

1:20^c. . . Behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, ‘Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins ^{2:1}Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, ²saying, ‘Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw His star when it rose and have come to worship Him.’ ” (Matt. 1:20-21; 2:1-2 ESV)

He came from the bosom of the Father to the bosom of a young woman. He put on humanity that we might put on his righteousness. He became the Son of Man that we might become the sons of God.

He was born contrary to the laws of nature as man knows it, lived in poverty, was reared in obscurity, and only crossed the boundary of his native land once, and that was in childhood. He had no wealth or worldly influence. He had neither training nor education in the philosophy or sciences of the age. His relatives were inconspicuous and without importance.

In infancy, He startled a king; in boyhood He puzzled theologians; in manhood He ruled the course of nature. He walked upon the waves and hushed the sea to sleep with a word. He healed countless numbers without medicine and made no charge for His services. He never wrote a book, and yet, no library in the world could hold the books that have been written about Him. He never wrote a song, and yet, He furnished the theme for more songs than all songwriters put together. He never founded a school of higher learning, and yet, all the schools together cannot boast of as many students as He has. He never practiced medicine; and yet, He healed more broken hearts than doctors have healed broken bodies.

Great men have come and gone, and yet, He lives on. Herod could not kill Him; Satan could not trick Him; death could not destroy Him; the grave could not hold Him.

He was rich, and yet, for our sake became poor. How poor? Ask Mary. Ask Joseph. Ask the Wise Men. He slept in another man’s manger; He cruised on a lake in another man’s boat; He rode on another man’s donkey; He was buried in another man’s tomb. In this life, by His own admission, even foxes and birds had more creature comforts than He had (Matt. 8:20).

More importantly, He was the only perfectly innocent man whoever walked on the face of the earth, and yet, for the sake of people who were His enemies by nature, He carried with Him to His death the sin of the world. Who is this? He is the ever perfect One. He is your Savior and your Lord!

At the end of this month you will be given a number of special opportunities to show to yourself just how important the person mentioned above is in your life. In those opportunities you will actually meet with Him so He can give you the one thing you need in life more than anything else—the forgiveness of sin. You see, sin is your biggest problem in life and He is the only Doctor with a remedy for it. In fact, it is more than just a remedy, it is a total cure. However, the medicine must be taken to affect the cure. Without taking the medicine regularly, the cure is put into jeopardy. It can even get to the point where you might decide you don't need it at all. That would be a tragic thing, for without the medicine of forgiveness, the eternal ramifications for not taking it are, to say the least, severe!

Meeting with the Man who was born the Babe of Bethlehem is more important than any holiday merriment. It is more important than any family holiday tradition. As He once said, “Anyone who loves his father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; anyone who loves his son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me” (Matt. 10:37).

If your holiday tradition excludes meeting with Jesus as the church remembers His birth; if your holiday tradition indicates that you think you are not in constant need of the one Christmas present He came to give you—your forgiveness, then perhaps a reevaluation of your priorities are in order. If you think meeting with Jesus would upset your family tradition and anger some of your relatives, then perhaps your family tradition and your relatives need some upsetting. Perhaps a new tradition of making Jesus the center of the season would be a spiritual gift and blessing to the rest of your family—especially to those who do not yet know Him. Consider making this year's special holiday services the main celebration in your family. It is the loving thing to do!

Christmas Eve—7 pm (Lessons and Carols with children)

Christmas Day—10 am (with communion)

New Year's Eve—7 pm (with communion)

As we progress through the Advent Season of repentance and look forward to Christ's second coming at the end of time by remembering His first coming, God grant every member of Trinity to keep Him as the very center of life. You want a Christmas present to top all Christmas presents? How about Jesus giving up His life on a bloody stake of execution so you can have the Kingdom! That's a gift that pales anything else you can think of in this life. It's ultimately the reason the wise men came to worship Him! Is it reason enough for you?

Pastor Hofmann