

Back to the Basics

Knowing My Savior (2)

After having eternally existed in heaven, the time for the Savior to come to this earth had come. After many prophecies by Old Testament prophets, the time had finally arrived. As we continue on our journey of learning more about our Savior, we find ourselves at the birth of Jesus Christ. In this lesson, we will take a look at the birth of our Savior, an event when He was twelve years old, His baptism, and His temptations in the wilderness.

Memory Verse:
Luke 2:30-32

Note: For a successful study, it is important that you make the time to complete all the Bible readings in this lesson, as well as subsequent lessons. To help you on this journey, please consider setting aside time each day to read a selected passage or chapter from that week's lesson. Then, at the close of the week, read through the lesson and then do the work pages.

The Birth of My Savior

Luke 1:26-38

We begin with the angel Gabriel. Gabriel was sent by God to deliver a very special message to a young lady named Mary. (This young damsel lived in the city of Nazareth and was betrothed (engaged) to a man named Joseph.) The message Gabriel was delivering was one of great importance. Gabriel begins by saying, "*Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women!*" (Luke 1:28) Understandably, Mary was troubled by the angel's greeting. Calming her fears, the angel delivered the message to Mary, a message she never would have expected. The angel said:

"Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name Jesus. 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. And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end." (Luke 1:30-33)

After hearing the angel's proclamation, Mary was concerned since she was not yet married. The angel Gabriel proceeded to explain, "*The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God.*" (Luke 1:35) The angel told Mary that her upcoming pregnancy would be by the divine hands of the Holy Spirit. It was an act beyond human comprehension.

Matthew 1:18-25

Just as the angel promised, Mary became pregnant. This news came as an obvious surprise to Joseph since he had not yet been told about the miraculous origin of this child. Joseph decided to end his betrothal to Mary (put her away) in a private fashion so as to not make a public spectacle of her. However, before Joseph could act, the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph and said, *“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. And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.”* (Matthew 1:20b-21) Joseph obeyed the angel of the Lord and took Mary to be His wife.

Luke 1:39-56

After finding herself expecting a child, Mary traveled to a city of Judah to visit a relative named Elizabeth. (Elizabeth was pregnant with a child who, one day, would prepare the way for Jesus and His work.) When Mary greeted Elizabeth, Elizabeth’s unborn child jumped in the womb at the sound of Mary’s voice. The baby was filled with the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit new the voice of the one who would give birth to the Messiah, the Savior. Elizabeth and Mary rejoiced together. Mary offered what essentially was a prayer of praise to the Heavenly Father for having blessed her with great blessings. Mary praised God by saying: *“My soul magnifies the Lord, And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior. For He has regarded the lowly state of His maidservant; For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed. For He who is mighty has done great things for me, And holy is His name. And His mercy is on those who fear Him From generation to generation . . .”* (Luke 1:46-55) Mary remained three months with Elizabeth. Mary either returned home just before or just after Elizabeth gave birth to John, the one who would prepare the way for the Savior.

Luke 2:1-39

About six months after returning to Nazareth, Mary found herself having to travel with her husband Joseph to the city of Bethlehem. (Caesar Augustus had ordered a census to be taken, which required Joseph and Mary to go to Bethlehem.) When Joseph and Mary arrived in Bethlehem, they found that there was no room in the inn. As a result, they stayed in some type of stable. As it happened, Mary went into labor and gave birth to her baby, wrapped him in “swaddling clothes” and placed him in a manger.

During the same night that Jesus was born, the angel of the Lord appeared to shepherds in the field. The angel of the Lord proclaimed to them the birth of the Savior and where they would find Him. The shepherds departed, going to Bethlehem. In Bethlehem, the shepherds found the baby lying in a manger, wrapped in “swaddling clothes.” The shepherds left Joseph and Mary and went to spread the news.

Eight days after the birth of the baby, Joseph and Mary had Him circumcised and called Him Jesus. Then, after the days of Mary's purification were completed, the family traveled to Jerusalem to offer sacrifices and to present the child to the Lord. While at the temple in Jerusalem, a man named Simeon, being filled with the Holy Spirit took the child and blessed God saying, "*Lord, now You are letting Your servant depart in peace, according to Your word; for my eyes have seen Your salvation which You have prepared before the face of all peoples, a light to bring revelation to the Gentiles, And the glory of Your people Israel.*" (Luke 2:29-32) Simeon then said to Mary, "*Behold, this Child is destined for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign which will be spoken against (yes, a sword will pierce through your own soul also), that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.*" (Luke 2:34-35) Following Simeon's statement, Anna, a prophetess, gave thanks to the Lord and told others about Jesus. After their obligation in Jerusalem, Joseph and Mary went to Nazareth.

Matthew 2:1-23

After Jesus' birth and circumcision (and sometime before Joseph and Mary's move to Egypt), a group of wise men (magi) came to Jerusalem, having traveled from the east to bring gifts for the baby. The wise men went to Herod and asked, "*Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him.*" (Matthew 2:2) The news of a potentially new king troubled King Herod. The king called for the chief priests and the scribes to inquire where the Christ would be born. The scribes and the chief priests told King Herod of the prophecy of Micah which read, "*But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, Are not the least among the rulers of Judah; For out of you shall come a Ruler Who will shepherd My people Israel.*" (Matthew 2:6)

King Herod told the wise men that the child was to be born in Bethlehem. He then instructed them to go find the child and then return with the child's location. The wise men followed the star until they came to the house in Bethlehem. They worshipped the child. After presenting the gifts to the child, the wise men, being warned by an angel, took another route on their return journey home.

After the wise men left, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph saying, "*Arise, take the young Child and His mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I bring you word; for Herod will seek the young Child to destroy Him.*" (Matthew 2:13) Joseph obeyed the angel of the Lord and took his family to Egypt. In the mean time, Herod became angry when he saw that the wise men did not return to him. King Herod, in his madness, "*put to death all the male children who were in Bethlehem and in all its districts, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had determined from the wise men.*" (Matthew 2:16b) King Herod's actions brought to pass that which was prophesied by Jeremiah, "*A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation, weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, refusing to be comforted, because they are no more.*" (Matthew 2:18)

After the death of King Herod, an angel of the Lord told Joseph to take his family and return. Because Herod's brother, Archelaus, was reigning over Judea, Joseph took his family to the city of Nazareth.

Luke 2:41-52

As the years went by, Jesus continued to grow. The next time we see Jesus in the Gospel's timeline is at the the age of twelve years old. As was the custom, Joseph and Mary traveled to Jerusalem for the Feast of the Passover. When they left Jerusalem to return home, Jesus remained behind, without Joseph's and Mary's knowledge. After traveling for about a day, Joseph and Mary began to look for Jesus and was unable to find Him. As a result, Joseph and Mary returned to Jerusalem and spent three days looking for Jesus. They finally found Him in the temple "*sitting in the midst of the teachers, both listening to them and asking them questions.*" (Luke 2:46) When Mary and Joseph asked Jesus why He had worried them so, He replied, "*Why did you seek Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?*" (Luke 2:49) As it was, neither Joseph nor Mary understood Jesus' statement.

Jesus and His family returned to Nazareth. Jesus lived the remainder of his childhood being subject His parents. "*And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.*" (Luke 2:52)

John Baptizes Jesus

Matthew 3:13-17

After a period of time, Jesus came from Nazareth to where John was baptizing in the river Jordan. When Jesus approached John, John said to Jesus, "*I need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me?*" Jesus replied, "*Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.*" (Matthew 3:14-15) So, John baptized Jesus.

When Jesus came up out of the water, God the Father showed His approval of Jesus. As the gospel of Luke records, "*. . . and while He prayed, the heaven was opened. And the Holy Spirit descended in bodily form like a dove upon Him, and a voice came from heaven which said, 'You are My beloved Son; in You I am well pleased.'*" (Luke 3:21-22)

Mark 1:9-11

It came to pass in those days that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And immediately, coming up from the water, He saw the heavens parting and the Spirit descending upon Him like a dove. Then a voice came from heaven, "You are My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." (cf. Luke 3:21-22)

Some time later, when John was declaring Jesus to be "the Lamb of God," John recalled the miraculous events which followed Jesus' baptism. John said, "*I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and He remained upon Him. I did not know Him, but He who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'Upon whom you see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, this is He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.' And I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God.*" (John 1:32-34)

Satan Tempts Jesus

Matthew 4:1-11

After John baptized Jesus, the Spirit led Jesus into the wilderness, where Jesus fasted forty days and forty nights. After such an incredible fast, Jesus was hungry. At this point, the devil began his process of tempting Jesus. The first temptation used against Jesus was one that appeared to take advantage of the fact that Jesus was suffering from extreme hunger. The devil said to Jesus, *“If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread.”* (Matthew 4:3) To which Jesus replied, *“It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.’”* (Matthew 4:4)

Mark 1:12-13

Immediately the Spirit drove Him into the wilderness. And He was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan, and was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered to Him.
(cf. Luke 4:1-13)

Seeing that his first attempt had failed, the devil tried a second time to tempt Jesus to sin. The devil took Jesus to the pinnacle of the temple and said to Him, *“If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down. For it is written: ‘He shall give His angels charge over you,’ and, In their hands they shall bear you up, Lest you dash your foot against a stone.’ ”* (Matthew 4:6) It would seem that with this temptation, the devil was trying to appeal to Jesus’ pride. However, Jesus did not succumb to the devil’s efforts. Jesus replied, *“It is written again, ‘You shall not tempt the Lord your God.’”* (Matthew 4:7)

After two failed attempts, the devil tried one last time to tempt Jesus. The devil took Jesus up to a high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. He then proposed to Jesus the following: *“All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me.”* (Matthew 4:9) After this last temptation, Jesus rebuked the devil, saying, *“Away with you, Satan! For it is written, ‘You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve.’”* (Matthew 4:10) Once again, the devil’s efforts failed. After this last temptation, the devil left and the angels came and ministered to Jesus.

More to Come

Now that we have come to know a little more about our Savior, our study will take a different turn. All four gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, are records of Jesus’ life. Each gospel takes a little different approach to Jesus’ life, depending upon their target audience. Instead of studying from all four gospels, from this point on, this series of lessons will focus on the gospel according to John. It will be necessary for you, the student, to take the time to read all the passages listed in each lesson. Such a thorough study will help to increase your knowledge of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

Ten Questions

1. What was the name of the angel who brought Mary the good news? _____
2. "... therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the _____ ."
3. When Joseph learned that Mary was pregnant, what was his initial reaction? _____

4. How long did Mary stay with Elizabeth? _____
5. Why did Joseph and Mary travel to Bethlehem? _____

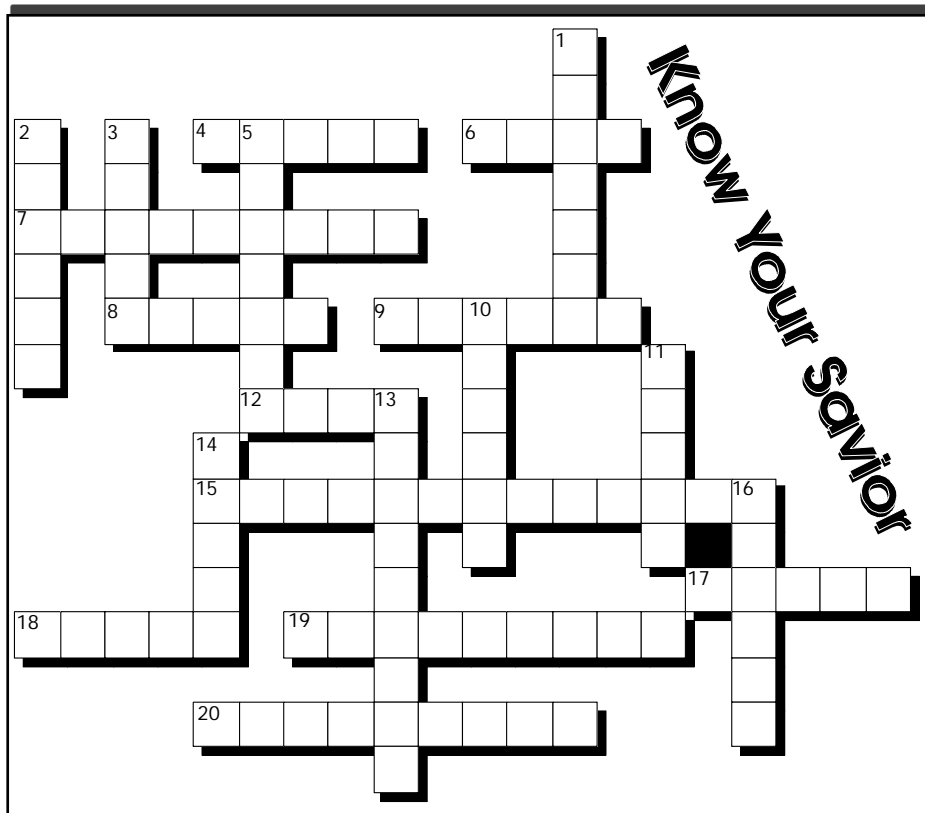
6. Which prophetess gave thanks to the Lord for the baby Jesus? _____
7. Who did King Herod ask where would the Christ be born? _____
8. Where was John baptizing? _____
9. Who did John see descend upon Jesus? _____
10. What happened to Jesus after the Spirit led Him to the wilderness? _____

True or False

1. T or F : The angel Gabriel did not tell Mary what name to give the child.
2. T or F : Joseph had decided to put Mary away in a very open and public manner.
3. T or F : Mary went to visit Elizabeth.
4. T or F : Elizabeth's baby was filled with the Holy Spirit.
5. T or F : The wise men came the same night as the shepherds to visit the baby in the manger.
6. T or F : The wise men traveled to Jerusalem and asked King Herod where was the child?
7. T or F : Micah prophesied, "A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation, weeping, and great mourning, . . ."
8. T or F : John declared Jesus to be "the Lamb of God."
9. T or F : Jesus fasted 30 days and 30 nights in the wilderness.
10. T or F : After he was tempted three times by the devil, angels came and ministered to Jesus.

A Little Fun

(Use the lesson text to answer these questions.)



Across

4. An angel of the Lord told Joseph to take his family to _____.
6. To whom did the angel say, "Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you . . .?"
7. Mary traveled to a city of Judah to visit a relative named _____.
8. "Joseph, son of _____, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, . . ."
9. Mary was betrothed to this man.
12. John declared Jesus to be "the ____ of God."
15. "Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all _____."
17. _____ days after His birth, Joseph and Mary had Him circumcised and called Him Jesus.
18. This man "put to death all the male children ... from two years old and under."
19. The angel of the Lord appeared to _____ in the field.
20. This man, Herod's brother, reigned over Judea.

Down

1. "You shall _____ the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve."
2. _____ Augustus issued a decree that all the world should be registered (taxed, KJV).
3. "Behold, this _____ is destined for the fall and rising of many in Israel, . . ."
5. This angel said, "Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women!"
10. This man said, "Lord, now You are letting Your servant depart in peace, according to Your word; . . ."
11. Mary stayed _____ months with Elizabeth.
13. Joseph and Mary traveled to this city because of a census.
14. "If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become _____."
16. "And while He prayed, the heaven was opened. And the Holy _____ descended in bodily form like a dove . . ."

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