

"Uncommon Birth" Matthew 1:18-2:23

INTRODUCTION:

People celebrate Christmas in different ways. There are different family traditions ... different customs ... BUT ... the SAME BIRTH!

Things sure have changed over the past 2000 years:

- o NOW – Santa comes at night ... presents are opened as soon as everyone wakes up.
- o THEN – On the 1st Christmas ... ONE GIFT was presented to the Shepherds while everyone else was asleep.
- o IT STARTED OUT – Wise Men came from the EAST.
- o NOW – Santa comes from the NORTH Pole.
- o IT STARTED OUT – Gifts were brought by CAMELS.
- o NOW – Gifts are brought by a sleigh with REINDEER.
- o IT STARTED OUT – A STAR led the way for the Wise Men.
- o NOW – A reindeer with a SHINING NOSE leads the way.
- o NOW – We have a CHRISTMAS TREE with lights, tinsel, decorations ... the smell of turkey, egg-nog & hot apple cider.
- o THEN – A LOWLY STABLE ... with hay ... and animal smells.
- o NOW – We have “Jingle Bells”.
- o THEN – The cry of a mother in pain, giving birth.
- o NOW – We go in DEBT buying presents.
- o THEN – The payment for our sin was given as a FREE GIFT.

Things have changed a lot in 2000 years ... BUT ... Jesus hasn't ... the Christmas story hasn't. This was a birth like no other.

It shouldn't be UNUSUAL for this UNUSUAL PERSON to have an UNUSUAL BIRTH. As we showed last week - God had a PLAN.

We plan WEDDINGS and we certainly plan for births – Well - God planned the BIRTH of His Son. There scriptures say that angels longed to look into these things – so if it was left to them - the ANGELS may have had a DIFFERENT PLAN.

Since angels are clearly known in scripture for their exuberant praise could it be that

o ANGELS - They may have wanted 10's of 1000's of TRUMPETS to announce His birth.

o GOD – Only wanted 1 angelic messenger – Gabriel.

o ANGELS – Probably wanted a fireworks display of shooting stars to light the sky.

o GOD – Only wanted 1 star over Bethlehem.

o ANGELS – Probably wanted to open the windows of Heaven & pour out untold wealth on this new King.

o GOD – Chose only 3 gifts from the Wise Men.

o ANGELS – Probably wanted a birth announcement sent to Royalty, Heads of Government, Religious Leaders.

o GOD – Chose to announce it only to some poor Shepherds.

YET ... God had it all planned out. NOT LIKE we would have planned it, perhaps. BUT THEN ... this was GOD'S Son.

There was nothing unusual about your birth or my birth - BUT ... the birth of Jesus was VERY UNUSUAL. Look with me at some of the unusual details of Jesus' birth as we consider the coming of the Messiah from the observance of His arrival, the other side of where we were last week.

1. UNCOMMON PREGNANCY – Matthew 1:18

Matthew 1:18 ¹⁸ Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit.

Jesus had to be born without any sin. IF He was to take our sin upon Himself, He must have none of his own ... OR ELSE ... **He** would be in need of a Savior. Nobody has ever done that before or since. No other “religion” has such a Savior.

ALL of us have a SIN NATURE ... we inherited it from Adam.

It has been passed down from generation to generation. This is something you can blame your FATHER for!

BESIDES ... a child of Joseph couldn't have been the Messiah. Besides having a sin nature ... which he would have passed on to Jesus ... a curse was placed on his family tree. **Jeremiah 22:30** says that **“no man of his seed shall prosper, sitting upon the throne of David and ruling any more in Judah.”**

Jechonias (called Coniah in Jeremiah) was the great, great (12 times) grandfather of Joseph. Jesus couldn't have sat on the Throne of David in God's Kingdom ... IF ... he were the son of Joseph.

2. UNCOMMON PROTECTION – Matthew 1:19

Matthew 1:19 ¹⁹ And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly.

It was a common practice for a man to have his wife stoned to death as an adulteress. That's what many men did ... it was perfectly acceptable ... it was Biblical. Most men wouldn't have stood by their espoused wife, like Joseph did.

IMAGINE THE SCENE:

Mary has been acting a little strange around Joseph lately ... maybe avoiding him. She has put on a little weight ... sick most every morning when Joseph came by.

THEN ... she tells Joseph that she is expecting a baby.
AND ... that Joseph isn't the father (he already knew that!).

THEN ... she gives him a story about an angel appearing to her ... telling her that she is going to give birth to GOD'S son.

Joseph may have loved Mary very much ... BUT ... this was TOO MUCH! No way! Just divorce her!

BUT ... NOTICE how God protects them both – 1:20.

Matthew 1:20 ²⁰ But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.

What a COMFORT this must have been for Mary & Joseph. NOW ... Joseph doesn't have just Mary's word.

This was GOD'S PLAN ... this was GOD'S SON.

3. **UNCOMMON PREDICTION** – Matthew 1:21

Matthew 1:21 ²¹ She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.”

Even now, the sex of a baby isn't predicted with 100% accuracy. AND ... this was 2000 years ago! They were guaranteed a BOY.

If this child was to be the KING of the Jews, it must be a BOY. If he is to be the sacrificial Lamb of God, this child must be a MALE. **Exodus 12:5** – “Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year: ye shall take it out from the sheep, or from the goats:”

If He's not a MALE, He couldn't be a KING ... He couldn't be the LAMB of God ... He couldn't be the SON of God. On earth, you have a 50/50 chance. BUT ... GOD was in charge of this birth.

4. **UNCOMMON PURSUERS** – Matthew 2:1

Matthew 2:1 ¹ Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem,

It took the Wise Men perhaps a year to follow the star to the house where Mary & Joseph were – **Matthew 2:11** ¹¹ And going into the house they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. While the Jewish Shepherds were just outside Bethlehem, the Gentile Wise Men came from probably 600 miles away.

NOTICE the gifts.

They would use this to live off of while they were in exile in Egypt
Matthew 2:13-14 ¹³ Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, “Rise, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you, for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him.” ¹⁴ And he rose and took the child and his mother by night and departed to Egypt.

5. UNCOMMON PROJECTION – Matthew 2:2

Matthew 2:2 ² saying, “Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.”

The star first appeared at the BIRTH of Jesus – 2:7. **Matthew 2:7**
⁷ Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly and ascertained from them what time the star had appeared.

It led them to Jerusalem. THEN ... it disappeared. THEN ... reappeared over Bethlehem – **Matthew 2:9-10** ⁹ After listening to the king, they went on their way. And behold, the star that they had seen when it rose went before them until it came to rest over the place where the child was. ¹⁰ When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy.

God used a STAR to reveal the LIGHT OF THE WORLD ...
Jesus.

NOTICE:

o How those who WALKED IN THE LIGHT reacted – 2:10 ¹⁰
When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy.

o How those who WALKED IN DARKNESS reacted – 2:3
Matthew 2:3 ³ When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him;

Some were “troubled” ... Some “rejoiced with exceedingly great joy”. What made the difference? What makes the difference in YOUR LIFE? It all depends on how much of His light you allow into YOUR LIFE.

6. UNCOMMON PROPHECY – Matthew 2:23

Matthew 2:23 ²³ And he went and lived in a city called Nazareth, that what was spoken by the prophets might be fulfilled: “He shall be called a Nazarene.”

Jesus was born in Bethlehem. THEN .. fled to Egypt to escape King Herod. Herod dies ... and his wicked son takes over. Joseph is afraid to go back to Bethlehem in Judea. It's only a few miles from Jerusalem, where the wicked King lives. SO ... Joseph goes back to his home town of Nazareth ... 76 miles further North ... in Galilee – 2:19-23. **Matthew 2:19-23** ¹⁹ But when Herod died, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, ²⁰ saying, “Rise, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the child’s life are dead.” ²¹ And he rose and took the child and his mother and went to the land of Israel. ²² But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there, and being warned in a dream he withdrew to the district of Galilee. ²³ And he went and lived in a city called Nazareth, that what was spoken by the prophets might be fulfilled: “He shall be called a Nazarene.”

Nazareth has lots of bad memories for Mary & Joseph. Jesus was considered an illegitimate child. Mary was considered to be a shameful woman who got pregnant out of wedlock.

BUT ... God had planned for His Son to be called a “Nazarene” ... to come from Nazareth. WHY? “Nazareth” means a ‘rod’ or ‘branch’. Out of Nazareth was to come forth the TREE OF LIFE!

7. UNCOMMON PRESENCE – John 1:1,14

John 1:1 ¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

John 1:14 ¹⁴ And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

This is perhaps the most UNCOMMON THING of all. THAT ... God would leave His Heavenly Throne to come to earth ... to LIVE among us ... to DIE for us.

YET ... that’s what Christmas is all about.

“He Left It All” – Charlotte A. Stere

“He left the streets of Heaven ... to walk this weary earth,
He left the Father’s riches ... for those of little worth.
He left the praise of angels ... for earthly hate and scorn,
The company of Heaven ... to wander here forlorn.
He left His crown of glory ... to hang upon a tree,
He left the Heavenly mansions ... to die for you and me.
He left the food celestial ... for vinegar and gall,
He left the Father’s bosom ... to slumber in a stall.
He left it all, dear sinner ... because He loved us so,
That whosoever cometh ... His perfect peace may know.
He left it all behind Him ... for sin and death and shame,
That we might dwell forever ... with Him. O praise His name.”

CONCLUSION:

There will be lots of people who will celebrate Christmas this year ... without Christ. They will celebrate with presents ... Santa ... a decorated tree ... turkey & dressing & ham. BUT ... they will celebrate Christmas ... without Christ.

What are you going to give to Jesus for His birthday? He’s like some people you know ... He’s hard to shop for. He doesn’t NEED anything. He doesn’t WANT any THINGS. What He wants is your love ... your obedience ... your faithfulness ... your surrender ... YOU!

AND ... in exchange ... He will give you:

- o A **PEACE** that passes all understanding ...
- o A **JOY** that you can’t measure ...
- o A **HOPE** that will never die ...
- o A **LOVE** that will never cease.

Make Jesus a part of your Christmas ... the central part. Don’t fill your life with so many other things that you don’t have any room for Jesus. Let’s enjoy the next week, as we prepare to celebrate the CHRIST of CHRISTmas!