



CAPITOL COMMISSION

The Absurdity of Christmas

DECEMBER 9, 2009

Paul Meinsen / PO Box 891, Jefferson City, MO 65102 / www.capitolcom.org / paul.meinsen@capitolcom.org

Max Lucado writes of a true story concerning Landon Saunders, who was speaking to a group one day. A man stood in the middle of his lecture to ask some earnest questions:

"You mean to tell me God became a baby and that He was born in a sheep stable?"

"Yes that is what I mean to say", replied Saunders.

"And then, after becoming a baby, he was raised in a carpenter's home? He never wrote any books or held any political offices, yet called himself the Son of God?"

Saunders answered, "That is right".

The questioner asked, "He never traveled outside of his own country, never studied at a university, never lived in a palace, and yet asked to be regarded as the Creator of the universe?"

"That's correct", replied Saunders.

"And this crucifixion story...he was betrayed by his own people? No followers came to his defense? And that he was executed like a common thief?"

"That's the gist of it", answered Mr. Saunders.

"And after the killing he was buried in a borrowed grave?" ask the inquisitive man.

"Yes, he had no grave of his own, nor money with which to purchase one" was the answer.

"And according to what's written, after three days in the grave he was resurrected and made appearances to over five hundred people?"

Saunders simply said "Yes".

"And all of this was to prove that God still loves his people and provides a way to return to Him?"

Saunders' reply: "Right".

"Doesn't that all sound rather...Doesn't that all sound rather absurd?"

Saunders' answer was simple, "I suppose it does sound absurd, doesn't it?"

Think about it:

The almighty *Elohim*, the majestic God of the universe whose name is *Yahweh*, created the universe and all that is in it, including the pinnacle of creation: mankind. He created everything knowing that mankind will disobey the one command that He gave them. He created everything knowing that man will get worse and worse in their rebellion towards Him--

- they murder, rape, and pillage each other;
- they boast and brag and live as though they are the center of the universe;
- they lie, cheat and steal for their own selfish reasons;
- they do not care about the Creator;

- they hate Him;
- they credit their own ideas about their origin;
- they worship other images, including themselves;
- they blame Him for the bad things that happen to them;
- and many of them fake some type of allegiance to Him.

And knowing all of this beforehand, *Yahweh* set a plan in order. He chose a man, Abraham, out of a pagan society. *Yahweh* set him apart from the others and promised that his family would be the one family that blesses the earth. Abraham's family finally grew over the generations to be a nation, but it became a nation in slavery. *Yahweh* gloriously delivered Abraham's family from Egypt and settled them into a land He promised to Abraham's family many years earlier.

Instead of being eternally grateful, this nation, Israel, began to live in the way that the people of the land before them lived. They broke the laws and commands that God had given to them. They worshipped the foreign idols, even to the point of sacrificing their own children. In spite of these things, *Yahweh* God continued to work His plan. He disciplined His children and had them carried away by invading armies. But He always promised and provided a remnant to carry on with His plan.

His plan would eventually come to a point in history where a young unmarried lady would have a baby even though she had not been with any man. This baby would be born in a lowly stable area in a little town called Bethlehem. This baby would be called "Immanuel"; which means "God with us." This baby would be God in the flesh. He came down as a man so that He may save man. His name was Jesus.

How would He save man by being a man? *Yahweh* saved man by permitting men to kill Jesus. He, who is holy, all-powerful, compassionate, and love gave His Son to be killed by unholy, powerless, selfish, hateful men. And by doing this, He saved them.

And then *Yahweh* confirmed the whole transaction by raising His dead Son back to life on the third day after His death.

The inquisitive man in the opening story is correct. This whole thing sounds rather bizarre and absurd.

But it is the absurdity that makes it all so glorious and shows us the greatness of God. The absurdity makes the grace amazing.

INTERIM BIBLE STUDIES

CAPITOL STAFF: WEDNESDAY @ 12NOON, HEARING ROOM #6
ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE: THURSDAYS @ 7AM, BROADWAY BUILDING 3RD FLOOR CAFETERIA

Missouri

The Absurdity of Christmas

Luke 1:26-37 Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city in Galilee called Nazareth, ²⁷to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the descendants of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸And coming in, he said to her, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." ²⁹But she was very perplexed at this statement, and kept pondering what kind of salutation this was. ³⁰The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; for you have found favor with God. ³¹And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus. ³²He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David; ³³and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end." ³⁴Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" ³⁵The angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy Child shall be called the Son of God. ³⁶And behold, even your relative Elizabeth has also conceived a son in her old age; and she who was called barren is now in her sixth month. ³⁷For nothing will be impossible with God."

Luke 2:7-14 And she gave birth to her firstborn son; and she wrapped Him in cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. ⁸In the same region there were some shepherds staying out in the fields and keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹And an angel of the Lord suddenly stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them; and they were terribly frightened. ¹⁰But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which will be for all the people; ¹¹for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. ¹²This will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." ¹³And suddenly there appeared with the angel a multitude of the heavenly hosts praising God and

saying, ¹⁴"Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased."

Matthew 1:18-23 Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: when His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man and not wanting to disgrace her, planned to send her away secretly. ²⁰But when he had considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for the Child who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. ²¹She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins." ²²Now all this took place to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet: ²³"BEHOLD, THE VIRGIN SHALL BE WITH CHILD AND SHALL BEAR A SON, AND THEY SHALL CALL HIS NAME IMMANUEL," which translated means, "GOD WITH US."

Galatians 4:4-5 But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, ⁵so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.

Friend, please remember this: The more you know God, as He has revealed Himself in Scripture, the more absurd and crazy this story sounds. And the more you understand yourself from the standpoint of the Scriptures, the more this story sounds glorious. If you ponder this at all, and believe it, you cannot help but be humble. There is no room left for any boasting of your greatness and goodness.

My prayer is that your Christmas season will be filled with joy, and praise and worship towards God; may it be filled with awe and fear and reverence.

"God became flesh and dwelt among us"--how absurd, yet how glorious.