] You can walk. Anywhere. In the entire. State of Texas. But you have to. Pick out that. One silver dollar. That's marked. And he said. What would be the odds. Of that person.

He asked. What would be the odds. Of that person. Picking out that. One marked. Silver dollar. Well. He said. It would be about. The same. Odds. That one man.

Could fulfill. Those eight prophecies. The odds. Would be the same. Provided. He said. And he added. This little caveat. He said. Provided.

That these prophets. Wrote. In their own wisdom. Which they did not. They wrote. Because God. Inspired them. And that changes everything. Doesn't it?

Changes everything. So the prophecies. Concerning. His birth. And then. Second. We should consider. The people. Confirming.

[27 : 40] His birth. We have. Recorded. In the gospels. Information. About the birth. Of Jesus Christ. Luke. Gives us.

Perhaps. Certainly. More information. Than. Than does Matthew. But Matthew. Gives us some information. About the birth of Christ. And so. Matthew and Luke. Really. We rely upon.

Those two. Neither one. Of those. Men. Who wrote. Under the inspiration. Of the Holy Spirit. Neither one of them. Were eyewitnesses. Matthew. Matthew.

Was. One of the apostles. Of course. And. And. Mary. The mother of Jesus. Traveled. At some point. Maybe. With them.

Maybe there was some connection. Interaction. But. And Luke. Of course. Was not. One of the apostles. He came. Quite a bit later. And it's very likely.

[28 : 34] That Luke. Was the one. Because he was. Known as such a. You know. A meticulous historian. And the way he wrote.

Kind of. Clues us into that. Not just a physician. But also. Very. Very. Very much into history. And. It's likely. Though we don't know. One hundred percent.

For sure. There are indications. In the book of Luke. That Luke sat down. With Mary. And. And. And others. And so. He was not an eyewitness. But he was able to write.

In such detail. About the birth of Jesus. And he got those details. From those people. Who were there. And gave testimony. And so.

Let's just think about. The people. Confirming. The birth. Of Jesus. And. We have to begin with Mary. We have Mary's testimony. Don't we?

[29 : 28] We have Mary's testimony. We're assuming. That it's Mary's testimony. I mean. Luke is telling us. About things. That no one would know. But Mary. Mary. Mary. Was an eyewitness.

To the visitation. Of the angel Gabriel. No one else was there. And. And so. She tells her story. Whether directly to Luke. Or. By way of some.

Some others. She was there. She heard. What the angel said. She was also. Also confirmed. The virgin birth. Who else could. Absolutely.

Confirm it. I mean. From a human. Standpoint. We have God's word on it. And that ought to be enough. But we have Mary. Who knows. Beyond a shadow of a doubt.

That Jesus was conceived in her. In a most unusual way. She did not know a man. And. And yet. She is with child. And she knows what the angel said. She knows what happened.

[30 : 24] To her body. And so. She. Gives testimony. To the birth. Of Jesus Christ. Now. Either. What she said was true.

Or she's a liar. No one else. No one else. To give testimony. Either it's true. Or she's a liar. And worse than that. If she's a liar. Then she's what?

Immoral. Immoral. Because we know. Joseph didn't have any. Relations with. Physical relations with her. He was ready to. Have her.

Privately put away. So it must have been. Some other man. So. She's either a liar. And a harlot. Or. She's telling the truth. And her testimony.

Bears witness. To the unique. Nature. Of the birth. Of Christ. But. And I want to do this. With each of these witnesses. Think about. What her confirmation.

[31 : 20] Reveals. That would be. Important to us. And it's one word. It's grace. Her. Her testimony. Reveals. The grace of God.

In fact. What did Elizabeth say. Of Mary. In Luke 1. 28. She was highly. She is highly. Favored. The highly favored one. The graced one. And then.

We have Joseph's testimony. We have Joseph's testimony. And he also was a. I guess you could say. Use the term. Eyewitness. To the announcement. Of Gabriel.

Concerning the birth. Of Messiah. Albeit. It was in. A vision. Or a dream. And. And yet. It was very real. And. He didn't dream this up. God actually spoke to him.

Through the angel. In his dream. And you know the story. And Joseph is. You know. Just beside himself. His. His. His. Betrothed wife. Is. With child.

[32 : 16] And it's not his. And the scandal of that. And the. Not only that. But the. You know. The sin of that. In regard to God's law. And what is he going to do.

And there. Had several options. He could have had her stoned. I guess. Technically. And yet they had some other provision. Where they could be. Kind of divorced. Privately.

Secretly. And. That still would not have been very good for Mary. And so he's just concerned about it. And. He has a dream while he's sleeping. And the angel speaks to him.

And. Now. If Mary. Her testimony. Is. Reveals the grace of God. Joseph's testimony revealed.

Faith. Didn't it? Faith in God. And Matthew 1.24. And I just love this passage. Then Joseph. Being aroused from sleep. He's had this. Dream.

[33 : 13] Actually. It's the angel in his head. Speaking to him. And. Reassuring him. And. Telling him some things. Revealing to him. About the child. And who that child is. And what he should do.

And so forth. And then in Matthew 1.24. It says. And then Joseph. Being aroused from sleep. Did. Did as the angel of the Lord. Commanded him. And.

He. Took. To him. His wife. He obeyed. He believed. And. And so he's. Such a testimony. Of faith. But. He is. A. A witness.

He. He. He. He. He. He. He. He. He. One of the people. connected to the birth of Christ, one of those people that confirm his birth, the uniqueness of it, and therefore the identity of the one born.

So we have Mary, we have Joseph. Mary as a testimony of the grace of God. Joseph a testimony of the faith, of faith in God. And then we have the shepherds, of course, and we started with the shepherds in our reading earlier.

[34 : 13] And they confirmed the announcement of the angel. They also had an interaction with the angel of God. And they confirmed the announcement of the angel about the baby born and who that baby is and so forth.

And they also witnessed firsthand the baby lying in the manger just as the angel said. Because they went to see it. And what did they do then? And they made known, they made known abroad the

things that they heard and saw.

And so what do you suppose their testimony reveals? And I think it reveals praise. Praise to God. Luke 2.20. They left glorifying and praising God. But they confirmed his birth, the birth of Jesus Christ.

And then we have the wise men, the magi. That's what it is in the Greek. And we kind of carry that over in some English translations.

[35 : 24] The magi, though we really don't know what they were. Or it's pretty clear they weren't magicians or sorcerers or anything such as that. They were certainly wise men.

And we know that from what they did, how they responded to Jesus. But they were the magi. Got me to think, you know, kids sometimes say funny things, don't they?

And they're funny, not trying to be funny, but they get words wrong. You know, like one of our kids, Sherry knows who it was. I don't remember, but I thought maybe it'd be best not to say who it was. Might embarrass him. But one of our boys thought that zucchini was a two-piece bathing suit. You know, so he just got the word wrong. It sounded like zucchini and so forth.

Well, I heard a story about a little boy who thought that it was the three maggots that came to visit with Jesus. Three maggots, goodness. There may have been some there.

[36 : 25] I don't know. And then another little girl. I thought that the wise men or these magi brought to Jesus gold, Frankenstein, and Smurfs. I've heard some other versions of that.

But the wise men, these kings, these magi, whatever they were, they could testify, first of all, to the star that led them. Just very much like that star right up there, I guess.

That star that moved. It stopped. And it moved. And ultimately led them and stopped right over where Jesus was at that time.

You know, and the Bible says he was in a house. They went and visited with him. They confirmed that. That was very real. And it's associated with the birth of Christ.

And they also confirmed the divine dream. They also had a dream that led them, you know, to go home another way so that they would not have to deal again with wicked Herod.

[37 : 22] And they could confirm that. All that is associated with the birth of the Messiah. But now the testimony of the wise men confirms something else.

Just like Mary and Joseph and the shepherds confirmed something that's very important. They confirmed worship. The worship of God. So Mary confirmed the grace of God.

Joseph, the faith in God. The shepherds, they revealed the praise and glorifying of God. And very similarly, the wise men then confirmed and revealed the worship of God.

The Bible says in Matthew 2.11, They fell down and worshipped him. And they opened their treasures to him. There is one thing, of course, that all of these people, Mary, Joseph, the shepherds, the wise men, all of them confirmed this one thing about Jesus.

They confirmed that he is the Savior. He is the Savior. And that is exactly what man needs. Mankind needs a Savior. Someone has said that if God, rather if our greatest need had been information, God would have sent a scholar or an educator.

[38 : 40] If our greatest need had been technology, God would have sent a scientist. If our greatest need had been money, God would have sent an economist.

I think most economists are pretty poor counselors when it comes to money. All right, let's say God would have sent a banker, okay, if we needed money. If our greatest need had been pleasure, God would have sent an entertainer.

But our greatest need is forgiveness. And so God sent what? A Savior. A Savior. All right, so we're considering Jesus and specifically his wondrous birth.

We have the prophecies concerning his birth. We have the people confirming his birth. And then we have the person, with a capital P, consecrating his birth.

That is, it is this person who sets his birth apart, makes it unique. The person consecrating his birth. His was a wondrous birth, a birth like no other.

[39 : 44] It was unique. It was miraculous. It was set apart. And why? Not because of the way he was born. Although that's a big part of it.

But primarily because of who he was. Who he was. He was, and we could just make a few statements about that. But we could say many, many other things.

But he was, in the first place, the one who spoke the world into existence. And all the universe, everything into existence. John 1, 3 is just one of several places that speak of this.

All things were made by him. By Jesus. Can you imagine Mary and Joseph trying to teach the toddler Jesus how to speak, how to talk?

Have you ever heard anybody speculate on that? And yet, you know, he could have said to Mary, Oh, mother, one time I spoke and all things came into being, you know.

[40 : 39] Or teaching him how to walk. Can you imagine that process? I mean, we're talking about the Lord of glory. But in his humanity, he had to be taught how to walk just like you and I did.

But can you imagine? He made the legs. And hands and feet. He made all things. And, you know, how about teaching him at some point in his life, teaching him how to add and subtract and divide and multiply.

And yet, he created everything in such order and everything in such sync that really mathematics is based upon the things he created.

We would not know math if he had not created it. And so, at one point, he's learning it. But he is the one who spoke the world into existence.

He is also the one who holds the creation together. Keeps it together. Colossians 1:17. And he is before all things.

[41 : 40] And in him, all things consist. That is, all things hold together. Sure. You know, you take Jesus out. Take God out.

You know, there's some who believe that God is dead. You know, that was a very popular statement some centuries ago. A century ago. But if God is dead, then everything just simply just falls apart, flies apart.

And scientists today, they can identify the various parts of a molecule and various parts of an atom. And all those various elements inside. But they, yet today, don't know how it all stays together. It's an unknown. Well, I already know. The Bible says, in him, all things hold together. And then he was the full revelation of God. Or is the full revelation of God. All God wanted to say to us, he has said through his son.

Avery Rogers once said, Jesus is the last period of the last sentence of the last paragraph that completes the last chapter of the book of life. He is God's final word.

[42 : 41] Hebrews puts it this way. Hebrews 1. One God who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets has in these last days spoken to us by his son.

Whom he has appointed heir of all things. Through whom also are all he made the worlds. And then one more. He is the one and only savior of man.

Mankind. You know, one and only. And life is hopeless. Meaningless. Worthless. Pointless. Without Jesus.

And that is why it is pointless to celebrate Christmas apart from celebrating the birth, the wondrous birth of Jesus. I read an article about the New York Hayden Planetarium.

Now, I've never been there. But, and this article was referring to an exhibit that they had back in the early 90s. They don't have it anymore. But it was most interesting. And it was an exhibit that was offered at Christmas time.

[43 : 49] The Christmas holiday. And so, the author of the article was describing it. He said, first of all, a giant lollipop tree was projected on the planetarium dome.

And surrounded, it was surrounded by a horizon filled with brilliantly colored toys which came to life and were dancing to the tune of jingle bells.

And then, at the climax of that, a huge figure of Santa Claus appeared. And then, it slowly faded out in a snowstorm.

And then, the music Hark the Herald Angels began to play. And the Star of Bethlehem broke through the sky. And then, there was produced kind of the Palestinian skyline or as it might have been on that night when Jesus was born.

And then, appeared a nativity. The nativity. And that's how the exhibit ended. And the author said, the producer may not have realized it.

[45 : 02] But he dramatically staged the supreme Christian message that our world needs to understand. Where jingle bells slowly becomes Hark the Herald Angels Sing.

Where lollipop tree and Santa Claus give way to the manger. The manger in Bethlehem. Christmas is about the incarnation.

God's incarnation. That he might then be our Savior. Amen.