

Born of Woman. Born of God.

The Nativity of Our Lord

Christmas Day

December 25, 2023

John 1:1–14

The celebration of Christmas is the celebration of the birth of Jesus. We celebrate because He is the Savior who was promised. Jesus was born in order to bring about salvation in His suffering, death, and resurrection. But there is even more to the celebration of Christmas. We are shown in the Gospel reading for Christmas Day that there is another birth we should celebrate. It is our birth. Let's look at how this birth comes about.

There were only two people who were not born, our first parents, Adam and Eve. Eve gave birth to the first child and from then on every person has come from the union of a man and a woman. The Bible emphasizes this one-flesh union of a man and a woman and how we are brought into this world. Eve, the mother of all the living, came from the first man, Adam. But from Eve on, every person has been born of a woman. What we are celebrating on Christmas is that this means also God. Jesus, the second person of the Trinity, was born of His mother, Mary.

Every human being is born from the union of a man and a woman, each person's father and mother. Jesus is the exception. He was indeed born of His mother, but He was not born from the union of His father and mother. He is not from his earthly, adoptive father Joseph but from His Heavenly Father. But He was not born of Father. Rather, the Bible teaches, He is begotten of the Father. As we say in the creed, Jesus was begotten, not made. We are made, we were created by God. We have come into existence at some point. Not Jesus. He is eternal, He is God.

But it's remarkable, isn't it? He was born! God became flesh. God became a human being. He was born of His mother, Virgin Mary. The conception of her child in the womb was not of the union and her husband-to-be, Joseph. It was a miraculous conception, Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit.

In the account of Jesus' birth in Luke 2 and in the statement of Paul in today's Epistle reading we are shown that Jesus was born of woman. But He was not born of God. That actually is something reserved for you and me. We, who are unlike Jesus in that each of us has an earthly father, are also unlike Jesus in that we are born of God. This birth, being born of God, is new birth. Our first birth, our natural birth, is from the union of our physical father and physical mother. This new birth—it is supernatural. It is spiritual. It is of God.

He has brought this new birth about because God Himself became a human being. This is the great truth of the Gospel reading for Christmas Day. In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. This Word, the eternal Son of God, became flesh and dwelt among us. God became a human being. The second person of the Trinity was conceived in the womb of Mary and born of her and was a baby. God became a man.

He was born of woman and begotten of His Father. Because He was, we who are born of woman are now born of God. John says in the Gospel reading that is not of human design. He says it is not by our will or anything we have brought about. God is the one who brings it about. The God who created us in the first place now creates us anew. We who are born physically by virtue of our father and mother are now born spiritually by virtue of being born of God. In the

Gospel according to St. John and elsewhere in the New Testament we are shown that this is through Baptism. It birth from above. This birth is of water and the Holy Spirit. This birth is remarkable even as the birth of Jesus is remarkable. It is unlike any other birth. Jesus was born of Mary but became a human being who is without sin. This is because He was not conceived from the union of a man and a woman. Thus He was born without sin. We are conceived by the union of a man and woman and thus carry the sin of our first parents Adam and Eve.

But while Jesus was conceived without sin He was born in the natural way, of His mother. And this Paul says in the Epistle reading is so that He could be born under the law. Why did Jesus need to be born under the law? Being God, He is the author of His eternal law. His law is good. Living according to His holy law would be the best possible life because everything would be the way God intended them to be. But we sin, we often follow not God's law but our own ideas and notions. The law then exacts demands on us because we are sinful. Even though God's law is good and perfect it condemns us because of our sin.

Jesus was born under the law in order to redeem us from the law. Jesus lived under this law, fulfilling it perfectly, what we could not do. He lived according to it perfectly and God counts that toward us as if we ourselves had kept God's law perfectly. But Jesus went even further. He suffered our punishment for not keeping God's law. We are the sinners. We have transgressed God's law. We deserve eternal condemnation for this. And yet Jesus was counted by God as if He were the one who transgressed the law. He suffered the punishment for our sin. We endured the condemnation we rightly deserve.

This salvation He has brought about in His life and in His death and resurrection He brings now to us in Baptism. Jesus was born of a woman and begotten of the Father. We are born of a woman and then also born of God. You will die but you will not die eternally. You will live forever. Free from your sin, from eternal condemnation, free from the pain and sorrow of this life. You have life because you are born of God and your life is now in Christ. You live your life to God and for others. Jesus was born of a woman to live in this life and sacrifice Himself for the sin of the world. You are still in your natural, sinful nature, but you have been born of God, Baptized into Christ. You have a new mind and heart in Christ, new life which you live in selfless sacrifice for others, loving them as God has loved you. Amen.

SDG

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