

Lifting Up The STANDARD

“When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the LORD shall lift up a standard against him” (Isaiah 59:19).



Challenging And Encouraging God's Remnant To Remain Faithful

Issue # 25

“Behold A Virgin”



“Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.”
(Isaiah 7:14)

At this special time of the year in our upcoming articles we will focus on the amazing story of all stories, concerning the birth of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Two Books

Matthew 1:1 begins with the mention of “The book of the generation of Jesus Christ.” Genesis 5:1 refers to “The book of the generations of Adam.”

The Book of The Generations of Adam Is A Book of Death.

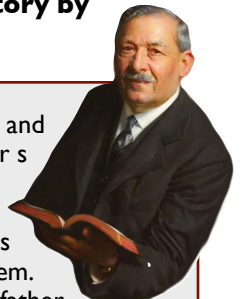
Genesis 5:1,
Enos, “and he died.”
Genesis 5:14,
Cainan, “and he died.”

Genesis 5:17,
Mahalaleel, “and he died.”
Genesis 5:20,
Jared, “and he died.”

Genesis 5:27,
Methuselah, “and he died.”
Genesis 5:31,
Lamech, “and he died.”

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Christmas Story by Gipsy Smith



When my father and his brothers travelled about the country, all their families accompanied them. By this time my father had prayed my sisters Emily and Lovinia and my brother Ezekiel into the kingdom. They came in in the order of their ages. I was the next, and in my heart I too was longing for God. My father used to pray continually in my hearing, “Lord, save my Rodney!”

All this time my father was very poor, and one winter at Cambridge we were in the hardest straits. My father was sitting in his van, looking solemn and sad. That day one of my aunts, I knew, had been buying provisions for the Christmas feast on the morrow. This had excited my interest, and, boy-like, I wanted to know what we were going to have for Christmas, and I asked my father. “I do not know, my dear,” he said quietly. There was nothing in the house and he had no money. Then the devil came and tempted him. His fiddle was hanging on the wall, and he looked at it desperately and thought to himself, “If I just take down my fiddle and go to a public-house and play to the

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The only way to get into Adam's book is to be born into it. The only way to get into "The book of the generation of Jesus Christ" is to be born again" (John 3:3).

The Book of The Generations of Jesus Christ Is A Book of Life.

John 3:15

"Whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal **life**."

John 3:16

"Whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting **life**."

John 5:24

"He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting **life**, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto **life**."

Two Sons

Matthew 1:1,

"The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham."

"The Son of David"

The phrase "the son of David" occurs twice in this chapter.

- **Verse 1**, "Jesus Christ, the son of David."
- **Verse 20**, "Joseph, thou son of David."

Matthew recorded Joseph's genealogy, and Luke recorded the family tree of Mary. Jews carefully maintained very accurate genealogical records mainly because property rights in Israel were linked to family heritage. The genealogical of Mary and Joseph gave Christ the indisputable right to the throne of David.

"The Son of Abraham"

Verse 1,

"The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham."

God's Word is a Book of promises and prophesies. Abraham's family is known as the family of promise. The promises of God are certain.

Genesis Chapter 12:12,

"Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed."

The genealogy of Jesus Christ, is much more than a list of names.



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people there, my children too will have a good Christmas dinner." But the temptation was very soon overcome. My father fell on his knees and began to pray. He thanked God for all His goodness to him, and when he arose from his knees he said to his children, "I don't know quite what we shall have for Christmas, but we will sing." He began to sing with a merry heart

"In some way or other
The Lord will provide:
It may not be my way,
It may not be thy way;
But yet in His own way
The Lord will provide."

Just then, while we were singing, there was a knock at the door of the van.

"Who is there?" cried my father. It was the old Cambridge town missionary, Mr. Sykes.

"It is I, Brother Smith. God is good, is He not? I have come to tell you how the Lord will provide. In a shop in this town there are three legs of mutton and groceries waiting for you and your brothers."

A wheelbarrow was needed to bring home the store. The brothers never knew who gave them these goods. But the Word of God was verified."

"No good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly."



Four Women

This is very interesting since it was not customary for Jews to include women in their records. Even more interesting is the fact that some of the women were anything but godly ladies.



Tamar: Genesis 38:6-30,

Tamar disguised herself as a harlot and seduced Judah. Through him, she became the mother of Perez.



Rahab: Joshua 2:1-24,

Rahab was a harlot who lived in Jericho.



Ruth: Ruth 1:1-4:22,

Ruth was from the land of Moab. They were a cursed people because they stemmed from the incestuous relationship Lot had with his daughters.



Bathsheba: Second Samuel 11:1-27,

Bathsheba was the wife of Uriah the Hittite, who was a soldier in the army of King David. She had an adulterous affair with David. Bathsheba later became the mother of Solomon.

Joseph The Husband of Mary

Following a lengthy and important list of names proving that Christ had a claim to the throne, we read,

Matthew 1:16,

“Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ.”

Matthew and Luke showed that Joseph was a legal parent, but not a genetic parent to Jesus. Jesus was miraculously conceived in Mary, by the Holy Spirit. Since Jesus was born into Joseph's family, he was a legal heir. Through Joseph, as well as Mary, Jesus obtained a rightful claim to the throne of David.

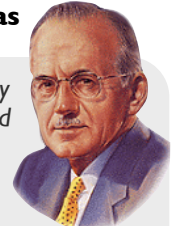


It is also important to note that Joseph, although engaged to Mary at this time, is referred to as “the husband of Mary.” Engagement periods were legal contracts in Israel at that time.

Joseph is mentioned seven times in Matthew and then fades completely out of view.

- **Ch.1:16,** “The husband of Mary.”
- **Ch.1:18,** “Mary was espoused to Joseph.”
- **Ch.1:19,** “Joseph her husband.”
- **Ch.1:20,** “Joseph thou son of David.”
- **Ch.1:24,** “Joseph...took unto him his wife.”
- **Ch.2:13,14,** “Joseph...took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt.”
- **Ch.2:19-21,** “Joseph.. took the young child and his mother, and came into the land of Israel.”

A.W. Tozer on Christmas



“So completely are we carried away by the excitement of this midwinter festival that we are apt to forget that its romantic appeal is the least significant thing about it. The theology of Christmas too easily gets lost under the wrappings, yet apart from the theological meaning it really has none at all. A half dozen doctrinally sound carols serve to keep alive the great deep truth of the Incarnation, but aside from these, popular Christmas music is void of any real lasting truth. The English mouse that was not even stirring, the German Tannenbaum so fair and lovely and the American red-nosed reindeer that has nothing to recommend it have pretty well taken over in Christmas poetry and song.

These along with merry old St. Nicholas have about displaced Christian theology. It does seem strange that so many persons become excited about Christmas and so few stop to inquire into its meaning; but I suppose this odd phenomenon is quite in harmony with our unfortunate human habit of magnifying trivialities and ignoring matters of greatest import. The Christmas message, when stripped of its pagan overtones, is relatively simple: God is come to earth in the form of man.

In these latter-years of the twentieth century no other season of the year reveals so much religion and so little godliness as the Christmas season. How far have we come

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The Unsung Hero

Every year during this season, we hear much about the different characters of Christmas. People like Mary, the shepherds, and the wise men. The wise men actually had nothing to do with the time when Jesus was born. It was about

two years later that we read “they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother” (Matthew 2:110). Very little is mentioned about Joseph. In most Christmas plays he just stands there watching the scene unfold around him.

Joseph was a “just man.”

He lived for God, and he walked by faith. The girl he was engaged to went away for six months and when she came home she was pregnant. He assumed what everyone would assume; however, he loved her and rather than have her stoned to death he chooses to put her way secretly. Joseph was a man of *character, compassion and commitment* to the will of God. When he realized that he was God’s *person* for the *purpose* God had for him he immediately went with God’s *plan* for his life. In spite of the fact that people would constantly be whispering behind his back, his family would most likely disown him; however, he determined to do what God wanted him to do.

Four Dreams

Matthew 1:20,21,

“But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the LORD appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.”

“He Thought On These Things”

The Greek word translated “*thought*” is *enthymeomai*. It only occurs two other times in the Bible and both in a negative way. (i.e. “*this can’t be right.*”)

In Acts chapter ten when the Lord told Peter to arise and eat contrary to what he had been taught to eat we read “*Peter doubted in himself what this vision which he had seen should mean.*” In verse nineteen we read, “*While Peter thought (enthymeomai) on the vision, the Spirit said unto him, Behold, three men seek thee.*”

In both cases when Joseph and Peter stopped to consciously, intentionally, and without impulsive emotionalism to think, the Lord revealed to them what He was doing and in both cases the men obeyed the will of God. In neither case would this have been the will of Joseph or Peter. They simply obeyed the revealed will of God. We will discuss the other three dreams that Joseph had in an upcoming article in this series. They are listed below.

Matthew 2:13,

“And when they were departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him.”

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in the corruption of our tastes from the reverence of the simple shepherds, the chant of the angels and the beauty of the heavenly host! The Star of Bethlehem could not lead a wise man to Christ today; it could not be distinguished amid the millions of artificial lights hung aloft on Main Street by the Merchants Association. No angels could sing loudly enough to make themselves heard above the raucous, earsplitting rendition of “Silent Night” meant to draw customers to the neighborhood stores. In our mad materialism we have turned beauty into ashes, prostituted every normal emotion and made merchandise of the holiest gift the world ever knew.

Christ came to bring peace and we celebrate His coming by making peace impossible for six weeks of each year. Not peace but tension, fatigue and irritation rule the Christmas season. He came to free us of debt and many respond by going deep into debt each year to buy enervating luxuries for people who do not appreciate them. He came to help the poor and we heap gifts upon those who do not need them. The simple token given out of love has been displaced by expensive presents given because we have been caught in a squeeze and don’t know how to back out of it. Not the beauty of the Lord our God is found in such a situation, but the ugliness and deformity of human sin.





Matthew 2:19,20,

“But when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeareth in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, Saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel: for they are dead which sought the young child’s life.”

Matthew 2:22,23,

But when he heard that Archelaus did reign in Judaea in the room of his father “Herod, he was afraid to go thither: notwithstanding, being warned of God in a dream, he turned aside into the parts of Galilee: And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene.”

“Mary, Of Whom Was Born Jesus”

Matthew 1:16

“Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ.”

The word “*begat*” occurs 225 times in the Word of God and always refers to **men** begetting children. Matthew chapter one the same principle continues.

Verses 1-16,

1 The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. 2 Abraham **begat** Isaac; and Isaac **begat** Jacob; and Jacob **begat** Judas and his brethren; 3 And Judas **begat** Phares and Zara of Thamar; and Phares **begat** Esrom; and Esrom **begat** Aram; 4 And Aram **begat** Aminadab; and Aminadab **begat** Naasson; and Naasson **begat** Salmon; 5 And Salmon **begat** Booz of Rachab; and Booz **begat** Obed of Ruth; and Obed **begat** Jesse; 6 And Jesse **begat** David the king; and David the king **begat** Solomon of her that had been the wife of Urias; 7 And Solomon **begat** Roboam; and Roboam **begat** Abia; and Abia **begat** Asa; 8 And Asa **begat** Josaphat; and Josaphat **begat** Joram; and Joram **begat** Ozias; 9 And Ozias **begat** Joatham; and Joatham **begat** Achaz; and Achaz **begat** Ezekias; 10 And Ezekias **begat** Manasses; and Manasses **begat** Amon; and Amon **begat** Josias; 11 And Josias **begat** Jechonias and his brethren, about the time they were carried away to Babylon: 12 And after they were brought to Babylon, Jechonias **begat** Salathiel; and Salathiel **begat** Zorobabel; 13 And Zorobabel **begat** Abiud; and Abiud **begat** Eliakim; and Eliakim **begat** Azor; 14 And Azor **begat** Sadoc; and Sadoc **begat** Achim; and Achim **begat** Eliud; 15 And Eliud **begat** Eleazar; and Eleazar **begat** Matthan; and Matthan **begat** Jacob; 16 And Jacob **begat** Joseph.”

Then we read about, *“Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ.”*

To this point, two things are revealed in the story. Mary is pregnant and Joseph is not the father. An angel then reveals to Joseph and it is printed in Matthew for all of us to understand that the child in Mary’s womb was conceived by the Holy Spirit, therefore, Mary was still a virgin. The doctrine of the virgin birth is foundational to Christianity. To renounce the virgin birth is to renounce the deity of Christ. There can be no *“Emmanuel, God with us,”* without Christ’s virgin birth.


Three Generations

Matthew 1:17,

“So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations; and from David until the carrying away into Babylon are fourteen generations; and from the carrying away into Babylon unto Christ are fourteen generations.”

Our Greatest Need

If our greatest need had been information, God would have sent us an educator;
 If our greatest need had been technology, God would have sent us a scientist;
 If our greatest need had been money, God would have sent us an economist;
 If our greatest need had been pleasure, God would have sent us an entertainer;
 But our greatest need was forgiveness, so God sent us a Savior.



“You can never truly enjoy Christmas until you can look up into the Father’s face and tell him you have received His gift.”

John R. Rice



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The first generation begins with the call of Abraham and ends with the introduction of David. It is the period of the patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph) and the judges (e.g., Deborah, Barak, Samson, and Jephthah). It was that great period of heroism when Israel was made famous! It begins with the birth and establishment of Israel as a nation.

The second generation is a period of decline. It was a period when for the most part Israel was ruled by wicked kings. It was a time of apostasy ending up in the destruction of Israel and her captivity in Babylon. Very little is known about this period covering about 600 years. It covers a period when Abiud, Eliakim, Azor, Sadoc, Achim, Eliud, Eleazar, and Matthan lived. The only thing we know about these men is that we do not know anything about them except their names.

The third generation begins with the nation being under bondage to Babylon and ends with them under the bondage of Rome.

God's Amazing Grace!

The nation of Israel is a story of disgrace, ending when they cursed and spit on their own Messiah; however, it was through that nation that the Messiah came.

The grace of God is obvious also, as previously mentioned in the fact that God allowed **Tamar** to be included in the Messianic line. For the details of her wickedness see Genesis 38:13-18.

God allowed **Rahab** the harlot and a Gentile, considered "dogs" by Israelites to be part of the Messianic line.

And there was **Ruth** who was a Gentile outcast from the cursed people of Moab. Moab was born out of the incestuous relationship recorded in Genesis 19:30-37. Ruth was a pure lady who became the wife of Boaz, and even the great-grandmother of David; however, she was born of a tribe of people who were begun as the result of incest. In Deuteronomy 23:3 we read the whole Moabite nation was cursed by God. In spite of that, we see the amazing grace of God by allowing Ruth, born in a tribe that was cursed and the product of an incestuous relationship!

Finally, there was **Bathsheba**, referred to in verse six as "her that had been the wife of Urias." She was an adulterous woman.

We should also consider the fact that God used a despicable tax collector, who was hated by the Jews, Matthew by name, to write the greatest story that has ever been written.

Let us understand that Jesus Christ is the friend of sinners. Matthew 11:19 tells us He was called "a friend of publicans and sinners." Christ Himself said, "for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" (Matthew 9:13).

"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." (Isaiah 6:8,9).

Message

The First Christmas Carol



C. H. Spurgeon

Delivered December 20, 1857

The Wonderful GRACE of Jesus

"Wonderful grace of Jesus,
Reaching the most defiled,
By its transforming power,
Making him God's dear child,
Purchasing peace and Heaven,
For all eternity;
And the wonderful grace of Jesus reaches me."

