



Truth for Today

December 20, 2020

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why I'm glad Jesus was born

by Don Hooton

It's the season where many churches have Nativity displays and special services for Christmas – a practice unknown in the New Testament (Please see my tract [*The History of Christmas*](#) to answer concerns for all that we see). However, *the Nativity of Jesus is in Scripture*. It is part of the gospel story, chosen by the Holy Spirit (as it was in *Matthew* and *Luke*) to be repeated again and again when the story of the gospel was shared. Although it is rarely recounted in the Epistles and elsewhere, the promise of His birth and coming was part of many of the prophet's messages (c.f. Isaiah 7:14; 9:6, et.al.) as well as the ministry that led to His rejection and death (c.f. 1Peter 2:4-8). The bulk of His ministry was as an adult, of course, but the Holy Spirit *reminded us twice* that telling the Nativity story upholds the message of the gospel. And these are the reasons, in the season of lists, *why I'm glad Jesus was born*.

His birth showed the power of God. For most couples who experience childbirth, it is a powerful reality to witness: life begetting life. Yet in the birth of Jesus was unveiled an even greater power from God who has to beget life by miracle. The promise Mary received was that *"The Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the Most High will overshadow you"* (Luke 2:35). *"His name Jesus"* the angel said was a daily reminder to Mary, and Joseph, that he was the *"Son of the Most High"* (2:32) – even the *"Son of God"* (2:35). God was able to execute His purpose outside the powers of nature that control humans. Jesus' birth was a miracle, a sign and a wonder – the very demonstration of power at the onset of Jesus' presence in the world that would be the beginning of many more powers in the world – that would change lives and destinies (c.f. Romans 6:1-8).

His birth showed that humans are created good and can have good hope by grace. Some days the reality that *"there is none righteous, no not one"* (Romans 3:10) seems to hard to bear. *"All have sinned"* is a regular sub-text of the daily newspaper or internet news stream, the evening news anchors – and well, our daily prayers. Yet in the blackness of the world we have a created, Jesus' arrival showed *"the tender mercy of our God, whereby the sunrise shall visit us from on high, to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide*

our feet into the way of peace" (Luke 1:78-79). Unlike the treachery of belief systems that cauterize our senses for good with the drudgery that we are "born in sin" (i.e. Augustinism's Original Sin) and "totally depraved" (i.e. Calvinism's TULIP), the gospel announcement that Jesus was born "in the flesh" shattered – and continues to shatter – such human falsehoods that has deprived humanity of its inherent good and interconnected responsibility for our own actions. I'm glad that Jesus was born because he is the perfect example that I was born to be good and that I can, by grace, pursue good in myself. Further, Jesus was the announcement to all: *"Good news of great joy that will be for all the people"* (2:10). Nothing should break the shackles of human despair more than the appearance of the Christ Child who brought hope and peace by His death and His resurrection to all.

His birth showed that God really cares. Biblical history is accented with God's interventions on the part of His people. In Psalms, *"The righteous cry out, and the LORD hears them; he delivers them from all their troubles"* (34:17). And so, *"this is the confidence that we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to His will He hears us. And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests that we have asked of Him"* (1John 5:14-15). Where does this confidence come from? From the evidence of a raised Lord? Yes. From the power of a crucified Lord? Yes. But also, it comes from the demonstration that *"my eyes have seen your salvation that you have prepared in the presence of all the people, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel"* (Luke 2:30-32). Just as righteous Simeon saw in the birth of Jesus as the evidence that God had heard his petitions and granted them, the arrival of Jesus in the world should be for every Gentile and every Jew that God has heard our cry for deliverance and hope: and Jesus is all of it.

So carefully consider how Scripture truly and completely presents the birth of Jesus. It is the beginning of the story of hope and salvation for all people; Imagined by its Author before the world began; And just *"at the right time time"* (Romans 5:6), this Jesus *"born of woman, born under the Law"* (Galatians 4:4) came to bring you and me the greatest Joy we will ever know.

That's why I am glad that Jesus was born.

NEWS & NOTES

UPDATED PRAYER LIST

- **Congratulations to Kaymesia and Kaku Barkoh!** Nyameke Henry Barkoh made his appearance on Thursday night. Both are home and well.
- **Paula Dobbs'** were inconclusive. She will have a left and right catherization on Wednesday at 9:00 a.m.
- **Harvey Goble** has an outpatient procedure to remove a skin cancer this week
- **Imogene Hodges** will have an Echocardiogram and Ultrasound on January 4th.
- **Cecelia Neel** is having substantive oral procedures to resolve infections in her bone.
- Longtime friends of **Lester Cockrell**, Emmitt & Marylou Taylor, along with their son's family all have covid 19. Emmitt has had surgery due to a fall and is now in skilled nursing unit.
- **Karen Dargan's mother, Vera Thompson**, passed away Friday morning. Funeral arrangements are at Brown & Son Funeral Home, Bradenton, FL, on Wednesday, 12/23, 11:30 a.m. Burial at Sarasota National Cemetery.
- **Tricia Davis'** mother, Patsy, has not been well for the last week.
- Because of the holidays, several will be travelling so we pray for their safety on the road and for their wellness.

IN-PERSON SCHEDULE (*Seating is based on pew capacities to maintain safe seating distances. Please follow recommended wearing of face masks, especially when singing. Overflow seating for worship is in classroom 5 and 9).*

- **SUNDAY**
 - BIBLE CLASSES, 9:00 AM. | For All Ages.
 - WORSHIP, 10:00 AM.
- **TUESDAY**
 - ADULT BIBLE CLASS, 10:30 AM
- **WEDNESDAY**
 - BIBLE CLASSES, 7:00 PM. | For All Ages.

VIRTUAL SCHEDULE

- ALL inperson events are LiveStreamed at the time of the scheduled event and will be replayable on our YouTube Channel.
- Woodlandschurchofchrist.org/live-stream

MEETINGS, EVENTS, SINGINGS & STUDIES

- **2:52 Kids Class** on first Sundays [2-12] | TBA
- **TEEN BIBLE CLASS** [12-18] | Bible Class on First Sundays | TBA (classroom 5)
- **BUILDING STRONG FAMILIES** Bible Class on first Sundays | 1/3, 4:00 p.m. (auditorium)
- **TEEN HOME DEVO** [12-18] | TBA
- **YOUNG ADULTS STUDY** | TBA until January
- **ADULTS STUDY** [30/40] | TBA until January
- **DEACON MEETING** | Sunday, 1/3,
- **CONGREGATIONAL MEETING** | Sunday, 1/10 after morning worship (*in-person only).
- **2021 EVENTS**
 - Area-Wide Singing | Sat., 3/6
 - Gospel Meeting with *Ed Brand* | 3/28-31
 - VBS | 6/22-25* (*Tue-Fri)
 - Youth Lectures with *Caleb Churchill & Andy Harrison* | 8/7-8
 - Gospel Meeting with *Mike Wilson* | 9/26-29
 - Women's Day Bible Study | 10/9
 - Men's Day Bible Study | 11/6

OPPORTUNITIES TO SERVE

- **VOLUNTEER SIGN-UPS** See the Monthly Assignments and let Barrett Blankenship know if you cannot fulfill an assignment.
- **Willing to TEACH?** We now need teachers for Spring quarter. **Please contact Brian Clark if you are willing to teach.**
- **WOULD YOU ENCOURAGE?** See Leo Betancourt.
- **HOSPITALITY?** Maureen Chegin and Cecelia Neel will coordinate food for members who need assistance during an extended recovery period after surgery or for the family at a funeral.

DIRECTORY UPDATES

- Contact Brian with updates or if you need a PDF of the directory.
- We are glad to welcome a new couple to our family: **Beau and Jasmine Frisby**. Look for their info in this week's enews.

WEEKLY BIBLE READING

Week Fifty-One (beginning 12/20)

- READ Psalm 50, 100, 150
- MEMORIZE Psalm 100:1-5

Attendance	InPerson Average Last-Month	Virtual Average Last-Month	InPerson Last Week	Virtual Views Last Week
<i>Sunday Classes</i>	<i>n/a</i>	<i>n/a</i>	64	27
<i>Sunday Worship</i>	77	52	105	44
<i>Tuesday Adult Class</i>	11	7	6	15
<i>Wednesday Classes</i>	39	20	53	14

SUNDAYS	10:00 AM - 12/20	10:00 AM - 12/27	CONTACT INFORMATION
Foyer 1-Welcome	Jay Dulin	Dwight Haas	<i>Elders</i>
Foyer 2-Ushering	Jonathan Chandler	Adam Bohanan	Keith Arrants 936.582.1244
SongLeading	Norman Davis	Jonathan Chandler	George Chapman 281.298.1303
1 st Prayer	Nathan Shows	Harvey Goble	Norman Davis 832.326.2966
Scripture	Michael Harvey	Josh Suarez	Don Hooton 936.443.6230
Scripture Reading	Matthew 5:13-16	Acts 2:36-47	<i>Deacons</i>
Communion_Lead	Barrett Blankenship	Troy French	Adam Bohanan 281.798.1093
Preaching	Don Hooton	Mickey Chandler	Brian Clark 281.513.0706
2 nd Prayer	Adam Bohanan	Gary LeBlanc	Gary LeBlanc 281.292.0262
Announcements	George Chapman	Norman Davis	Craig Preuss 832.477.0578
Sanitize-Bathrooms After	Osteens	Hootons	<i>Evangelists</i>
Sanitize-Pews After	Shows	Shewmake	Don Hooton 936.443.6230
Building Open/Lockup	Bohanan	Davis	<i>Website</i>
Sound 1	Chris Latson	Chris Latson	www.woodlandschurchofchrist.org
Communion Prep	G&L Chapman	G&L Chapman	<i>Office Phone</i>
Counting Contribution	George Chapman & Brian Clark	Norman Davis	281.367.2099
WEDNESDAYS	7:00 PM - 12/23	7:00 PM - 12/30	<i>Church Email</i>
SongLeading	Keith Arrants	Adam Bohanan	woodlandschurchofchrist@gmail.com
Invitation/Talk	Barrett Blankenship	Dwight Haas	
Prayer	Gerald Hodges	Craig Preuss	
Announcements	George Chapman	Don Hooton	