

Leaving the Manger

(Compiled by Paul R. Blake from multiple Internet sources)

Introduction:

A. Matt. 1:23-25

1. The virgin birth of Jesus is a central truth of Christianity, second only to the resurrection - 1Cor. 15:12-15, 17-18
2. The fact that God left heaven to come to the earth and live as a man is endlessly fascinating and glorious - John 1:1-4, 10-14
3. While the facts surrounding the birth of Jesus are firmly rooted in Scripture, the celebration of His birth is not. It wasn't until 354 A.D. that the Bishop of Rome decided to observe December 25th, formerly the pagan holiday of Saturnalia, to celebrate the birth of Jesus.
4. It is ironic that ten times as much is said of the last three years of His life than is said of His first 30 years.

B. His childhood vs. His adulthood were paradoxical contrasts

1. It's what happens when God becomes man - Heb. 2:9-10, 14-15, 17-18

I. AS A BABY, HE WAS HELPLESS – AS A MAN, HE WAS ALL POWERFUL

A. As a Baby, He was totally dependent on others for survival - Luke 2:41-52

B. As a Man, we are totally dependent on Him for survival - Col. 1:17; Heb. 1:1-3

C. Matt. 28:18-20; John 11:43-44; Mark 9:39; Matt. 8:28-34; 14:22-33

D. This power demands our respect and submission

II. AS A BABY, HE WAS LOVED – AS A MAN, HE WAS HATED

A. While it is true that Herod hated Jesus when he was born (Matt. 2), most people love a baby.

B. John 15:18-20 - Jesus was different and thus hated.

C. By his light, he exposed the darkness and shame in others - John 3:19

III. AS A BABY, HE MADE DEMANDS OF HIS FAMILY – AS A MAN, HE MAKES DEMANDS OF EVERYONE

A. Every parent knows from experience the taxing demands of an infant.

B. But as Jesus grew, so did the scope of his demands.

C. He called all men to repentance and a change of life

1. John 8:11; Luke 13:3; Matt. 16:24

IV. JESUS WAS BORN TO DIE SO THAT WE CAN BE BORN AGAIN TO LIVE

A. The doctrine of Christ is full of paradoxes.

B. It was God's plan from before the creation of the world to send Jesus to earth to die - Rev. 13:8; Luke 24:44-47

C. Today, those who are born again can have life

1. John 3:3-5; 1Peter 1:23; 1John 5:4

Conclusion:

A. As important as the birth of Jesus is, we must look beyond the manger, beyond the baby, beyond the youth; and see the Christ who has all authority, who makes ultimate demands of us, but who also promises everlasting life.