



A Child. A Son. A Savior.

Introduction

Think about the first time you experienced a birth—maybe the birth of kittens or puppies, maybe even the birth of your very own son or daughter! Would you agree with me that birth is a miracle? that life is a miracle?

The miracle of birth is sometimes so astonishing, so awe-inspiring that it's beyond belief.

For instance, consider twins Jamie and Emily, born at just 27 weeks to parents in Australia. Mom delivered Emily safely. But when Jamie, Emily's twin brother, was born, he simply would not begin breathing. Doctors tried for 20 minutes to resuscitate Jamie but finally gave up.

Jamie's mom held her little boy, hugging, touching, and saying a heartbreaking good-bye. Finally, when she was ready to let go, she handed him to a nurse. At just that moment, Jamie gasped for air. The hospital staff assumed this was just a reflex. But soon Jamie shuddered. A moment or two later, he began to breathe normally. He opened his eyes. He held out his hand and grabbed his mother's finger.

The obstetrician looked on, astonished. "I don't believe it. I just don't believe it," the doctor kept repeating. Today, Jamie is fully recovered, growing, and living out the miracle of life with his twin sister and the rest of his family.

Getting to the Heart

At Christmastime, we focus on a miraculous birth. Jesus' birth, though, is miraculous on a whole other level. The birth of our Savior was utterly exceptional. Never before. Never again. Never on earth would any birth compare with the miracle of that birth! Listen to the way the prophet Isaiah describes it:

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given.

Isaiah 9:6

Think with me for a moment about three things that made our Lord's birth so remarkable.

- *A child is born . . .* Conceived by the Holy Spirit, Jesus had no human father. In a poll taken recently in the United States, 75 percent of those responding said they believed in our Lord's virgin birth. But whether we believe it or not, it is a fact! Born of the Virgin Mary, Jesus was (and is) a true human being. Conceived by the Holy Spirit, Jesus was (and is) truly God.

Miraculous! Just as every other human baby, Jesus grew in his mother's womb. His spinal cord developed. His heart began to beat. He floated in amniotic fluid. He relied on an umbilical cord for

nutrients and oxygen. So weak! So dependent! So small! Yet, he was (and is) God—God himself coming as he had promised to “save his people from their sins” (Matthew 1:21)!

- *A son is given . . .* “A son is given,” writes Isaiah. Given! Here is the Christmas gift that outshines any and every Christmas gift ever given! This “son,” the son of Mary was also the very Son of God! Sometimes we roll our eyes at those who seems to think they are “God’s gift to humanity.” But Jesus really *was*!

The Baby that once lay in Bethlehem’s lowly manger would grow up to teach, to heal, to demonstrate God’s unconditional love for all humanity. Those little baby hands, those little baby feet would not stay tiny. One day, they would bleed for you and for me.

Just as Jesus was born for us, so he would die for us. He would take the nails you and I, by our sins, deserved. Jesus would endure God’s wrath so that you and I would never endure it. Jesus would willingly suffer and die in our place for our worry, our greed, our gossip, our dishonesty, our self-absorption, our bigotry, our ugly thoughts and words. Jesus would die for our sins—and rise again!

- *To us . . .* “A child is born . . . a son is given.” Just think! To us! To you! We have done nothing to earn God’s gift. We have done nothing to attract his love. Quite the opposite, in fact. Nevertheless, the gift—the Child, the Son—is given *to us*! That Child, that Son, died and rose again, crushing the power of sin and death forever. Now *that* is truly miraculous.

It is so miraculous, it is such good news that, thinking about it, some may decide it is unbelievable. But whether we believe it or not, it is nonetheless true!

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given.

Isaiah 9:6

Nearly two centuries ago, Phillips Brooks wrote this prayer as he pondered our Lord’s great Christmas gift—the Child, the Son, the Savior, given to us. Will you pray that prayer with me now?

O holy Child of Bethlehem,
Descend to us, we pray;
Cast out our sin, and enter in,
Be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels
The great glad tidings tell;
O come to us, abide with us,
Our Lord Emmanuel!

“O Little Town of Bethlehem,” stanza 4

Taking It Home

Today, each of you will receive (*name the item you will be distributing*). Let it remind you this Christmas and throughout the coming New Year of that Child, that Son, the One who was born for you, who died for you, who lives for you, and who, through faith, lives in you—your Savior, Jesus Christ! And feel free to take a second one to share with someone who is lonely, sad, or anxious or who wonders whether God’s love is for them. It is! That Child, that Son, was given “for us”!