



CREATION AND THE BEGINNING OF HUMAN HISTORY

#C1 – The Promised Messiah

PICTURES NEEDED

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| C1-1 Living room at Christmas | C1-5 Mary and Joseph with Jesus in manger |
| C1-2 King David | C1-6 John the Baptist and Jesus |
| C1-3 Mary and Angel Gabriel | C1-7 Jesus talking to his disciples |
| C1-4 Bethlehem | |

REVIEW (Before Teaching Lesson)

- **Journal Review:** Ask students to share an important truth that they learned from their journal readings at home that week. Share some of your own insights.
- **Previous Lesson Review:** (Use the visual from the last lesson to aid in review)
Review questions from the previous Gnosis lesson.
- **The Big Question Review:** Review from the previous Gnosis lesson.
Let the students give their answers to the question.
- **Bible Verse Review:** Review the verse from the previous Gnosis lesson.

LESSON CONTENT

(picture CA1-1) After Thanksgiving, we enter into the Christmas season. What is the focus of the Christmas season for most people? What should be the focus of the Christmas season? Why? (Let students give their answers.)

The coming of Jesus to earth is the most important event in human history. It is a real event that has defined how time is measured. What year is this? This is the year ____ AD.

What does AD mean? AD comes from the Latin words anno Domini that means in the year of our Lord. A monk set up this designation in 532. He started dating events on the Roman calendar from the year he believed Christ was born. That means that it has now been _____ years since Christ's birth.

What are the years in the past before Christ's birth referred to as? The years before Christ came to earth have historically been designated BC, meaning before Christ. To lessen the historical influence of Christianity the dating terminology is now being change from AD to CE, which means Common Era and BCE, which means before the Common Era.

As society tries to lessen both the meaning of Christmas and the impact of Jesus' coming on human history, it is critical that as Christians we understand the full meaning of Jesus' coming and its impact on all humanity. To keep a right focus during the Christmas season we are going to study in depth who Jesus is and the events leading up to and surrounding his birth.

Why do we study Jesus' birth every Christmas season? Studying Christ's first coming is something we do every year because it is important to remember. If we don't review something regularly, we will forget.

What is the Bible? The Bible is God's story or message to us. Like history, the Bible itself is divided into two parts by Christ's coming.

What are the two sections of the Bible? The Old and New Testaments

What is the difference between the Old and New Testaments? Besides relating the story of creation and the law given to Moses, the Old Testament contains the history of God's people (Israel) and books of poetry, proverbs and prophecy. It was all written before Jesus came to earth. The New Testament contains the good news about Jesus coming and dying for our sins. It also tells about the history of the early church, lays out Christian beliefs, and shares how to live out our faith.

Before we begin looking at the events surrounding the birth of Jesus, we want to examine what the Old Testament prophets had to say about the coming of a savior. What is a prophet? A prophet is a person who speaks from God and tells what will happen in the future.

How does a person know that a prophet is speaking from God? God warned his people to test the prophets; they were to examine carefully what a prophet said. According to the Bible, the words of a prophet should:

- Lead a person towards the one true God, not away from him.
- Encourage a person to follow, obey and serve the Lord.
- Not contradict or go against what the Word of God (Bible) says.
- Prove to be true. (This can be hard to test because some prophecies are about the very distant future.)

There are many Scriptures in the Old Testament that the Jewish people considered Messianic prophecies. What would be a Messianic prophecy? One that relates to the coming of the Messiah.

Who is the Messiah? The Messiah is the Savior God promised to his people Israel. Many of the prophecies about the Messiah were fulfilled with the first coming of Jesus. Other prophecies point to his second coming.

In this lesson, we will examine five different Messianic prophecies to learn what they say about the Messiah God promised to send to the people of Israel. We will test each of the prophecies to determine if they apply to Jesus.

1. **(picture C1-2)** Jeremiah 23:5 - *"The days are coming," declares the LORD, "when I will raise up to David a righteous Branch, a King who will reign wisely and do what is just and right in the land. ⁶ In his days Judah will be saved and Israel will live in safety. This is the name by which he will be called: The LORD Our Righteousness."*

What does this prophecy say about the Messiah?

(Write answers on the board to refer to in terms of Jesus.)

- He will be from the branch of King David.
- He will be a King who will reign wisely and do what is right and just.
- In his days Judah will be saved.
- He will be called The Lord Our Righteousness.

How did Jesus fulfill this prophecy?

- Being a branch means that the Messiah would be descended from King David. Descended means to come from the family line of someone who lived before you. Both Mary and Joseph were from the line of David as was Jesus. They were King David's descendants. (Matthew 1:1-16, Luke 3:23-38)
- As he stood before Pilate Jesus called himself a king, although he said that his kingdom was not of this world. (John 18:37)
- Jesus told Nicodemus when he was talking to him that he came to save the world. (John 3:16-18)
- Paul describes in his letters the righteousness that comes through Jesus. (Romans 3:21-22)

2. **(picture C1-3)** Isaiah 7:14 - Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.

What does this prophecy say about the Messiah?

(Write answers on the board to refer to in terms of Jesus.)

- A virgin, a woman who had never been married and hadn't had relations with a man, would give birth to a son. This could only be a miracle from God, as a woman has to have relations with a man in order to have a baby.
- The baby was to be named Immanuel which means "God with us," implying that God would come in the flesh to dwell among men.

How did Jesus fulfill this prophecy?

- When the angel Gabriel told Mary she was to have a baby, Mary responded, "How will this be, since I am a virgin?" (Luke 1:34)
- The angel Gabriel told Mary that the power of the most high would overshadow her and the one born would be the Son of God. She was to give the baby the name Jesus which is a form of Joshua that means "The Lord saves." (Luke 1:31-33)

3. **(picture C1-4)** Micah 5:2 - *But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times.*

What does this prophecy say about the Messiah?

(Write answers on the board to refer to in terms of Jesus.)

- The Messiah would come from the insignificant little town of Bethlehem.
- The origins of the Messiah would be ancient, from the beginning of time.

How did Jesus fulfill this prophecy?

- Jesus was born in Bethlehem. His parents had to go there to register with the Roman government because they were from the line of David. Bethlehem was King David's hometown and they were his descendants. (Luke 2:4-5)
- Because Jesus is God, he has always existed and was there at the time of creation. (John 1:1-3)

4. **(picture C1-5)** Isaiah 9:6-7a - *For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end.*

What does this prophecy say about the Messiah?

(Write answers on the board to refer to in terms of Jesus.)

- The Messiah would be born as a man, but the names by which he would be called tell us that he is God.
 - Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end.
- How did Jesus fulfill this prophecy?
- Jesus said he and the Father are one. He is God. (John 10:30)
 - Jesus' kingdom is eternal and will never end. (John 18:36)

5. **(picture C1-6)** Malachi 4:5-6 - "See, I will send you the prophet Elijah before that great and dreadful day of the LORD comes. He will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers; or else I will come and strike the land with a curse."

What does this prophecy say about the Messiah? Before the Messiah came God would send the prophet Elijah to turn hearts back to him and restore right relationships within families.

How was this prophecy fulfilled? Jesus said that John the Baptist was the Elijah who was to come. (Matthew 11:11-14) Matthew, chapter 3, describes how John the Baptist fulfilled the role of Elijah by preparing the way for Jesus.

(picture C1-7) Peter, who was a Jew and one of Jesus' disciples, spoke of the importance of Jesus' coming in fulfilling the Old Testament Messianic prophecies. He walked with Jesus and knew who he was. Matthew 16:13-17 relates a conversation between Jesus and Peter,

¹³When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?"

¹⁴They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets."

¹⁵"But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?"

¹⁶Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

¹⁷Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven."

What did Peter recognize about Jesus? Peter recognized that Jesus was the Christ, the Messiah sent by God. Jesus and those with him proclaimed that he is the Messiah.

At Christmas, we want to be like the prophets of old, sharing the good news of the Messiah that has already come. A messenger faithfully shares God's truth as the prophets of the Old Testament did. They are a blessing to those who hear and believe.

Isaiah 52:7 says, *How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation, who say to Zion, "Your God reigns!"*

What is the good news we are to proclaim at Christmas and always? How can we do that? (Let students give their answers.)

LESSON WRAP-UP

- **Overview Questions:** What should the words of a prophet do? What are five Old Testament prophecies concerning the Messiah? How do we know Jesus is the Messiah?
- **Thought Questions:** Why do people need a Messiah (Savior)? Why was the Messiah promised to Israel? Why didn't all the Jews recognize Jesus as the Promised Messiah? Why doesn't everyone see who Jesus is?
- **Prayer:** Thank God that he has made a way for us to be delivered from the punishment and the power of our sin through his Son Jesus Christ. Pray that you would be humble and your eyes opened to see fully who Jesus is and all he has done for you. Pray for those who have arrogant, hard hearts that they might see their need for Jesus.
- **The Big Question: What does God's messenger do?**
Let the students give their answers to the question. Share the memory verse. Ask how it answers the question.
- **Memory Verse: Isaiah 52:7 God's messenger faithfully shares God's truth.**

How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation, who say to Zion, "Your God reigns!"

Question: What do God's messengers share with other people?

ACTIVITIES (Completed after the lesson)

Any age appropriate activity can be included which fits into the class time. The activities with a star are included on the class notes.

- ★ **Lesson Notes:** Ask the students to summarize in one sentence what the lesson was about. Then have them give three main points covered in the lesson. An example is below.

Theme: The Old Testament contains prophecy about the promised Messiah and those who were with Jesus believed he fulfilled those prophecies.

1. The Messiah would be from the line of David.
2. A virgin would give birth to a son.
3. The Messiah would come from Bethlehem.
4. The child would be called Mighty God.
5. The prophet Elijah would prepare the way.

- ★ **Memory Verse:** Read the memory verse on the cover of the class notes and then have the students fill in the blanks in the verse.

★ **Activity Page:** Prophecy crossword puzzle

Instructions: Fill in the puzzle with prophecies about the Messiah.

Virgin – The woman who would give birth to a son.

Messiah – The one who would fulfill the prophecies.

Elijah – The prophet who would prepare the way.

Bethlehem – The town of the Messiah's birth

David – The line from which the Messiah would come.

Prophet – A person who foretells the future.

Righteousness – The manner in which the Messiah will reign.

Immanuel – A name for the Messiah.

★ **Further Understanding:** Investigation/Reasoning Skills

1. Read the whole passage below to the students as they read along in their Bibles.
2. Read the passage verse by verse and have the students explain each verse.
3. Have the students extract one important truth from the passage. This can be done as an entire class or you can break into pairs or small groups.
4. Have the students answer the additional two questions: How can you apply that truth in your life? What will be the result of applying that truth?

John 14:5-11 Jesus tells us who he is.

Questions: What does Jesus say about himself? What does Jesus say is evidence about who he is?

JOURNAL

The journal is passed out at the end of class for the students to complete at home. It has six readings that answer a digging deeper question. It would be beneficial for the teacher to work through the journal readings also.

Digging Deeper: How do we know we can trust the stories about Jesus?

Reading 1: 2 Peter 1:12-21 The disciples were eyewitnesses.

Why did Peter want to refresh the memory of those he was writing to? (14-15) How did Peter know he was not following a cleverly invented story? (16-18) How was the word of the prophets made more certain? (16-18) What are ways people try to discredit the truth of Jesus' coming? Why do people want to discredit Jesus? How is the celebration of Christmas being used for purposes other than honoring God?

Reading 2: John 20:19-31 Jesus rose from the dead and appeared to his disciples.

Why were the disciples certain it was Jesus who appeared to them? Why did Thomas doubt what they said? What did Jesus say to Thomas? What does that mean for you? Why did John write down the things he said? Why do you think this account of Jesus is trustworthy?

Reading 3: Luke 1:1-4 Luke carefully investigated what he wrote down.

Who had handed down the stories of what happened? Why did Luke write down all the things he investigated? Why do you think what he wrote is trustworthy?

Reading 4: 2 Timothy 1:1-14 We know who is trustworthy.

How did Timothy's faith develop? What was Paul encouraging Timothy to do? What was happening to Paul because of sharing the Gospel? Why did Paul keep on sharing? Why do you think Paul is a trustworthy witness of the truth?

Reading 5: 1 John 1:1-7 John heard and saw the things he wrote about.

How did John know the things he is telling others? (1-3) Why is John writing these things down? (3-4) What does John say is the message? (5-6) What happens if we walk in the light? (7) Do you believe you can trust the things John wrote down? Why? What will believing the things he wrote do for you? Why is walking in the light critical for having fellowship with other believers?

Reading 6: John 14:5-11 Jesus tells us who he is.

What does Jesus say about himself? What does Jesus say is evidence about who he is?