

The Birth of Jesus and Its Teachings

Passages: Mt 1:18–25; 2:1–23; Lk 2:1–39

Memory Verse

“So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: ‘Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,’ which is translated, ‘God with us.’” (Matthew 1:22–23)

Knowledge of God’s Will [God’s Word]	Knowledge of God [God’s Divine Nature]	Good Work [Behavior]
Understand the many events that happened before and after the birth of Jesus.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. God is sovereign, and He is in control of history.2. God’s prophecies never fail.3. With God, nothing is impossible.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Trust in God’s sovereignty.2. Live upright lives.3. Serve God wholeheartedly.

Overview

Events and Spiritual Teachings

- A. The Prophecies of Jesus’ Birth and Their Fulfillment
- B. God Chooses Joseph and Mary
- C. Witnesses and Testimonies of Jesus’ Birth

Life Application

- 1. God’s Sovereignty
- 2. Follow God’s Divine Direction

Memory Verse

Conclusion: God is worthy of our worship.

A. The Prophecies of Jesus' Birth and Their Fulfillment

The Bible teaches us that before God even made the world, He had already planned that Jesus would be the way, the truth and the life for all of us, and Jesus' crucifixion our path to salvation. The only payment that would reconcile sinners to a holy and loving God would be Jesus' death.

Let us read 1 Peter 1:19–20. “But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you.”

Note the word “foreordained.” This word indicates that God had appointed or decreed something beforehand. In other words, Jesus' birth and death had already been planned before the foundation of the world! God's love for us is so great that He prepared a way for us to be His children long before we were born so that we can be forever with Him in the future.

Let us read a few of the prophecies about Jesus' birth and learn how they were fulfilled:

1. The Messiah will be born in Bethlehem

a. Prophecy

Micah 5:2 – “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.”

b. Fulfillment

- Matthew 2:1 – “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.”
- Luke 2:15 – “So it was, when the angels had gone away from them into heaven, that the shepherds said to one another, ‘Let us now go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has come to pass, which the Lord has made known to us.’”
- John 7:42 – “Has not the Scripture said that the Christ comes from the seed of David and from the town of Bethlehem, where David was?”

2. The Messiah will be born of a virgin

a. Prophecy

Isaiah 7:14 – “Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel.”

b. Fulfillment

Matthew 1:23 – “‘Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,’ which is translated, ‘God with us.’”

3. The Messiah will be a descendant of David

a. Prophecy

- Isaiah 11:1 – “There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots.”
- Jeremiah 23:5 – “‘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.”

b. Fulfillment

Luke 3:31 – “The son of Melea, the son of Menan, the son of Mattathah, the son of Nathan, the son of David.”

B. God Chooses Joseph and Mary

God Himself descended from heaven to earth and manifested as a man. God did not choose a family with wealth, status, or power. Rather, He chose Joseph and Mary, an ordinary couple, to be Jesus’ parents. Joseph and Mary were both descendants of David, fulfilling the many prophecies that the Messiah would be born of David’s line (Isa 11:1; Jer 33:15; Ezek 37:24). First, let us examine Joseph.

1. Joseph

Joseph, as the Bible tells us, was not the biological father of Jesus. Matthew 1:18 mentions, “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.” Matthew 1:25 also mentions, “And [Joseph] did not know her till she had brought forth her firstborn Son. And he called His name JESUS.”

Mary and Joseph were engaged to be married. Like all grooms, Joseph was busy preparing the wedding feast and his home for his new bride. It was while they were still betrothed that he learned Mary was pregnant. He did not know how this happened, so imagine his great disappointment. Let us read Matthew 1:19–24 next.

God had sent Joseph a dream in which He revealed to Joseph the true nature of Mary’s pregnancy and His will for Joseph.

What can we learn from Joseph, who was chosen by God to carry out His plan?

In this passage we can see three beautiful qualities in Joseph: righteousness, the fear of God, and humility. Joseph had the right, by law, to refuse to take Mary as his wife. Although it seemed as if Mary had been dishonest, Joseph wanted to save her from public disgrace by dealing with the matter discreetly. He had decided this even before God spoke to him in a dream. He wanted to do what was right. Yet, after the dream, despite his confusion, Joseph trusted God’s will and God’s plan.

2. Mary

Mary was the wife of Joseph and mother of Jesus. Before she married to Joseph, the angel Gabriel appeared to Mary and announced the coming birth of Jesus. Let us read Luke 1:26–38.

Mary wrote a song recorded in Luke 1:46–55 in which she exalted God for His faithfulness. She considered herself to be blessed from that moment onwards, as she mentioned in verse 48: “For He has regarded the lowly state of His maidservant; for behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed.”

What can we learn from Mary, who was chosen by God to carry out His plan?

- a. In Luke 1:46–47, she writes, “My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior.” It tells us that she rejoiced in knowing God’s plan for her and that she was glad to be doing His will. Are we joyful in doing God’s will and carrying out His plan for us?

- b. Luke 1:38 records: “Then Mary said, ‘Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word.’” She called herself a maidservant of the Lord and was extremely glad and thankful that God was willing to use her to fulfill His plan. She humbled herself and yielded to God’s calling.
- c. In Luke 2:19, we read, “But Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart.” She received a message from God and asked, “What is God’s plan for me and how can I be God’s vessel?” She wanted to find out what God wanted her to do, an answer that can only be found by meditating on God’s word with a humble and lowly heart. Are our hearts humble enough to receive God’s will? Are we humbled upon knowing God’s will?

C. Witnesses and Testimonies of Jesus’ Birth

Luke 2:1–39

1. The testimony from the shepherds

The amazing event of Jesus’ birth was revealed to some shepherds in the fields. The shepherds were terrified when the angel first appeared, but the angel bid them not to fear, for they had no reason to be afraid. The angel bore good tidings: the announcement of the birth of the Messiah, Christ the Lord. The angel then told the shepherds the sign that would let them know how to find Jesus Christ. The shepherds immediately went with haste to find Jesus, and upon seeing Him, spread the message the angels had told them: The Savior had been born.

2. The testimony from Simeon

The Bible describes Simeon as “just and devout,” and someone who waited “for the Consolation of Israel.” He was a man of faith who longed for the coming of the Messiah. The Holy Spirit filled Simeon and revealed to Simeon that he would not see death until he had seen the Lord Jesus. When he saw Jesus, Simeon took Him in his arms and blessed God (Lk 2:28–32).

Simeon understood that the Messiah’s coming also brought salvation to the Gentiles, not only to the Jews. Simeon further prophesied to Mary saying, “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)” (Lk 2:34–35). He was preparing Mary for the sorrow and grief she would bear upon witnessing Jesus’ death on the cross.

3. The testimony from the prophetess Anna

As a young widow, it would have been normal for Anna to remarry and bear children. But she chose to serve the Lord instead and prayed daily in the temple. Like Simeon, she longed for the Messiah to come, and her prayer was for the restoration of Israel. Once she saw baby Jesus, she began to share the news of Jesus with those who were looking for redemption in Jerusalem.

Neither Simeon nor Anna had any status. Still, they were godly people who lived God-centered lives. Their highest priority was to serve God; therefore, both were able to recognize and proclaim God’s Messiah. Are you filled and guided by the Holy Spirit? Do you long to see the Messiah face to face, as Simeon and Anna had?

Matthew 2:1–12

4. The testimony from the magi

We do not know much about the wise men, nor do we know how many wise men were there. But we do know that they traveled far to see the King of the Jews, the Messiah. Upon seeing the young Child, they responded with joy, worship, and gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. This is

the true essence of worship: bowing down to worship in honor and reverence. After finding Jesus and worshiping Him, they were warned by God not to return through Jerusalem as they had originally intended.

Check for Understanding

- 1. What does it mean in 1 Peter 1:19–20 that Jesus was “foreordained”?** It means that Jesus Christ’ birth and death were planned even before the world had been created.
- 2. Share one example from the Bible of how Jesus’ birth or death was planned.**
 - a. The Messiah will be born in Bethlehem (Mic 5:2; Mt 2:1; Lk 2:15; Jn 7:42)
 - b. The Messiah will be born of a virgin (Isa 7:14; Mt 1:23)
 - c. The Messiah will be a descendent of David (Isa 11:1; Jer 23:5; Lk 3:31)
- 3. How did Joseph respond when visited by the angel of the Lord? How did Mary respond when visited by the angel Gabriel?** Both Joseph and Mary responded with great humility, the fear of God, and submission to the will of God. At first, Joseph wanted to refuse Mary as his wife, but once he learned that it was God’s will for Mary to give birth to the Messiah, he did as God commanded and took Mary as his wife. Mary, likewise, trusted in God’s will.
- 4. Why did the Lord preserve Simeon and Anna until old age to see the birth of Jesus Christ?** Neither Simeon nor Anna held any special status in society. Rather, serving God was their priority. Thus, they recognized the incredible significance and preciousness of the birth of Jesus Christ and gladly shared it with others. Being able to see the birth of the Messiah also gave them hope for redemption in Jerusalem.
- 5. True or False: The Bible records that three wise men visited Jesus.** False; the Bible does not record how many wise men visited Jesus at that time.

Life Application

1. God’s Sovereignty

We should always follow God’s divine direction and embrace it with faith because we know that our God is a sovereign God. This means that:

- a. God has supreme power and authority (Dan 4:34).
- b. God is in complete control (Eph 1:11).
- c. God can accomplish anything (Isa 46:9–10).

There are many examples in the Bible that prove God’s sovereignty:

- God’s creation (Gen 1)
- The parting of the Red Sea (Ex 14)
- Korah was swallowed by the earth (Num 16)
- The sun stood still (Josh 10)
- The sundial moved ten degrees backward (Isa 38:8)
- An iron ax head floated on water (2 Kgs 6:5–6)
- Daniel’s three friends were preserved from the furnace fire while in the furnace (Dan 3:23–25)

2. Follow God’s Divine Direction

To follow God, we must: have a heart that is loyal to Him, serve Him wholeheartedly, and live an upright life. 2 Chronicles 16:9 says, “For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him.” The word “loyal” comes from the Hebrew word *shalem* meaning “perfect, whole, true, blameless and complete.”

a. To have a heart that is loyal to Him we need to give up our carnal nature.

Jesus Christ said, “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me” (Lk 9:23). In order to have a heart that is loyal to Him, we must put aside our selfish desires and seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness (Mt 6:33). To do this, Paul instructs us to “put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry” (Col 3:5). To follow Christ, we have to give up our bad habits and any relationships that pull us from God.

When called, Joseph and Mary were both willing to embrace God’s plan by faith. Mary gave an astounding response: “Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word” (Lk 1:38). She fully embraced God’s plan by demonstrating that she belonged to God, and she chose to be a person whom God could fully use. Joseph, too, did not understand initially, but later, he embraced God’s plan by setting aside his own plan.

Are you willing to let God rule your heart? Are you willing to let go of your own plan and embrace His? Sometimes, the journey does not seem to make any sense. Sometimes it hurts, and other times it is truly difficult to follow. But when we do follow God’s plan and have a heart that is loyal to Him, He will give us His strength.

b. To serve God wholeheartedly, we must live an upright life and trust God.

Luke 2:25 describes Simeon as just and devout. The word “just” is translated from the Greek word *dikaios*, which means “straight,” and “devout” means “devoted to God.” These describe a person who was in the right relationship with God in heart and action.

Earlier in his life, God had told Simeon that he would see the Messiah with his own eyes before his death (Lk 2:26). We do not know how old Simeon was when God made this promise to him, but he likely wondered when he would see the Messiah. Hebrews 11:1 tells us that “faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” Simeon kept waiting until that day when the Holy Spirit told him to go to the temple, where he finally saw the promised Messiah. Simeon exemplified a true life of trust and faith in God.

Anna lost her husband, but she did not become bitter. She became a blessing to the work in God’s kingdom. Anna was a prophetess, and like Simeon, she had been waiting for the coming of the Messiah. Although she grew old, she kept her spiritual vitality young by giving herself to prayer and serving God in all things. Because Anna served Him faithfully and prayed for the Messiah, the Bible records her as the only woman who recognized baby Jesus. After seeing Him, she could not help but testify of Him to those who were looking forward to redemption in Jerusalem.

Both Simeon and Anna exemplify what it means to trust God, to serve Him wholeheartedly, and to live an upright life.

Memory Verse

“So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: ‘Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,’ which is translated, ‘God with us.’” (Matthew 1:22–23)

Meaning

1. The prophecies in the Old Testament about the birth of Jesus were all fulfilled.
2. God did not send someone to help us; God Himself came to help us.
3. God came to earth for the greatest rescue mission: to die on the cross and save us from our sins. Is He your Savior today?

Conclusion

God is sovereign, and we must honor His kingship. He is the Most High and the Creator of all in heaven and on earth, so we must do according to His will. "For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him" (2 Chr 16:9). God has always been actively looking for those whose hearts are loyal and upright to Him, who are willing to set aside their own plans for His. He will show His power by protecting those who look to Him for deliverance.

Lesson 1 Homework Assignment Answer Key

1. What does the memory verse tell us about God's sovereign nature, and how does this affect us?
God is all-powerful and all-knowing; as long as He wills it, His plan will come to pass. This affects us because while we may not know what will happen today or tomorrow, God knows what will happen, and He can protect us through the trials ahead. This also means we can fully place our trust in Him without fear.
2. Which prophecy was fulfilled in Luke 3:31? Write down its location(s) in the Old Testament.
The Messiah will be a descendant of David. It is written in Isaiah 11:1 and Jeremiah 23:5.
3. How did Mary respond to Gabriel's news? What was Joseph's reaction after his dream from God?
She rejoiced and gave herself completely to God's will. Joseph immediately did as he was instructed by the angel and married Mary despite his previous plans to put her away secretly.
4. Who were the two workers that God revealed Jesus' birth to? How does the Bible describe them?
Simeon and Anna. Simeon is described as a "just and devout" person who waited for the Consolation of Israel. He also had the presence of the Holy Spirit. Anna was described as a prophetess who dedicated her life to God after her husband died. She fasted and prayed every day for the deliverance of Israel through the birth of the Messiah.
5. How should we live our life based on Anna's example?
Answers may vary. General examples: Prioritize God in your life and put Him first no matter what happens. Spend time every day with Him through prayer. Freely testify about His word without fear.
6. Based on Mary's example, are we joyful in doing God's will and carrying out His plan for us?
Personal answer.