

What event in your life has been the most life-changing for you? For some of you, it's the day you were diagnosed with cancer, or the day you got into that accident. Those things changed your life. For others, it's the day you got your job, or the day you got married. Those things change lives, too, don't they?

But do you know what "*the people who study these things*" says is the event that changes things the most? The birth of the first child! That makes sense. When your first child is born, you become entirely responsible for another human being, besides yourself. It changes how you look at everything in life. How are you going to provide for this child? What kind of parent will you be? What about college? What kind of world will he or she grow up in?

That is actually true for every Christian, because the event that changed our lives the most ... was the birth of a firstborn! Today, we "**Celebrate the Birth of God's Firstborn.**"

We do celebrate for a couple of reasons:

- 1) He's the *firstborn* over all creation, and
- 2) He's the *firstborn* for our reconciliation.

(1)

It had been four long centuries of silence and darkness. There had been no written Word or prophecies from God since Malachi. But the Apostle Paul reports on how God broke the silence and chased away the darkness: **God has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves.**

Darkness ... that's similar to our situation in Wisconsin. It's dark! It's gloomy! It's winter! It's cold. Darkness ... that's similar to our situation spiritually. Our souls, by nature, are as dark and gloomy and cold as a midwestern winter.

But at Christmas a warm little body, introduced light to our hearts and happiness to our souls. God sent his firstborn into our world!

We're told something about him. **This Son is the image of the invisible God.** The Son is the spitting image of the God we can't see. That's because this child is God! His love for you was so strong that he willingly took on:

- human eyes to show you how he looks after you,
- human ears to show you how he hears your every prayer,
- a human mouth and voice to speak your language.

He did all of that for you.

We're told **This Son** was also **the firstborn over all creation.** According to his Godly nature, Jesus Christ, wasn't just a part of creation, he was its Creator. But according to his human nature, Jesus Christ also became a part of his own creation!

For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him.

- This child in the manger created the wood for his manger.
- This child created the woman from whom he came.
- This child created the shepherds and the sheep and the rolling hills on which they kept watch.
- This child created the angels who announced his arrival and sang his praises!

In addition, we're told: **He is before all things and in him all things hold together.** The Son, the second person of the Trinity, may not have been specifically mentioned in Genesis 1, like the Father and Holy Spirit. But today's lesson from Colossians specifically tells us he was there. Which means, that if the eternal God wrapped in that infant body would remove himself for even a moment, our whole world would come apart at the seams and collapse.

That God - your Creator, Sustainer and Savior - that God entered your world to become like you to show you the merciful heart of God!

Normally, when a first child is born that means a lot of work and responsibility for others. But this firstborn, God's firstborn, did all the work and took on the responsibility himself for you and for me.

(2)

But there's more, we're told: **In him (God's Son, Jesus) we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.** Do those words ever break the silence and tell a story!

Christmas tells us why God came into the world. Was he the parent who walks into the room to put a scare into the kids who were horsing around? *No!* **In him we have redemption.** Jesus Christ came to pay the ransom so we'd be free from the grip of the devil and death.

Was he the parent who walks into their kid's bedroom to list all the mistakes they made at the musical recital, or the sporting event? *No!* **In him we have the forgiveness of sins.** Jesus Christ came to bury our sins so deep that they'll never be dug up ever again.

Here's how that happened: **He's the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy.** There's that word "*firstborn*" again. Not only was Jesus God's Firstborn Son in the manger, he would also be the Firstborn from the dead. He was the first to be pulled permanently out of the grave, never to go back again. You and I will follow on the Last Day.

For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him. The eternal God who has no beginning or end - had a beginning in a manger! That's both breathtaking and confusing, isn't it?

- All the omniscience of God (he knows everything) all packed into that tiny little mind!
- All the omnipotence of God (he's stronger than everyone) all packed into those tiny little arms and hands!

- All the omnipresence of God (he can be everywhere at once) all packed into that tiny little body!

For your salvation and mine, he did this on purpose, he set aside the full-use of all those attributes which only God has, to become what he was not, so that we might become what we are not!

And finally we're told, **through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.**

- At first it was the wood of the manger cradled him, but later it was the wood of the cross that held him.
- That small group that stood over him at his manger, would later become a much larger crowd that stood under his cross.
- His infant sounds became the cries of a Mighty Warrior: "*My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?*" You realize, don't you, that you and I are the answer to his question? By his blood, we, who trust in him, can sleep in heavenly peace.

The birth of God's firstborn – Christmas – is the most life-changing event in your life.

- Into the darkness of your life came the Light of the world.
- Into the silence of your life came the news of your salvation.

That's why we Celebrate the Birth of God's Firstborn!