



THE PROBLEM OF CHRISTMAS, PART 3: X MARKS THE SPOT

Ever felt the chaos of Christmas? Things that start off so beautiful become terrorizing and terrifying by the end of the season. The songs you love to sing become annoying. The food you look forward to eating you get sick of. The parties you been anticipating become a burden. Is that how you want to spend this Christmas? Do you think that this is how God wants you to spend this Christmas?

To understand all that God did through the birth of His son Jesus to radically change and redeem our story. God gave us a whole new way to live, to love, and have relationship with him and others—all through the birth of a little baby, born in a forgotten town, to a teenage mother.

BIG IDEA: God takes ordinary things and transforms them into extraordinary things.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

** Remember the goal is to use the questions to generate discussion, not to complete every one.*

1. What types of things do you do to avoid waiting somewhere?
2. With your Bible or YouVersion, read the following passages.

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’).

[*Isaiah 7:14 \(NLT\)*](#)

² But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, are only a small village among all the people of Judah. Yet a ruler of Israel, whose origins are in the distant past, will come from you on my behalf.

[*Micah 5:2 \(NLT\)*](#)

3. What stands out to you about these two prophecies concerning a future Messiah? How do you think the Jewish audience would have heard them? What does it mean to you that Jesus fulfilled every one of the over 300 prophecies in the Old Testament regarding the coming Messiah?
4. With your Bible or YouVersion, [read Luke 2:1-7.](#)

¹ At that time the Roman emperor, Augustus, decreed that a census should be taken throughout the Roman Empire. ² (This was the first census taken when Quirinius was governor of Syria.) ³ All returned to their own ancestral towns to register for this census. ⁴ And because Joseph was a descendant of King David, he had to go to Bethlehem in Judea, David’s ancient home. He traveled there from the village of Nazareth in Galilee. ⁵ He took with him Mary, to whom he was engaged, who was now expecting a child. ⁶ And while they were there, the time came for her baby to be born. ⁷ She gave birth to her firstborn son. She wrapped him snugly in strips of cloth and laid him in a manger, because there was no lodging available for them.

[*Luke 2:1-7 \(NLT\)*](#)

5. What details in these verses show you Luke isn’t just telling a story, he’s recounting history? How do you see both prophecies from question 1 fulfilled? What is the significance of listing Joseph’s ancestry (see [*Jeremiah 23:5-6*](#))?
6. Mary and Joseph would have grown up knowing all of these prophecies, yet the prophecies had been given nearly 700 years before them. Put yourself in either of their shoes. What do you think it would have been like for them? Have you ever experienced what you felt like was silence from God? How did you respond?

7. *With your Bible or YouVersion, [read Luke 2:6-14](#).*

6 And while they were there, the time came for her baby to be born. 7 She gave birth to her firstborn son. She wrapped him snugly in strips of cloth and laid him in a manger, because there was no lodging available for them. 8 That night there were shepherds staying in the fields nearby, guarding their flocks of sheep. 9 Suddenly, an angel of the Lord appeared among them, and the radiance of the Lord’s glory surrounded them. They were terrified, 10 but the angel reassured them. “Don’t be afraid!” he said. “I bring you good news that will bring great joy to all people. 11 The Savior—yes, the Messiah, the Lord—has been born today in Bethlehem, the city of David! 12 And you will recognize him by this sign: You will find a baby wrapped snugly in strips of cloth, lying in a manger.” 13 Suddenly, the angel was joined by a vast host of others—the armies of heaven—praising God and saying, 14 “Glory to God in highest heaven, and peace on earth to those with whom God is pleased.”

[Luke 2:6-14 \(NLT\)](#)

8. In verse 7, most translations read ‘there was no room for them in the inn.’ When we see the Christmas story performed, there’s usually a mean inn keeper who turns away the pregnant couple. Read the following excerpt. How does having no room for Joseph and Mary take on new meaning?

*The view that Joseph and Mary simply arrived late to Bethlehem and accommodations at the local hotel were full is incorrect. The word translated as inn is the Greek word **kataluma**, which is translated as **guest room**, which gives an all new spin to this familiar Christmas story.*

*It’s not that Joseph and Mary were late to town, but that they were **rejected** by their family. They had family members in town—that’s the reason they returned to Bethlehem for the census. But when they got there, the scandal of this unwed teenager having a baby caused their own extended family to turn Joseph and Mary away. Their own extended family wouldn’t even allow them in their house!*

9. Amid this scandal, how does God prove Himself to Mary and Joseph?

10. *With your Bible or YouVersion, [read Matthew 10:34-36](#).*

34 “Don’t imagine that I came to bring peace to the earth! I came not to bring peace, but a sword. 35 ‘I have come to set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. 36 Your enemies will be right in your own household!’

[Matthew 10:34-36 \(NLT\)](#)

11. Just the birth of Jesus was a scandal, and His arrival divided Joseph’s family. How has Jesus caused conflict in your family?

12. Jeff has challenged us to go back to the basics of Christmas, rethinking the nativity. How has today’s message challenged you personally?

MOVING FORWARD

As a group, listen to the Casting Crowns song [While You Were Sleeping](#) (you can click on the blue link). Will you miss the God who became man who stepped into your world today? How will the reality of Jesus change your priorities and help you make room for Him in your values and decisions?

CHANGING YOUR MIND

6 And while they were there, the time came for her baby to be born. 7 She gave birth to her firstborn son. She wrapped him snugly in strips of cloth and laid him in a manger, because there was no lodging available for them.
Luke 2:6-7 (NLT)