

## The Life of Christ

### **Introduction:**

1. The birth of Jesus is a major Biblical event

- “But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoptions as sons” (Galatians 4:4-5)

1) *Born of a \_\_\_\_\_* (Genesis 3:15)

2) *Born of a \_\_\_\_\_* (Isaiah 7:14, Matthew 1:18, Isaiah 9:6)

3) *Born under the \_\_\_\_\_* (Matthew 5:17, Galatians 3:13)

4) The purpose was to redeem us and free us from the bondage of sin

- It paved the way for the fulfillment of the promises made to David:

1) **A kingdom that will last forever** (II Samuel 7:16-19, Psalm 89:3-4, 28-29)

2) **It would be through his (David's) descendants that a dynasty of kings would come that would never end.** (II Samuel 7:12-16, II Sam. 23:5, II Chronicles 17:14, Genesis 49:10, I Samuel 16:12, Psalm 89:3-4, Isaiah 11:1-5, Daniel 7:13-14, Psalm 145:10-13)

- It was a fulfillment of prophecy (Isaiah 7:14, 9:6-7, Micah 5:2, Zechariah 14:9, Luke 1:32-33)

## 2. The birth of Jesus is a major historical event

- The Biblical record confirms, affirms and corroborates that the historical record is accurate as to the birth of Christ.
  - 1) The Gospel writers (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John) identify actual historical figures (such as Caesar Augustus, Herod the Great, Quirinius, Pilate) in their record of the birth, life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.
  - 2) The fulfilled prophecies concerning Christ's birth remain to this day as an irrefutable fact.
  - 3) If the birth of Jesus was not as significant as some try to claim – then why did Herod the Great feel so compelled to destroy Him?
- *If the birth of Jesus was not an historical fact then why so much fuss about Him?*
  - 1) If He wasn't real then why do we celebrate his birth every year?
  - 2) If He wasn't real then why does our world feel so strong that they need to do everything in their power to deny He existed?
  - 3) If He didn't exist then why are people willing to die for Him?

**"Nearly 2000 years ago in an obscure village, a Child was born of a lowly woman. He grew up in another village where He worked as a Carpenter. When He was about 30 He taught and preached.**

**This Man never went to College or Seminary. He never wrote a Book. He never held public office. He never had a family.** He never traveled over 200 miles from His birthplace. While only in His 30's He was sentenced to death on a Cross between two thieves. His executioners gambled for the only piece of property He had--the simple coat He had worn. His body was laid in a borrowed grave. Three days later this Man arose from the dead--living proof that He was, as He had claimed, the Savior whom God had sent, the Incarnate Son of God.

**Nineteen centuries have come and gone and today the risen Lord Jesus Christ is the central figure of the human race.** On our Calendars His birth divides history into two eras. One day of every week is set aside in remembrance of Him. Our Two most important Holidays celebrate His Birth & Resurrection. This one Man's life has furnished the theme for more songs, books, poems, and paintings than any other person or event in history. Thousands of Colleges, Hospitals, Orphanages and other Institutions have been founded in honor of this One who gave His life for us. All the Armies that ever marched, all the navies that ever sailed, all the Governments that ever sat, all the Kings that ever reigned have not changed the course of history as much as this One Solitary Life." (Author Unknown)

## Early Life:

### 1. The historical setting

- The \_\_\_\_\_ was still the main gathering place for the Jews in Jerusalem.
  - 1) The \_\_\_\_\_ (composed of the Jewish High Priest/s, the Sadducee's and the Pharisee's) was the religious ruling body for the Jews.
  - 2) The mindset of the priests of the Temple was that the Messiah would come as promised by God through the prophets.
- The ruling Empire at the time of Christ's birth was the \_\_\_\_\_:
  - 1) The independence that was gained by the Jews from Greek dominance during the **Maccabean Period** (the Inter-Testament Period) was lost as Pompey (the Roman general and shared leader of the Empire – 60 B.C.) appointed Antipater (Herod's father) as ruler of Judea. *Thus Judea became a Roman province of Syria.*
  - 2) Upon the suspicious death of Julius Caesar (he shared power with Cassius and Pompey), there was an immense amount of turmoil in the Roman Empire.
  - 3) It would be Cassius who imposes a tax on the Jews and he passes the responsibility for collecting those taxes to Antipater and his two sons (Phasael and Herod).
  - 4) Sometime after the death of Julius Caesar, another emperor will come to power and his name is **Octavian** (*also known as Augustus* – Luke 2:1).
  - 5) Caesar Augustus will appoint **Herod** (*also known as Herod the Great*) as king of Judea and he will reign from 40 B.C. until about 4 B.C. and he (Herod) will attempt to have Jesus killed shortly after His birth. He did this out of selfish motivation and fear and perhaps even driven by external evil forces.
  - 6) Herod will remodel/rebuild the Temple (some of the structure remains to this day – such as the Wailing Wall). Herod will also build Masada.

## 2. The religious setting

- The significance of the birth of **John the Baptist**:

- 1) His father (**Zacharias** – which means “The Lord remembers”) was a priest, walked a blameless life and lived obediently to the Lord. His life was in many ways a stark contrast from the other priests of his day as they were corrupt.
- 2) His mother (**Elizabeth** – which means “The oath of God”) was a descendant of Aaron. She too was a godly woman and worthy of the same recognition as her husband. She will give birth to John the Baptist (the one who would prepare the way for the Messiah).
- 3) **John** will have a significant standing before the Lord and his life will reflect a pursuit of holiness, righteousness, and obedience. ***Some compare his life to that of Elijah the prophet.***
- 4) It will be John who will preach about repentance in preparation for the Messiah and cause many to return back to the Lord (Malachi 3:1-6, Mk. 1:4-5, Matthew 3:5-6). Jesus will even confirm that John is a fulfillment of Mal. 3:1.

- The significance of the Messiah’s birth:

- 1) **Joseph** (Mary’s husband) was **not the physical father of Jesus** but his “royal lineage” provided the legal claim to the throne without the physical contamination of sin of that lineage. It is important to note that Jesus was King, not because of Joseph’s “legal claim” but because He is declared so!
- 2) **Joseph was a righteous man** (Matthew 1:19) and although he is not the focal point surrounding Christ’s birth, he was used by God for a special purpose.
- 3) **Mary was a woman who was highly favored by God** and she was the one who would carry the Savior of the world in her womb! Mary is and never should be the object of our worship as she herself is human like us and in need of redemption which is accomplished through faith in Christ (John 14:6).

### 3. The birth of Jesus and His early childhood:

- The precise year of Jesus' birth is unknown but many place it at approx. 6 B.C.
- The location of Christ's birth was a village called \_\_\_\_\_ (Micah 5:2), which was about 5 miles south of Jerusalem.
- The governor of Syria (Cyrenius/Quirinius) ordered a census (for the purpose of taxation) and it was this census that brought Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem.
- The Biblical account of the birth of Jesus:
  - 1) An angel appeared to Joseph to inform him that the child in Mary's womb was not the result of physical union between Joseph and Mary but it was ***"through the supernatural working of the Holy Spirit"***.
  - 2) There were **shepherds** near Bethlehem, at the time of Jesus' birth and they were doing what shepherds do (watching over their flocks). An angel also appears to them (Luke 2:8-14) and informs them of the birth of the Savior! ***It is rather ironic that the "religious leaders" were not the ones to receive the announcement, but instead a group of lowly shepherds.*** It is also good to note that the shepherds were excited and they praised God for they had seen the Savior of the world and received firsthand knowledge of His birth.
  - 3) At some point Mary and Joseph had their baby circumcised (Luke 2:21), they officially named him **Jesus** as instructed by the angel (Luke 1:31), and they presented Jesus to the Lord (Luke 2:22-24).
  - 4) **Simeon** (*a priest who was a righteous and devout man*) was on duty to receive the presentation of Mary and Joseph's baby. It was Simeon's desire to see the Messiah before he died and God granted him that prayer. Simeon will speak a song of praise (Luke 2:27-32) that acknowledges God's fulfillment of the promise that a Messiah would be born and salvation would come (Isaiah 9:6-7). He would have understood Jesus' name to mean salvation.
  - 5) Simeon will pronounce a blessing on Mary and Joseph and prophesy as to what would happen to Jesus and how others will respond to Him. (Lk 2:34-35)

- The visitation by the \_\_\_\_\_ (Matthew 2:1-12)
  - 1) This occurred during the time of Herod and happened after Jesus was born.
  - 2) Jesus was now called a child (Matthew 2:9, 11) as opposed to a baby or infant (Luke 2:12), so the assumption is made that He was between 1-2 years old.
  - 3) Mary and Joseph were still in Bethlehem, but no longer in the cave/stable as Matthew tells us they were in a house. (Matthew 2:11)
  - 4) There is a great deal of speculation and tradition that surrounds these Magi but we know that they claim to have seen a star in the east and they set out to follow its path.
  - 5) We are not told what prompted them to follow the star (perhaps they received special revelation from God about the birth of Christ, or they had some sort of prior knowledge – we just don't really know), but their purpose in going was to bring gifts and worship Him.
  - 6) **The star that the Magi followed was no ordinary star** as stars (planets) travel from east to west, not north to south. This star (the one they had seen in the east) had now reappeared and led them to a specific \_\_\_\_\_, in a specific \_\_\_\_\_, in a specific \_\_\_\_\_ called Bethlehem.
  - 7) Most conclude there were three Magi (because there were three gifts) but we don't even know that for sure.
  - 8) The gifts were expensive and most conclude they had a symbolic meaning (gold – representing Christ's deity or purity, incense - representing the fragrance of His life, and myrrh – representing His death or sacrifice). We are told that the Magi fell to the ground and worshipped Jesus.
  - 9) Perhaps the gifts had another purpose; which was to be a provision for Joseph, Mary's and Jesus' long stay in Egypt. The gifts could be sold to buy food.
  - 10) The Magi knew (by special revelation) that Herod planned to kill this child (Jesus) so they did not return to Herod and went another way home.

## **Teaching Ministry:**

### 1. The historical setting:

- By the time Jesus is baptized by John the Baptist and He begins His teaching ministry, the Roman government has gone through a few changes:
  - 1) **Tiberius Caesar** succeeds **Augustus** as Emperor of Rome (A.D. 14-37) and he was not all that popular with the Jews of Judea.
  - 2) **Pontius Pilate** was appointed as governor of Judea and he will rule over Judea from A.D. 26-36. He will play a primary role in the crucifixion of Christ.
  - 3) **Herod Antipas** (one of Herod the Great's sons) will rule over the region of Galilee from 4 B.C. until A.D. 39, along with **Herod Phillip** (his brother) who will rule over the region east of the Jordan from 4 B.C. until A.D. 34.
- Two significant Jewish religious leaders will come to power:
  - 1) \_\_\_\_\_ - who served as the High Priest from A.D. 6 until he was deposed by the Roman government in A.D. 15. He still remained the recognized authority.
  - 2) \_\_\_\_\_ - who was the son in law of Annas

### 2. The spiritual setting:

- John the Baptist preaches repentance to the Jews
  - 1) The purpose in doing this was to prepare the way for the Messiah (John 1:6-8, Mark 1:1-8)
  - 2) John used baptism as an act of obedience showing a genuine changed heart
- There were those who did not genuinely repent (many of them religious leaders) and John calls them a \_\_\_\_\_, showing their allegiance to Satan.

### 3. The transition of ministry from John the Baptist to Jesus

- This pretty much begins when Jesus presents Himself to be \_\_\_\_\_ by John (Matthew 3:13-17, Mark 1:7-11, Luke 3:21-22, John 1:15-34)
  - 1) John declares Jesus to be; “the Lamb of God who comes to take away the sins of the world” (John 1:29)
  - 2) John knew who Jesus was and felt completely unworthy to baptize Him
  - 3) *Some ask; why was Jesus baptized if He was sinless?*
- John will continue his ministry, and it will somewhat overlap the ministry of Jesus, but his purpose (preparing the way for the Messiah) had been served. John was responsible for bringing many in the “house of Israel” to an understanding that Jesus was the promised Messiah.
- John knew that his life and ministry would decrease while the life and ministry of Jesus would increase (John 3:22-30). It will be shortly after this declaration that John the Baptist will be thrown into prison and eventually executed. (Lk. 3:19-20, Matt. 14:1-12, Mk. 6:14-29)

### 4. The ministry of Jesus begins:

- The calling of His disciples (those who would be “Fishers of Men”)
  - 1) **Andrew** (a disciple of John the Baptist – John 1:35-42)
  - 2) Then Simon (aka Cephas or **Peter** – John 1:42)
  - 3) Then **Nathaniel** (aka Bartholomew) and **Philip** (John 1:43-51)
  - 4) **James** and **John** (Sons of Zebedee – Mark 1:19-20)
  - 5) **Thomas** (aka Didymus), **Matthew**, **James** (son of Alphaeus), **Thaddaeus** (aka Judas – not Iscariot), **Simon** the Zealot, **Judas Iscariot**. (Mk 3:13-19)

5. The Ministry of Jesus was accepted by some and rejected by others:

- Those who witnessed Jesus' miracles and healings accepted Jesus to be the Savior and Messiah:

- 1) **His disciples** believed; "This beginning of His signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifest His glory, and His disciples believed Him" (Jn. 2:11)
- 2) Many of those who witnessed the miraculous signs of Jesus believed; "Now while in Jerusalem at the Passover Feast, many people saw the miraculous signs He was doing and believed in his name" (John 2:23 NIV)
- 3) **Nicodemus** (see John 7:50-51, John 19:39-40)
- 4) **The Samaritan woman** (aka the woman at the well – see John 4:25-42)
- 5) **Many Samaritans believed** in Jesus due to the witness of the Samaritan woman (John 4:39-42)
- 6) Many of those whom Jesus healed or even those who witnessed the miracles and healings chose to believe and follow Him (such as **the man possessed by demons** – Mark 1:21-28, **Simon' mother in law** – Mark 1:29-31, **many people in the region of Capernaum believed** – Mark 1:32-34, **the leper** – Mark 1:40-45, **the paralytic man** - Mark 2:1-12, **all sorts of tax collectors and sinners** – Mark 2:13-17, and even **the man who was healed on the Sabbath** – Mark 3:1-6)

- *Those who rejected Jesus as Savior and Messiah*

- 1) **Many of those in Jesus hometown of Nazareth** (Luke 4:16-30)
- 2) **Many of the Pharisees and other religious leaders** (Mark 2-3, John 8:44)
- 3) Some who appeared to follow Jesus will later show themselves to **not be genuine followers** as they will be a part of the group shouting "crucify Him"!

6. Understanding the “**Sermon on the Mount**” which was delivered by Jesus:

- The Message itself can be summed up in Jesus response to one of the Pharisee’s who asked the question as to what is the greatest commandment to which Jesus responded; “You shall love the Lord God with all your heart, and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and foremost commandment. The second is like it, you shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets” (Matthew 22:37-40)
- The **context** of the Sermon on the Mount:
  - 1) It was \_\_\_\_\_ in the sense that it came right from the pages of the Old Testament and contained the same message that had been declared for centuries.
  - 2) It was \_\_\_\_\_ relevant (just as it is today) in that it taught **radical internal change** (obtained only through faith) not social reform. *Though it may be true that “what the world needs now is love sweet love” – what they first need is Jesus sweet Jesus!*
  - 3) It was \_\_\_\_\_ in that it teaches that we are not only to do right but **we are to be right**. In order to be right, we must recognize the only way to do that is through faith in Jesus Christ! It is that faith (when exercised through trust) that we are transformed by the working of the Holy Spirit and begin to pursue (through Him) a “right life”. The sermon provides a pattern for happiness and true success which cannot be fully achieved without first embracing Jesus as Lord and Savior by faith.
- The **content** of the Sermon on the Mount:
  - 1) The **Beatitudes** (evidences of the blessed life – *represented by true inner righteousness that come through faith in Christ – Matthew 5:3-12*) are witnessed through character traits and qualities such as; “**being poor in spirit**” (*one totally dependent on God*) which leads a person to be happy that God honors such a quality, “**being meek or gentle**” (*having a deep sense of appreciation for what God has done – I Peter 21-23*), “**hungering after righteousness**” (*having a healthy appetite for right living*), “**being merciful**”

(*demonstrating compassion to others in a tangible way*), “**being pure in heart**” (*pursuing righteousness because we are free to do so*), “**being peacemakers**” (*because we have an inner peace with God – Romans 5:8-10, we should be instruments of peace*), and “**being happy when facing persecution**” because just as the world hates Jesus it will hate us too (II Timothy 3:12, Hebrews 11:23-26) but in that persecution comes the joy of others hearing about Him.

- 2) **The benefits that come from this “blessed life are;** that we become \_\_\_\_\_ of the kingdom (Matthew 5:3), that we receive \_\_\_\_\_ in knowing that we have \_\_\_\_\_ with God (Matthew 5:4), that we receive \_\_\_\_\_ in knowing that our new nature drives us towards \_\_\_\_\_ (Matthew 5:6), that we are recipients of God’s \_\_\_\_\_ (Matthew 5:7), and that we will one day see God (Matthew 5:8).
  - 3) Jesus also taught that we (His followers) were to influence the world and He uses the example of being salt and light. In doing this we are to; “Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven”. (Matthew 5:13-16)
  - 4) The sermon continues as Jesus contrasts **true righteousness** (which is a result of true faith) with the **false righteousness** of Pharisaic tradition and He does so through several illustrations that reveals the complete hypocrisy of the Pharisees. (Matthew 5:21-48, Matthew 6:1-18).
  - 5) Jesus continues to teach some basic guidelines for “**right living**” as he states we should; *avoid being enslaved to greed* (Matthew 6:19-24), *live a life of faith* (Matthew 6:25-34), *avoid hypocritical judging* (Matthew 7:1-6), *continue to seek God’s will by doing God’s will* (Matthew 7:7-12), and finally by *doing good to others* (Matthew 7:12)
  - 6) Jesus completes the sermon by making a clear distinction between truth and error by using several examples that define His true followers from those who are not His followers. (Matthew 7:13-27)
- We are told that the crowd was amazed at what they heard because Jesus taught the truth...some will follow him and some will reject Him.

7. What was the impact of the Sermon on the Mount:

- Jesus taught that internal righteousness, which is achieved only through faith in Him (John 1:1, John 1:12, John 1:17), was in clear and distinct contrast to the external righteousness (*based on self fulfillment, indulgence, and rationalization*) taught by the Pharisees.
  - 1) Ironically it was primarily the “**non religious**” (*gentiles, pagans, sinners*) who embraced this teaching and followed Jesus.
  - 2) The very ones who should have known that Jesus is “**The Way, The Truth and The Life**” (John 14:6), are the ones who deny that He is! (**John 5:16-47**)
- This sermon (as most that preach the truth) caused a stir and brought conviction to those who heard it:
  - 1) Some will deny Christ and vehemently reject His words as blasphemy and demand that He be killed.
  - 2) Others will give up everything to follow Christ and in many cases relinquish their life for Him.
- Here are some that chose to follow Jesus:
  - 1) The Roman Centurion (Matthew 8:5-13, Luke 7:1-10, John 4:46-54)
  - 2) The widow whose son was raised from the dead (Luke 7:11-17)
  - 3) The “sinful woman” (Luke 7:36-50)
  - 4) A host of others too numerous to count (crowds of 4000 and 5000 whom Jesus fed both physically and spiritually)
  - 5) Those who were recipients of His miracles and healings
- Those who rejected Him were offended at His message and even considered it blasphemous, but they revealed who their real father was. (John 8:42-44)

### **His Arrest, Trial, Crucifixion:**

1. The plan that was put in place to arrest Jesus and have him killed was orchestrated by **Caiaphas, Annas**, and the other chief priests and elders (Matthew 26:2-5). Jesus was well aware of the plot and even warned His disciples that this would happen. (Matthew 26:1)
2. **Judas Iscariot** (an instrument of Satan) was the one who betrayed Jesus (Matthew 26:14-16) and he was responsible for arranging to have Jesus arrested.
  - The plan did not catch Jesus by surprise and He was fully aware of what was about to take place. (Matthew 26:22-24)
  - In order for the arrest to be successful, Judas knew that he needed to get Jesus alone and away from the crowds in order to avoid a riot.
  - It was in that quiet place (the **Garden of Gethsemane**) where the betrayal of Jesus by Judas Iscariot took place (Matthew 26:45-56). **What a sad testimony as to the depths of sin that mankind can go.**
3. **There were several trials (6 official ones), but none of them produced a single thread of evidence that Jesus committed a crime nor did they prove that he did anything wrong because He didn't. (Matthew 26:58-68)**
4. The ruling governor at the time was **Pilate** and he was unsuccessful in finding any fault with Jesus.
5. The crowds by this time had become so unruly that the rule of law was tossed out the window and Jesus (though he had done nothing wrong) was condemned to death on the cross, not for his actions but for our sin!
6. **We (all of us) are responsible for the death of Jesus because it was our sin that put him on the cross but it was God's love and providence that allowed it to happen. (Romans 5:8-9, Isaiah 53:1-12)**

### **Doctrinal Essentials:**

1. Jesus died (Luke 23:33-49)
2. Jesus was buried (Luke 23:50-56)
3. Jesus rose from the dead (The Resurrection – Luke 24:1-34)
4. Jesus ascended (Luke 24:50-53, Acts 1:1-11)

### **The Story of Redemption:**

1. We are all born with a sin nature (passed on from Adam & Eve) and although that nature is bent on pursuing the “acts of the flesh”, God set a plan in motion to redeem man from this bondage which (if left unredeemed) would ultimately leads to death and eternal separation from God. (John 3:16-18, Romans 5:8, Romans 6:23)
2. The promise of redemption was made as early as Genesis 3:15 and God’s plan was woven throughout the pages of the Old Testament and when the time was right, He sent His Son into the world to “buy back” (redeem) His creation through the shed blood of the only one capable of paying the price for our sin.
3. “But when the fullness of time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons” (Galatians 4:4-5)

### **Concluding Remarks:**

1. The death, burial and resurrection of Christ served a purpose and it is through faith in that truth by which man can be redeemed/saved. (Romans 10:9-10, Ephesians 2:8-10)
2. Some believe there are others ways to reconcile themselves to God but the Scriptures is clear when it says; “And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12, see also John 14:6)