

## 1 - The Readings

As you read through the set readings we need to notice the following things:

1 - Luke 1.5-25	The announcement of the birth of John
2 - Luke 1.26-28	The announcement of the birth of Jesus
3 - Luke 1.39-56	Mary visits Elisabeth
4 - Luke 1.57-80	The birth and childhood of John
5 - Matt 1.1-17; Lk 3.23-28	The Genealogy of Jesus
See also 1 Chronicles 2.1-15; Ruth 4.12-22; 1 Chronicles 3.5-24	
6 - Matt 1.18-25; Luke 2.1-7	The Birth of Jesus
7 - Matt 2.1-12	The wise men from the east worship the infant Jesus
8 - Luke 2.8-20	The local shepherds come to worship the infant Jesus
9 - Luke 2.21	The Circumcision of Jesus
10 - Luke 2.22-38	Jesus presented in the Temple: Simeon and Anna testify
11 - Matt 2.13-18	Fleeing to Egypt: Herod murders the local children
See also Revelation 12	
12 - Matt 2.19-23	The Return from Egypt; settlement at Nazareth in Galilee
13 - Luke 2.41-52	Jesus in the Temple at Jerusalem: aged twelve.

## 2 - Observations on readings

- 2.1 Link between families of John and Jesus
- 2.2 Contrast angelic mediation and Incarnation
- 2.3 Genealogies used in two senses
- 2.4 Wise men – The Lord alerts the Gentiles
- 2.5 Common people of Israel informed
- 2.6 Testimony of faithful witnesses
- 2.7 Reaction and resistance to the arrival of Messiah

2.1 There is a strong link between John and Jesus at their births. This will find expression in the work of John as a forerunner to Jesus. Something is passing away as the new thing arrives. The conjunction between the two families of John and Jesus is the setting for the ending of one way of God dealing with his people and the entry upon a fuller, maturer and permanent and final dealing.

2.2 The use of angelic mediation to announce the incarnation of the Word. Again something is giving way to a greater mediation.

2.3 Genealogies point to the conjunction of physical descent and familial reception of the Word of God. More of this later.

2.4 The wise men open up a wider issue of the gentiles – that they also have a prophetic intimation of the coming of the Jewish Christ. God has not left Himself without witness even there.

2.5 The local shepherds represent the people of Israel for whom their messiah has come – they come to worship and bear witness to the angelic announcement directly to them. God does not only alert Mary and Joseph, and their relatives – this is for all the people to know. These common people by direct revelation – the opposing, religious, Pharisees by indirect movement of observing the coming of the Gentiles to worship. They are not given to be privy to the hidden work among them – they are only permitted to know as a reaction to the results of what others have come to know by revelation. This is indicative of their role throughout the Gospels. They eventually have the kingdom taken away from them in the light of their opposition [Matthew 21.33-46] and being wicked husbandmen.

2.6 The powerful testimony of the various faithful witnesses to the coming of Jesus. The angels, the wise men, Elisabeth, Anna and Simeon. Then there is the indirect recognition that something is afoot, for the scribes are required to indirectly testify when the gentiles ask, Herod the Great also in a darker way.

## The Readings

## 2- Observations about the readings

2.7 The plan of God, for the Word to become incarnate was kept hidden for ages past in God. It was only made known to the heavenly realms through the church [Ephesians 3.3.1-13] not comprehended by the angelic powers. It was taken by surprise. The coming of the word of God is greatly feared and strongly resisted by the occult [hidden] powers. A resistance is seen accompanying the arrival of the Messiah.

### 2 - Preliminary observations on Text

1. Difficulties in resolving the two genealogies of Matthew 1 and Luke 3

[a] variations between David and Joseph, between Abraham and David they agree

[i] Two names for each??

[ii] Joseph's mother married two men, of one Joseph was a son by birth, of another son by adoption?

[iii] Luke's genealogy is the genealogy of Mary. Heli being the father of Mary and hence the father-in-law of Joseph.

[b] Cainan not found in genealogy from Noah to Abraham in Hebrew version of Gen 11.12 although it is found in LXX

### 3 - The Fulfillment of God's Promises – according to Matthew

3.1 The genealogy

3.2 Five Incidents:

[1] The birth of Jesus [Isaiah 7.14; 8.8,10]

[2] The magi adore the infant Jesus [Numbers 24.17; Micah 5.2; 2 Samuel 5.2 and 1 Chronicles 11.2]

[3] The flight into Egypt [Hosea 11.1]

[4] The slaying of the infants [Jeremiah 31.15]

[5] The return from Egypt and the childhood of Jesus at Nazareth [Judges 13.5-7; Isaiah 11.1; 53.2]

Matthew's presentation of the Birth and Infancy of Jesus has really majored on the fact that God delivers on His promises. His presentation of the birth of Jesus is stated in a genealogy and five incidents – all of which are heavily interleaved with the Old Testament.

#### 3.1 - The Genealogy

In Matthew there is a presentation of the genealogy of Jesus. This genealogy spans the whole of the Old Testament as divided into 3 cycles of 14 generations each. They demonstrate Jesus as the son of Abraham and the son of David [Matt 1.1]. What is presented to the readers in the first cycle is how the covenant relation between Abraham and the LORD is carried through to a peak in the person of David. The second cycle of 14 generations states the peak of the Davidic kingdom declining to the time of the Babylonian exile. The final cycle shows that there are 14 generations from the exile to the coming of Jesus.

We are left with the clear statement that the covenant of Abraham is coming to its full fruition and indeed will lead to a new covenant; it is also true that the kingdom of David will be restored by this man Jesus, who is son of Abraham and son of David.

#### 3.2 - Five Incidents of Jesus' Birth and Infancy

The genealogy is followed by five incidents in the infancy of Christ which are connected with five prophetic passages of the Old Testament.

[1] The birth of Jesus [Isaiah 7.14; 8.8,10]

[2] The adoration by the magi of the infant Jesus [Numbers 24.17; Micah 5.2; 2 Samuel 5.2 and 1 Chronicles 11.2]

*Questions generated by  
the text as we read*

*3 - God fulfils His  
promises*

[3] The flight into Egypt [Hosea 11.1]

[4] The slaying of the infants [Jeremiah 31.15]

[5] The return from Egypt and the childhood of Jesus at Nazareth [Judges 13.5-7; Isaiah 11.1; 53.2]

These show the messianic dignity of the Christ, which is the design of the evangelist.

#### 4 - Comparison between Luke and Matthew in Infancy narratives

4.1 Did Mary speak with Joseph?

4.2 Relationship between Nazareth and Bethlehem

4.3 Magi's visit and flight to Egypt: integrate with Luke's narrative?

Questions:

[1] Did Mary speak with Joseph after the angel announced to her the birth of the child? If she did, then Joseph's perplexity, as recorded in Matthew, is hard to understand?

But [a] she might have judged it right for God to sort out her betrothed Himself. This is consistent with what we know of Mary's disposition. [b] Mary may have told him, either before or after her visit to Elisabeth, and his consternation is what the angel relieves.

[2] Does Matthew present Bethlehem as the normal abode of the family, and the residency at Nazareth as a result of the angelic intervention? In contrast, does Luke indicate that Nazareth was the normal abode, and Bethlehem an interlude due to Augustus' decree?

[3] How do we interweave the incidents of the visit of the Magi and the flight into Egypt [Matt] with Luke's narrative?

[i] before the presentation of the child in the temple?

[a] six weeks not time for journey to Egypt and back

[b] parents wouldn't have taken to the Temple after the jealousy of Herod had become known?

[ii] after the presentation in the Temple for Luke has them returning to Nazareth directly after the presentation, without going to Bethlehem. Matt has Joseph, after the return from Egypt, not returning to Bethlehem, but going straight to Nazareth.

BUT: [a] Could we place the presentation either *before* or *after*:

Mary and Joseph could have simply trusted the Lord to protect the child.

Nearest Egyptian town of Rhinocolure was 3-4 days journey. So three weeks easily would have seen them go and return.

[b] Could place it *after* if we simply suppose that Mary and Joseph returned to Bethlehem, which Luke either did not mention or did not know

Also, if we think about Mary and Joseph as deciding to settle in Bethlehem then it would add up to an obvious possibility.

# child of high rank Bethlehem better

# nearer Elisabeth and Zachariah

# avoid the short time which elapsed between marriage and birth

#### A Reconstruction of Order of Infancy Narratives

1. The angel announces to Mary the birth of Jesus [Luke 1].

2. Mary, after or without having spoken to Joseph, goes to Elisabeth [Luke 1]

3. After her return, Joseph falls into a state of perplexity from which he is delivered by the message of the angel [Matt 1]

4. He takes Mary ostensibly for his wife [Matt 1]

5. Herod's order, carrying out the decree of Augustus, leads them to Bethlehem [Luke 2]

6. Jesus is born [Matt 1 Luke 2]

7. His parents present him in the Temple [Luke 2]

8. On their return to Bethlehem, they receive the visit of the Magi and escape to Egypt [Matt 2]

9. Returned from Egypt, they give up the idea of settling at Bethlehem, and determine once more to fix their home at Nazareth.

[After Godet, [Luke vol 1, 1870] on the supposition that Luke and Matthew are, at the time of writing their own account are ignorant of the other's account.]

### 5 - Genealogies Point to Mysterious Matter - Incarnation of the Word of God

5 – Genealogies point to the Mystery of the Incarnation

5.1 Jesus linked with the line of Joseph

5.2 Lineage takes its meaning from Jesus

5.3 Lineage as a tracing of the reception of the Word of God

5.4 The use made of the genealogies in Genesis

5.4.1 Lines of descent show similarity of action, father to son

5.4.2 Becomes a way of expressing the response to Word of God: obedient or not

5.4.3 Gives us a way of seeing that faithful response promotes more revelation

5.4.4 vessels of wrath, vessels of mercy [Romans 9-11]

5.5 The case of the Word of God, spoken and incarnate, coming to Mary and Joseph

5.5.1 It will be a trial of their faith to receive the Word [as for everyone]

5.5.2 Word always has the initiative – God's people can only respond

5.5.3 Joseph and Mary receive a spoken word and also make welcome incarnate Word

5.5.4 Stand at the intersection of angelic mediation and mediation through a Son

5.5.5 They stand in a line of the faithful elect, contrasting to others in every generation

If the genealogies are set within the continuity of the Jewish Old Covenant, then we are not to mistake that Jesus comes as the Son of David, the long promised Messiah who is the King of the Jews.

The Gospel writers make this the uppermost matter for them to expound and set forward the birth of Jesus was in "this way".

#### 5.1 - Jesus linked to the line of Joseph

5.1.1 Both the genealogies Matthew 1.2-16 and Luke 3.23-38 end not with Mary but with Joseph. So, if Joseph is not the father of Jesus, then they do not prove what they ought to prove ie Jesus' physical descent from David.

5.1.2 Jesus' descent from David is so important to Paul [Romans 1.3, 2 Tim 2.8] and to John [John 7.42] and also to the Matthew Mark and Luke [Mtt 1.1, Mark 10.47ff and //s, 12.35ff and //s 12.23, 21.9]

5.1.3. Both Luke 3.23 and Matt 1.16 leave open, if they do not actually indicate, that, the idea that Jesus was not actually the bodily son of Joseph.

Didn't Matthew and Luke understand that they were seemingly compromising the very point that they were trying to make? Perhaps they were making another one?

Couldn't they have attempted to say something which made it clear that Jesus was the legal son of Joseph if not sired by him? [Eg here of the way that the word of God arranges for orphans to be dealt with. Adoption is the powerful override of the word of God to the brokenness of our own life style or poverty.]

5.1.4. Further, both Matthew and Luke make it clear that the conception of Jesus in no way involved Joseph. This is especially clear.

**5 - Preserving the mystery of the Incarnation**

**Joseph's lineage**

# Point 03 - The Birth

*Major points in the Life of Jesus*

5.1.5. This indicates to us that the genealogies are not given to prove the physical descent of Jesus from David and so establish his kingly rights. Yet, the fact that God had arranged that the husband of Mary would in fact be the legal father and that he would be from the line of David was a marvellous fulfilment of the providence of God. It indicates that God, by a clear direction assigned Jesus to Joseph, the son of David. The link forged by nature would not have bound Jesus any more firmly to the house of David than the will of God made manifest.

### 5.2 - Jesus does not take His meaning from His lineage – the lineage takes it from Him

Most genealogies are recorded to show that there is a continuous, unbroken line from forefather to current son. Further, this is very much a matter of the flesh, it is about sperm and siring from father to son.

Most genealogies are traced and studied by the current generation concerning the past ancestors. What this generally means is that the current person is invited to compare his behaviour with those who have gone before. In the case of a long line of worthies, this acts as incentive to perform well and to so take his place as one who kept up the long family tradition. And, of course, we have to wait for the end of the life to assess, in some way, whether that was a worthy addition to the line or a gross failure, perhaps even a black sheep of the family. The history of the line is the base line, the control for the assessment of the new man in the line.

Here, we are asked to think of the reverse. Here, the presence of some very gross sinners among the forebears, we are required to ask might it not be that this new Man, who has taken his stand with the sinful forebearers might not come to "save his people from their sins."

The genealogies of Matthew and Luke are not asking from where we have come, except in the sense to understand what were the promises of God in regard to this line of people and how those promises were fulfilled in their history.

The genealogies of Matthew and Luke are asking to where have we come in the history of what God has promised and has accomplished so far. Rather than thinking whether Jesus will turn out to be a good or bad addition to the already clear family line, they are asking does the family line find its honour and meaning in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. In this way we are invited as readers to:

[a] see the meaning of a lineage in quite a different way. As connected to the work of the word of God.

[b] We are to read the life of Jesus as that of the proper Man who, by the way He lives stands within a human line of history, but not as one conditioned by it, but as the manifestation of the hidden basis for which it was always to be measured. He is the goal of the line and the fulfilment of all its promises. Promises which were partly taken up in each generation which preceded him but never ever having come to their proper and majestic conclusion.

[c] Jesus does not come to have his siring through a line, but comes as the very begotten Son of God. But He takes flesh in a line of those obedient to the Word of God. They are the ones who will minister to Him in His human infancy and dependency. They will nurture Him at that time. In this sense Jesus is given to Joseph and Mary to parent – to care and serve Him. But always as a true King, as Son of David – a fact to which the journey of the Three Wise Men testifies.

### 5.3 - A lineage which traces the reception and obedience to the Word of God.

But throughout the Bible, and particularly in the OT, although we learn this most clearly from the NT, there is another "lineage" which we must look into. It is different from the natural spermatoc physical line of descent. It is the tracing of the way that the Word of God has come into history and how it has been trusted when it has brought revelation to those to whom it came.

This tracing of the faithful lineages and also the unfaithful ones, begins very early on in

*The lineage doesn't define Jesus - He defines it.*

*Line of receiving God's Word and the obedience that follows*

Genesis.

#### 5.4 - The use made of the genealogies in Genesis

In the book Genesis there are records of the various lines of certain men. [eg Adam's line to Noah Genesis 5; Noah's sons Genesis 10; and then Shem to Abram Genesis 11.10-27; Ishmael's line Genesis 25.12-16; Esau's sons as progenitors of Edom Genesis 36; the sons of Jacob [Israel] Genesis 46.] Usually we are given the story of something which the progenitor did in his response to the word of God. Then we see that there is a line of his descendents who echo and manifest the similar traits and developments of that progenitor's actions and will commitments. Here the issue which is being recorded is not so much the spermatic descent, but the similarity of actions which each person of this line demonstrated.

In this way, the question of physical descent from a forefather demonstrates not simply the gene pool but also the biases of the lineage for good or ill. This is in accord with the principle that children copy their parents and commit their wills to do what they have seen in example laid out before them.

This is especially true in regard to tracing the activity of the faithful ones who in their response to the revelation of God find themselves trusting God for the things which He has revealed to them concerning Himself.

These contrasting genealogies of Genesis give us a differentiation between a line of men and women who trust God and those who do not. There are those of faith in God, [which is righteousness] and those who are faithless. When we think of the revelation which God has made we are considering this from the point of view of the Word of God. Such a genealogy of the faithful, comes to be also the place where the word of God's activity among men and women may be traced. From that perspective we are looking at the elect line of men and women as they are found in contrast to the faithless ones. Genesis is stating this manifestation of the faithful response to the word of God clearly in its genealogies.

The tracing of these genealogies also tells us that the receptivity to the word of God promotes greater revelation; or folks are delivered over to their wickedness and blindness increases.

In this way vessels of mercy and vessels of wrath are manifest throughout the whole of the Old Testament history. Each group, as found within the people of God testify to the distinction between a children of Abraham by sperm, and a children of the promise, which comes about through the initiative of the word of God and the response it finds.

#### 5.5 - The case of the Word of God, spoken and incarnate, coming to Mary and Joseph

The word of God finds people in the midst of life right where they are. In the case of Mary and Joseph it was at that period of time when they had agreed to marry and were betrothed. It proved to be an awkward time for them in many ways, and the trial of their faith at the reception of the word of God would become manifest in their circumstances. We shall investigate this.

The word of God always has the initiative in the way that it comes to men and women. The whole of the Bible records this – the history of God's covenant people is a history which records a response to God's action, not the taking of initiative with God.

We should not be confused into thinking that the word of the angel is not the word of God to them, it was. Gabriel is the bringer of good news both from God and also about God. As an angelic mediator of the word of God Gabriel stands in the line of the Old Covenant. For this way of bringing the word to men and women is about to be eclipsed by the coming of the Word Himself into the flesh as the Son of God. For the conception of Jesus in the womb of the virgin will be the coming of the Word of God Himself into the world.

In this sense their response to this sovereign initiative will put them into the lineage of the faithful or it will not. They trusted God and so found themselves in the line of the welcoming receivers of the word of God. They are people of faith, and so have the righteousness which Abraham had before God [Romans 4].

#### *Genealogies in Genesis*

#### *The Word of God comes to Joseph and Mary*

Before the announcement both Mary and Joseph are faithful people of God; and their reception of the Word of God incarnate reinforces that perception in the mind of the readers of the New Testament. Both Matthew and Luke then are stating a genealogy which simultaneously bears witness to the humanity of Jesus; while at the same time lumping Him into their lineage, which is that of the godly receivers of God's word who relate to God by trusting His word.

### The issue of whether the word of God has failed [Romans 9]

So, in considering this tracing of the faithful [=righteous] we see that their lives are the only place to clearly see where God has been active over history. Their lives are a history of their engagement with the word of God. This principle is most clearly stated by Paul in Romans 9. In that place he makes clear that:

[a] The failure of Israel [the natural descendants of Abraham] to come in to the gospel promises is not a demonstration of the word of God having failed

[b] Right throughout the history of Israel there are two streams of people evident within the general group of the people of Israel

[c] The distinction is that there are sons after the flesh [those who are physically, spermatically descended from Abraham] and there are "children of promise". These latter are persons who the word of God has found and they have responded to it in faith which leads to obedience.

[d] There is a need for both of these groups of people within Israel manifest in every generation; and a contrast is discerned for the sake of those who have received mercy to know that they have.

It is the Word which has the initiative in the formation of these groups because it is the source of their being there in the first place – it is the priority of revelation.

Here in the Gospel story, right at the beginning what we have is a generation to whom the historical Jesus, the incarnation of the Son of God, finds Himself called to stand with them according to the Word of God.

This is a much more certain, initiative of God than any physical descent could ever be. Here there is a linkage with Joseph's lineage which is fixed by the sovereign choice of the Word of God which comes to Mary and also to Joseph. We could say that Jesus is given to Joseph by the sovereign choice of God. The mode of the Christ coming to earth is not going to be according to a man's spermatoc drive – but the sovereign gracious act of God who will take flesh in the womb of a passive receiver in Mary, a woman of faith.

Basil, an early church father, stated that Mary conceived "through her ear". This is a colourful way of stating that the reception of the word of God when coming to Mary finds a lodging place in her person, such that, as she receives it, it is effective for the purpose for which it was sent.

### 6 - Miraculous conception signifies the mystery of the Incarnation

6.1 God does it entirely of Himself

6.2 The use of a sign

6.3 God has the initiative – takes flesh in the womb of virgin

6.4 Born of the virgin Mary

[1] born as no one else is born

[2] born not of male generation, but of female conception

[3] born of a real mother; flesh and blood Gal 4.4

[4] new, second creation presupposes the first

6.5 Born of a virgin – both a grace and a judgement

#### 6.1 God does it entirely of Himself.

Leads us to the fact that there is no way to understand this Incarnation except as some-

*Mary and Joseph are like other faithful ones who have gone before*

*Miraculous conception shrouds mystery*

thing which God does entirely Himself. The coming of one who is truly God and truly man is not going to be understood intellectually, but rather spiritually. It will be a mystery and there will be a need to see God's work as only able to be understood in His own light. It can only be understood as a unique act of God. But it is the description of this mystery which we must attempt to read, and see what the Scripture is signifying.

The sign [the virgin birth] signifies the thing signified [that mystery of the Word of God made flesh].

6.1.2. Not a Jewish-based understanding in Matt 1.18.

6.1.3. As a sign what does it signify?

It says that in the midst of the continuity of the creaturely world, yet independently of it, both in respect of our understanding of His action and of the action itself, God has the initiative.

### 6.2 The use of a sign

There is a use of "signs" in OT. They signify something and deal with mystery, yet express that something of the miracle's meaning is carried by the nature and the form of the sign given. Saw the use of signs in OT as well as in Matthew Eg. Exodus 4, Mark 2 "that you may know.." = this is what signs do. The healing of the paralytic is the sign of the forgiveness of sins. "These signs follow...." What is a sign and a wonder? What is it used for in Scripture?

These signs follow:

sign	thing signified
lay hands on sick and they recover	forgiveness of sins
cast out demons	authority of sons [written in Book of life], work of cross
handle serpents	authority of sons
drink deadly poisons	conquering as sons, protection

Signs declare the truth of God in a form which can be apprehended by the physical realm, and they are to be accompanied by the explanation of the things signified - this is what Jesus did. They actually are the occasion for the declaration of the heart of God. And as assuredly as we are aware of the heart of God towards the world re: forgiveness = redemption, then we are in a place to believe for the signs to follow those that believe..

Consider the use of the marriage ring; no one marries to have a ring. That would mean that we would be pre-occupied with the sign and didn't value the thing signified.

So the virgin birth does not give us an explanation of the reality that took place but it tells us of the mystery of that reality; the fact that it is inconceivable. It speaks of the fact that God has acted solely in and through Himself; and that all the questions we can usually ask of an event,

So questions such as, "How does it work? Why has it been given? Where did all this come from?" - these can't be answered. All of it is God's work which He does in Himself.

The sign then tells us that the mystery does not yield to intellectual understanding but only to a spiritual understanding in which God's work is to be seen in its own light. The earthly origin of Jesus of Nazareth is a mystery.

Isaiah 7.14 says that the conception by a virgin will be a sign - we need to keep to this sign by which the witness to the mystery is signified.

### 6.3 - God has the initiative

[a] parallel to the empty tomb at Easter

The virgin birth at the start of the earthly life of Jesus and the empty tomb at the end

*Signs*

*God's initiative*



of the earthly sojourn of Jesus are really a single sign in themselves. They describe and they mark out the earthly existence of Jesus for us; and both signs show Christ's life as marked off from the rest of human life.

The virgin birth testifies to the mystery of the revelation; where, in Jesus Christ God comes forth from his hiddenness of his divinity. The tomb, and the resurrection, shows the revelation of the mystery. By our sharing in this mystery at the end of his life we come to know the mystery of the beginning. The gospels are written from the position known in the lives of people after resurrection.

#### 6.4 - Born of the virgin Mary.

= born as no one else was born

= born not because of male generation, but solely by female conception

= born of a real mother, a son born of the real flesh and blood of his mother, with flesh and blood as real as the flesh and blood of sons of other mothers. [See Galatians 4.4 "born of a woman", ἐκ γυναικός].

[Contra Valentinus: Christ received nothing of his mother but assumed a heavenly body newly created for the purpose, passing through Mary as water passed through an aqueduct. See Mary as a channel, not as one from whom God has drawn.]

= not a creation *ex nihilo* but a creation *ex Maria*. This tells us that the new, second creation presupposes the first. There is a continuity here. Creaturely self glorification is denied here - man is not God's partner in the action.

Because the genesis of Jesus Christ is a sign we are not content just to call it supernatural.

#### 6.5 - Born of a virgin

[1] It is both a:

[a] grace [Luke 1.28, 2.10 Matt 1.18-25] and

[b] judgment [Luke 1.29, and see meaning for Joseph]. It does not just run biologically counter to Joseph's life, it is also socially counter to life. Joseph participates in the event which opposes him, contradicts him, withstands him and compromises him. And he cannot come to terms with it without pain and astonishment and humiliation - and he can only appreciate by faith.

[2] judgement on man.

Virginity = the denial, not of man in the presence of God, but of any power, attribute or capacity in him for God. If he has it [and Mary does have it] it is laid upon her, she acquires it.

#### 7 - The concurrence of the Gentile revelation and the Jewish – the Magi

7.1 The Magi know of the Jewish King by sovereign revelation

7.2 They bring gifts appropriate to a royal son, despite the parents present

7.3 The mode of revelation is not angelic, but suitable to their wisdom

7.4 The "macro" view and the "micro" gel together, Gentile and Jewish

7.5 Saviour of the world is proclaimed

7.1 If the genealogies enmesh us in the detailed promises of God to the Jews, the Gospel records do not fail to also bring out another group of people who also have revelation about the coming of a particular King of the Jews. [Psalm 2 – the refusal of the kings of the earth to yield to the Lord and his Messiah.]

7.2 The magi also know who it is that they have come to worship. They also bring kingly gifts, and they do so at a time when there is no suggestion of empire as might accompany a

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*In what sense "born" of Mary*

*In what sense "born" of a "virgin"*

*7- The witness of the Gentiles*

## Point 03 - The Birth

*Major points in the Life of Jesus*

foreign king in his maturity. They come in his birth, at the time when knowledge of a king is usually established by the fact that his parents must be royal for him to be known as a king in his infancy. But that is not the case here. So the magi are coming to a humble advent of a King whose kingdom will not be of this world.

7.3 The nature of their revelation. Heaven speaks to the Jews through angels. For these ones, from Gentile origins, God has allowed them a heavenly sign. To follow a star, and if their background was astrology or astronomy, we are not told. But they have seen something in the heavens, as they understand it, and they are coming to worship.

7.4 They also testify to the form of the revelation they have. It is general, not specific as to place. They have come with a macro view of the heavens to guide them, and from afar. But once they come into the area of Palestine, they ask the locals who may be expected to know that there is a king born and for that their macro view star will not do. But as they ask for the information, it is to the Jewish scribes that the answer is obvious, although they have no immediate revelation of what is transpiring; but they know the prophets. But then, as the town of Bethlehem is known as the place, there is the star for them, confirming this Jewish based revelation and the Gentile leading as coming from the same source. The implications that who we have here is the Saviour of the world are clear as crystal.

### **8 - The heavenly invasion through the humble birth. Rebellious angelic powers are alerted, but have no revelation as such [Rev 12].**

- 8.1 The heaven faith of the magi; contrast of Herod
- 8.2 Out of Egypt God has called His Son
- 8.3 Issues that concern heaven and earth
- 8.4 Israel has given birth to her Messiah
- 8.5 Satanic opposition
- 8.6 God protects His humble One

There is a clear development in the Revelation to John which makes clear for us that there is a reaction which is extreme from the governing Roman power who is currently occupying the land of Israel and oppressing the people of God.

8.1 The worship of the Magi as men of revelation and faith. Contrasts sharply with the desire of Herod the Great to remove a competitor and cut Him off in His infancy and weakness. But behind Herod [the current "beast from the earth"] is the rebellious angelic power of Satan [the consistent "dragon"].

8.2 Out of Egypt have I called my son.

This way of using the text from Hosea 11.1 is found in the section where the prophet is emphasising the love of God for Israel as his child. The whole matter is one of encouragement to Israel as to how the Lord will care for them, heal them, and lift the yoke from their neck. As He delivered Israel of old – so He will deliver His only Son from the persecution and hunting of the Roman powers and the hostile imprisoning powers of His people.

The point here is that the Messiah has also had to flee from the persecution which arises to the people of God. The Messiah stands with his people in needing to be delivered from the persecution which is encountered in the world. In that sense He stands for them as faithful upholders of the witness of God in the world. However, in this case the Messiah is experiencing, not as Israel did, the persecution in Egypt of a king "who did not know Joseph", but of a foreign king in Palestine who is persecuting the Messiah [as a figure of collective Israel] and driving him out of His own land into a foreign one which receives Him. Then, He is called out of there into the land of Palestine again because the foreign king has died and found the judgement of God. God has vindicated His Messiah who was hounded from his heritage. God has bent down and fed His people.

8.3 The world setting of what is happening between heaven and earth. That we have a man from heaven is testified to here in the gospels by the opposition which is overkill. There is a desparation of brutality which unmasks the Satanic fear of this humble Messiah of the Jews.

*8 - A heavenly invasion of grace*

# Point 03 - The Birth

*Major points in the Life of Jesus*

8.4 Revelation 12.1-2 asks that we understand Mary as a figure who stands for the whole of Israel. She is one from whom the child is born, but so is Israel. He not only comes born "of a woman", He is born king "of the Jews". In this sense the genealogy of Mary is vital, as Luke records it, for it tells us of her pedigree as a woman who can stand for Israel, for she too is of the Jews in the most faithful sense.

8.5 Revelation 12.3-4 wants us to understand that at the birth of the child from God's people the demonic power of the rebellious angel Satan, is present to deal a death blow to the woman's child.

8.6 We are now caught up with the heavenly warfare which has been happening since the rebellion of Satan. Rev 12.7-11. Here we learn that the advent of the Messiah is no less than an invasion of the heavenly Man into the hostile, demon manipulated world. Now a beachhead has been established. The warfare of heaven has come to the earth and the King has brought the kingdom with his presence. Satan has looked to nip it in the bud, but God has protected His Messiah. The ruler with the rod of iron to all rebels has arrived in meekness and humility to woo to Himself those who would love Him.

### **The Incarnation of the Word of God challenges us.**

Need to see that the gospels bring us at every point a challenge about Who is Jesus Christ? So that we are always directed to the person first. For if we come to understand who he is in each engagement with the text, then we shall have found the gift for us, as well as the task based upon that gift.

1. Only a true man has a genealogy, a line, a descent. And this testimony to the humanity of Christ will be expressed in the double sense which we are about to investigate. He has a physical birth, and also a reception of the word of God as evident in his life. Both ideas are expressed by genealogies.

2. God always keeps His word - Abraham as father of many nations

3. The list of Jesus' genealogy contains some unworthies - the sinfulness and corruption of sinful nature.

4. The mercy and compassion of the Lord Jesus Christ

5. For our sakes He became poor, is the way Paul states this action of his taking flesh, his birth.

*Challenge to us as readers*