

## Birth

Read Luke 1:1-3:20, Matthew 1:1-25.

Developing circumstances forced the young couple to leave the comfort of their home. The journey ahead of them was long and dangerous. She was nine months pregnant, due to deliver their first child at any moment. The man was a new husband. He would do almost anything to ensure the safety and security of his little family when her time to give birth arrived.

It had been a couple of days since they loaded everything they could carry and hit the road. News of their estimated arrival had not reached concerned family and friends. Many questioned. Where are they? Why haven't they contacted us? What has happened to them? Are they alive?

Sounds familiar? You likely have heard the story of Mary, Joseph, and the birth of Jesus. The people of Israel were looking for a light at the end of a long, dark tunnel. The atmosphere into which Jesus was to be born was foreign domination and occupation.

## Talking Points

- One cannot separate Jesus from the divinely orchestrated events of history that preceded His birth.
- Prophecies about Jesus' birth were found throughout the Hebrew Bible / Old Testament. Some prophecies were very specific.
  - Virgin Birth – Isaiah 7:14
  - Place of Birth – Micah 5:2
- Some Jews knew that the time of the Messiah's appearance had arrived because of Daniel 9:24-26. They were actively looking for Him to appear.
- Joseph and Mary, Jesus' earthly parents, were required by a decree of Caesar Augustus to leave their home in Nazareth and go to Bethlehem. They were to be counted in a census of the entire Roman world.
- Jesus' family remained in Bethlehem for about two years until they were forced to hide in Egypt.
- When it was safe to return to Israel, they went to Nazareth, an obscure village in Galilee.
- Jesus grew in "wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man until He was about thirty years old.

## Background

*But when the fullness of time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as son (Galatians 4:4-5).*

## **Andrii, Ellissa, and Baby P**

This lesson was written on March 4, 2022. A story similar to Jesus' birth narrative was playing out in the lives of one of our disciples. Andrii married Ellissa a little over a year earlier. Ellissa followed Andrii to Kyiv, Ukraine, where they shared the Good News through the game of soccer.

On February 24, the day Russia attacked Ukraine, Ellissa was just days from delivering their first baby. Nations sat helplessly on the precipice of global conflict.

The background of both birth narratives is startling in their similarities. Rome, the oppressor, ruled through the projected might of its military. Caesar Augustus viewed himself as God. Like rulers before and after, Augustus was merely a puppet of the current ruler of this fallen world, Satan. The LORD sent His only begotten Son into a war, a raging spiritual and physical conflict zone.

## **The Good News**

Andrii & Ellissa made their way out of Ukraine. They found a place to give birth to Baby P in another city. While they are now off the frontline of falling missiles and destroyed lives in Ukraine, they have not left the war. They still stand as the *image-bearers* of the living God in our fallen world.

Baby P's birth date was firmly affixed on the timeline of God's grand story. The Creator has always known it. Nothing in the circumstances of Andrii, Ellissa, and hundreds of other Ukrainian couples in similar situations has surprised the Savior.

## **What's Your Strategy?**

All who by faith belong to Messiah Jesus are *image-bearers* of God. We are to make disciples of Jesus who make more disciples. Through the sacrifice of our lives, God wants to give new birth to the captives of this world. Knowing what we are supposed to do and how to do it are two very different things.

Praise God if you have a discipleship strategy and see God producing fruit through your obedience! But if you don't, we are here to help. Disciple Daily's approach is to equip Jesus' admirers to be His disciples using the storyline of the Bible. The first step with everyone we train is to teach them to use Talk Thru the Bible, this series of hand signs and keywords. It is so easy; anyone can learn to do it.

As seen from this lesson, you can position the story of Jesus' birth within the story of current world events. What is happening around us is connected to previous events and real-world similarities. Our discipleship method puts you in a position of power to introduce the people around you to the God of history. History is HIS STORY.

## **Bible Conversations**

- Many prophecies concerning Jesus' second appearance are found within the narrative of the Bible. What do you know about the prophetic timeline of history?

- The world is a chaotic mess. You might say it is in the state of "de-creation." The sinful nature of mankind is the reason for the chaos. In what ways can you think of using the world's condition to point people to Jesus?
- Following 33 years of life, Jesus returned to heaven, vowing to return and bring order to His world. What could you do to be better equipped to help others look for Jesus' next appearance?