

## The Surprising Gift

Lesson 05 of the series, "The Gift"

### I. Surprisingly, Jesus was born in Bethlehem even though his parents didn't live there.

"In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) And everyone went to his own town to register. So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child." Luke 2:1-5 (NIV)

a. Jesus' birth in Bethlehem fulfilled ancient prophecy.

"But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, are only a small village among all the people of Judah. Yet a ruler of Israel will come from you, one whose origins are from the distant past." Micah 5:2 (NLT)

"Out of the stump of David's family will grow a shoot— yes, a new Branch bearing fruit from the old root. And the Spirit of the LORD will rest on him..." Isaiah 11:1-2 (NLT)

*Life Application:* We can trust God to keep his promises.

"Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest."

Matthew 11:28 (NLT)

"Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you." Hebrews 13:5 (NIV)

"...I am going to prepare a place for you... When everything is ready, I will come and get you, so that you will always be with me where I am." John 14:2-3 (NLT)

b. God used a Roman census to get Joseph and Mary to Bethlehem.

"We can make our plans, but the LORD determines our steps... We may throw the dice, but the LORD determines how they fall." Proverbs 16:9,33 (NLT)

*Life Application:* We can trust that God is guiding our lives in ways that we don't understand.

"And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them." Romans 8:28 (NLT)

The LORD says, "I will guide you along the best pathway for your life. I will advise you and watch over you."  
Psalm 32:8 (NLT)

"Oh, how great are God's riches and wisdom and knowledge! How impossible it is for us to understand his decisions and his ways!" Romans 11:33 (NLT)

### II. Surprisingly, Jesus was born in a barn even though he is the King of Kings.

"While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn."

Luke 2:6-7 (NIV)

a. Jesus wasn't the kind of Messiah people expected.

"He came into the very world he created, but the world didn't recognize him. He came to his own people, and even they rejected him." John 1:10-11 (NLT)

Jesus answered, "My Kingdom is not an earthly kingdom. If it were, my followers would fight to keep me from being handed over to the Jewish leaders. But my Kingdom is not of this world." John 18:36 (NLT)

*Life Application:* We must be willing to accept the unexpected from God.

"You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be very great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his ancestor David. And he will reign over Israel forever; his Kingdom will never end!" Mary asked the angel, "But how can this happen? I am a virgin." The angel replied, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the baby to be born will be holy, and he will be called the Son of God... For nothing is impossible with God." Mary responded, "I am the Lord's servant. May everything you have said about me come true." Luke 1:31-38 (NLT)

- b. Jesus gave up his divine privileges in order to save a world of lost sinners.

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” John 3:16 (NKJV)

“Though he was God, he did not think of equality with God as something to cling to. Instead, he gave up his divine privileges; he took the humble position of a slave and was born as a human being. When he appeared in human form, he humbled himself in obedience to God and died a criminal’s death on a cross.”

Philippians 2:6-8 (NLT)

*Life Application:* We must accept God’s surprising gift.

“But to all who believed him and accepted him, he gave the right to become children of God. They are reborn—not with a physical birth resulting from human passion or plan, but a birth that comes from God.”

John 1:12-13 (NLT)

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