

Swaddling Clothes

Luke 2:7



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FOCAL Luke 2:7^{KJV} And she brought forth¹ her firstborn² son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.

God is not usually found in the bright lights of man, in the fanfare, in the casinos, nor on the pinnacles of human achievement. The Bible tells us that "**God is light, and in him is no darkness at all**". (1 John 1:5). The Light of God is not found in the supposed glories of man. It is Satan that will take you **up into a high mountain, and show you all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them.** and ask you to **fall down and worship him.** (Matthew 4:8-10). God is not in that. The Son of God was born of a virgin, cloaked in humanity, born just as you and I were born. He did not come in a palace, but in a manger. He did not come of rich parents, and even today the rich rarely regard Him. He was born of lowly parents, though to be born He had to lower Himself from glory - true glory.

There are three things we will see in the Scripture today. We will see what it means that *Jesus is the firstborn*. Once we understand this, we will prove that *Jesus Christ must be loved and cherished*. And finally, we will see why the *cherished and loved Jesus brings glory where*

KJV all texts are King James Version, unless otherwise noted

1 G5088, **τίκτω**, tiktō, tik'-to, A strengthened form of a primary word **τέκω** tekō (which is used only as an alternate in certain tenses); to *produce* (from seed, as a mother, a plant, the earth, etc.), literal or figurative: - bear, be born, bring forth, be delivered, be in travail. (Strong's Hebrew and Greek Dictionaries), Second Aorist Active Indicative

2 G4416, **πρωτοτόκος**, prōtotokos, pro-tot-ok'-os, From G4413 and the alternate of G5088; *first born* (usually as noun, literally or figuratively): - firstbegotten (-born). (Strong's Hebrew and Greek Dictionaries)

He dwells. First,

1. Jesus Is The Firstborn

FOCAL Luke 2:7 And **she brought forth her firstborn son**

I want you to notice that the text says, **she brought forth her firstborn son**. It is not **she brought forth their firstborn son**. This was not her and Joseph's son, but the Son of God given to her by the very power of God. It is, as the Scripture said:

Matthew 1:18 ... When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost.

This Child that was born of Mary, born through the power of God's Holy Spirit, was not a *mere man*. We read in the Scripture this mystery:

Colossians 2:9 For in [Christ] dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.

In Christ dwells **all the fullness of the Godhead**. Jesus Christ is pure God, fully God, wholly God, with all the power and magnitude of God. But in Him is all the fullness of the **Godhead bodily**. Jesus is fully God in fully perfect Human form. He is fully God and fully Man. Eternal God would inhabit humanity, first of all, through the virgin birth. Why would God the Son do this? Why was this Baby from this virgin in this manger? Read with me again:

FOCAL Luke 2:7 And she brought forth her **firstborn son**

Jesus Christ, Eternal God the Son, took on humanity so that *God could work in and through humanity*. Up to this point in human history few had been *friends to God*, or even *friendly to God*. When man did good, he generally did good apart from God. He did good, did charitable things, then took the credit for it. In short, every act of good that man did was tainted by sin.

Do you think this is an unfair assumption or an unfair statement? Look at God's record of human history in the Bible, the Word of God. You see *Abraham*, the man that the Scripture calls the **friend of God (2 Chronicles 20:7; James 2:23)**. Was his walk before God pure and holy, full of faith? We know that Abraham was willing to sacrifice his only son Isaac on Mount Moriah, but what of before Isaac's birth? Didn't he go in to Hagar, and didn't his faithless act bring Ishmael to life? Didn't his act with Hagar bring a continuing curse between Israel and the children of Ishmael, even unto this day? What about *Noah*, the man who **walked with God (Genesis 6:9)**? Noah built the ark that saved humanity - for that he should be commended. But Noah allowed drunkenness to take him, and his drunkenness allowed grievous sin to enter into his very family (**Genesis 9:24**).

God and man can not walk together while we walk side by side. God must walk with man *within man*.

Just as God entered humanity from within a virgin, once you accept the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior He takes up residence within you. God does not want to walk with man as He did with Adam, **walking in the garden in the cool of the day (Genesis 3:8)**. That which came to pass in the manger shows that God wants to come *to man, to work within man* in a real and a personal way. God wants to be a constant part of your lives, not just to have the *smallest part* of your life. We are told in the Scripture that Jesus Christ lowered Himself from Glory to participate in this virgin birth. Our Lord ..

Philippians 2:7-8 ... took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: (8) And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

What can Eternal Godhood take on that He does not already possess? Can God learn, grow in knowledge? No, absolutely not! God knows all things, though we know little. The Scripture says that the **foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men. (1 Corinthians 1:25)** A child once asked me "If God made all things, who made God?" This is a fair question with a simple answer - no one made God. God is without beginning, and without end. God is "everlasting", never beginning and never ending (**Isaiah 40:28**). As an Eternal Being God is *outside of time* (**Romans 16:26; 1 Timothy 1:17**). Time is a convention that we are subject to, based on the rotation and orbit of

this earth around the sun.

God was beyond time *until He took on Himself the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men, humbling Himself* for us.

God the Son made Himself subject to time for a short time when He took on humanity through the virgin birth. The *Great I AM*³ who revealed himself to Moses at the burning bush (**Exodus 3:14; Psalm 90:2; John 8:58**) would now reveal Himself to humanity in a manger. Eternity touched mortality, Godhood subject Himself to time. Who made God? No one! God is, was, and will always be. The humanity of Christ was born of a virgin, but His Eternal Godhood was never born.

Why was this happening? Why was God **taking upon Himself the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men**? There can only be one answer: the Cross! God did not need to take on humanity. He did not *need* to be like us. God did not *need* to subject Himself to the stream of consciousness we call *time*. No Beloved! God came through a virgin, willing to be her

FOCAL Luke 2:7 ... **firstborn son**

So that you could be brought into a closer relationship with Him. The **firstborn son** of the virgin would go to the Cross, making payment for your sins. If you have

³ Yahweh occurs more than 6,800 times in the Old Testament. The word is believed to be a form of the verb hayah, which signifies "to be," ultimately meaning "the eternal One" or "self-existing One." God's existence is underived; no one made him. He simply always was. (christiancourier.com)

believed in Him and trusted in what He has done for you, then

Jesus is *more* than just a name, Christ *more* than just a holiday. Because Jesus consented to be **the firstborn among many brethren (Romans 8:29)** you who have accepted Him as Savior and Lord are now *kin to God*.

This is an impossibility that only God could have made possible. You cannot be God, nor could you ever, in your own power, work your way into being God. God is God, immortal, above all things. We are mortal and, for all of our advances, still subject to the restrictions of our mortality. Though a lowly bird can touch the very top of the highest tree in the world, man cannot - without great effort - reach that same height in his own power. We might, through complex computations, rig up a tower or a vehicle that will take us to the very top of that oak. We strain to do that which our Loving Creator has made birds to do naturally. God made birds to fly - look how effortlessly they do so. Man makes man to fly, look how we strain to do the same thing!

God has caused the lowest of creatures, the fish, to swim underwater and touch the bottom of the sea. We struggle and, after a fashion, determine a way that we can breath while swimming underwater. We can touch the bottom of much of the ocean, but even so there are areas we have yet to be. There are certain areas in the ocean so deep that not even the strongest of divers among humanity can go. The pressure of the water would immediately kill those foolish enough to try. Yet what is impossible for us is child's play for the fish that God has

created.

We mimic the bird when we created the airplane, and the fish when we created the submarine. We struggle, and with our technology we closely approximate what these creatures have been taught to do by the Creator. Yet we never do as they do, for we were not created with feathers or fins. What did God want us to be? He shows us in the manger. God wants us to be part of His family, bound to Him for all eternity. God wants to be **the firstborn among many brethren**. God wants us to be His friends, those whom He can love. God wants us to walk with Him, to talk with Him, to live with Him and for Him, to be with Him for all eternity.

Jesus Christ, Eternal God, became the firstborn of Mary so that He could be the **firstborn of many brethren**. God made the birds to fly, the fish to swim, and wants to make you part of His Eternal Family.

The Bible says:

Romans 8:28 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to [his] purpose.

If you are saved, God **has called you according to His purpose**. Just as He called the birds to effortlessly fly, and the fish to effortlessly swim, He has called you to be **conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren**. Has God saved

you? This is His purpose for you, to be His brothers and His sisters, His children, His family. Has God redeemed you? Then He lives inside you, in similar manner as He lived in Mary. Do you belong to God by faith in Christ? Then you are called to **bring forth the Firstborn**, to let others see Jesus in you and through you.

If you have been saved by faith, doing what the Scripture says:

Romans 10:9-11 That if thou shalt **confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. {10} For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.**

{11} For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

then you are saved. What's next? The bird flies when it's momma pushes it from the nest. It stretches it's wings, then flies. Stretch your wings, O Christian, live for Christ as Christ lives through you.

The fish when it hatches from the egg hides from predators, from natural enemies in it's watery world. The fish will hide itself among the algae and rocks, carefully avoiding the evils that will eat it. O Christian, live in Christ, hide yourselves among the Rock of your salvation.

Read and meditate on His Word, seek the power of His Precious Indwelling Spirit. Surrender to God your every waking moment, and your faith will make you more than victors in this present evil age. God has

Romans 8:29 ... predestinated [you] to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

You are to be like Christ, to live like Christ, to speak like Christ, to represent Christ. This is not something you yourself can do, but something that God will accomplish in you as you seek His face. At the appointed time Mary **brought forth Christ**, not because of anything she did, but because of what God did in her.

2. Jesus The Firstborn Must Be Loved And Cherished

FOCAL Luke 2:7 And **she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger...**

Look at the love that Mary had for Jesus! The Lord Jesus, born of a virgin, is not cast from His mother, but is tenderly **wrapped in swaddling clothes** and carefully **laid in a manger**. This is the Savior of the world, she knows that she must take care of Him. Though Mary may not know at this time that He will be the **Lamb of God**

Who taketh away the sin of the world (John 1:29), she does know His importance. Do all see this importance? No, because:

FOCAL Luke 2:7 **And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.**

Illustrate Jesus was tenderly cared for by the virgin, and should be tenderly cared for by all who are kin to Him. Yet those **in the inn** thought nothing of Christ nor of His family. The text says **there was no room for them in the inn**, Christ nor His family was welcome there - though He came to save all. Has anything changed from then to now? Is there room for Jesus and His family in our society? What about in government, in our court systems, in our schools, in our public places in America. There is room for the drunkard, room for the sexual sinner, room for even those who refuse to believe in God. Yet for Jesus there is **no room in the inn**. Our courts exclude Christ from every place but in our Churches - and I fear that that day may come in time. Christ is forbidden in our Senates, among our representatives. We may in this country, as in Rome of old, speak to a generic god in a generic way. But to pray "in Jesus' name" is, in many places, forbidden. For instance, Florida Senate President James E. "Jim" King apologized to members of the legislative body April 28, 2004, after **Florida Baptist pastor Clayton Cloer invoked the name of Jesus in his prayer in the Senate chamber**⁴.

⁴ May 10, 2004, reported by James A Smith Sr in Baptist Press

Yet this is common all across our nation. **There is no room for them at the inn**. Not too long ago **Pastor David Hughes** was banned from the Maryland Senate because he refused to remove "In Jesus' name, amen" from the end of his opening prayer for that governing body. **There is no room for them at the inn**, no room for Jesus in government. Even in Lexington Tennessee not too long ago I heard a charge leveled against someone running for office. It was said that that man *wore his religion on his sleeve*, and we just can't have this. How sad! **There is no room for them in the inn**.

No matter where you go, there seems to be **no room for them at the inn**, neither for Christ nor for His family. We are not normally found among the rich, nor among high society. We are not found in the board rooms of the largest companies. Jesus is taken away from our colleges, from our schools. I am amazed at how often Jesus is taken away from the Church. Listen to some preachers, and hear how often they mention the name of Jesus Christ. I have heard whole sermons by those who pretended to be anointed of God speak, and never once mention Christ nor the Family that He purchased with His own blood. **There is no room for them in the inn**.

Now Beloved, let's get somewhat more personal, if we can stand this but a moment. The heat of the fire is comfortable at a distance, but when we are close to it it becomes uncomfortable, even burning.

While we speak of the sins of the schools, of the rich, of the board room, of the government, we are warmed by

that heat, for the flame is far away. We are not in those places, and it is easy to rest your feet before the fire while sipping coffee. But let's get closer to the fire.

Is there room for Jesus in your daily life? Do you live for Jesus at home, in the midst of your family, when you are away from this Church house? Is there room for Christ in your private conversation when the preacher cannot hear you? Do others at work know that you are a Christian, that you are saved by faith in Christ, or would they be surprised to discover you at Church on Sunday morning? We make room at the inn of our hearts for hurt and dismay over others, so much so that many times we hold grudges for years over what others have or have not done to us. Yet is there room at the inn of your mouth - do you refer to Christ in your conversation, and speak as Christ would speak before a lost and dying world? Do your children see Christ in you? He must be brought forth, Beloved, if you have believed in Him. You must lay Jesus tenderly before the world, **wrapped in swaddling clothes**, cherished - the focus of your attention. We who are Christians moan about the state of the world around us, yet the state of America is no different than the state of ancient Rome. If you are saved, then Christ chose to come and be part of your life. Just as Mary could not be *a little bit pregnant with Christ*, you cannot be *a little bit saved*. You are either saved, or you are not. Just as Mary was *great with Child of the Holy Ghost*, all of God indwells you if you have believed in Him. Live for Him, make room for Him in all that you do. When you do this, you will see society around you change. When the unbelievers heard that **Paul and Silas** were coming to their town they said, "**These that have turned the**

world upside down are come hither also" (Acts 17:6), and they troubled the people. If you are saved, God is inside of you! The Spirit of God lives in you. Let Jesus live through you! Live for Him, let others see Him in you, just as Mary did in that manger so long ago. The world will always say **there is no room at the inn for them**, yet:

1 John 4:4 KJVA Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.

Greater is God Who is in you, than Satan and all the forces of hell! Greater is Christ Who is in you, than in all the forces of this fallen world. This world will *always* say that there is **no room at the inn for them**, neither for Christ nor His Family. This is understood.

The dead and the living do not have supper together. Yet Beloved, for the professed believer to have **no room at the inn** is a tragedy, a travesty, and an abomination.

Jesus Christ surrendered Himself to Mary to enter into this world. Jesus Christ surrendered Himself to suffering, deprivation, and pain in order to show us that He is the Way to God. Jesus Christ surrendered Himself to the horrid death of the Cross because He loved you so. Shall you say to Him, "**There is no room at the inn - I have no room for you in my life**"? Or shall you do a sad thing, the saddest thing of all, and send Him into the smallest part of your life, into the manger, into the areas

you care little about. No Beloved, make room for Him! He is worthy. Surrender to Him if you would be blessed.

3. Cherished And Loved, Jesus Brings Glory Where He Dwells

I know that the flame hurts when we apply it to ourselves, yet the same flame burns away the dross and creates in us what Christ would have us to be. Look at this one more point:

FOCAL Luke 2:7 And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and **laid him in a manger**; because there was no room for them in the inn.

Our Lord Jesus lay in that manger. Before He came to the manger it was common, nothing special, a few old boards put together perhaps with a brush arbor roof. But once Christ came, glory came. God was in the manger, and God exalts the place He is.

You may be poor, and of lowly spirit. You, like that manger, may have little that the world considers of worth. The world seeks the bright lights of the inn, but God seeks the manger. The most humble will come to Christ while He is in this manger. The shepherds will come, and look on the very Glory of God.

Though I will not belabor this point, the **magi** or **wise men** who came to Jesus did not come to Him while He was in the manger. They came to Jesus *after* He was circumcised, when Mary had returned to Nazareth. The

Gospel of Matthew clearly tells us:

Matthew 2:11 And **when they were come into the house**, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshiped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.

The wise men (and the Bible never says there were only *three* wise men, but that they brought *three* gifts) worshiped Jesus in **the house**, not in **the manger**. But back to the manger.

God was in the manger, and while God was there glory was there.

You may consider yourself to be the least among men. Do not fear! God is in the manger, calling you to glorious salvation in Him.

He will not look on you and say that you are unworthy to save - all are worthy of salvation for He has decided you are worthy. He came to seek and to save that which was lost, and surely that applies to you and to I. I have heard it said of so called *great preachers* that they have body guards who prevent the common man from reaching them. Only the best can come into this regal and exalted circle! Even among those who *protest Rome* we see some who would be exalted. Yet, not so of Jesus. He lay in the manger, and any could come near and behold His glory. When He grew in His humanity and walked among the children of Adam, He rebuked the self appointed body

guard that would keep the children from His side. The Scripture says:

Mark 10:13-14^{NIV} People were bringing little children to Jesus to have him touch them, but the disciples rebuked them. {14} When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.

Oh my Beloved,

Jesus never had a bodyguard, a wall around Him. The manger where He lay at the beginning showed that He would ever be accessible, even to the poorest and most common. When He walked through a city the lepers, forbidden to touch any, came to touch Him.

When He moved through the crowds diseased women reached out their hands just to touch the hem of His garment and so be healed. Jesus is always accessible, approachable, ready to be reached.

"By being laid in a manger he proved himself a priest taken from among men, one who has suffered like his brethren, and therefore can be touched with a feeling of our infirmities."⁵

NIV New International Version

⁵ C.H. Spurgeon, NO ROOM FOR CHRIST, IN THE INN, NO. 485, A SERMON DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, DECEMBER 21ST, 1862

Jesus in the manger lay in a place where the *beasts were fed*. The Bread of Life (**John 6:48**) would lay in a feed trough. Though the animals would not feed on Him, He would one day compare Himself to *bread and drink*, the very foundation of life. If you have believed on Him you have eternal life, if you live for Him you have abundant life, if you do not possess Him you have no life in you. Jesus said:

John 9:5^{NIV} While I am in the world, I am the light of the world."

While Jesus lay in that manger, the glory of God was in that place. When Jesus departed, the glory left.

If Jesus Christ is in your life - active, living, working - then your world will be a beautiful and light filled place. Burdens are less when Christ carries them with me. Does Jesus walk with you? Do you walk with Jesus? If you do not cherish Him, worship Him, honor Him, then you will not enjoy His light. I pray that God will help you all see God in the manger, and in your lives.