THE LIFE OF CHRIST
LESSON 8 “The Announcement And Birth Of Jesus”

Scripture: Matthew 1:18-25
Place: Nazareth
Date: 5 BC

I. The Announcement of Jesus Birth to Joseph. - Matthew 1:18-25

Matt 1:18-25
18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit.
19 Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly.
20 But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit.
21 "And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins."
22 So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying:
23 "Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel," which is translated, "God with us."
24 Then Joseph, being aroused from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took to him his wife,
25 and did not know her till she had brought forth her firstborn Son. And he called His name Jesus. (NKJ)

A. Joseph’s Conflict with Mary. - Matt. 1:18-19

1. vs. 18; The name “Jesus Christ” has different connotations depending on the positioning of “Jesus” and “Christ”. If the phrase “Jesus Christ” is used, the positioning of the words describe and refer to the humanity of Jesus as anointed of God. (The man Jesus, who has the anointing) If the phrase “Christ Jesus” is used, this will refer to Jesus in position of relationship to God as Deity or better yet, as the “Son of God”. It refers to the “Messiah, the Anointed One” and “His anointing”.
“Betrothed” (or “espoused”) = mnesteuo μνέστευο (mnace-tyoo’-o); from Strong’s #3423 “to give a souvenir” (engagement present), i.e. betroth: KJV—it means to “espouse”. It is a legal and binding agreement which could only be broken by a bill of divorce. There were to be no sexual relations during this time as according to Deuteronomy 22:24, a betrothed woman was considered a wife. During the betrothal time, sexual unfaithfulness was considered adultery, the penalty for which was being stoned to death. The betrothal lasted usually 12 months. This gave the proper amount of time for all legal contracts and documents to be completed and signed before the marriage is fulfilled.

2. vs. 19; “A public example” would be done to bring shame upon her before all in the town or village.

Deut 22:25-29
25 "But if a man finds a betrothed young woman in the countryside, and the man forces her and lies with her, then only the man who lay with her shall die.
26 "But you shall do nothing to the young woman; there is in the young woman no sin deserving of death, for just as when a man rises against his neighbor and kills him, even so is this matter.
27 "For he found her in the countryside, and the betrothed young woman cried out, but there was no one to save her.
28 "If a man finds a young woman who is a virgin, who is not betrothed, and he seizes her and lies with her, and they are found out,
29 "then the man who lay with her shall give to the young woman's father fifty shekels of silver, and she shall be his wife because he has humbled her; he shall not be permitted to divorce her all his days. (NKJ)

Joseph wasn’t the father of the child. He had not laid with his wife or caused her pregnancy, so he didn’t want to be blamed for it and have to marry under these circumstances. She had related the story of the angel to him but under these circumstances, she might be stoned to death as the people would think she was lying. History records that other women were put to death for
claiming to be with child by God and that they were carrying the promised messiah. Mary would argue that the child was God’s which would have been a conflict of their religious beliefs even though they knew the promise of the Messiah might come through a virgin.

Joseph planned to have a private divorce – the only choice that would have allowed him to maintain his personal righteousness according to the Law of Moses and yet save Mary from public disgrace and possible death.

**Isa 7:14**

14 "Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel. (NKJ)

🌟 Jewish historians wrote that other women had made this claim and were stoned to death. Joseph loved Mary and in his desire to protect her he decided to put her away privately through a written bill of divorce according to Moses.

**Deut 24:1-2**

1 "When a man takes a wife and marries her, and it happens that she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some uncleanness in her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce, puts it in her hand, and sends her out of his house,

2 "when she has departed from his house, and goes and becomes another man's wife, (NKJ)

🌟 Deuteronomy 24:1-4

This is that permission which the Pharisees erroneously referred to as a precept, (Mt. 19:7), when Moses commanded to give a writing of divorcement. It was not so; our Savior told them that he only suffered it because of the hardness of their hearts, lest, if they had not had liberty to divorce their wives, they should have ruled them with rigour (abuse), and it may be, have been the death of them (wives).

It is probable that divorces were in use before (they are taken for granted, Lev. 21:14), and Moses thought it needful here to give some rules concerning them.

A man might not divorce his wife unless he found some uncleanness in her, v. 1. It was not sufficient to say that he did not like her, or that he
liked another better, but he must show cause for his dislike; something that made her disagreeable and unpleasant to him, though it might not make her so to another. This uncleanness must mean something less than adultery; for that, she was to die; and less than the suspicion of it, for in that case he might give her the waters of jealousy; but it means either a light carriage, or a cross froward disposition, or some loathsome sore or disease; nay, some of the Jewish writers suppose that an offensive breath might be a just ground for divorce. Whatever is meant by it, doubtless it was something considerable; so that their modern doctors erred who allowed divorce for every cause, though ever so trivial, Mt. 19:3. ¹

**Matthew 19:3-12**
The Pharisees were desirous of drawing something from Jesus which they might represent as contrary to the Law of Moses. Cases about marriage have been numerous, and sometimes perplexed; made so, not by the law of God, but by the lusts and follies of men; and often people fix what they will do, before they ask for advice. Jesus replied by asking whether they had not read the account of the creation, and the first example of marriage; thus pointing out that every departure there from was wrong. That condition is best for us, and to be chosen and kept to accordingly, which is best for our souls, and tends most to prepare us for, and preserve us to, the kingdom of heaven. When the gospel is really embraced, it makes men kind relatives and faithful friends; it teaches them to bear the burdens, and to bear with the infirmities of those with whom they are connected, to consider their peace and happiness more than their own. As to ungodly persons, it is proper that they should be restrained by laws, from breaking the peace of society. And we learn that the married state should be entered upon with great seriousness and earnest prayer. ²

**B. Joseph and the Dream - Matt.1:20-23**

1. **vs. 20;** Because Joseph was in extreme mental conflict and anguish over Mary, his mind could not comprehend any more input concerning the matter. God chose a time when Joseph’s mind was relaxed and could receive the word of God without

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¹ From Matthew Henry's Commentary
² (From Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary, PC Study Bible formatted electronic database. Copyright © 2000, 2003, 2006 by Biblesoft, Inc. All rights reserved.)
interruption or conflict. In verse 19 Joseph is called a “just” man. The word “just” is the word “dikaios” δικαιος from Strong’s #1342 meaning; “upright, blameless, righteous, conforming to God’s laws and man’s”. In the NT it is used primarily of persons who correspond to the divine standard of right made possible through justification and sanctification. Joseph is struggling with moral and ethical issues besides heart issues. No wonder God spoke to him in his sleep! God spoke to Joseph through dreams, just as He did to his OT namesake (Gen. 37:1-11). The title son of David reminded Joseph of his royal lineage and prepared him for the announcement of Messiah’s birth.

2. vs. 21; “Jesus” is from the Greek word “iesous” ειςος from Strong’s #2424. It is a transliteration of the Heb. “Joshua or Yehoshua,” meaning “Jehovah is salvation” or “Yahweh saves”, i. e., "is the Savior," "a common name among the Jews, (e. g., Ex. 17:9; Luke 3:29 {RV}; Col. 4:11). The angel explained that Jesus' name revealed His purpose: He would rescue sinners from the punishment they deserve. This salvation would be experienced by His people, identified as those who follow Jesus.

It was given to the Son of God in Incarnation as His personal name, in obedience to the command of an angel to Joseph, the husband of His Mother, Mary, shortly before He was born, (Matt. 1:21).^4

a.) “save” is the Greek word “sozo” (sode'-zo); 4982 to save, i.e. deliver or protect (literally or figuratively): KJV-- heal, preserve, save (self), do well, be (make) whole.

“Jesus has come to heal us and make us whole in body, mind and spirit, to make us sound in mind, to deliver us from destruction from the wrath of God against sin and bondage and to preserve us with His everlasting life!”

^3 Taken from the HCSB Study Bible; note for vs. 21
^4 (from Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words, Copyright (C) 1985, Thomas Nelson Publishers)
3. vs. 23; This would be the fulfillment of Isaiah 7:14 which was made as Isaiah and his son were on their way to meet Ahaz.

**AHAZ**

It was to King Ahaz that Isaiah's evangelistic announcement of the promised Immanuel was made (Is. 7:10-17). The prophet Isaiah sent a message to the terrified Ahaz, but Ahaz would not turn to God and trust Him for deliverance. Instead, he plunged deeper into idolatry and self-destruction. Ahaz's conduct brought divine judgment to Judah in the form of military defeats. Edom revolted and took captives from Judah. The Philistines invaded Judah, capturing several cities. Rezin of Damascus seized control of Elath, Judah's port on the Gulf of Aqaba (2 Kin. 16:5-6).

At his death, Ahaz was buried without honor in Jerusalem. He was not deemed worthy of a burial in the royal tombs (2 Chr. 28:27). He is also called Achaz (Matt. 1:9).

II. The Birth Of Jesus - Luke 2:1-7

**Luke 2:1-7**

1 And it came to pass in those days that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered.
2 This census first took place while Quirinius was governing Syria.
3 So all went to be registered, everyone to his own city.
4 Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David,
5 to be registered with Mary, his betrothed wife, who was with child.
6 So it was, that while they were there, the days were completed for her to be delivered.
7 And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. (NKJ)


1. vs. 1; “Caesar” is a title of Roman Emperors and, in scripture, a symbol of secular authority. Caesar was derived from the family

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5 (from Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary, Copyright (C) 1986, Thomas Nelson Publishers)
name of Julius Caesar who lived from 101 to 44 BC. He was the uncle of Rome’s first Emperor, Augustus. The name Caesar was passed into the twentieth century in the titles of Russia’s “Czar” and Germany’s “Kaiser”. In Matthew we have the line drawn between who we are to respect as the governing authority in our Christian life.

Matt 22:15-22
15 Then the Pharisees went and plotted how they might entangle Him in His talk.
16 And they sent to Him their disciples with the Herodians, saying, “Teacher, we know that You are true, and teach the way of God in truth; nor do You care about anyone, for You do not regard the person of men.
17 “Tell us, therefore, what do You think? Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?”
18 But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, “Why do you test Me, you hypocrites?
19 “Show Me the tax money.” So they brought Him a denarius.
20 And He said to them, “Whose image and inscription is this?”
21 They said to Him, “Caesar's.” And He said to them, “Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's.”
22 When they had heard these words, they marveled, and left Him and went their way. (NKJ)

Earthly rulers have a claim to our taxes and in some areas our submission, but God alone deserves our total allegiance.

Augustus Caesar lived from 31 BC to 14 AD. He ruled when Christ was born. (Luke 2:1)
The name AUGUSTUS [aw GUS tus] means (consecrated, holy, sacred) - a title of honor bestowed upon Octavian, the first Roman emperor. Luke refers to him as "Caesar Augustus" (Luke 2:1). A nephew of Julius Caesar, Octavian was born in 63 BC.

In 43 BC, Octavian, Lepidus, and Mark Antony were named as the Second Triumvirate, the three rulers who shared the office of emperor. When Mark Antony was defeated by Octavian at the Battle of Actium
(in Greece; 31 B.C.), Octavian became the sole ruler of Rome and reigned as emperor for more than 44 years, until his death in A.D. 14. It was during his reign that Jesus was born (Luke 2:1).

Augustus reigned during a time of peace and extensive architectural achievements. After his death, the title "Augustus" was given to all Roman emperors. The "Augustus Caesar" mentioned in Acts 25:21-25, for instance, is not Octavian but Nero. 6


Tiberius is mentioned by name only once in the Bible. Luke 3:1 states that John the Baptist began his ministry “in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar,” or A.D. 28. Luke 3:1 is very important in helping to establish the chronology of the life and ministry of Jesus. Tiberius is also frequently referred to simply as “Caesar” (Luke 23:2; John 19:12, 15). The Pharisees and Herodians sought to entrap Jesus by asking him a question concerning tribute to Caesar: “Tell us...is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?” The "Caesar" in question is Tiberius, and the coin which they brought to Jesus bore Tiberius' image (Matt 22:15-22; Mark 12:13-17; Luke 20:20-26). Jesus began his ministry and was crucified during the reign of Tiberius.

Born in Rome on November 16 B.C., Tiberius became emperor in his 55th year and reigned for 23 years, until his death in March, A.D. 37, at the age of 78. Some historians believe that Caligula, the mad successor to Tiberius, hastened Tiberius' death. The city of TIBERIAS, on the Sea of Galilee, was built in the emperor's honor, about 20 B.C., by Herod Antipas, Roman governor of Galilee and Perea. 7

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6 (from Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary, Copyright © 1986, Thomas Nelson Publishers)
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Caligula reigned from A.D. 37 to A.D. 41. Caligula, whose real name GAIUS CAESAR (A.D. 12-41), Roman emperor (A.D. 37-41), born probably in Antium (now Anzio, Italy), the youngest son of the Roman general Germanicus Caesar and the grandnephew of the Roman emperor Tiberius. His early life in military camps earned him the nickname Caligula (Latin, “Little Boot”) because of his small military shoes.

Tiberius named his grandson, Tiberius Gemellus, and Caligula joint heirs to the throne, but the Roman Senate and people chose Caligula as sole emperor. Caligula adopted Gemellus as his son but later had him murdered. A clement ruler for the first six months, he became a vicious tyrant after a severe illness. Historians believe that he probably went insane. He squandered his fortune on public entertainment and building projects; banished or murdered most of his relatives; had people tortured and killed while he dined; made his favorite horse a consul; declared himself a god; and had temples erected and sacrifices offered to himself. In 41 AD, the officers of his guard formed a conspiracy against him, and he was assassinated.

Claudius ruled from 41 A.D. to 54 A.D. (Acts 11:28, 17:7; 18:2) He gave the order deporting all Jews from Rome (Acts 18:2), forcing Priscilla and Aquila to move to Corinth. Claudius [KLOW dih us] is the fourth emperor of the Roman Empire (A.D. 41-54), known as Tiberius Claudius Nero Germanicus, who suppressed the worship activities of the Jewish people in the city of Rome.

Early in his reign as emperor, Claudius was favorable toward the Jews and their practice of religion. But he later forbade their assembly and eventually “commanded all the Jews to depart from Rome” (Acts 18:2). This edict may have extended also to Christians, who were considered a sect of the Jews at that time.

Aquila and Priscilla, who became friends of the apostle Paul, were refugees from Italy because of this order of the Roman emperor (Acts 18:1-2). The Book of Acts also refers to a great famine which "happened in the days of Claudius Caesar" (Acts 11:28).  

Nero ruled from 54 to 68 AD. (Acts 25:11; Phil.4:22) He was the first Emperor to distinguish between Christians and Jews. It is said that he...
blamed Christians for the disastrous fire in Rome in 64 AD and launched the first official Roman persecution against the church. Tradition holds that Peter and Paul were executed in Rome near the end of Nero’s reign.

**NERO** [NEE row] was the fifth emperor of Rome (he ruled from AD 54-68), and known for his persecution of Christians. Nero began his reign with the promise that he would return to the policies of the great emperor Augustus. For several years he succeeded, thanks mainly to the guidance of Burrus and Seneca, two of his advisors. Under his reign Rome extended its borders, solidified certain territories of the Roman Empire, and incorporated some good qualities of Greek culture.

Nero had considerable artistic interests. He wanted to change the image of Rome from a violent society to one that was more humane. The Romans, however, despised his love for the Greek way of life. His extravagance, coupled with poor management, brought on heavy taxation, depreciation of the Roman currency, and the confiscation of large land holdings by the state. Nero's personal life was filled with tragedy. His mother, Agrippina, and Octavia, his legal wife, were murdered. Many of his advisors and officials were either killed or exiled. Tension became so great that by AD 68, after several attempted conspiracies, the Praetorian Guard revolted and Nero was forced to flee Rome. In that same year, at the age of 30, he took his own life.

Many of Nero's cruelties are linked to the time of the great fire in Rome (AD 64). Nero was accused of setting fire to the city in order to divert attention from himself, but this has never been proven with certainty. The Christians, however, were made the scapegoats for this arson. Many of them, possibly even Peter and Paul, lost their lives.

Nero became a kind of apocalyptic figure, a person associated with the end times. Rumors persisted that he was alive and would some day return and reign again. Some interpreters of Scripture believe that Nero is the beast from the sea whose "deadly wound was healed" (Rev 13:3, 12). Some Bible students have found in the mysterious number 666 (Rev 13:18), when decoded, the name Nero Caesar. Possible

Vespasian ruled from 69 to 79 AD. During the middle of a war with Judean rebels, his troops proclaimed him the new Emperor in 69 AD. He left his son Titus to destroy Jerusalem as Jesus prophesied in Matthew 24 which crushed the Jewish rebellion.

His full name is TITUS FLAVIUS SABINUS VESPASIANUS (AD 9-79), Roman emperor from AD 69-AD 79), born in Sabine Reate, near Rome. During the middle of the 1st century AD he commanded a legion in Germany and in Britain conquered the Isle of Wight. In AD 66 he campaigned against the Jews in Judea. Upon being chosen emperor in AD 69, he left the war in Judea to his son Titus and returned to Rome, where he restored the government and the public finances. After the capture and destruction of Jerusalem by Titus in AD 70, the world was at peace for nine years. Other important events of Vespasian's reign include the suppression of a formidable revolt (AD 69-AD 70) by the Germanic Batavians under their leader Julius Civilis; conquests in Britain by the Roman general Gnaeus Julius Agricola; the development of a more extensive educational system; and the construction of the Colosseum in Rome. His son Titus succeeded him as emperor.

Titus ruled from 79 to 81 AD; succeeded his father as Emperor and was followed by his brother Domitian who ruled from 81 to 96 AD. Domitian launched the second major Roman persecution of Christians and was responsible for exiling the Apostle John to the island of Patmos.

His full name is Titus Flavius Sabinus Vespasianus (AD 39-AD 81), a Roman emperor (AD 79-AD 81), who destroyed the Temple of Jerusalem and completed the Colosseum. He was born December 30, AD 39, in Rome, the elder son of Titus Flavius Sabinus Vespasianus, later Emperor Vespasian. Titus served as a military tribune in Germany and Britain and later fought under his father's command during the Jewish rebellion in Palestine. After Vespasian became emperor in AD 69, Titus was left in command of the Roman army in Palestine, and he brought the war to a close with the capture of Jerusalem and the destruction of...
the Temple in AD 70. To commemorate this victory in the Jewish war, his brother, Emperor Domitian, later erected the Arch of Titus.

On the death of his father in AD 79, Titus became emperor, and by his generous gifts and lavish entertainments he soon made himself popular with the Roman people. He established a lenient government, discontinuing all prosecutions for \textit{laesa majestas}, or treason by disrespect, and decreeing heavy punishments against informers. During his short reign Titus completed and dedicated (AD 80) the Flavian amphitheater, later called the Colosseum, begun by his father and built near the extensive baths that bear his name. The eruption of the volcano Mount Vesuvius occurred during his reign in AD 79, and the following year Rome was afflicted by a great fire and a plague. His beneficence to the sufferers of these disasters made Titus the idol of the populace. He died on September 13, AD 81.

\textbf{B. Joseph and Mary Travel to Bethlehem. - Luke 2:4-7}

1. vs. 4; \textit{“BETHLEHEM”} (beth’le-hem; “house of bread”). A town in Palestine, near which Jacob buried Rachel, then known as Ephrath (Gen. 35:19; 48:7). It is also called Bethlehem Ephrathah (Mic. 5:2), Bethlehem in Judah (1 Sam. 17:12), Bethlehem of Judea (Matt. 2:1), and the city of David (Luke 2:4; cf. John 7:42). The old name, Ephrath, or Ephrathah, lingered long after Israel occupied Palestine (Ruth 1:2; 4:11; 1 Sam. 17:12; Ps. 132:6; Mic. 5:2; etc.). The city overlooks the main highway to Hebron and Egypt. The site of the city on a commanding limestone ridge of the Judean highland has never been disputed.

After the conquest Bethlehem fell to Judah (Judg. 17:7; 1 Sam. 17:12; Ruth 1:1-2); Ibzan of Bethlehem judged Israel after Jephthah (Judg. 12:8); Elimelech, the husband of Naomi and father-in-law of Ruth, was a Bethlehemite (Ruth 1:1-2), as was Boaz (2:1, 4).

David was born in Bethlehem, and here he was anointed as future king by Samuel (1 Sam. 16:1); here was the well from which David's three heroes brought him water (2 Sam. 23:15-16), thought to be the same three wells still existing in the N side of the village; it was the birthplace of the Messiah.
In Matt. 2:1, its male children under two years of age were slain by order of Herod (2:16, cf. Jer. 31:15; Mic. 5:2). This Bethlehem is about five miles S of Jerusalem, and elevated 2,460 feet above sea level. In Bethlehem stands the Basilica of the Nativity, marking the traditional site of the birth of Christ. 10

2. vs.7; The baby Jesus was laid in a feeding trough, which is fitting since He is the Bread of Life and we are sustained by every Word that proceeds from the mouth of God which is fulfilled in Jesus Himself!

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<td>Gen. 3:15</td>
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<td>The Messiah would be a descendant of Abraham.</td>
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<td>The Messiah would be a descendant of Jacob.</td>
<td>Num. 24:17</td>
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<td>The Messiah would be an heir to the throne of David.</td>
<td>Is. 9:7</td>
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<td>The Messiah would be anointed and eternal.</td>
<td>Ps. 45:6, 7; 102:25-27</td>
<td>Heb. 1:8-12</td>
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<td>The Messiah would be born in Bethlehem.</td>
<td>Mic. 5:2</td>
<td>Luke 2:4, 5, 7</td>
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<td>The Messiah would be born of a virgin.</td>
<td>Is. 7:14</td>
<td>Luke 1:26, 27, 30, 31</td>
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10 (from New Unger's Bible Dictionary, originally published by Moody Press of Chicago, Illinois. Copyright (C) 1988.)
The Messiah’s birth would trigger a slaughter of children.  

The Messiah would also come from Egypt.  

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