

Episode #550 Christmas 2019 3: The Jewish Savior

I. The birth of Christ was a miraculous event that prepared the way for all that He would accomplish in His death, burial, and resurrection. At this time of year we remember that birth and the glorious salvation that God gave us as a result.

II. Luke 2:1-7. The story of the birth of Jesus Christ.

- A. The Bible story or the myth? They were there, not arriving that night.
- B. No room. Not no vacancy. One room inns, but birth made a woman unclean. She couldn't give birth in the inn's one room. So this was arranged, probably far in advance.

III. Luke 2:8-20. The visit of the shepherds.

- A. A manger was the food trough for animals, not a glorious bed! Swaddling clothes not unusual, but the typical clothing for a poor woman to wrap her baby in, not the mother of a great King!
- B. Note: they praised God and said, not sang. No singing angels in this story!

IV. Luke 2:21-40. Why do we not include this portion in our typical Christmas story?

- A. The Christmas story in our culture is as much a cultural myth as a Bible story. Not that the story is a myth, but our way of telling the story is a myth. We add details and subtract others. We don't consider the historical implications. Example: political, as in Matthew 2, of the King Messiah being born.
- B. Myths back up things believed in popular culture. We like the part about Him being born in a stable, in a manger, to a poor couple. That fits our culture, which puts less emphasis on the difference between rich and poor and exalts the common man. This also fits with the visit to the shepherds. The wise man story shows that Christ is not just for the poor, but for all, including the rich, powerful, and wise.
- C. Yet what does the last half of the chapter show? That Christ came to the Jews, and came as a Jew. He was a part of the Jewish religion. Christ was not a "Christian," but a Jew. He came for Israel, His people. But Christianity views Judaism as a rival religion, and is traditionally anti-Jewish. Thus this part does not fit a modern myth!
- D. Yet this part is just as crucial as any other part: He came for Israel, and was Jewish!

V. Luke 2:21. The child is named.

- A. The Lord circumcised eight days after His birth, according to the law. Leviticus 12:3.
- B. He is named "Jesus," "Joshua," "Yehoshua," or "Yahweh-Savior."
- C. The name given him by the angel before He was conceived. Luke 1:31.

VI. Luke 2:22-24. The presentation in the temple.

- A. The law prescribed a purification for the mother, then a presentation of the child to the LORD.
- B. The first child of any woman was holy (set apart) to the LORD. Exodus 13:2, 12-15.
- C. The child had to be presented and an offering given. Leviticus 12.

VII. The story of Christ's birth given in the Bible is in many ways different from the modern, "myth" story commonly told at Christmas. While there are elements of the story we like, there are elements that just do not fit our modern idea. The last half of Luke 2 is just such a portion. It shows Christ's circumcision and presentation at the temple, showing without doubt the truth: that Christ was not brought up as a "Christian," but as a Jew. Yet this is important. Christ is the King of the Jews and the Savior of Israel, just as surely as He is the Savior of all. Do we believe this important part of the Christmas story? Do we acknowledge that He is the Jewish Savior?