

MYTH BUSTERS

DAY ONE: MYTHS ABOUT THE BIRTH OF JESUS

Matthew 1 – 2; Luke 2

Introduction:

1. Christmas is a favorite time of year for many people.
2. Some like the stories of Santa Claus and his sleigh travelling around the world to give gifts to children.
3. Others enjoy it as a time to be with family and friends and to give gifts to one another.
4. Many celebrate it as a religious holiday honoring the birth of Jesus.
5. Our job in this lesson will be to investigate what really happened when Jesus was born.
6. We will find out what the Bible teaches concerning this and put to rest any myths relating to the birth of Jesus.

I. The Birth of Jesus: Facts Vs. Myths

A. When was Jesus born?

1. Myth: Jesus was born on December 25.
2. Fact: The Bible does not state the date when Jesus was born.
3. There are some things that can be known about the time of Jesus' birth.
 - a. It was during the days of the Roman Empire (Luke 2:1).
 - b. It was probably sometime during the year 2 BC.
 - i. Before the death of Herod (in AD 1)
 - ii. At a time of a nationwide census
 - c. It was not during the winter months.
 - i. The shepherds were in the fields with their flocks.
 - ii. In the winter, sheep were kept in pens and fed stored grasses.
 - iii. It was only from mid-April – mid-October that they were kept out in the fields at night.
 - iv. There have been interesting studies that place Jesus' birth in April or September, but even these are not conclusive.
 - d. It was at the perfect, planned time of history (Gal. 4:4).
 - e. The exact date is not important or God would have revealed it.

B. Where was Jesus born?

1. Myth: Jesus was born in Jerusalem (as claimed by the Book of Mormon [Alma 7:10]).
2. Fact: Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea (Matt. 2:1; cf. Micah 5:2).
3. Bethlehem was also called the "city of David" because it was the place where King David had been born (cf. Luke 2:4).
4. In Bethlehem, apparently because of the large number of people who had come to be taxed, there was no room in the inn for Joseph and Mary.
5. Thus, when the time came for the baby to be born, they had to place Him in a manger – a feeding trough for animals.

- C. Who was present when Jesus was born?
1. Myth: Three Wise Men came to see Jesus lying in a manger on the night of His birth.
 2. Fact: Only the shepherds came to see Jesus that night.
 3. An angel appeared to some shepherds who were guarding their flocks on the night of Jesus' birth.
 4. The angel informed them of the birth and told them what they would find in the town.
 5. Thus, the shepherds left their flocks, hurried into Bethlehem and found "the babe lying in a manger."
 6. The only people present at this time were Mary, Joseph, Jesus, and the shepherds.
- D. What about the Wise Men?
1. Myth: Three Wise Men visited Jesus at His birth and gave Him gifts.
 2. Fact: The Bible does not state how many Wise Men visited Jesus.
 - a. It states that there were Wise Men (Matt. 2:1).
 - b. Thus, there were at least two; but, there could have been any number of them!
 3. Fact: The Bible states that they visited Jesus in a house when He was a "young child" (Matt. 2:11).
 - a. Note that they were in a house, not at an inn or a stable.
 - b. The word for "young child" is different from the word for "babe" used earlier.
 - i. "Babe" indicates a child in the womb or newly born.
 - ii. "Young child" refers to an infant or little one, but more advanced or matured.
 4. Fact: The Wise Men presented three gifts to Jesus.
 - a. Even though there were 3 gifts, this does not necessarily mean that there were 3 Wise Men.
 - b. The gifts were gold, frankincense, and myrrh.
- E. What about Mary's other children?
1. Myth: Mary remained a perpetual virgin and never had any more children.
 2. Fact: The Bible teaches that Joseph and Mary had other children who were the half-brothers and half-sisters of Jesus (Mark 6:3).
 3. Jesus was her "firstborn son" – not her only son (Matt. 1:25).
- F. When did men begin to celebrate the birth of Jesus?
1. Myth: Christians have always celebrated the birth of Jesus.
 2. Fact: The Bible never teaches Christians to celebrate Jesus' birth.
 3. The word "Christmas" comes from the Roman Catholic Church – a religious service they called Christ's Mass.
 4. The Bible nowhere mentions Christmas or a special day to remember or honor the birth of Jesus.
 5. Instead, Christians are to worship every first day of the week (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:1-2; Heb. 10:25; Rev. 1:10).
 6. They are to partake of the Lord's Supper in remembrance of Jesus' death upon the cross (Matt. 26:26-29; 1 Cor. 11:23-26).
 7. There is no Bible authority for celebrating Christmas as a religious holiday honoring the birth of Jesus.

- II. The Birth of Jesus: Lessons To Be Learned
- A. Though we do not celebrate the birth of Jesus, it is still an important event in history and essential to the Gospel message.
- B. In fact, there are some very important lessons to be learned from the birth of Jesus.
- C. First, we learn His identity.
1. John 1:17 – He is Jesus Christ.
 - a. The name Jesus means, “Savior” (Matt. 1:21; Luke 1:31).
 - b. The word Christ means, “Anointed” or “Messiah” (John 1:41).
 2. John 1:14 – He is the “only begotten of the Father.”
 - a. Jesus was not an ordinary man, though He was completely human.
 - b. He was born miraculously of a virgin; thus, the Son of God (Lk. 1:35).
 3. John 1:1 – He is the Word.
 - a. The Spokesman of God (Heb. 1:1)
 - b. The Source of Truth (John 14:26; 15:26; 16:13)
 - c. The Embodiment of the message
- D. Second, we learn of His preexistence.
1. John 1:15 – Jesus was before John.
 - a. Yet, he was born after John (Luke 1:24-27).
 - b. He was before Abraham (John 8:58-59).
 - c. He was before the world (John 17:5).
 2. John 1:1 – Jesus was in the beginning (cf. Gen. 1:1)
- E. Third, we learn of His deity.
1. John 1:1 – The Word was God.
 - a. It was prophesied (Isa. 9:6; 7:14; Matt. 1:23).
 - b. Jesus claimed it (John 10:30-33)
 2. John 1:3 – All things were made by Him.
- F. Fourth, we learn of His mission.
1. John 1:14 – He dwelt among us to be one of us (cf. Heb. 4:15).
 2. John 1:4-5 – He came to give life and light.
 - a. About grace and truth (John 1:17)
 - b. About God (John 1:18; 14:8-9)
 - c. About salvation (John 1:12-13)
 - d. This shows the way to everlasting life (Luke 19:10).
- G. Finally, we learn of His reception and rejection.
1. John 1:5 – He was not comprehended (attained or taken hold of).
 2. John 1:10 – He was not known.
 3. John 1:11 – He was not received.
 4. John 1:6-7 – Yet, John testified of the Truth about Him.
 5. John 1:12 – Thus, He was received by some.
 - a. They had the power (right) to become sons of God.
 - b. It was dependent upon true faith.
 - c. It included obedience (cf. Rom. 8:14; 2 Cor. 6:17-18; Gal. 3:26-27).
- H. We must never forget the birth of Jesus.
- I. However, we must remember that its purpose was to allow Jesus to live as a perfect example and to die as a perfect sacrifice.