

A BIRTH ANNOUNCEMENT

“GALATIANS 4:3-5”

These last few weeks have been an exciting season for the Adams' family! Today, has been quite a day! Kathy and I have witnessed the birth of our first two grandchildren. Colt is eighteen days old, and Quincy is ___ hours old! We were warned by many of you what a thrill grandkids would be, *and you were right!* Our only tinge of sadness has been that all our family and friends weren't there to join us for the births. Time and distance kept folks away.

But there's a remedy for that... It's called **“A Birth Announcement.”** Here's a birth announcement for the newest Adams' - Colton and Quincy. And notice the vital information a typical birth announcement contains... It let's people know *how it all came out!* First, there's **the logistics**, *the time and location of the birth*. Second, there's **the statistics**, *the weight and height of the child*. Finally, there's **the linguistics**, *the name and its meaning*.

Birth announcements inform distant friends and relatives of a new arrival. And this is exactly what God did. He would've liked for each of us to have been in Bethlehem on that first Christmas morning for the birth of His Son. But due to time and distance we were unable. That's why God has sent us all a birth announcement... The Bible lets us know *how it all came out!* Today we're going to look at Jesus' birth announcement...

Galatians 4 provides us **the logistics**, **the time and place of Jesus' birth**. Read with me Galatians 4:4-5, **“When the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.”** Notice again the words, **“When the fullness of time had come, God sent forth His Son...”** Implied is that the birth of Jesus was planned in advance. The Bethlehem birth wasn't a random event. It was an example of careful family planning. Jesus was born based on a very precise, predetermined timetable. Centuries earlier – even before the foundation of the world – God prearranged His birth – its *timing*, and its *location*, and even the *participants*.

Two thousand years before Jesus was born, God chose parents for His Son. Jesus was to be of the stock and lineage of the nation of Israel. God chose a man named Abraham and his wife Sarah. Through their seed He promised to bless the nations. Over the centuries God renewed His promise to Abraham's descendants... *to Isaac – to Jacob – to Judah – to David* – then all the way down the family tree *to Mary and Joseph*. God impregnated His people with a promise - then told them to wait and believe.

Yet as all parents will testify – *it's tough to wait on a baby!* Any mother will tell you 40 weeks – or 280 days – is a very long time to be **“great with child.”** Ladies, just be glad you're not a rhinoceros. Lady rhinos are pregnant for 450 days or 15 months... Be glad you're not a mama elephant! A pachyderm stays pregnant for 645 days – nearly 2 years. *It's tough to wait on a child...* Yet imagine the nation Israel. *She was pregnant for 2000 years!* That's the length of time between the promise made to Abraham and Messiah's birth.

This is why the writer of Hebrews speaks to Israel's challenge. He writes, **“Do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.”** It takes *faith AND patience* to inherit God's promises. Rarely are the promises of God fulfilled instantaneously. There's almost always a wait between the giving and receiving of God's promise. That's why faith and patience are required. *Faith never gives up.*

Patience never tires out. This is true for all God's promises, but especially the one fulfilled on that first Christmas. Jesus was born in *"the fullness of time"* – right on schedule – *not a day too soon, not a day too late.* Jesus arrived on God's *due date.*

Israel was told to *wait*, but not without a *date!* Like any OB-GYN God calculated a *due date.* He pinpointed the exact day of Messiah's appearance. Did you know only 3% of babies are born on the day they're due? *But God was precise to the very day.* Not the day of Jesus' birth, but the day that culminated His earthly ministry. Daniel 9 calculates the timeframe of God's promises to Israel. Daniel speaks prophetically of a 483 year period between *the command to rebuild Jerusalem* and *the coming of the Messiah.*

Start at March 14, 445 BC, count off 483 years, 173,880 days, and you arrive at April 6, 32 AD. Jesus had to be born and ready for this monumental moment. Here was the day He rode His donkey into the city of Jerusalem. Jesus presented Himself as Israel's King. We call the day, **Palm Sunday.** It was Jesus' unveiling - the only public demonstration He ever orchestrated. The promise predicted in Daniel 9 - 500 years in advance - was fulfilled to the exact day. As Galatians tells us, Jesus was born *"in the fullness of time."*

Yet not only was the time of His birth and later arrival predicted, so was the location. God not only had **a preplanned time**, but **a preplanned place.** When a couple becomes pregnant they chose a location for the birth. Usually a hospital close to home - *but not always does the child cooperate...* We've all heard stories of babies who were born in the backseat of a cab, or on the side of the road... I heard of a mom who made it to the hospital in time, but not the delivery room. Her baby was born in the hospital's coat closet. It was amazing, for the rest of his life the kid liked to just *hang around.*

But God's Son was delivered exactly where God planned. His birthplace was also predicted long in advance – 700 years beforehand. The Prophet Micah predicted that Messiah would be born in the little town of Bethlehem. That's why God had the Caesar order a Roman census. It took a royal decree to get Joseph of Nazareth to load up his pregnant wife of nine months and embark on a 100 mile donkey ride south to his hometown of Bethlehem. The Emperor ordered the census to inflate his own ego. Little did he know, the King of kings had manipulated him to fulfill His will.

God had a time and place for Messiah to be born. That's why it shouldn't surprise us to discover that God has a time and place for all His works. Ecclesiastes 3 tells us, *"To everything there is a season, a time for every purpose under heaven... (and) He has made all things beautiful in its time..."*

One of the lessons we learn is that *our time and place* isn't always *God's time and place.* Often God's miracles have to incubate before they're ready to hatch. Sometimes a step back over here can mean two steps forward over there. God doesn't act on *our* cue. He works when and where He chooses. This is why we need both **"faith and patience"** to inherit God's promises. Faith gets us in position to receive. Patience holds our ground until the promise comes. Remember, **faith never gives up** and **patience never tires out.**

But the Bible also gives us **statistics on this child. His weight and height.** Colossians 2:9-10 makes an incredible statement regarding the Baby born in Bethlehem, *"For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power."*

Isn't it funny how we make a big deal over a baby's weight and height? I understand why adults keep track of their weight. It's been said, "[The challenge of adulthood is not living within your means, but living within your seams.](#)" And I suppose children also need to somewhat watch their weight. But for crying out loud, the one time in life when weight shouldn't be a factor at all is when you're a baby! *Yet what's the first thing that gets asked after a baby is born? Everybody wants to know, how much did he weigh?*

I'd love to see adults treat each other the way we treat babies. What if I came home and told my wife... "[Honey, I ate lunch today with a guy who weighs 185 pounds 13 ounces, and is 72 inches long.](#)" She'd think I'd flipped. But with babies the statistics count! It's said, "[Having a baby is like catching a fish - after you haul it in, you can brag about its height and weight.](#)" And so it was with the Baby born of the Virgin. Even today, after Jesus has all grown up - we're still proud of the Savior's stats – *His weight and height...* Not His *physical measurements*, but His *spiritual statistics...*

Weight is the measure of a person's character and qualities. The actor in the play with the complex personality is always referred to as "[the heavy.](#)" Weight speaks of [identity](#), whereas height stands for a person's [destiny](#). When "[he stands tall](#)" or "[she's head and shoulders above the others](#)" we're speaking of accomplishment... In this sense there's never been a baby who *weighed more*, or *stood taller* than the Child born that first Christmas... In Colossians 2:9-10, this little baby gets [weighed and measured](#). Verse 9 places him on the scales and weighs Him. Verse 10 measures His height.

Verse 9 tells us, "[For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily...](#)" The Greek word translated "[fullness](#)" is "[pleroma](#)." This was a technical, theological term used in Greek philosophy. It was the essence or substance of God. "[Pleroma](#)" was the stuff that makes God, God – the divine substance. There were false teachers living in Colossae who said God had spread out His [pleroma](#). There were many incarnations. God was represented by many spokesmen. His Spirit and nature resided in various people and places. According to these Colossians the [pleroma](#) had been sprinkled out among the angels – and was found in nature - and was even embodied in various holy men... These false teachers taught that God could be found in all things.

And thus, they concluded that there was nothing unique about Jesus. Since God had scattered the [pleroma](#) across the religious spectrum, and diced Himself up among many luminaries - Jesus was just one recipient. But this is where Paul objects! He becomes adamant! "[All the fullness of the Godhead](#)" – the [pleroma](#) - the totality of God - all that makes God, God... came in the person of Jesus. The Almighty became little. He was born a Baby, and laid in barnyard straw. *This was a heavy Baby!*

Remember in the OT God had one residence on Earth – the Temple in Jerusalem. It was the one promised place where God was sure to be found. God resided there in physical and visible form. The Hebrews called this supernatural manifestation of God the "[Shekinnah](#)," or literally, "[The Glory](#)." The Hebrew word "[glory](#)" means "[heaviness](#)." The glory of God was the heaviness of God - the weightiness of who God is... Ezekiel 10:4 referred to God's glory in the Temple as, "[the brightness of the LORD's glory](#)."

And this is the same term the writer of Hebrews uses to describe Jesus. He is the brightness, or radiance, or heaviness of God. When Isaiah refers to the baby in Bethlehem, he called him, "[Immanuel](#)," or "[God with us](#)." On that first Christmas, God replaced the OT Temple. He held a ribbon-cutting ceremony on a new Temple. God occupied the body of a baby. His glory no longer resided in a building of stone, but in human flesh.

Psalm 72:19 commands, "Let the whole earth be filled with His glory." Apparently, the glory of God spills over the edges of our immense universe. But what Paul says in Colossians 2 is this vast glory was compressed into a tiny package. All the heaviness of God was compacted, and compressed into the fragile frame of a baby. The voice of God that roared and spoke the universe into existence, was reduced to the slightest breathings of a baby. Jesus was not only *God incarnate*, but He was *Glory Concentrate!*

The other day I was feeding my grandson Colton, and it reminded me of an episode with my daughter, Natalie. *Not my finest moment as a parent...* Kathy was out and about and it was up to me to feed Nat. She gulped down 8 ounces of formula, got the complimentary burp, and I put her to bed. But a few minutes later I her awful, gurgling noises. I walked up to the crib to discover she'd upchucked all 8 ounces. I wondered *what did I do wrong?* Later that night I discovered my mistake. The can of Similac read "Mix 4 to 1." I had overdosed my little girl on quadruple strength Similac! I felt terrible.

But here's my point, *concentrations are potent and heavy to handle.* When Moses met God on Mount Sinai, he was shrouded in divine glory. The mountain smoked, and quaked, and trembled. It was a heavy moment. And it's a weighty experience to come to Jesus. Once you realize how heavy He is you have to bow under the weight of His glory and authority. Years ago, an English Professor was discussing the world's great literary figures. He narrowed the list to two names: **Jesus** and **Shakespeare**. He told his class, "The major difference between these two men is that if Shakespeare came into this room we'd all stand to honor and respect him. But if Jesus Christ were here, we would all humbly bow and worship Him."

When you vacuum a house, there're pieces of furniture so heavy you don't try to move them. You work around them – *a china cabinet or a water bed*. And likewise Jesus is too heavy to be moved. You can't slide Him around. Or push Him aside. Or slip by Him. He's too heavy to move. Everyone has to deal with Jesus. All that we do and think needs to be organized around Jesus. It's up to us to accommodate Jesus - not vice versa. He's the heavyweight! Jesus will one day throw his weight around and demand our allegiance!

And Jesus is not just the heaviest baby of all time - He is also the tallest! Even as an infant Jesus towered over the other 77 billion people who have inhabited planet earth. Verse 10 measures His height, "*(He) is the head of all principality and power.*" He is head and shoulders above all other authorities. Jesus died, and rose, and ascended to the Father in heaven - and now all things have been placed under His feet. There are no limits to His jurisdiction. Emperor Napoleon stated, "I marvel, that whereas the ambitious dreams of myself, Caesar, and Alexander, have vanished into thin air, a Judean peasant, Jesus, should be able to stretch His hands across the centuries and control the destinies of men and nations." The Bible labels Jesus, "King of kings."

A Babylonian ruler, Nebuchadnezzar, saw an image which represented the kingdoms of man – then he saw a **stone** strike the image and it crumbled. The stone was Jesus. *His Kingdom* will replace *the kingdoms of this world*. Jesus stood so tall Zacharias called Him the "Dayspring" or "Sunrise." Jesus stands above the horizon. He's the dawning of every new day.

And Paul concludes, "*we are complete in Him.*" That means if you want to be accepted by God and get to heaven you've got to come through Jesus. The Babe of Bethlehem is so tall, if you stand on His shoulders you can reach to heaven! No person can climb high enough to get there on their own. Only through Christ can we rise from the ashes and stand tall before God.

We're looking at a biblical birth announcement – the **logistics**, **statistics**, and finally the **linguistics**. Matthew 1:21 sheds light on **the baby's name and its meaning**. The angel tells Joseph, **"And (Mary) will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins."** One of the fun things about having a baby is getting to choose the name. Here are the five most popular baby names in 2010 according to the Social Security Administration... For the girls it's **Isabella, Sophia, Olivia, Emma, and Ava**. For the boys it's **Jacob, Ethan, Michael, Jayden, and good ole William**. Some parents go with a garden variety name - others get more exotic. Julia Roberts named her twins **Phinnaeus and Hazel**. *They'll thank her later!*

The most common names in the English language are **"John"** and **"Smith."** Put them together and you get **"John Smith."** There are 39,000 **"John Smiths"** in England. There're 225 **"John Smiths"** in the Metro Atlanta area.

Understand, when God named His Son, He gave Him the Hebrew equivalent of **"John Smith."** The name **"Yeshua"** – or in English, **"Jesus"** – was a common name. I'm sure it was the number one for the year 4 BC. **"Jesus"** means **"Jehovah is Salvation."** And since all Hebrew girls longed to birth the Messiah, they would often give their sons this name **"Jesus."** This is why in His adult life the Savior went by the designation, **"Jesus of Nazareth"** - it differentiated Him from all the other Jesus' alive at the time... Certainly over the last 2000 years Jesus has done much to distinguished Himself. You no longer have to refer to his hometown. Folks around the world recognize the name **"Jesus!"** Just say **"Jesus"** or **"Je'sus"** or **"Jezi"** and trust me, no one will ask, **"Jesus who?"** Today, His name invokes strong emotions. Some folks hear His name and their face lights up with love... Other people mock, or show disdain... Still others are embarrassed and feel ashamed... What emotion swells up in you when you hear the name **"Jesus"**? It reminds me of an old hymn... **"There is a Name I love to hear, I love to sing its worth; it sounds like music in my ear, the sweetest name on earth."**

The Bible tells us no other name carries as much authority, and garners as much respect as this name. Philippians 2:10, **"At the name of Jesus every knee should bow... every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord."** In Acts 4 Peter says, **"Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."** The name **"Jesus"** is heaven's password!

Parents choose names for different reasons. Some parents like the sound or rhythm of a name. Other parents scrutinize the meaning of the name. I'm not sure, but I think the name **"Sandy"** is Old English for **"young looking grandpa..."** Some names even become a indicator of a child's future. In Bible times the giving of a name carried great meaning. Such was the case with **"Jesus."** The angel told Joseph to name the boy, **"Jesus,"** for **"He will save His people from their sins."** *When God sent us a gift it was a Savior!*

Of all God could've given us for Christmas He shipped us a Savior! Humans are not actually hard to shop for... It's not like we have no needs...

God could've sent us an **ecologist** to deal with global warming.

Or a **family counselor** who could stop the spiraling divorce rates.

Or He could've given us a **medical researcher** with the cure for cancer.

Or a **sociologist** with ways to alleviate starvation and disease.

Or a **diplomat** who could bring peace to our war-torn world.

Or an **economist** to solve the debt crisis, and create new jobs.

Or an **educator** who could help underachieving students.

Or a **psychologist** who could counsel away our depression and stress.

We have so many needs... but God didn't send an ecologist, or counselor, or researcher, or sociologist, or diplomat, or economist, or psychologist... *He sent us a Savior!* He sorted out all our ills and determined our greatest need... It's been said, "*At the heart of all our problems is the problem in our hearts.*" Sin is at the root of all our other maladies... Sin is our archenemy! It's our rebellion and selfishness that keeps us alienated from God.

If only I could tap into God, then He could clean up the mess in my life. But sin makes it impossible to log on. Sin blocks the link between me and God. Take two magnets - point the north ends toward one another, and try to push them together. They repel. An invisible force pushes them apart. Likewise sin is the invisible force that keeps you from connecting with God. The sin in your heart keeps pushing you away from Him. *There's only one solution...* As with the magnets, the answer is to turn one of the ends around.

And this is what needs to happen for you to connect with God. You need *to turn around*. The Bible uses the term "*repent.*" All it means is "*to turn.*" When you confess your sin, and hate your sin, and desire to overcome your sin. When you *turn from your sin*, the Savior forgives you and sends His Spirit to live inside you. He becomes a magnetic force that draws you to God. And once our sin is dealt with, God goes to work on all our other problems.

The man who wants God's healing, without dealing with his sin is like the patient who wants the doctor to treat the symptoms, and not the disease. Too many people want God's help, but they're unwilling to address the real issue. We hate our *loneliness*, our *despair*, our *losing battle with lust*, our *financial problems*, our *broken relationships*... but our first step toward getting help is gaining access to God. And this only happens when we repent – when we humble ourselves – when we *turn from our sin* and *turn to the Savior*.

Turn to Jesus and He takes it from there. Jesus is no part-time Savior. It's not just His hobby. Jesus is a specialist. He knows the job inside and out. He's a Savior extraordinaire. He gets out the grimmest grime and dirtiest dirt. He straightens out the most twisted people! It's said, "*I have a great need for Christ. I have a great Christ for my need.*" This is what Christmas is about! As the angel proclaimed to the shepherds, "*Born unto you this day in the city of David, a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.*"

Two thousand years ago in a distant land a special Child was born! And since it was impossible for us be present, God sent us a birth announcement. It informs us of the *logistics, time and location* – the Child's *statistics, weight and height* – His *linguistics, His name and its meaning!* God announces to all men everywhere the birth of *His Son* and *our Savior - Jesus!*

And once you receive a birth announcement it's customary to send a gift! That's right. It's only proper etiquette to respond with a gift. You've taken care of everyone else on your shopping list. Do you have a gift for the Savior? And I'll tell you what He wants... *Jesus wants you!* Have you trusted Him with your life and asked for His forgiveness? Today could be your **time and place** to surrender to Jesus... He's **heavy** enough to support you, and **tall** enough to get you to heaven... And He specializes in what you need most. You're a sinner. He's **a Savior!** It's a perfect fit... if you'll humble yourself and come to Jesus today... *Let's bow our heads and...*