

Adult Bible Class

Christmas Lesson

The Birth of Jesus and Our Spiritual Birth

During this special time of the year we celebrate the birth of the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus was Emmanuel, God with us. He was God come to earth in human flesh. The mystery of God is how or why God would take on human flesh.

1 Timothy 3:16 (KJV) And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.

God Took on Human Flesh - Jesus Was Born

Although Jesus was God, he was also human. He was a descendant of King David of Israel. He had a family tree just like you have a family tree.

2 Samuel 7:15 (NKJV) But My mercy shall not depart from him, as I took *it* from Saul, whom I removed from before you. **16** And your house and your kingdom shall be established forever before you. Your throne shall be established forever.""

17 According to all these words and according to all this vision, so Nathan spoke to David.

Psalms 89:3 (NLT) The Lord said, "I have made a covenant with David, my chosen servant. I have sworn this oath to him:

4 'I will establish your descendants as kings forever;
they will sit on your throne from now until eternity.'"

We read in Scripture that the writers of the Christmas story emphasized that Jesus was of the line of David.

Matthew 1:1 The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham:

Luke 1:31 And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name JESUS. **32** He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David.

One of the last "words in red" (words of Jesus) recorded in the New Testament are these words from Revelation:

Revelation 22:6 "I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things in the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the Bright and Morning Star."

The Bible is the most remarkable "holy book" in all the world because events were prophesied centuries in advance by many different people - and they came to pass as the prophets said! God's people could use holy scripture to confirm the identity of people and events. What a wonderful book! No other "holy book" of any other religion is like the Bible!

The Christmas Story according to Matthew

Matthew 1:18 (NKJV) Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit. **19** Then Joseph her husband, being a just *man*, and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly. **20** But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. **21** And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins."

22 So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: **23** "*Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,*" which is translated, "God with us."

24 Then Joseph, being aroused from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took to him his wife, **25** and did not know her till she had brought forth her firstborn Son. And he called His name JESUS.

The prophet Isaiah told of a virgin giving birth to a son. This prophecy is special because it is tucked into a story of a king of Judah (a descendant of David) who refused the goodness of the Lord. This king, Ahaz, was a bad king. Yet, the Lord showed him mercy by asking him to ask of the Lord for a sign of confirmation. Ahaz refused, so God in his indignation said,

Isaiah 7:13 (NLT) Then Isaiah said, "Listen well, you royal family of David! Isn't it enough to exhaust human patience? Must you exhaust the patience of my God as well? **14** All right then, the Lord himself will give you the sign. Look! The virgin will conceive a child! She will give birth to a son and will call him Immanuel (which means 'God is with us'). **15** By the time this child is old enough to choose what is right and reject what is wrong, he will be eating yogurt and honey.

This wonderful prophecy was given to a descendant of King David about a future descendant that would be born of a virgin - his conception would be miraculous and speak of his purity. He would also have an ordinary childhood (eating normal childhood food). The prophecy then switches back to the subject at hand - God's judgment on Judah, and God uses Isaiah's son to finish his description of what He would do with Judah.

In the above passage from Matthew, we are given the name of the Savior for the first time - Jesus!

Matthew 1:21 And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins.

In the Old Testament, there are many prophecies about the birth of Jesus, His life and ministry, His death, resurrection, and His second coming. However, we are never given the name of the Messiah - until the New Testament.

Proverbs 30:4 Who hath ascended up into heaven, or descended? who hath gathered the wind in his fists? who hath bound the waters in a garment? who hath established all the ends of the earth? what is his name, and what is his son's name, if thou canst tell?

The name of the Messiah was given by angelic report from Heaven! Joseph was commanded to name the child “Jesus,” which means, *Jehovah is salvation*.

Matthew 2:1 (NLT) Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the reign of King Herod. About that time some wise men from eastern lands arrived in Jerusalem, asking, **2** “Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We saw his star as it rose, and we have come to worship him.”

3 King Herod was deeply disturbed when he heard this, as was everyone in Jerusalem. **4** He called a meeting of the leading priests and teachers of religious law and asked, “Where is the Messiah supposed to be born?”

5 “In Bethlehem in Judea,” they said, “for this is what the prophet wrote:

6 ‘And you, O Bethlehem in the land of Judah,
are not least among the ruling cities of Judah,
for a ruler will come from you
who will be the shepherd for my people Israel.’”

The location of Jesus’ birth was recorded by the prophet Micah (Micah 5:2). Also near this passage is a prophecy concerning his suffering:

Micah 5:1 (NKJV) . . . They will strike the judge of Israel with a rod on the cheek.

2 “ But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah,

*Though you are little among the thousands of Judah,
Yet out of you shall come forth to Me
The One to be Ruler in Israel,
Whose goings forth *are* from of old,
From everlasting.”*

Now let’s continue in Matthew 2:

Matthew 2:7 Then Herod called for a private meeting with the wise men, and he learned from them the time when the star first appeared. **8** Then he told them, “Go to Bethlehem and search carefully for the child. And when you find him, come back and tell me so that I can go and worship him, too!”

9 After this interview the wise men went their way. And the star they had seen in the east guided them to Bethlehem. It went ahead of them and stopped over the place where the child was. **10** When they saw the star, they were filled with joy! **11** They entered the house and saw the child with his mother, Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasure chests and gave him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

12 When it was time to leave, they returned to their own country by another route, for God had warned them in a dream not to return to Herod.

13 After the wise men were gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. “Get up! Flee to Egypt with the child and his mother,” the angel said. “Stay there until I tell you to return, because Herod is going to search for the child to kill him.”

14 That night Joseph left for Egypt with the child and Mary, his mother, **15** and they stayed there until Herod’s death. This fulfilled what the Lord had spoken through the prophet: “I called my Son out of Egypt.”

Hosea prophesied that the Messiah would be in Egypt for a time (Hosea 11:1). Let’s continue in Matthew 2:

Matthew 2:16 Herod was furious when he realized that the wise men had outwitted him. He sent soldiers to kill all the boys in and around Bethlehem who were two years old and under, based on the wise men’s report of the star’s first appearance. **17** Herod’s brutal action fulfilled what God had spoken through the prophet Jeremiah:

18 "A cry was heard in Ramah—
weeping and great mourning.
Rachel weeps for her children,
refusing to be comforted,
for they are dead."

The above prophecy is found in Jeremiah 31:15. Like many of the prophecies of the Messiah, it is tucked into a story of the "here and now." God gives a prophetic utterance to the prophet concerning the Messiah and then continues with the subject at hand. Now, let's continue in Matthew 2:

19 When Herod died, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt. **20** "Get up!" the angel said. "Take the child and his mother back to the land of Israel, because those who were trying to kill the child are dead."

21 So Joseph got up and returned to the land of Israel with Jesus and his mother. **22** But when he learned that the new ruler of Judea was Herod's son Archelaus, he was afraid to go there. Then, after being warned in a dream, he left for the region of Galilee. **23** So the family went and lived in a town called Nazareth. This fulfilled what the prophets had said: "He will be called a Nazarene."

The prophet Isaiah said:

Isaiah 11:1 There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse,
And a Branch shall grow out of his roots.
2 The Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon Him,
The Spirit of wisdom and understanding,
The Spirit of counsel and might,
The Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD.

This word, "branch" means *a descendant*. Another prophecy about the "branch" is found in Jeremiah:

Jeremiah 23:5 (NKJV) "Behold, *the* days are coming," says the Lord,
"That I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness;
A King shall reign and prosper,
And execute judgment and righteousness in the earth.
6 In His days Judah will be saved,
And Israel will dwell safely;
Now this *is* His name by which He will be called:
THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.

Isaiah further prophesied about the ministry of Jesus in the Galilee region:

Isaiah 9:1 Nevertheless the gloom *will* not *be* upon her who *is* distressed,
As when at first He lightly esteemed
The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali,
And afterward more heavily oppressed *her*,
By the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan,
In Galilee of the Gentiles.
2 The people who walked in darkness
Have seen a great light;
Those who dwelt in the land of the shadow of death,
Upon them a light has shined.

In this same chapter of Isaiah, we are given one of the most marvelous prophecies regarding the birth of the Savior:

Isaiah 9:6 For unto us a Child is born,
Unto us a Son is given;
And the government will be upon His shoulder.
And His name will be called
Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
7 Of the increase of *His* government and peace
There will be no end,
Upon the throne of David and over His kingdom,
To order it and establish it with judgment and justice
From that time forward, even forever.
The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.

Why Did God Take on Human Flesh?

Mankind was in desperate need of a Savior. Sin had reigned since the fall of Adam and Eve. Without a Savior, there was no hope for mankind. God devised a plan that a substitute could take the place of sinful man in death, but this substitute must be without sin and perfect in every way.

Romans 5:6 (NLT) When we were utterly helpless, Christ came at just the right time and died for us sinners. **7** Now, most people would not be willing to die for an upright person, though someone might perhaps be willing to die for a person who is especially good. **8** But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners.

2 Corinthians 5:15 (NKJV) and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again.

1 Peter 2:21: For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps:

22 "Who committed no sin,
Nor was deceit found in His mouth";

23 who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed *Himself* to Him who judges righteously; **24** who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness—by whose stripes you were healed.

Jesus Was Born, and We Must Be Born Again

Although God is so mighty, and although He cannot tolerate sin, yet He loved us so much that He sent his Son into the world. This means that God Himself was born into this world - God and humanity fused together in the Son of God. The Son of God is God in human flesh.

John 3:16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. **17** For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

Jesus was actually born, just like you and I were born. He had a mother who gave Him birth just like you and I had a mother who gave us birth. Jesus was a true member of the human family. Although He was God, yet He was also man.

Luke 2:10 Then the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. **11** For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. **12** And this *will* be the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger."

Romans 1:2 which He promised before through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures, **3** concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh, **4** and declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.

Galatians 4:3 Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world. **4** But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, **5** to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.

2 Corinthians 5:18 (NLT) And all of this is a gift from God, who brought us back to himself through Christ. And God has given us this task of reconciling people to him. **19** For God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, no longer counting people's sins against them. And he gave us this wonderful message of reconciliation. **20** So we are Christ's ambassadors; God is making his appeal through us. We speak for Christ when we plead, "Come back to God!" **21** For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ.

Jesus was born into the human family so there would be an acceptable sacrifice for sin. No other human being was qualified to pay for our sins.

Jesus was God who condescended and became a man. We are humans who must follow God's plan of salvation so we can live forever with Jesus. We must be born again so we can be spiritual and live for Jesus here, then live with Him in eternity.

John 3:3 (NKJV) Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

4 Nicodemus said to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?"

5 Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. **6** That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. **7** Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' **8** The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit."

Being born again is a necessity to go from lost sinner to saved saint of God. If our only birth is our natural birth that brought us into this world, then we have no hope. We must have that second birth. The writer of *Hark! the Herald Angels Sing* wrote this verse:

Hail the heav'n-born Prince of Peace!
Hail the Son of Righteousness!
Light and life to all He brings
Ris'n with healing in His wings
Mild He lays His glory by
Born that man no more may die
Born to raise the sons of earth

Born to give them second birth

Hark! The herald angels sing

"Glory to the newborn King!"

The Apostles Peter and John wrote to the church of being born again:

1 Peter 1:22: Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart, **23** having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever,

1 John 2:28: And now, little children, abide in Him, that when He appears, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming. **29** If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone who practices righteousness is born of Him.

1 John 5:18: We know that whoever is born of God does not sin; but he who has been born of God keeps himself, and the wicked one does not touch him. **19** We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies *under the sway of* the wicked one.

If Jesus had not been born into the human family, there would be no hope for mankind. No other human being was qualified to die for us and appease the wrath of God against mankind. The reason that Jesus was qualified was that he was able to live a human life without sin.

Hebrews 4:14: Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast *our* confession. **15** For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all *points* tempted as *we are*, yet without sin.

A truly human person had to take our place as the sacrifice for our sin. Although Jesus was God, He was also truly human.

Now that Jesus has given Himself as a sacrifice for all of mankind, we must personalize His sacrifice and make it apply to us by being born again of water and Spirit.

God came down to earth and was born a man.

Now, He asks us to be born again so we can ascend to Heaven!

What a mighty God we serve!

Acts 2:36 (NKJV) "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ."

37 Now when they heard *this*, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Men *and* brethren, what shall we do?"

38 Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. **39** For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call."