

THIS IS JESUS

UNIT 1: THE MESSIAH NAMED JESUS
PART 2: HE IS
Lesson 1: He Is The Gift

Devotion 1

And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David (Luke 2:4)

Looking into our lineage can be a really fun activity. Finding out about our ancestors can tell us a lot about how we got here, what things we have inherited, and even give us clues into who we are.

Read Luke 2:4.

King David is often considered the best king of Israel. Even if you are new to being a follower of Jesus, you've likely heard of King David or witnessed him depicted in different forms of art and music. Having David in your lineage would be an incredible honor, and definitely something worth telling others about.

But this inclusion in Luke 2:4 was more than just a flex. Luke includes this detail to remind us that Jesus fulfilled yet another prophecy concerning the Messiah. Read this prophecy from Isaiah 11:

There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit. And 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 the fear of the Lord. (Isaiah 11:1-2)

Jesse was David's father. (So lineage-wise, if you are related to David, you are related to Jesse.) Luke wanted to make sure that we understood that this branch that would possess all of this wisdom, counsel, knowledge, etc., was Jesus.

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT:

- Jesus fulfilled every prophecy foretold of the Messiah. What can we learn from this specific one? Do you think people ever wondered what it would look like to have a Messiah born from the line of David? Do you think the story of Jesus' birth matches their expectations?

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Devotion 2

And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. (Luke 2:8-10)

There are a few things you might need to know about shepherds during Jesus' day. First, they were often looked down on by 'normal' Jewish society. They spent a long time out in the fields, which probably meant they didn't smell so good. Being a shepherd meant having a lonely, low-paying job. And yet, it was a group of shepherds that received an angelic chorus about the newborn baby Jesus.

Read Luke 2:8-10.

If you were doing some homework, and an angel appeared, how do you think you would respond?

If you were to keep on in Luke 2, you would read that the shepherds felt everything from fear to joy. But what they did next is the really cool part.

Read Luke 2:15 below:

When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us."

The shepherds heard about the gift of Jesus and immediately wanted to share it with others!

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT:

- Who can you share the gift of Jesus with this week?
- You might not be able to wow that person with an angelic choir, but how can you share the Gospel with the same awe and amazement?

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Devotion 3

For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 6:23)

Today, you will be doing a little research.

Read Romans 6:23.

Your task is to define two specific words from this verse. Be sure to find multiple sources as you seek out the meaning of these words. For example: From a digital dictionary, a physical dictionary, your own understanding of the word, quotes about the word, how a friend defines it, etc. The words are:

WAGES

GIFT

Once you've thoroughly defined those words, take a closer look at the verse. In the context of the verse, what is the difference between a wage (essentially what you earn from your work) and a gift (something that someone else worked to give to you)?

Take a moment to reflect on what we earn from the sins in our lives. That seems like really bad news, doesn't it? But this verse also tells us some very good news. In fact, this verse IS the Good News (the Gospel) of Jesus. What does that mean to you?

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Devotion 4

Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, saying, "Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him." (Matthew 2:1-2)

Read Matthew 2:1-2.

You may have heard of these wise men, or seen them portrayed in Christmas movies. The Magi, or wise men, are believed to have been astrologers from Persia or Arabia. These men likely studied a form of mundane astrology, which essentially means that they viewed the stars as a sort of map that tells us about things that will happen around the world. There was not a distinction between astronomy and astrology at that point. They simply studied the stars and used years' worth of history and passed down knowledge to recognize the patterns.

That's why it is incredibly interesting that these wise men showed up in Jerusalem looking for the king of the Jews. Mundane astrologers of that time did not have fancy computers that could calculate the location of the planets and stars for them. They had to do all of the observation and math themselves. Contrary to how it's portrayed in movies and other media, the Magi didn't have an epiphany or see one bright star. Instead, they probably spent hours cross-referencing maps and calculations, trying to understand what this once-in-a-lifetime positioning of the night sky meant. Excited to see a once-in-a-lifetime person, they traveled a long way just to meet this child.

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT:

- How do you spend time searching for God? Do you have the same level of commitment as the Magi? Why or why not?
- What do you think about the fact that Jesus was such an important gift to the world that the stars in the sky testified about His birth?

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Devotion 5

Now there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon, and this man was righteous and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. And he came in the Spirit into the temple, and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him according to the custom of the Law, he took him up in his arms and blessed God and said, "Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace, according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to your people Israel." (Luke 2:22-32)

Today's devotional passage is long, but it's a story worth reflecting on. Although we have read about shepherds and wise men, there is another person who had a powerful response to the gift of Jesus.

Read Luke 2:22-32.

Reflect on this passage with the following questions:

1. What promise did Jesus fulfill for Simeon?
2. What promise does Jesus fulfill in your life?
3. Simeon refers to Jesus as a light for revelation to the Gentiles and the glory of God's people (Israelites). What do you think that means? How does that help your understanding of Jesus as the greatest gift?