

THE WORD BECAME FLESH



CREATION AND THE BEGINNING OF HUMAN HISTORY

#01 - The Promised Messiah Luke 1:1-4

PICTURES (Note: Inserted in brackets at the appropriate place in the lesson is the number of the picture to show the students.)

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|-----|---------------------------|-----|--------------------------------------|
| 1-1 | Prophet (Moses or Elijah) | 1-5 | Mary and Joseph with Jesus in manger |
| 1-2 | King David | 1-6 | John the Baptist baptizing Jesus |
| 1-3 | Gabriel talking to Mary | 1-7 | Jesus talking to his disciples |
| 1-4 | Town of 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:** Since this is the beginning of a new study, it might be beneficial to ask the students what they learned from the past year study.
- **Bible Verse Review:** Ask the students what Bible verse from the past year study has really been meaningful to them.

LESSON CONTENT

Note: The Bible verses included in the lesson are from the NIV 1984 edition. The wording of the questions is derived from that version. If another version of the Bible is used, questions may need to be adapted.

This year we will be studying the life and teachings of Jesus from the Gospel of Luke.

Who was Luke? Luke was a doctor and probably a Gentile by birth, meaning he wasn't a Jew. He came to believe in Jesus by the things he heard. He was a companion of Paul and also wrote the book of Acts.

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. This is the year ____ AD.

What does AD mean? AD comes from the Latin words Anno Domini which means in the year of our Lord. This designation was set up by a monk 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 before Christ's birth referred to as? The years before Christ came to earth historically have been designated BC, meaning before Christ. To lessen the historical influence of Christianity the dating terminology is now being changed from AD to CE which means Common Era and BCE which means Before the Common Era.

As society tries to lessen the impact of Jesus' coming on human history it is critical as believers that we understand the full meaning of who Jesus is, what he did and his impact on all humanity. We want to examine carefully his life and teachings.

Luke starts his Gospel as follows:

Luke 1:1-4

¹ Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us, ² just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the word. ³ Therefore, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, it seemed good also to me to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, ⁴ so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught.

To whom was Luke writing and why was he writing to him? Luke was writing to Theophilus whose name is Greek and means one who loves God. Luke wanted Theophilus to know with certainty the things he had been taught about Jesus.

Why is knowing with certainty what Jesus taught and did important? If we don't know with certainty, we will be filled with doubt. We will question who Jesus is and we won't put our faith in him. We will easily be swayed by wrong teaching and the thinking of the world.

Before we begin to study the life and teachings of Jesus we want to examine what the Old Testament prophets had to say about the coming of a Savior. What is a prophet? **(picture 1-1)** 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:

1. Lead a person towards the one true God, not away from him.
2. Encourage a person to follow, obey and serve God as Lord.
3. Not contradict or go against what the Word of God (Bible) says.
4. 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, ones that related to the coming of the Messiah.

Who is the Messiah? Jesus is the Messiah, 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.

From the Christmas studies, you complete each year you have learned five different Messianic prophecies about the Messiah God promised to send to the people of Israel. Do you remember what they are? (Let the children give their answers.) As we work through the study this year, we will see how Jesus fulfilled each of them.

NOTE TO TEACHER: You don't need to present these in the order they are listed. You can go through them as the students recall them.

1. Jeremiah 23:5 – The Messiah will be from the line of David.
"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 say about the Messiah? (picture 1-2)

- He will be from the branch (line) of King David, who was an important Old Testament king.
 - 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.
2. Isaiah 7:14 – A virgin will give birth to a son.
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 say about the Messiah? (picture 1-3)

- A virgin, a woman who has never been married and hasn'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 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.

3. Micah 5:2 – The Messiah would come from Bethlehem.

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 say about the Messiah? (picture 1-4)

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

4. Isaiah 9:6-7a – The child would be called Mighty God.

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 say about the Messiah? (picture 1-5)

- The Messiah would be born of a woman 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.

5. Malachi 4:5-6 – The prophet Elijah would prepare the way for the Messiah.

"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 say about the Messiah? (picture 1-6) Before the Messiah came God would send the prophet Elijah to turn hearts back to him and restore right relationships within families.

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. The Bible relates a conversation between Jesus and Peter.
(picture 1-7)

Matthew 16:13-17

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 know about Jesus? Peter recognized that Jesus was the Christ, the Messiah sent by God. Jesus and those with him proclaimed he is the Messiah and this is confirmed by the prophecy in the Old Testament, which points to him.

John, another one of Jesus' disciples said: 14 The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

To whom does The Word refer? The Word refers to Jesus.

What do words do? Our words reveal the thoughts in our mind, the things we think about and are. Jesus reveals who God is.

What does it mean that the word became flesh? Flesh is the muscle and skin that make up a material being. Since flesh is physical it has a beginning (birth) and an end (death). Jesus, who is God, took the form of a human being. He became flesh. He was born and died as a human.

Why did Jesus become flesh? Jesus became flesh so we could gaze upon the glory of God, see into the spiritual world, understand truth and have a relationship with him. Because we are physical beings, it is hard for us to understand who God is. It is easier for us to relate to other men. Jesus came as a man to show us the nature of God, testify to the truth and pay the penalty for our sin so that we might be able to enter God's holy presence.

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 men need a Messiah (Savior)? Why was the Messiah promised to Israel? Why didn't all the Jews recognize Jesus as the Promised Messiah? Why don't all people in our times see who Jesus is?
- **Prayer:** Thank God that he has made a way for us to be delivered both from the punishment and 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: Who is Jesus?**
Let the students give their answers to the question. Share the memory verse. Ask how it answers the question.
- **Memory Verse: John 1:14**
Jesus is the Word of God who came to live among us and reveal God's glory.

¹⁴ The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Questions: Who is the Word? What did he do? Why did he do that?

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 that 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.

Why do you need to know this? So I can believe that Jesus is the Messiah that God promised to send to his people.

- ★ **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 the prophecies about the Messiah.

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

Messiah – The one who was to fulfill the prophecies.

Elijah – The prophet who would prepare the way.

Bethlehem – The town of the Messiah

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:** Bible Study Skills

Many people will say that Jesus is a good teacher but not God. Jesus said in Matthew 19:17 that “There is only One who is good.” According to Jesus, only God is good. Jesus made claims about himself to be God. He can’t be a good teacher. He can only be one of three things:

- He could be Christ our Savior, which is what he claimed to be.
- He could be a con man because he claimed to be God and isn’t.
- He could be completely crazy because he claimed to be God and isn’t.

Note: C.S. Lewis refers to these in Mere Christianity as Lord, liar or lunatic.

Look up the verses to see what Jesus had to say about himself and determine who he truly is.

- John 6:38-40 :³⁸*For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me. ³⁹And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all that he has given me, but raise them up at the last day. ⁴⁰For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day."*

God is his Father. He has come from heaven.

- John 14:6: ⁶*Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.*

He is the only way to God.

- John 17:1-5: ¹*After Jesus said this, he looked toward heaven and prayed: "Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you. ²For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him. ³Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. ⁴I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do. ⁵And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began.*

He is God's son and the way to eternal life.

- John 18:36-37: ³⁶*Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jews. But now my kingdom is from another place."*

³⁷*"You are a king, then!" said Pilate.*

Jesus answered, "You are right in saying I am a king. In fact, for this reason I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me."

He speaks truth.

The daily journal inside the booklet has six readings that relate to a theme. It would be beneficial for the teacher to work through the journal readings also.

Digging Deeper: Journal Focus – 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: 2 Timothy 1:1-12 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 4: 1 John 1:1-4 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) Do you believe you can trust the things John wrote down? Why? What will believing the things he wrote do for you?

Reading 5: Hebrews 2:1-4 God testifies to who Jesus is.

What makes us certain of Jesus and the way of salvation?

Reading 6: Matthew 7:15-23 We can recognize the fruit.

How does one recognize whether a prophet is from God or not? What will the Lord say to those who are not from him?