

THE KING IN A MANGER

Luke 2.1-7

Every person has a birthday, and most birthdays are remembered at least by the person himself and usually by his immediate family. But no birthday has ever been remembered so widely as the birthday of the Lord Jesus Christ. Why is this?

One possible answer to this question is found in the many paradoxes of the Christmas story. In this great story so filled with paradoxes, there is one paradox that stands out above the rest, it is the paradox of the incarnation: Immanuel!

CAESAR AND CHRIST

That paradox did not escape the biblical writers. In fact, as we study the Christmas narratives, we soon find that not only was it known to them, but it was actually emphasized. We see this clearly in Luke's gospel in the best known verses of the story (vv. 1-7).

EIGHT CONTRASTS

This paradox has undoubtedly commended the story to many generations of people, but we have not exhausted it yet. For according to the full teaching of the Word of God, Jesus descended from the peak of glory to this lowly position in order that he might raise us from our lowly position to his glory.

For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.
2 Corinthians 8.9

Years ago I read some comments on a message entitled, "The Contrasts of Christmas" by Donald Grey Barnhouse. It is of interest here because each of the eight contrasts developed by Barnhouse illustrates this central paradox.

Luke 2.11	John 1.12
Luke 2.7	John 14.2
Matthew 2.11	Galatians 3.26
Luke 2.51	Galatians 5.1
Philippians 2.6-7	1 Peter 5.4
Matthew 8.20	2 Corinthians 8.9
Luke 2.16	Luke 15.10
Matthew 2.13	Hebrews 2.14,15

THREE LESSONS

First, none of us should judge by appearances, especially by those that impress the world greatly.

Second, we should learn that it is impossible for us to judge the end of anything by its beginning.

Revelation 5.9-13

Finally, there is a lesson in what the Christian life should be.