



Who was this child called Jesus?

2023

If I were to stand on a street corner today and ask people passing by, “Do you know who Jesus is?”, I expect some of them would reply that they do, and perhaps even believe in Him, but others would dismiss me as a mere fanatic of Jesus. And they would be right! However, regardless of how people feel or think about Jesus, the fact is that He is the central figure of Christianity. Prophets foretold His arrival hundreds of years before His birth, and among them was Isaiah who said, “Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call Him Immanuel, – which means God with us.”¹ And this prophecy was actually fulfilled over two thousand years ago.

Jesus' humble beginnings were certainly not fitting for the Messiah, Savior and King the prophets talked about and were expecting. A palace would have been more suitable, but God chose the humblest place imaginable: an ordinary stable. And to announce that a Savior was born, He sent His angels to shepherds who were in nearby fields.² Guided by a star, Magi also came to worship this exceptional child, whom the prophets referred to as 'King of the Jews'.³ While the Bible gives a detailed description of Jesus' birth, it doesn't provide much information about His childhood. It does mention, however, that "Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men."⁴

As an adult, we learn more about Him through His three-year ministry. Actually, Jesus revealed His true identity, and the purpose of His mission when He said, “For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.”⁵ He further declared, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”⁶

Jesus, the Son of God made flesh, willingly came to earth to save mankind from our sins; the innate corruption of our human nature we all inherited from the disobedience of the first man and woman to God. He came to demonstrate that God loves us even if we don't deserve it; to teach us His ways and how to walk in them. Jesus suffered and died on the cross, so we might be reconciled with God through Him, and have eternal life in His presence. As He was hanging on the cross, the sins of the world were placed on Him... And through it all, He demonstrated His amazing love toward mankind, even to those who were persecuting Him when He said, “Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.”⁷

Jesus knew beforehand what He would have to endure. Yet, He was fully committed to His mission until the end, and never failed to show His love toward the crowds that followed Him. Their physical needs were important to Him, and He addressed this issue specifically in one of His teachings, stating that God will take care of them as He takes care of everything else in all of His creation. He concluded saying, “Therefore do not be anxious, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For the Gentiles [unbelievers] seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all.” And to make sure they

understood what should be their priority, He continued saying, “But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.”⁸

Jesus' amazing and numerous miracles demonstrated a genuine compassion toward all people. Thousands of them were miraculously fed, and many were healed. The lame walked, the blind saw, the deaf heard and the mute spoke. The demon-possessed were delivered, and the dead were brought back to life. His most powerful miracle was undoubtedly His own resurrection. He proved once again His divine power and as He did, He gave them and now to us, the hope of eternal life that He promised to those who truly believe in Him. Amazingly, Jesus continues to perform miracles on our behalf, and the most important one is without question His transformative power in people's hearts and lives. And I can say that I am a witness to this ongoing transformation in my own life.

As a young mother, I felt a constant restlessness in my heart, but was unable to pinpoint its cause. Spiritually speaking, I honestly considered myself in right standing with God since I always did my best to observe His commandments and follow a religion which, in itself, didn't soothe at all my yearning heart. So, I finally abandoned all the religious practices I was taught as a child, and turned to transcendental meditation and yoga to find inner peace. It didn't take long for me to realize that they provided only temporary relief, and I dropped them completely.

Then one day, through an unexpected series of events, God touched my heart in a very special way. I came to understand that this inner peace and joy I was so looking for was only found in Jesus. It had nothing to do with religion, my good deeds, and own justification in front of a holy God. It was only through the sacrifice of His only Son, Jesus, who died on a cross for me, a sinner... So, it was with deep conviction and a contrite heart that I asked God's forgiveness for my sins, and entrusted Him with my life. As it happened, a wonderful relationship began between us. From that point on, I gained a greater understanding of Him through His Word, the Bible, and started following His teachings. As I did, I witnessed my life being transformed in so many ways... One thing I can say, though, is that I never felt that restlessness again.

My search was finally over... God had given me a new purpose in life. My priorities and goals had changed, and raising my family became the most admirable, and fulfilling mission I've ever had. I had put God first in my life. In doing so, He promised me peace amid turmoil; wisdom to guide me through the complexities of life; courage in the face of adversity; hope when everything seems to fall apart, and to provide for all my needs. But most importantly, that He would always be with me in this life, and beyond. By His grace, God touched my heart, and I am so grateful that He did. I can say that this gift of salvation is the most costly and valuable gift ever given to me... Jesus said, “For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through Him.”⁹ In essence, Jesus did it all for us...

The Bible says, “For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— not by works, so that no one can boast.”¹⁰ Salvation isn't something we can earn by living a good life, through our own merit or even a religion. It is a gift. Therefore, to be able to receive it, we must come to God with a sincere and humble heart that is open to His immeasurable, incomparable greatness and love, which are truly beyond our comprehension. And as we do, His Spirit convicts us, and causes us to see the truth in a clear light. We fully understand then that it is by grace alone through faith in Christ Jesus that we are reconciled to a holy God. This means that when we belong to Christ, we are a new person. The old life is gone, and a new life has begun!¹¹ And that's what I call a true miracle!

Christmas is right around the corner, and most of us we'll soon be gathering with families and friends to celebrate. There will be an exchange of gifts, good food and fun. It's an exciting time of the year! But I hope we will not forget the primary reason for our celebrations, which is the birth

of Jesus, the Son of God, who was born and grew up to adulthood; who suffered, died and raised to life in order to lovingly show us the way home to Him. By coming to earth, He brought good news to a world in turmoil, which is that salvation, freedom from sin and guilt, lasting joy and peace, and eternal life can only be found in Him. And by sacrificing and giving His life for mankind, He demonstrated the true meaning of love. So, all things considered, this celebration is not just about the birth of a child named Jesus, but also about honoring Him as our Savior, the King of kings, the Lord of lords and the Prince of Peace!

While I'm looking forward to celebrating this event, my heart goes out to you, dear readers, who have lost someone very dear to you, whether recently or some time ago. This holiday season will be particularly difficult, and I pray that you find comfort in God as well as in the love and support of family and friends. For those who will be spending Christmas alone, may God reveal His presence in a way that will be particularly meaningful to you. And for all who have been going through very challenging times this year, may you feel His peace and hope for better days to come.

As I look ahead to the upcoming year, I want to conclude this letter with a scripture, and make it my prayer to God for all of you. "May the Lord bless you and keep you. May the Lord make His face shine upon you, and be kind to you. May the Lord show favor toward you, and give you peace."¹²

Wishing you all and your loved ones a wonderful and blessed Christmas!

With love,

Beth 😊

¹Isaiah 7:14 ²Luke 2:8-18 ³Matthew 2:1-12 ⁴Luke 2:52 ⁵John 3:16 ⁶John 14:6 ⁷Luke 23:34 ⁸Matthew 6:31-33
⁹John 3:17 ¹⁰Ephesians 2:8-9 ¹¹2 Corinthians 5:17 ¹²Numbers 6:24-26