

Jesus' Life Prior to His Ministry: The Introduction of Christ, Part 4 Events That Followed Christ's Birth

Looking into the Face of Jesus
The Life of Christ, 1: Pages 67-82
Outline: Lesson Plan 7

Introduction

- A. Texts for this lesson: Luke 2:8–20; 2:21–39; Matthew 2:1–12
- B. What happened when Jesus was born? What evidence that He was the Christ was given?
- C. Remember the sequence of events.
- D. Remember also the significance of the events.

I. The Birth of Jesus Proclaimed to the Shepherds

- A. Luke 2:8–20
 - 1. The announcement of Jesus was made to the shepherds keeping watch over their flock by night.
 - a. Not to the city officials
 - b. No huge announcement
 - 2. The birth would have basically gone unnoticed except for the shepherds.
 - 3. The angels' words to the shepherds are some of the most famous we know today. Read Luke 2:10–12.
 - a. Notice what the shepherds did once they found the baby Jesus. Read Luke 2:17, 18.
 - b. They have been called the first evangelists because they told everyone they met.
- B. Notice Luke 2:19; this along with Luke 2:51 have caused many to conclude that Mary must have later shared her thoughts with Luke.

II. The Circumcision and Naming of Jesus

- A. Circumcision/naming (Luke 2:21–39)
 - 1. An important point: the birth of Jesus did not bring an end to the OT.
 - 2. He was under Jewish law and regulations.
 - a. He had to be circumcised on the 8th day (Leviticus 12:3).
 - b. He had to be redeemed with money in recognition of their deliverance during the tenth plague (Numbers 3:40–51; 18:15, 16).
 - c. Forty days after the birth of a son, a Jewish mother was to go to the temple for a ceremony of purification, which included a sacrifice (Leviticus 12:2–8).

- d. When Mary and Joseph went to make their offering and perform their ceremony, two people were very excited to see Jesus.
- B. Simeon
 - 1. Simeon was told he would not die until he saw the Messiah.
 - 2. His words also included how Jesus would be the Messiah for the Gentiles (Luke 2:21, 32).
 - 3. He also talked about a sword that would pierce Mary's soul (Luke 2:35).
- C. Anna, an 84-year-old prophetess
 - 1. She was a dedicated servant of the Lord
 - 2. She immediately began giving thanks to God.
 - 3. She continued to speak of Jesus to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem
- D. They left the temple.
 - 1. Luke 2:39—once they obeyed the law, they returned to Galilee, to their own city of Nazareth.
 - 2. This could refer to a trip back to get their things.
 - 3. It is probably referring to their later trip back to make Galilee their home after their flight to Egypt.

III. Jesus Visited by the Wise Men (Eastern Magi)

- A. Text: Matthew 2:1–12
 - 1. Proof that Jesus was going to be the savior of the Gentiles came soon in the visit of the Magi from the east.
 - 2. They said, "King of the Jews," not, "Our King."
- B. Who were they?
 - 1. "Magi"—short for Magicians but not the same as we know them. The NASB says, "a cast of wise men specializing in astrology, medicine, and natural science."
 - 2. They were not kings, but many times served as advisors to kings. Based on this story, they were honest seekers of Christ.
- C. Unusual features
 - 1. Somehow, God convinced them to follow a star to find the Messiah.
 - 2. We do not know how many Magi there were; we just know there were more than two.
 - 3. They came from the east—Arabia, Persia, Babylonia, etc. We do not know. Their true wisdom did not come from their knowledge, but from the fact that they were diligent seekers of our Savior.
 - 4. The star led them to Jerusalem.
 - 5. They begin asking where the King of the Jews was (Matthew 2:2).
 - a. Herod heard of their search.
 - b. Herod made them promise they would tell him where this King was so he could "worship" Him too.

- c. Notice: Jesus was born a King; He did not later become one.
 - 9. The star reappeared and sent them to Bethlehem—to the house where Jesus was staying.
 - 10. The gifts were given:
 - a. Gold
 - b. Frankincense—very expensive fragrance that was burned to give good odor for a home
 - c. Myrrh—similar to frankincense, but primarily used in embalming the dead
- D. Their mission was complete.
 - 1. God warned them not to return to Herod in a dream.
 - 2. They left for their country another way (Matthew 2:12).

IV. Application

- A. Seeking the Savior (Matthew 2:1–13). Are we as wise as the “wise men”?
- B. The Magi—what do we learn from them?
- C. The mission
 - 1. Why did they make the long trip to Jerusalem (Matthew 2:2a)? To find the Messiah
 - 2. Why did they want to find him (Matthew 2:2b)? To worship Him
 - 3. Hebrews 11:6— “a rewarder of those who seek Him”
 - 4. No sacrifice is too great in our search for Jesus.
- D. The method
 - 1. How did the wise men know about Jesus and understand they needed to worship Him?
 - 2. Could have been from Jewish neighbors
 - 3. But the biggest clue comes from the words, “we saw His star in the East.”
 - 4. Remember, they were astrologers.
 - 5. The main point is that they were guided directly by God.
 - 6. However, to find Jesus, we must be willing to accept God’s guidance.
 - 7. Once we accept His guidance, we must be ready to follow it immediately.
 - 8. Do not forget to find Jesus. We must use the Scriptures to do that.
 - a. When the king asked where the Messiah was, the Jewish leaders went to the Scriptures (Micah 5:2; 2 Samuel 5:2).
 - b. If you seek Jesus, God will help you find Him.
 - 9. They worshipped Jesus (Matthew 2:11).
- E. Symbolism of the gifts
 - 1. Gold—a gift for a king
 - 2. Frankincense—incense, a gift for a priest
 - 3. Myrrh—a gift for a Savior

- 4. Significance does not really matter; the wise men simply desired to do homage to their king.
- F. We must give the best we have to our Savior.

Conclusion

- A. There were three groups of people identified in this story.
- B. The wise men wanted to seek the Lord.
- C. Herod sought to kill the Lord.
- D. The Jewish leaders put forth no effort to find the Lord even though He was only a few miles away.
- E. Which are you? You may not be Herod, but could you be the Jewish leaders?
- F. Let us seek the Lord and give Him the best we have.

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