

discipleship essentials

Essentials for Christian Living
Study 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.

The Study Guide is intended for an individual to look deeper into a specific lesson on their own. The lessons can be used in conjunction with other Discipleship Essentials materials, such as the video and audio productions found on www.discipleshipessentials.org.

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WHO IS JESUS?

LESSON 2: THE PROMISED MESSIAH AND MIRACULOUS BIRTH

WHAT IS IT ABOUT?

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

JUST SO YOU KNOW...

The Christian Bible is divided into two parts – the Old Testament and the New Testament. The first part consists of the Law of Moses, the history of God’s people, and the books of the prophets, common to several world religions. Within these writings are prophecies about a Messiah or Saviour who would come and unify the people of God, and be their King and rescuer. Jesus’ life fulfilled all of these prophecies! We can see the hand of God in this as He extended His love for His creation by revealing the plan He had from the beginning to save people. Jesus is unique in all of history, and this lesson will explore how He alone was the long-awaited Messiah.

GETTING STARTED

1. 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)?

2. From what you know about Jesus, what was unique about His birth?



STUDY

- ❖ **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.

➤ Read each set of verses from the Bible and write down the events they describe.

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| Luke 1:26-38 | |
| Matthew 1:18-25 | |
| Luke 2:1-7 | |
| Luke 2:8-20 | |
| Luke 2:21-38 | |
| Matthew 2:1-18 | |

➤ 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.

- Take a closer look at how Jesus fulfilled a few specific prophecies. Look up the verses from the Old Testament and compare them to the New Testament. What was promised? How was that promise fulfilled?

| Old Testament Prophecy | New Testament Fulfilment |
|------------------------|--------------------------|
| Isaiah 7:14 | Matthew 1:22-23 |
| Micah 5:2 | Matthew 2:1 |
| Isaiah 53:12 | Matthew 27:38 |

- **Prophecies come True:** There were over 300 prophecies in the Bible that Jesus uniquely filled – qualifications for being the Holy one of God that only He met. Look at the following chart to see a selection of prophecies that Jesus fulfilled. Each of them is very specific.



| 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, or sometimes by the pouring of oil over the head. 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.
- Read [John 14:6](#). What does it say that Jesus is?



- When we say that Jesus is our Messiah, or the anointed one, we are saying that He is Lord – the only One through whom we can be saved from our sins and have eternal life. He 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 verses 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!



IN SUMMARY

- ❖ Jesus was born in a special way, and His coming to earth was predicted for thousands of years before it happened!
- ❖ The events of Jesus' birth were unique and set Him apart.
- ❖ Jesus' birth, life and death fulfill prophecies and are included in the Old Testament.
- ❖ Jesus is the anointed one – the Messiah – who fulfills the office of prophet, priest and king for the people of God. He alone is the way to God, the truth of God, and in Him alone is eternal life.
- ❖ Jesus came for many reasons – He fulfilled what was written about Him and proved that He came to save sinners, to call us to repentance, to find and save the lost, to serve, and to give us abundant life.
- ❖ Jesus not only uniquely fulfilled prophecies about His birth, but He also accomplished all the prophecies about Him, bringing the good news of the Kingdom of God to all people.



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. 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?

2. 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?

3. 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?