



LESSON 6

CHRIST—THE KING—IS BORN

Scripture Text: Luke 2:1-18

Jesus is not just a great person who happened to appear in the course of history. His coming was designed by God and foretold by prophets. The coming of Jesus Christ was according to prophecy. The angel assured Joseph as to the nature of the Babe, and then without hesitation, Joseph married Mary. Joseph's faith and quick compliance with the divine command impresses us. The unusual announcement in last week's lesson becomes an unusual fulfillment in today's study. The birth of Jesus was the greatest event that ever happened on this earth.

MEMORY VERSE: *And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.*

John 1:14

The Taxing

Luke 2:1-5 Caesar Augustus—Palestine was under rule of Rome, under Caesar, the emperor. There was peace throughout the world when Jesus was born, but only because resentful nations were held in check by fear of Caesar. He was an absolute monarch, but his private life was a stench in the minds of all decent people. At this time a Prince of Peace was born, and His ideals, His program, and His promises were entirely different from those of Augustus. **All the world should be taxed**—all the Roman Empire. **All went to be taxed**—Rome ruled the whole then-known world. Caesar called for an enrollment, a census, and decreed that no one could be enrolled by proxy. Mary, in her delicate condition, had to travel the better part of a hundred miles in order that she might be counted by this tyrant. **Joseph . . . from Galilee . . . into Judaea, unto . . . Bethlehem**—from the north to the south more than seventy-five miles. **Of the house and lineage of David.** (See genealogies in Matthew 1:1-17.)

Joseph was of the house and family of David, and so was Mary. Christ was born with royal blood in His veins. Even though He came with no aspiration of being an earthly king, He had the bloodline of a king. The nation was looking for the coming of a Messiah. Everyone believed that a new King would be born in Bethlehem. Bethlehem means "house of bread." Here the Bread of Life would be born. David had been called the friend of God. Jesus was a descendant of David on His human side. The finger of God had touched His mother, and she had conceived under the power of the Holy Spirit. He was God-Man, and only such a Being could be the world's Savior. God had to bring something down from the far reaches of Heaven to redeem us from sin's power.

Born in a Manger

Luke 2:6-7 And so it was—God knew it would be so and told Micah to write it more than 700 years before (Micah 5:2). **Brought forth her firstborn son**—no fanfare, just a simple record of the entrance of the great Creator into His world. **Swaddling clothes . . . a manger . . . no room for them.** Not much of a welcome. Joseph and Mary went to an inn, but there was no room for them because it was full of sleepers and revelers. God brought forth His only Son and laid Him in arms of clay with mercy to a merciless world. There was no room for Jesus that night in

the inn, and there has been no room for Him in the inns of the world since. We still turn Him away because we do not want to be disturbed in our sleep. We still turn Him away because we do not wish for Him to interfere with our revelry. These people could not properly estimate man's spiritual needs. They wanted a king who could unseat Augustus, the self-centered tyrant, and bring true peace to their earthly kingdom. Against this man of worldly power, God held up a little Baby.

Good Tidings

Luke 2:8-11 Shepherds abiding in the field—lowly, common workers. **Angel of the Lord came upon them**—the revelation took place in the quiet of the open fields. God makes His greatest revelations not in the earthquake or the fire or the roaring tempest, but in the still, small voice. God's message always comes to a lowly people. These were shepherds. The One Whose birth was announced was to be the Good Shepherd. They were watching over flocks of sheep to be used in temple sacrifice. This night they heard the announcement of the birth of One Who was to be the Lamb of God, **which taketh away the sin of the world** (John 1:29). The revelation of history's greatest event was made to a group of humble people. An angel of the Lord always stands by those who are willing to heed the heavenly message. The glory of the Lord still shines round about the openhearted.

Fear not—God wishes not to frighten. Can't we almost see His dear face and outstretched arms in the message: **good tidings of great joy . . . to all people?**—the message of salvation. **Unto you . . . a Saviour . . . Christ the Lord.** The gift His world most needed He gave. He came to all of us. Here was the Prophet, Priest, and King promised by God in the prophecies. He is Master and Ruler. Here we see the spiritual King set against an earthly tyrant. History has been dated from the act.

This contrast comes down into our own day and into our own lives where worldliness and spirituality are in deadly conflict. In today's lesson we see the heavenly King born into the world so thoroughly disguised by humanity and by the disregard of men that nobody understood His nature except a little group of shepherds. The fact that a Savior is born is not enough; we must seek and find Him personally through divine revelation, as did these shepherds.

Luke 2:12-14 A sign—to point out. **Suddenly . . . a multitude of the heavenly host**—it took only one angel to deliver the message, but it took all Heaven in overflowing joy to join in the praise. **Glory to God**—to Him the glory belongs. It was His plan and doing. **On earth peace**—Jesus did not bring or promise peace among nations, but He brought soul peace—individual peace (John 14:27). **Good will**—the good will of Heaven being shown to the needy ones of earth. Oh, thank God for His love and goodness!

Their Response

Luke 2:15-18 Let us now go . . . and see—no question, just simple faith. **They came . . . and found**—just as the angel had spoken. **Had seen it, they made known abroad**—the normal response is to tell the good news of Jesus to every human soul. This first Gospel sermon has three points: (1) Do not be afraid; (2) Be filled with joy; (3) There is "born unto you . . . a Saviour." That is the Gospel—old and yet ever new. Only faith in Christ can dispel fear. Joy does not come through the possession of anything but God's great Gift. Joy is God's gift, and it may be the possession of anyone who is willing to believe and accept.

There are many things that crowd Christ out of modern political, intellectual, and social life. Is He crowded out of your heart? If so, why?

This lesson is adapted from a lesson by Mary Lehmann.
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