

Christ ^{the} Firstborn of the Family



GARY HARGRAVE

Why Do We Celebrate Christmas?

Are we celebrating Christmas to have a birthday party for Yeshua (Jesus)? No, that misses the true significance of His birth. We are celebrating the fact that Yeshua, the Son of God, was born of a woman and came into the earth as a newborn baby. He was born like us that we can be like Him (2 Corinthians 5:21). To study this, we will begin by reading Matthew's account of His birth.

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. And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man and not wanting to disgrace her, planned to send her away secretly. But 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. She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins." Now all this took place to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet: "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."

MATTHEW 1:18-23

The name Joshua or Yeshua came by angelic proclamation. In Hebrew, His name is Yehoshua, which means "the LORD is salvation" or "YHWH saves." He is the Savior of the world. He is also the fulfillment of the name Immanuel, meaning "God with us" (Isaiah 7:14). He was the fullness of God bodily in the earth (Colossians 2:9). He was the Father manifested in the earth (John 10:30). Therefore, it is extremely significant that God brought Him forth as a baby.

Christ Is Relatable to Us

Why did God send His Son as an infant? So that we could relate to Him. So that we could see ourselves as being like Him and realize that He went through the same maturing process we go through. Just like us, Yeshua had to grow up, both naturally and spiritually. He grew “in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men” (Luke 2:52).

If Yeshua had come down from heaven as a fully grown perfect human, we would have lost the relationship God wants us to have with Him. By being born as a baby, He becomes relatable to you and me. In spite of that, we think of Christ as someone like Superman. We distance ourselves from Him because we think we could never be like Him. We want Him to take care of everything because we are convinced that we can never attain to what He is. How can we think that way when we know Yeshua came into the earth as a vulnerable child? He was clearly not Superman; the angel warned Joseph to hide the infant in Egypt because Herod sought to kill Him (Matthew 2:13-15). As a newborn baby, Yeshua was just like us, incapable of protecting or taking care of Himself.



Born of a human mother, Yeshua had to grow. He had to learn. He went to school and studied. He learned the Scriptures. He was well-studied and well-educated. When He grew older, He was able to stand in the synagogue, open the scroll of Isaiah, and read it publicly in Hebrew (Luke 4:16-21). The Septuagint Bible existed during this time, so He would have read the Scriptures both in Hebrew and in Greek. Due to the Roman influence, He may have spoken Latin as well. As a child, Yeshua had to grow up. He had to face life. He had to work with Joseph and learn a trade (Mark 6:3). He did not get out of any growth experiences that we all face.

Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered. And having been made perfect, He became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation.

HEBREWS 5:8-9

Get this in your mind. Yeshua was not born perfect. He was made perfect through the things He suffered. He was not born with perfect obedience. He went through the discipline of learning obedience. We should realize from this that Yeshua is more like us than we want to admit. And what God was doing in bringing forth Christ, He is looking to do in us as well.





Yeshua Was the Firstborn of Many Brethren

We have this idea that no one can ever be like Christ. It is true that no one will die on a cross again for the sins of mankind. Other than that, everything else about the life of Christ is what God is trying to work in our lives. The Lord Himself said, “You will do greater works than what I am doing because I go to the Father” (see John 14:12). We need to open our hearts to the true revelation of what God was speaking at the time of Yeshua’s birth. When we talk about the birth of Christ, we should recognize that He was to be the firstborn Son of many brethren.

And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren.

ROMANS 8:28-29

God foreknew us and predestined us to be conformed to the image of His Son. If we are going to remember His birth, then let us remember all that is available for us. Yeshua was the firstborn Son of God. He was the pattern or example of what God is looking to do in us. That does not mean that what we go through will be a cakewalk, but it should be easier because we have Him. He did it first. He went through all that we go through. He knows the ropes, and He always lives to make intercession for us (Hebrews 7:25).



We Have the Right to Become Sons of God

Every Christian understands the idea of opening his or her heart and receiving Christ. But do you understand what happens in that process? Those who receive Him also receive the power or the right to become the children of God. The Greek word for children here can just as easily be translated as “sons,” as it is in the King James Bible. By receiving Christ, we have the power to become the sons of God. The Greek word also means “offspring.” We are God’s offspring after Yeshua, who was the firstborn among many brethren. Another interesting aspect of this Greek word is that it is a term of endearment. It embraces the concept of “my darling child.” In Christ, we have the right to become His darling children but also to grow up and become truly His mature sons, offspring who follow the pattern of Christ.

There was the true Light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man. He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God. And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.

JOHN 1:9-14

What God did in manifesting Christ as the Word made flesh, He is looking to do in us. Once we open our hearts and receive Yeshua as our Savior, Lord, and King, we inherit the same birthright. The process He went through becomes our process. Our cry is “Abba! Father!” (Romans 8:15). We long to come into the same experience of Christ as the offspring of our Father.

I know that it seems impossible sometimes. Being like Christ seems so unattainable in our minds. Yet God’s heart is that we be like Him. It is God’s heart that Yeshua is not ashamed to call us brethren (Hebrews 2:11). We must see that! The Father is saying that we are from the same household as Yeshua. We are His brothers and sisters. We are the offspring of the same Father, having the right to become the sons and daughters of God.

We are born anew in Christ and start out as spiritual infants. We then progress through every stage of spiritual growth until we are mature and have our own measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ (Ephesians 4:13). We grow into maturity just as Yeshua did. God is doing the same thing with you that He did with His Son. He is teaching you obedience (Hebrews 12:9-11). He is perfecting that which concerns you (Psalm 138:8, KJV). Why is He putting you through all this? There is something He wants you to do in this generation.



Be His Voice to This Generation

God is looking to speak to the world. There was a time when Yeshua, the firstborn Son, spoke to His generation. Who speaks to our generation today? I know we have Christ's words recorded in the Bible. But they also had the writings of the prophets when God sent Yeshua to the earth to be His voice. We likewise must become the Word made flesh so that God has a voice in our generation. He brought His only begotten Son to birth because He so loved the world (John 3:16). Because of His great love for all creation, He needs a voice in this generation as well. It is urgent in God's mind that He bring many sons to glory, because without those sons He has no voice in the world (Hebrews 2:10). That is why He is working in you, teaching you obedience, and imparting to you the very nature of Christ.

God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world.

HEBREWS 1:1-2

Have you ever wished that God would just leave you alone? We tend to say to Him, “I don’t mind You being around, but just to answer my prayers. Stop teaching me obedience. Stop perfecting me. I don’t like this suffering part.” God is doing that to you because He must have a voice in this generation. God has never left Himself without a voice. He has always had a voice in every generation, and you are His voice today.

This Christmas celebrate the birth of Christ with this cry in your heart. Come before the Father and say, “I, too, will be Your voice in the earth. Go ahead, Father, work in me. I believe in Christ as my Savior. Therefore, I have the right, the ability, and the power to become Your child, to be raised up by You through this process of becoming Your mature son or daughter.” It is not always an easy or a fun process, but it is what He is looking for. He is looking for those who, like Christ, are willing to go through whatever is necessary.

Like Christ, we are born into this age, grow, and are perfected until we become His voice in the earth. Stand up, put your shoulders back, and say, “Abba! Father! As Your child, I reach in to be Your voice in this generation. Now show me who to talk to. Show me who to speak to. Show me how to move.” If there was ever a generation that needed a Word from God, it is this generation. We cannot think of ourselves as anything but a people of destiny whom God has brought forth at this time just as He brought forth His Son in the perfect time (Galatians 4:4).

Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen.

EPHESIANS 3:20-21

ABOUT GARY HARGRAVE



GARY HARGRAVE has a passion for leading people into spiritual maturity. Gary effectively ministers the life-changing truth of God's Word through Bible teaching and prophetic revelation that emphasizes the Lordship of Christ.

Gary embraces the teachings and insights of the Hebrew Scriptures as the essential foundation of God's Kingdom and the roots of Christian faith.

By cultivating spiritual maturity in Christians, Gary is deeply committed to teaching and inspiring unity in the Body of Christ and between Christians and the Jewish people.

Throughout decades of ministry, Gary has worked closely with leaders in the Jewish, Catholic and Protestant communities to build relationships based on commonality and understanding. He frequently leads study tours to Israel and the lands of the Bible.

Gary is the host of a weekly podcast entitled *Growing In God*, and is the founder of Shiloh University, an accredited online Bible college and seminary.

Gary and his family reside in Hawaii.

For other insightful resources by Gary Hargrave, including podcasts, books, articles, videos, and other educational materials, please visit: www.HargraveMinistries.org.

ABOUT HARGRAVE MINISTRIES

The calling of the Lord upon this ministry is to lead people into spiritual maturity by revealing biblical truth. **Our passion is to see the Kingdom of God manifest on earth** as the Body of Christ grows in unity, power and love.

Everything we do flows from the revelation of the Jewish roots of our Christian faith. It is our desire and privilege to bless the land and people of Israel. Our Israel outreach includes:

- **Feed the poor and break the cycle of poverty in Israel**
- **Support the orphans and widows of fallen Israeli soldiers**
- Provide physical and emotional care to **child victims of terrorism**
- **Build bridges between Christians and Jews with biblical study and research**
- Support archaeology and preservation of the **biblical City of David**
- Provide 24/7 **care for Holocaust survivors**
- **Help persecuted Jews around the world return to Israel and start new lives**
- Plant trees to **reforest Israel** and help create **"The Gospel Trail"** between Nazareth and Capernaum

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