

discipleship essentials

Essentials for Christian Living
Leader's Guide

WHO IS JESUS?

LESSON 2: THE PROMISED MESSIAH AND MIRACULOUS BIRTH

INTRODUCTION

This lesson is part of a Disciple Essentials module titled *Who is Jesus?* This series of seven lessons introduces the person and work of Jesus from a Christian perspective, considering His identity, work, teachings and death. Because Jesus is central to the Christian faith and religion, it is vital for the disciple to know Jesus, and for those exploring Christianity to know what makes Jesus Christ unique, and worthy of our discipleship and devotion. You may have participants from a variety of cultural and religious backgrounds who have differing ideas about who Jesus is and what He taught. This series will be an excellent foundation for their future studies in discipleship.

INTENDED AUDIENCE

The intended audience for these lessons is new Christians, those who would like a refresher on the basics of Christianity, as well as those preparing to teach these Christian practices and beliefs. Also, those with an interest in Christian thought will find value in these lessons as they pertain to daily living and choices.

The Leader's Guide is intended to help you as a leader in your preparation. These lesson outlines may be used in conjunction with other Discipleship Essentials materials found online at www.discipleshipessentials.org.

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WHO IS JESUS?

LESSON 2: THE PROMISED MESSIAH AND MIRACULOUS BIRTH

PURPOSE

The purpose of this lesson is to look at how Jesus uniquely fulfilled the Old Testament prophecies about the coming Messiah.

LEADER'S NOTE

This lesson will be interesting to participants who are familiar with the Old Testament. If some are still exploring Christianity, it might be necessary to discuss the reliability of the Scriptures if they doubt them. For those with a firm understanding of Christianity, this lesson gives opportunity to celebrate the love of God for His creation, and His plan of salvation for His people from the beginning. It can also help prepare Christians in talking to people of other faiths. For participants who might feel weighted down with the theology and history in this lesson, focus on the simple truth that God kept His promise that Jesus would come to save us.

INTRODUCTION

Select two or three of the following questions to ask the group.

- ❖ What is something you have had to wait a long time for?
- ❖ From what you know about Jesus, what was unique about His birth?
- ❖ What does the word 'prophecy' mean? Why did God have prophets give people clues as to what would happen in the future? Do you know any Bible prophecies (either that have been fulfilled, or are yet to be fulfilled)?
- ❖ How does God know what will happen and can tell us about it ahead of time?

STUDY

Instruct the group on the following points.

TEACH

- ❖ **Prophecies from Long Ago:** Jesus was born in a special way, and His coming to earth was taught to people for thousands of years before it happened! First we will look at the events of Jesus' birth, and then how those events and others fulfilled the prophecies about Him.
- ❖ **The Birth of a King:** The events of Jesus' birth are unique – but everything about Jesus is! He, the Son of God, was born to be a King for all people – but the circumstances of His birth did not reflect His royal future.



TASK: *If you have a large group, you could hand out each passage of the story of Jesus' nativity to a different participant or small group. Have them read it and summarize the events that occurred. Alternatively, have the group read each passage together and create a timeline of events.*

- Mary was a virgin, and had not been married to the man to whom she was engaged (Joseph). An angel appeared to Mary to announce that Jesus would be born to her (Luke 1:26-38). She was neither wealthy nor powerful, but just a young woman.
- Joseph discovered that Mary was pregnant and therefore planned to sever their engagement, as it would appear that Mary had been unfaithful. However, an angel appeared to Joseph and explained that Mary had conceived by the Holy Spirit. He was commanded to take Mary as his wife, and to name the child Jesus (Matthew 1:18-25).
- Mary and Joseph travelled to Bethlehem, to the city of David, to register for a census and taxation. This was a regular custom. Because the town was full of travellers, there was no overnight accommodation available, so Mary gave birth to Jesus in a stable (Luke 2:1-7).
- Jesus was born not in a palace or a wealthy home, but in a barn where animals were kept. His first visitors were not rulers and priests, but young shepherds watching their sheep. An angel visited the shepherds and announced the birth of Jesus to them. (Luke 2:8-20).
- Jesus was brought to the temple, circumcised according to Jewish custom, and blessed by the priest, Simeon (Luke 2:21-38).
- Far away, wealthy and educated men saw the sign in the sky that the Messiah had been born, and followed the star to where Jesus was. They believed He was born to be the King of the Jews, and gave Him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh (Matthew 2:1-18).
- These events alarmed King Herod, so he ordered all young boys to be put to death. Joseph was warned in a dream to flee to Egypt, where he, Mary and Jesus were safe.

ASK: *What events surrounding Jesus' birth would have been normal for a baby boy in that part of the world? What events surrounding His birth were unusual, special, and even miraculous?*

❖ **A Unique Birth:** Jesus – who was born to be a King – did not have a birth fit for a king, but rather for a peasant. Yet, angels foretold and celebrated His birth and powerful people travelled a great distance to honour Him. From the details of Jesus' birth we can learn why He came and why He was unique:

- He was born to be the Son of God, the Saviour, and the King. It was known who He would be before He was born.
- He came to save people from their sins and to show them the way to God, not to gain worldly power and riches. He was a King whose throne is not on earth, but rather in heaven and in the hearts of those who believe in Him.



- Earthly authorities did not recognize Him, but those who honoured God in their heart recognized the significance of His birth and worshipped Him.
- ❖ **The Fulfilment of Prophecy:** The writings of the Law and the Prophets in the Old Testament contain hundreds of prophecies about the coming Messiah. Each prophecy gives a specific detail about who this person would be, where and how He would live, and what He would achieve. In the days of Jesus, and since then, others have claimed to be the Messiah, but only Jesus fits every prophecy and fulfils every promise perfectly. This demonstrates that Jesus is God's chosen servant, the Messiah, God Himself who came to save us.
 - This is a selection of prophecies about the Messiah that Jesus uniquely fulfilled. Look up the verses to see what the prophecies were, and how they came true in Jesus.

Prophecy	Made	Fulfilled
He would be born of a seed of Woman (a virgin birth)	Genesis 3:15	Matthew 1:18, Galatians 4:4-5
He would be bruised by Satan (crucifixion), but He will ultimately destroy Satan	Genesis 3:15	1 Peter 2:24, Revelation 20:10
He would come from the line of Abraham	Genesis 12:3	Matthew 1:1
He would bless all nations	Genesis 12:3	Galatians 3:8,
He would be The Lamb that God promised	Genesis 22:8	John 1:29
He would be heir to the throne of David	2 Samuel 7:12-13 Isaiah 9:7	Luke 1:32-33 Romans 1:1-3
He would be born of a virgin	Isaiah 7:14	Matthew 1:22-23,
He would be born in Bethlehem	Micah 5:2	Matthew 2:1
He would spend time in Egypt	Hosea 11:1	Matthew 1:13-15
He would be called a Nazarene (the Hebrew word for 'branch' in Isaiah 11:1 sounds like 'Nazarene')	Isaiah 11:1	Matthew 2:23
A messenger would prepare the way for Him	Isaiah 40:3-5	Luke 3:2-6
Money paid to betray Him would buy a potter's field	Zechariah 11:12-13	Matthew 27:3-10
He would be hated without cause	Psalms 69:4	John 15:24-25
He would be crucified with criminals	Isaiah 53:12	Matthew 27:38
His feet and hands would be pierced	Psalms 22:16	Luke 24:38-41, John 20:25-27
His bones would not be broken	Exodus 12:46	John 19:33-36
Soldiers would pierce His side	Zechariah 12:10	John 19:34
He would be buried with the rich	Isaiah 53:9	Matthew 27:57-60
He would resurrect (come back to life) from the dead	Psalms 16:10	Matthew 28:2-7
He would ascend to heaven	Psalms 47:5, Psalms 24:7-10	Luke 24:51
He would be a sacrifice for sin	Isaiah 53:5-12	Romans 5:6-8

- ❖ **The Anointed One:** To the Jewish people who read the Old Testament scriptures, the prophecies about the Messiah were very important. The Messiah means 'the anointed one'. The offices of



prophet, priest and king were each initiated by the anointing (rubbing) of oil on the forehead. This set them apart for their special job. The Messiah was a figure who would come to rule the united people of God in an era of peace.

- Christians set themselves apart from the Jewish people in that they believed that Jesus uniquely filled all the requirements to be the Messiah.
- Notice John 14:6 and realize that today, Jesus is:
 - Our High Priest (*He is **the Way*** to God and makes atonement for our sins, [Hebrews 2:17; 5:5-6](#))
 - Our Prophet (He is ***the Truth***, [Acts 3:20-22](#))
 - Our King (He is ***the Life*** and will *rule forever*, and has an everlasting kingdom, [Matthew 27:37, John 18:36](#)).
- ❖ **Why Jesus Came:** Those who doubt Jesus or the Christian faith may say that Jesus wanted to have power, and therefore falsely claimed to be the Messiah. However, when we look carefully at all the prophecies that foretell his birth, ancestry, death, and purpose for coming, it would be impossible for someone to fulfil them of their own will. No one chooses the time or place of their own birth, nor their ancestry. However, Jesus knew from the beginning how He would die and the circumstances surrounding His death. He fulfilled all that was written about His birth, His life and His death.
 - Read the following prophecies that show us why Jesus came.
 - Jesus came to save sinners ([1 Timothy 1:15](#)).
 - Jesus came to call us to repentance ([Mark 2:17](#)).
 - Jesus came to find and save the lost ([Luke 19:10](#)).
 - Jesus came to serve ([Matthew 20:28](#)).
 - Jesus came to be a King and show us the Truth ([John 18:37](#)).
 - Jesus came to give us abundant life ([John 10:10](#)).
 - Jesus came to judge those who reject Him ([John 9:39](#)).
 - Jesus came to proclaim the good news of the Kingdom of God ([Mark 1:38](#)).
 - Jesus came into the world because the Father sent Him ([John 20:21](#)).
 - Jesus came into the world to rescue us from our sin ([John 3:16-18](#)).
 - As you look over the reasons Jesus came and how He uniquely fulfilled the prophecies, it is clear that Jesus was who He claimed to be – not merely a prophet or teacher, but the Son of God.
 - We can praise God that He had such a wonderful plan for saving us from our sins – a plan that He began to reveal since before the beginning of the world!



DISCUSSION

- ❖ When did God start revealing His plan to send a Messiah to rescue people from their sins? What was the earliest verse in the Bible that pointed to Jesus?
- ❖ Why was God so specific in His prophecies about the Messiah and the purpose of His coming? Even with this detailed information, why were there people who did not receive Him as Messiah?
- ❖ What surprised you about Jesus' birth? Why do you think God determined that Jesus would be born in a humiliating situation rather than an honourable one?
- ❖ Why is it important to note that Jesus' coming was prophesied long ago? How could this information be helpful when you are talking to people of other faiths and worldviews about who Jesus is?

PRAYER

Close with a time of prayer for your participants. Pray that they would understand who Jesus is, particularly His role as the Messiah. Pray that they would long for more knowledge of Him, and for Him to live within them. Pray that your participants would honour Him as their King. Thank God for His incredible plan of salvation and for sending His Son, Jesus, to earth for so many reasons. Thank Him for providing forgiveness of our sins and reconciliation with God.