

THE PERSON AND LIFE OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST

Lesson Two

THE DETAILS OF THE BIRTH OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST

Scripture reading: Luke 2:1-20

Burden to Impart:

In this lesson we see how when the time appointed by God had come for Christ to be born, *God sovereignly caused a universal census to be taken so that Mary and Joseph would be in Bethlehem for Christ's birth, as foretold by the prophet Micah (Micah 5:2). The Savior of the world had come, yet man gave Him no place to even be born, so He was born in a poor, humble manger among the beasts of the fields.* Although men took no account of His birth in the city, the angels of heaven announced the birth of the Savior to the shepherds in the fields. They had both time and room in their hearts to go and find the Savior who had been born. After finding Him they came back rejoicing and praising God.

Memory Verse: "A Savior was born to you today in David's city, who is Christ the Lord" (Luke 2:21).

Facts to Teach:

1. Many hundreds of years before the Savior was born, the prophet Micah had already announced beforehand that He would be born in the city of David, Bethlehem (Micah 5:2). Before great persons (presidents or kings) visit a city, the city is always pre-notified so that they can prepare the city for his coming. So great and important is the Savior who was to be born in Bethlehem that God gave hundreds of years notice beforehand about His coming.
2. In order to lead Joseph and Mary to the city of David where Christ was to be born, God sovereignly caused a universal census to be called for the first time in the history of the ancient Roman government. Everybody had to return to the city of their ancestry and be enrolled.
3. Joseph and Mary were very righteous. They did not take any excuse to avoid or hide from the census, even though she was nine months pregnant. This made it very difficult and even dangerous to walk all the way to Bethlehem to be enrolled. There was the danger that the baby might even be born while they were on their journey.
4. There was no room in the inns for Joseph and Mary when they arrived. There is no place given to the Lord Jesus in this world, for people do not care about Him. He later said, "Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to rest His head." (Matt. 8:20)
5. Finally, the Lord Jesus was born in a lowly, dirty manger among the animals. They are called the dumb beasts of burden, yet they knew their Owner when He came and they knew their Master when He was born, but His people Israel did not (Isa. 1:3).
6. The angels of heaven would not allow the greatest event that had ever happened in the universe (God's incarnation is even greater than creation) to go unannounced. They did not announce it to the busy, occupied people of Bethlehem, but to the open shepherds as they took care of their flocks in the night out in the fields. They gladly received the good news, ran to the city and found the baby-Savior in the manger. They rejoiced and worshipped God.

Songs: Hymns 82, 84, 85 and Hymns Jr. 46-47.

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(Story for lesson 2)

BORN IN A MANGER

Memory verse: And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.

Matthew 1:21

Do you know how many angels God has? They are like the stars in the sky at night. They are shining and beautiful like the stars. They love God and they do whatever He tells them to do. One day God said to an angel named Gabriel, "Gabriel, I want you to go to the city of Nazareth to a young girl named Mary. Tell her that God has chosen her. She will be very special and God will bless her. And tell her that she will be the mother of His dear, dear Son."

Gabriel went right to the city of Nazareth to Mary's house. When Mary saw the angel she was frightened. He understood and said, "Don't be afraid. The angel was strong and kind. He said, "God has chosen you. God has chosen you to be the mother of His dear Son; the mother of His Son who will one day be the King of Israel."

Mary waited. She was thinking about what he had said. She was troubled as to how to answer him. Then she said, "How can I have a son? I am not married." Again she thought for a while. There was a soft white cloud around the angel; it seemed to Mary that it was around her too. She felt happy and blest. Then like we pray, she said, "Let it be to me as God has said." And with an "Amen," the angel left as gently as he had come. Mary was comforted and could only say, "The God of our fathers is a God of wonders." As she pondered on what had happened, she was filled with peace and joy. This was real. It was not a dream. She would be the mother of the King of Israel. She would be the mother of the Son of God.

Mary was busy helping in the home. She was working, but she was really waiting for her dear friend Joseph to visit. Joseph was the man to whom she would be married. She was anxious to tell him everything that had happened. When he did come, she told him about the angel, and how frightened she was, and how he said, "Don't be afraid," and how God had chosen and honored her to be the mother of God's Son, and that His Son would one day be the King of Israel.

Joseph did not want her to say any more, He could not believe her. Oh, how sad! Mary cried and cried because Joseph did not believe her.

With many tears, she prayed to God to help her. And God did help her in a wonderful way. Do you know how? Well, God sent the same angel to Joseph. The angel told Joseph just what he had said to Mary. That she was to have a son, the Son of God, and that His name was to be Jesus, for He would save His people from their sins. Mary could only thank God for answering her prayers and that now she and Joseph could obey Him together.

At that time there was a great Emperor (like a king) over all the earth. He ordered all his subjects to pay special taxes to him. Everyone had to go to the city where he or she was born to register. It did not matter how hard it was for them or their families to get there.

So Joseph and Mary had to make a long, hard trip from Nazareth to Bethlehem. They had to go 75 miles, over rough roads on a donkey. Bethlehem was the birthplace of Israel's great King David, who was also the great, great, great grandfather. This was very hard for Mary because she was about to have the baby Jesus and she was most uncomfortable. But Mary and Joseph both believed in God, and knew that He would help them

in this time of their trouble.

After the long, long trip they both saw Bethelhem in the distance and they looked at each other with much relief and thanked God. Joseph could see how tired and miserable Mary was, and he told her that soon she would be in a comfortable room, and that everything would be taken care of. But, what a bitter disappointment awaited them in Bethelhem.

Every inn-keeper refused to let them in. Each place was filled and some closed their doors on them; they did not want to have a baby born in their inn. So the two kept going through the streets, through noisy crowd of people who had no use for them. Finally they came to the last inn. Here the inn-keeper told them that he had no room for them in his large inn. He was so unkind that Joseph almost cried as he begged this man not to turn them away. And so, as he closed the door, the inn-keeper pointed them to the stable where the animals of the guests were tied for the night. With a deep groan in his heart and a prayer to God for help, Joseph led the donkey with Mary back to the stable. And there, when he lifted the latch bar and opened the big door, they both knew that their God had not forgotten them and that the angel of His Presence had led them right to this place.

The stable was large and warm with a smell of new, fresh hay. A lamp was burning above in a safe place. The hour was getting late and Joseph made a comfortable place for Mary over plenty of nice, clean hay. A lamp was burning above in a safe place. The hour was getting late and Joseph made a comfortable place for Mary over plenty of nice clean hay. He tied their donkey in the last empty stall and gave him food and water. As Joseph stroked the donkey's back and sides, he could hear the sounds of wild celebrations in the distance. He and Mary could only worship God for delivering them from the mad crowds who had no place for God or for His dear Son. Joseph knew that Mary was thinking the same thoughts as he heard her giving thanks to God for the comfort of His Presence after this long and difficult day. She was quoting from David's psalm, "God is a very present help in trouble."

And there, that night in Bethlehem, with no one around but the gentle animals with their big, dark eyes and warm breathing, the world's dearest sweetest baby was born. Mary gave birth to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. She wrapped Him in the soft, clean clothes she had prepared for Him and laid Him there in the manger.