



CHRISTMAS LESSON 4

God announces the Messiah's birth

MATTHEW 1:18-25; LUKE 1:26-38



God announced the miraculous birth of Jesus the Messiah.



“She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins” (Matt 1:21).

Supporting Truths

1. The birth of Jesus was a miracle.
2. The virgin birth proves that Jesus is the promised Savior.
3. The virgin birth proves that Jesus is the promised King.
4. The virgin birth shows that Jesus is both God and sinless man.
5. The virgin birth shows that God’s favor is by His choice, not based on worldly status.

Objectives

1. State that the Holy Spirit caused Mary to become the mother of Jesus.
2. Identify that Jesus was born to save His people from their sin.
3. Show that Jesus was descended from David to be the promised King.
4. Explain how the virgin birth shows that Jesus is both God and sinless man, and consider why this is important.
5. Notice that neither the people nor the places in this story were impressive.



Lesson Summary

About six months after Gabriel announced the birth of John the Baptist, he appeared again in the small village of Nazareth in Galilee. There he told a young virgin named Mary that she would become the mother of the Messiah. An angel also appeared to Joseph, telling him that Mary's baby was from God. This angel reminded Joseph that Isaiah had already said this would happen: a Child would be born to a virgin, and the Child would be Immanuel, God with us.

Spotlight on the Gospel

Jesus' miraculous birth proves that He is: (1) the promised Savior, (2) the promised king, and (3) both God and sinless man. However, unless we trust in Him, we will not experience any of the blessings He came to bring. To enjoy the blessings of salvation, we, like Mary, must believe that Jesus is the promised Messiah (Luke 1:45) and commit ourselves to Him as Savior and Lord.

LAST WEEK



God sends John
the Baptist
*Luke 1:5–25, 57–67,
76–7*

THIS WEEK



God announces the
Messiah's birth
*Matthew 1:18–25;
Luke 1:26–38*

NEXT WEEK



The Wise Men
worship Jesus
Matthew 2:1–18

Lesson Commentary

God announced the miraculous birth of Jesus the Messiah.

Six months had passed since God sent Gabriel to Zachariah to announce the birth of John the Baptist (Luke 1:36). Now Gabriel appeared again to announce the birth of the Messiah Himself. John's birth had been miraculous, but it was just an introduction to the far more miraculous birth of the Messiah.

The Messiah's birth was a **miracle** because it was a supernatural event, something that broke the laws of nature. It also fulfilled many prophecies about the birth of the Messiah and confirmed that Jesus is the Messiah, the one born to rule as King forever and to save His people from their sins.

The angel Gabriel announced Jesus' miraculous birth to Mary (Luke 1:26–38)

Gabriel had appeared to Zachariah in the holy place in the temple, but his next appearance was in the small, out-of-the-way village of Nazareth (1:26). Not only was Nazareth small and unimportant, but it was in Galilee, the northern part of Israel, separated from Judea by Samaria and close to the Gentile nations to the north. It was even called "Galilee of the Gentiles" because of how many Gentiles lived in this region (Matt 4:15; Isa 9:1).

Not only did Gabriel go to an unlikely place, but he appeared to an unlikely person, a girl named Mary (Luke 1:27). She is given no introduction except that she was a virgin betrothed to Joseph. Betrothal was like being legally married, even though a year might pass before they celebrated the wedding feast and lived together as husband and wife. Typically, girls would be betrothed by their parents at about 12 or 13 years old, so Mary was just a girl.

Scripture tells us that God chose Mary not because of something unique in her but because of His own grace. **Grace** is God's blessing, pleasure, or delight that He shows based on His choice, not based on what a person deserves. So when Gabriel called Mary "favored one" (1:28), he was literally calling her "one

who has been shown grace," or "one God has chosen to delight in."

Mary found favor with God just as Noah had (Gen 6:8). By His own grace, God chose Mary, like Noah, to carry out a special role as part of His salvation plan.

Gabriel also said, "the Lord is with you," just as an angel had said to Gideon (Judg 6:12). Just as Gideon did not understand, so Mary was deeply troubled and did not know why she should have such a special greeting (1:29). But just as God was with Gideon to empower Gideon to perform a special task, so God was with Mary to empower her to miraculously become the mother of the Messiah.

When Mary was troubled, Gabriel explained that God had chosen to show his kindness to young Mary by choosing her to be the mother of the Messiah (1:30–31). His name would be Jesus, which in Hebrew is Yeshua or Joshua and means "Yahweh saves." As one born from a virgin, He would be the Son of the Most High, and therefore also the one prophesied to rule on the throne of David forever (Luke 1:32; Ps 2:7–9; 2 Sam 7:12). This reminds us that **Messiah** does not just mean Savior; it also means King. Christ already rules in the hearts of all who submit to Him as Lord (Luke 17:21; Col 1:13), but Gabriel also speaks of a time when Jesus will rule as the King of Israel (Luke 1:33; Zech 14:16–21).

But there was a problem: Mary was a **virgin, someone who was not married and had never acted as if she was married**. Mary asked how it was possible for a virgin to have a child (Luke 1:34). Gabriel answered that the Holy Spirit would cause her to become pregnant, which showed two important things about her child (1:35). First, the virgin birth shows that Jesus was free from the corruption of Adam's first sin that polluted the entire human race (Heb 4:15). If Jesus were not sinless, He could not have satisfied the law or provided a spotless sacrifice (1 Pet 1:19).

THINK ABOUT IT
God often chooses the foolish, weak, and lowly in order to shame human pride and display His own power to save (1 Cor 1:27–29).



STUDY THE BIBLE LESSON

God announces the Messiah's birth • Matthew 1:18–25; Luke 1:26–38



Second, the virgin birth shows that Jesus is the Son of God. As the Son of God, Jesus is fully God (Heb 1:2–3). If Jesus were not God, He would not have the authority to forgive sins (Luke 5:21–24), to grant life in and of Himself (John 11:25; 1 Tim 6:13), to save in His own name (Acts 4:12; Isa 43:11), to mediate with authority before God (Job 33:23), or even to reveal God to us (John 1:18).

Gabriel's explanation of the virgin birth would still have been very difficult to believe, so he provided Elizabeth as a sign for Mary (Luke 1:36). If God could miraculously give her a child, why couldn't God provide a child in an even more miraculous way? About

2,000 years earlier God had promised Sarah a son, and when she doubted, God asked her, "Is anything too difficult for the Lord?" (Gen 18:14). Now Gabriel promised another even more miraculous birth, and when Mary wondered how, Gabriel affirmed, "Nothing will be impossible with God" (Luke 1:37). Unlike Sarah, who doubted many times before finally believing, Mary believed right away, and because she believed, she submitted to God's plan (1:38). She would become the mother of the Messiah.

The angel announced Jesus' miraculous birth to Joseph (Matt 1:18–25)

Mary's faith was incredible, because she knew people would think she was pregnant due to sin. In fact, even the man she was going to marry thought this. This man, Joseph, was from the line of David (1:16–19), again confirming that Jesus was the promised Son of David who would reign forever (21:9). But Joseph did not yet know about Jesus. So when he found out Mary was pregnant, he planned to divorce Mary, since betrothal was so strong that it required a divorce to cancel it (1:18–19). Legally he could have publicly shamed her and had her stoned to death, but because he was a righteous man, he was kind and planned to divorce her secretly.

But God made sure to protect Mary and the baby inside her. An angel, probably Gabriel, told Joseph what he had already told Mary: Mary's baby was from the Holy Spirit (1:20). Gabriel had told Mary that Jesus would be the eternal King. But since the Messiah is also Savior, Gabriel told Joseph that Jesus would be the one who would save His people from their sin (1:21). The Jews of that time thought they needed salvation from the political oppression of Rome, and people today want to be saved from all sorts of temporary hardships. But what we really need to be saved from is our own sinfulness (Rom 4:7). Jesus was born in order to become the sinless sacrifice whose death would pay for sins (1 John 2:2) and save all who put their faith in Him (Rom 3:24–26).

To help Joseph believe, the angel reminded Joseph of Isaiah's prophecy about the virgin birth (Luke 1:22–23). This prophecy had been given as a sign to the entire house of David (Isa 7:13), proving that God had not given up His promise that the house of David would last forever (2 Sam 7:13).

It also proves that the Old and the New Testaments are one story. They are consistent. When Joseph showed he believed Gabriel by marrying Mary and naming the baby Jesus (Luke 1:24–25), he put his faith in the same Messiah that Isaiah had depended upon over 700 years earlier.

Who is this Messiah? As one born from a virgin, He was both God and man; He was Immanuel, which means "God with us." The virgin birth set Jesus apart from every other human. No one else was born only from a woman (Gal 4:4). No one else could be called the seed of a woman (Gen 3:15). This is yet another proof that Jesus is the Messiah who was promised with such accuracy. And it is proof that we do have a Savior. He is both sinless man and God become flesh. He came to die for our sins, rule in our hearts, and reign forever.



THINK ABOUT IT

The virgin birth is essential to biblical faith.

Without it there is no Son of God, no sinless man, and no salvation.

THINK ABOUT IT

Christmas is ultimately about God dealing with man's greatest problem as He fulfills the long awaited promise through the divine person of Jesus Christ.



Lesson Outline

God announced the miraculous birth of Jesus the Messiah.

AGES 3–5 LESSON OUTLINE



1. The angel Gabriel told Mary she would be the mother of Jesus (Luke 1:26–38).
2. The angel told Joseph that Mary's child was from God (Matt 1:18–25).
3. Jesus was born to a virgin to show that He came to save people from sin (Matt 1:21; Luke 1:34–35).

AGES 6–11 LESSON OUTLINE



1. **The angel Gabriel announced Jesus' miraculous birth to Mary (Luke 1:26–38).**
 - Gabriel went to a small village to an unknown girl (1:26–27).
 - Gabriel announced that God had chosen to delight in Mary (1:28–29).
 - Gabriel announced the birth of Jesus, the Son of the Most High, to rule on the throne of David over Israel forever (1:30–33).

- Mary was a virgin, but the Holy Spirit would cause her to become pregnant (1:34–35).
- Mary believed that nothing is impossible with God, so she submitted (1:36–38).

2. **The angel announced Jesus' miraculous birth to Joseph (Matt 1:18–25).**

- Joseph was a righteous man from the line of David (1:16–19).
- Joseph planned to cancel the wedding when he learned Mary was pregnant (1:18–19).
- The angel said that Mary's baby was from the Holy Spirit (1:20).
- The angel said to name Him Jesus, because He would save people from sin (1:21).
- This fulfilled Isaiah's prophecy of a virgin having a son called Immanuel (1:22–23).
- Joseph obeyed and named the baby Jesus (1:24–25).





Lesson Questions

Use these questions to teach or to review this week's lesson.



Ages 3–5 Lesson Questions

- 1. What did Gabriel tell Mary?**
She would become the mother of the Messiah, the King.
- 2. Why did this promise seem impossible?**
Mary was a virgin. She was not married and had never acted like she was married.
- 3. So how could Mary have a baby?**
The Holy Spirit would cause her to become pregnant.
- 4. What did Gabriel tell Joseph?**
He should take Mary as his wife, because her baby was from God, the Savior that Isaiah had talked about long ago.



Ages 6–11 Lesson Questions

- 1. After appearing to Zachariah in the temple, where did Gabriel appear next?**
He appeared in the small village of Nazareth to a young virgin named Mary.
- 2. What did Gabriel tell Mary?**
He said she had been shown favor because she would become the mother of the Messiah.
- 3. What did Gabriel say about the Messiah?**
He would be great, the Son of the Most High, and the eternal King who would rule over Israel from the throne of David.
- 4. Was this promise more difficult than God's promises to Sarah and to Elizabeth?**
Yes. Sarah and Elizabeth were barren and old. But Mary was a virgin. She was not even married and had never acted like she was married.
- 5. So how could Mary have a baby?**
The Holy Spirit would cause her to become pregnant. Because of this, Jesus would be sinless man and the Son of God.
- 6. Who was Joseph?**
He was a descendant of David, a righteous man, and the one whom Mary was going to marry.
- 7. What was Joseph about to do when he found out Mary was pregnant?**
He was about to cancel the wedding because he thought Mary had done something sinful.
- 8. How did Gabriel change Joseph's mind?**
He explained that the baby was from God, he reminded Joseph that this is what Isaiah had prophesied, and he said that Jesus was the promised Savior.

Lesson Activities

Choose from the following ideas to introduce, illustrate, and apply this week's lesson.

AGES 3–5



INTRODUCE

HOW DO WE RECEIVE MESSAGES?

Ask the children if any of them have ever received a letter, phone call, or an email. Talk about the different ways we receive messages today. Tell the children that in today's story, Jesus' parents received messages from some of God's special messengers—angels.

ANGEL ON THE WALL

Draw an angel on a large piece of butcher paper, and tape it to a wall in the classroom. Explain that an angel had a very special message for Joseph while he was sleeping. During the Bible lesson, we will find out what that message was.



ILLUSTRATE

THRONE OF DAVID

Bring in a picture of a throne or construct a pretend throne (elevate a chair and create a high back with cardboard tubes painted gold). Explain that when the Bible talks about a throne it is talking about a king, one who sits on a throne. Tell the children that Gabriel told Mary that God would give her son, Jesus, "the throne of His father David" (Luke 1:32). Explain that this meant that Jesus would rule as King forever. God was going to give Jesus David's throne, or kingdom.

JOSEPH OBEYED

The angel told Joseph to take Mary as his wife (Matt 1:20). Did Joseph obey the angel? Yes! (1:24). The angel also told Joseph to name the baby that was in Mary, "Jesus" (Matt 1:21). Did Joseph obey the angel? Yes! (1:25). Explain that because Joseph obeyed the angel he showed that he believed what the angel said. The same is true for us. When our moms and dads tell us something we show that we believe them by obeying what they say.



APPLY

GET YOUR HEART READY FOR CHRIST

See *Year 1 Craft Book, Book 2*.

Materials: Cardstock, scissors, glue, crayons, and burlap wire.

Directions: Prior to class, cut out the pieces of the heart puzzle and a manger for each child. Glue the manger together. In class, have children begin by coloring the heart pieces. Help them organize and glue the heart pieces on the top half of a sheet of cardstock folded vertically (short edge binding). Note: some should hang over the top. Have them color the baby Jesus picture. Help them to put the picture and the hay (burlap) in the manger. Secure the manger with glue to the bottom half of the cardstock. Also, glue the verse on the bottom half, near the edge.



Get Your Heart Ready for Christ
See *Year 1 Craft Book, Book 2*

TEACH THE BIBLE LESSON

God announces the Messiah's birth • Matthew 1:18–25; Luke 1:26–38



AGES 6–8



INTRODUCE

ANCESTORS AND DESCENDANTS

Teach the meaning of ancestors and descendants to your children. Bring in pictures of your grandparents, parents, and children. Show these pictures to the children, and tell them who each person is. Tell them that you are your father's son or daughter and that you are your grandparents' grandson or granddaughter. Help them to say the word "ancestor." Tell them that ancestors are the grandmothers and grandfathers all the way back to Noah. Do the reverse for "descendant." Tell the children that they are descendants of their grandparents. They are descendants of their grandma's grandma and so on. In the end, use the pictures to test the children to see if they know who is an ancestor and who is a descendant. In today's lesson, we are going to learn that Joseph and Jesus were descendants of King David.

CHRISTMAS CHAIN OF CHRIST'S NAMES, WEEK FOUR

Add to last week's chain the names "Jesus" and "Son of God."



ILLUSTRATE

MIRACULOUS BIRTH

Tell the children that the birth of Jesus was a miracle. Explain that Jesus' birth was a miracle because it didn't happen according to the natural pattern that God established. Normally, every child has a mother and a father, but Jesus had an earthly mother and no earthly father. This is why Jesus' birth was a miracle. Ask the children if they can remember any other miraculous births that we've learned about in the book of Genesis? One is the birth of Isaac in Genesis 21:1 (his mother, Sarah, was too old to have children and barren) and another is the birth of Jacob and Esau in Genesis 25:21–26 (their mother, Rebekah, was barren).

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Tell the children that the angel told Joseph to name the Child that Mary was carrying, "Jesus" (Matt 1:21). This name means "Joshua" or "Yahweh saves". Ask the children if they remember any other names given to Jesus in the previous three Christmas lessons. Answers include: "Messiah", "Savior", "Christ", "King", "Immanuel", and "Sunrise". Ask the children if they can remember what any of these names tell us about Jesus.



APPLY

GOOD NEWS MEGAPHONE

See *Year 1 Craft Book, Book 2*.

Materials: Red and green cardstock, scissors, glue, tape and crayons.

Directions: Have each child form a cone with a piece of red cardstock and tape it together. Cut-off any excess. Cut a handle from green cardstock and glue it to the bottom of the cone. Cut out the picture and the letters on the activity sheet. Arrange and glue the letters "G-O-O-D" on one side and the letters "N-E-W-S" on the other side. Color the picture and affix a small L-shape cardstock strip to its back to serve as a prop. Put a piece of tape on the bottom of the L-strip and position the picture inside the cone.



Good News Megaphone
See *Year 1 Craft Book, Book 2*

AGES 9–11



INTRODUCE

THE NEED FOR A SAVIOR

Ask the children what life would be like without sin. Remind the children that God created Adam and Eve in a perfect garden. After sin entered the world, man's punishment was death. God loved us and promised to send His only Son to die on the cross for our sins. God sent Jesus as a gift for us. That gift is our salvation.

GENEALOGY JUMBLE

See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 2.

Copy the Genealogy Jumble work sheet (located in craft book) on card stock for each group and cut up the rectangles. Place the names in an envelope. During class, divide the children into groups of 5–7 children. Give each group an envelope with the genealogy names inside. Direct the children to open their Bibles to Matthew 1:1–18. Instruct the children to work together to line up the names in the correct order, from Abraham to Joseph. The first group to finish wins. Use this activity to teach children to identify Joseph as being from the line of David.



ILLUSTRATE

BABY ACROSTIC

Write the acrostic "BABY" vertically on the board. Above the acrostic write, "Mary, you will..." As you teach the section on Luke 1:26–33, fill in the summary of what the angel told Mary about the baby she would soon bear. Use this acrostic to help Children remember the important things the angel revealed to Mary about her son, Jesus. Mary, you will...

Bear a son

And call his name Jesus; He will...

Be great and be called the Son of the Most High.

Your son will rule the messianic kingdom.

BLESSINGS OF OBEDIENCE

Mary was likely a young girl (probably around the age of 13) when she learned she would be the mother of Jesus. This came as a shock as Mary had never been married. However, the Bible records her amazing response: "Behold, the bondservant of the Lord; may it be done to me according to your word" (Luke 1:38). Mary believed and submitted herself to God's will. Because of her submission she was greatly blessed (Luke 1:21). We too receive God's blessing when we obey His will.



APPLY

MESSIAH MEMORY

See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 2.

Photocopy the work sheet (located in craft book) onto card stock and cut out each square. Mix up the squares, and place them face down on the center of the table in six columns and four rows. The first child may turn over two cards to see if they match. The name (for example, "Jesus") should match its significance or meaning ("The Lord saves"). If the cards do not match, the child must turn them face down in their original locations. Play continues clockwise to the next player. When a child successfully matches two cards, he picks up the cards and places them in his own pile. That child may continue playing as long as he continues to find matches. At the end of the game (when all the cards have been successfully matched), the child with the most cards in his pile wins. To play again, simply mix up the cards and reset them on the table. Use this activity to help the children remember the importance of the names given to Jesus in this lesson and to introduce them to the additional names for Christ given throughout the New Testament.