

Christmas

Celebrate Jesus at Christmas!

**Background
Study Verses:**
Luke 1:26-56; 2:1-7

Lesson Material:
Luke 1:30-35,38,46-49;
2:4-7

Bible Truth
We can celebrate the
birth of Jesus because
He is God's son, He
was born of a **virgin**,
and He was born in a
very humble place.



The J-O-Y Deaf church planned a Christmas drama. The drama committee chose people to be Mary, Joseph, angels, wise men, and shepherds. The committee asked Laura to be Mary and Sam to be the angel Gabriel.

Each one learned about the personality and life of the people they played. The “wise men” learned about wise men in the time of Jesus. The “shepherds” learned what the Bible said about shepherds.

They were all excited to do their part. Everyone was happy except Laura and Samuel. They both said they were not good enough to play holy people.

The pastor explained Gabriel was an angel. He was a wonderful being, but He was not God. Only God is holy. He explained to Laura how Mary was a wonderful young girl. She was not holy. Both Laura and Samuel understood. They were happy to be Mary and Gabriel.

What These Verses Tell Us

1. **Declare Who Jesus Is (Luke 1:30-33)** - The angel Gabriel told Mary she would give birth to God's Son, the **Messiah**.
2. **Appreciate How Jesus Came (1:34-35, 38)** - Mary was a **virgin**. The angel explained she would become pregnant by the work of the Holy Spirit.
3. **Proclaim God's Greatness (1:46-49)** - Mary praised God for His greatness. God was pleased with her.
4. **Welcome Jesus (2:4-7)** - Mary traveled with Joseph to Bethlehem. She gave birth to Jesus in a poor place.

STUDY QUESTIONS

Find the verses in today's lesson.

1. Which verse tells us an angel spoke to Mary? Luke 1: ____.
2. Which verse tells us Jesus is the Son of the Most High God? Luke 1: ____.
3. Which verse tells us His kingdom will never end? Luke 1: ____.
4. Which verse tells us His name is holy? Luke 1: ____.
5. Which verse tells us Mary praised the Lord? Luke 1: ____.

Today's Lesson

This week we will take a break from our study of John's Gospel to look at the Christmas story in the Gospel of Luke.

Mary was the mother of Jesus. The Old Testament **prophets** said Jesus would be born into the family of David. The first chapter in Matthew explains Jesus was from the family of David. It lists all the generations from Abraham to Mary and Joseph. Joseph was from the family of David. He was Jesus' stepfather.

When Mary was about fifteen years old, she had a visit from an angel, Gabriel. He told her God was with her and God blessed her. Mary was startled (surprised) and wondered what he was talking about.

Read Luke 1:26-29 for the background for this lesson. You can also read about Gabriel in Daniel 8:16-17 and 9:20-23.

1. Declare Who Jesus Is (Luke 1:30-33)

30. The angel said to her, "Don't be afraid, Mary; God has shown you his grace.
31. Listen! You will become pregnant and give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus.

32. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of King David, his **ancestor**.
33. He will rule over the people of Jacob forever, and his kingdom will never end.”

Verse 30. Gabriel spoke gently to Mary. He calmed her fears. He explained the reason she should not be afraid. He told her God had shown her grace. Grace is God’s special love. In this verse it means God was giving her a gift. She did not earn this gift. God gave His gift to a humble girl.

Verse 31. Many young Jewish women prayed daily. They prayed they would become the mother of the Messiah. The angel told Mary God chose her to give birth to a son. He told her to name Him Jesus. The name *Jesus* means “the Lord is salvation.”

Everything about Jesus’ birth happened exactly as it was told by prophets in the Old Testament (Micah 5:2).

Verses 32-33. These verses give us four truths about Jesus. First, “Jesus will be great.” His greatness will be seen in Him as a man. Jesus showed his greatness through His teaching and miracles. His great work was to be the Savior.

The second great truth is, “Jesus will be called the son of the Most High.”

The name *God Most High* goes back in history as far as Abraham (Genesis 14:19-20). Since Jesus is the Son of the Most High God, He is also God. He is God, the Son. He did not have a human father. His father is the Most High God. Joseph was His stepfather.

The third great truth is, “The Lord God will give Jesus the throne of His ancestor, King David.” The Old Testament has many verses that explain how David would be the ancestor of the Messiah (2 Samuel 7:8-16, Jeremiah 23:5). It was important for the Gospel writers to explain Jesus was from the family line of David. Matthew traced Jesus’ family from Abraham through David to Mary, His mother (Matthew 1:1-17).

The fourth great truth is, “Jesus will rule over the people of Jacob forever.” His kingdom will never end. He will reign over all people. When Jesus returns to earth, He will set up His kingdom. That kingdom will never end.

We can celebrate Christmas because we know who Jesus is. We can declare His truth through our words, actions, and songs.

WE CAN CELEBRATE
CHRISTMAS BECAUSE WE
KNOW WHO JESUS IS.

2. Appreciate How Jesus Came (1:34-35,38)

34. Mary said to the angel, “How will this happen since I am a virgin?”
35. The angel said to Mary, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and

the power of the Most High will cover you. For this reason the baby will be holy and will be called the Son of God.

38. Mary said, “I am the servant of the Lord. Let this happen to me as you say!” Then the angel went away.

The word *appreciate* in the title of this section means “to be thankful for something.” In these verses we are taught to be thankful for Jesus’ birth.

Verse 34. Mary answered the angel. She asked how all this could happen. She was still a virgin—a girl who had not had a sexual act with any man. She was engaged to Joseph, but she never slept with him. She did not seem to doubt the angel.

Verse 35. Gabriel explained she would become pregnant by **supernatural** power. He told her the Holy Spirit would cause her to become pregnant. This statement is a direct **declaration** Jesus would be holy. He was God’s Son. A basic belief about Jesus is He was born from a virgin. He was truly God in a human body.

Verse 38. Mary knew people would not believe her. She would be mocked and called evil names. She knew Joseph might break their engagement. It did not matter to her. She replied to the angel she was God’s servant. She wanted to do whatever God planned. She accepted the statement of the angel with joy.

We can celebrate Christmas because we know Jesus was born of a virgin. It was a **miracle**.

3. Proclaim God’s Greatness (1:46-49)

46. Then Mary said, “My soul praises the Lord;

47. my heart rejoices in God my Savior,

48. because he has shown his concern for his humble servant girl.

From now on, all people will say that I am blessed,

49. because the Powerful One has done great things for me. His name is holy.”

We need to understand who Mary was. We learned earlier in the lesson she was a virgin. She was living in Nazareth, a city in Galilee. God chose her to be the mother of the **Messiah**, Jesus. She was a good young woman. God was pleased with her. She worshiped God the Father. The Bible tells us these things.

The Bible does not say Mary is holy. It does not say Mary is equal with God. The Bible does not say we should pray to Mary. It does not say Mary was without sin all the rest of her life. The Bible does not say Mary was born from a virgin herself. In the next four verses we will learn something about who Mary was spiritually.

In verses 39-45, we read about Mary's trip to see her relative, Elizabeth. Elizabeth told Mary she was blessed because she believed the Lord's promises. God promised Mary she would be the mother of the Messiah. She believed Him.

Verse 46. Mary's reply to Elizabeth is beautiful. Most Bible students believe her words are a hymn used in the New Testament churches. She sang about the Lord God. She sang to the Lord. The very first words she sang were praises to the Lord. She was not thinking about herself. She was humble and praised God for His blessings.

Verses 47-48. Mary said her heart rejoiced in God, her Savior. Why is this important to understand? She said God was her Savior. Only human people need to have a Savior. This verse tells us Mary was not holy. Only God is holy. Since she is not holy, people should not pray to her.

Mary said she rejoiced because God showed His love for her. She called herself His humble servant girl. She did not think she was holy.

Notice the last part of this verse. Mary said from now on people will say she was blessed. The verse does not say she will bless anyone.

MARY PRAISED GOD.
SHE CALLED HIM THE
POWERFUL ONE.

Verse 49. Mary continued her song of praise. Mary praised God. She called Him the powerful One. She told Elizabeth He did great things for her.

Finally, she proclaimed God's name is holy. Only God is holy.

Read verses 50-55 to see the rest of Mary's song. It is about the power of God.

We can celebrate Christmas because it shows God's grace and the holiness and greatness of Jesus.

4. Welcome Jesus (2:4-7)

4. So Joseph left Nazareth, a town in Galilee, and went to the town of Bethlehem in Judea, known as the town of David. Joseph went there because he was from the family of David.
5. Joseph registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was now pregnant.
6. While they were in Bethlehem, the time came for Mary to have the baby,
7. and she gave birth to her first son. Because there were no rooms left in the inn, she wrapped the baby with pieces of cloth and laid him in a feeding trough.

In verses 1-3, Luke explained how the Roman Emperor Augustus Caesar made an order for everyone to register. Today we call that a census. Caesar decided to count all the people in his Roman territory.

Verse 4. The head of each family had to go to the city of their ancestors to register. Joseph's ancestors were from Judea. The town of Bethlehem was in Judea. It was about seven miles south of Jerusalem. Nazareth was about 100 miles north of Jerusalem in Galilee. The trip for Joseph and Mary was about 90 miles. The trip took several days. It was a hard trip for Mary because Jesus' birth was very near. They walked or rode on donkeys.

Verse 5. Joseph took Mary to the city of Bethlehem. It was also the home of Mary's **ancestor**, King David. Luke said Joseph took Mary because he was engaged to her. Engagement in New Testament times was different from engagement today. They were promised to each other, and this could not be broken without a divorce. Later they would have a big wedding ceremony.

Joseph was a good man. He did not want to shame Mary. An angel also appeared to Joseph (Matthew 1:18-25).

Even though Mary was pregnant, she was still a **virgin**. She never slept with a man until after Jesus was born (Matthew 1:25).

She was not a virgin all of her life. The Bible says Mary had other children after Jesus was born. You can read about them in Mark 3:31, John 7:5, and Matthew 13:56.

Verse 6. While Mary and Joseph were in Bethlehem, Jesus was born. We do not know how long they were there. The trip was late in Mary's pregnancy. They arrived in Bethlehem in time to fulfill the prophesy about where Jesus

WHEN MARY LEARNED
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would be born (Micah 5:2).

Verse 7. Many people were in Bethlehem. Why? People came to register for the census. The town was small. There were not many places for them to stay. All the inns (hotels) were full. The only place Joseph could find was a stable for animals. This may have been a cave. Mary laid Jesus in a manger. The manger is a box where people put food for farm animals. It was usually full of hay. Mary made a soft bed for Jesus in the hay.

When Jesus was born, Mary wrapped Him in strips of cloth or "swaddling clothes." This shows us Jesus was born in a very humble place.

In this story of Jesus' birth, we see two different events. When Mary learned she would become the mother of the Messiah, she welcomed Him gladly. She was gentle and loving from the day of the announcement of His birth.

When it was time for Jesus to be born, no one had room for Him. The whole town did not care about this young woman who was giving birth to the Lord Jesus. They had no room for Him in their lives.

We can celebrate Christmas because we know Jesus is God's Son, the Messiah, Savior, and Lord.

What About You?

The story of Jesus' birth causes us to take time to think about how we feel about His birth.

Do you believe He was born from a virgin?

Do you praise God for His great gift to us?

Do you welcome Him into your life the same way Mary did? Or, do you not have enough room for Him in your life?

Applying the Lesson

Mary sang a song of praise. She praised God for His greatness. She praised Him for His loving kindness. She praised Him for His goodness. She praised Him because His name is holy.

Write a song of praise. Choose words to explain why you praise God.

1. For His greatness _____

2. For His loving kindness _____

3. For His goodness _____

4. His name is holy _____

A verse to remember: "He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of King David, his ancestor. He will rule over the people of Jacob forever, and his kingdom will never end" (Luke 1:32-33).

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Background Study Outline

- 1. Special Announcement (Luke 1:26-33)**
- 2. Submissive Servant (1:34-38)**
- 3. Spirit-Filled Proclamation (1:39-45)**
- 4. Song of Praise (1:46-56)**
- 5. Savior's Arrival (2:1-7)**

Lesson Material

- 1. Declare Who Jesus Is (Luke 1:30-33)**
- 2. Appreciate How Jesus Came (1:34-35,38)**
- 3. Proclaim God's Greatness (1:46-49)**
- 4. Welcome Jesus (2:4-7)**

Bible Truth

We can celebrate the birth of Jesus because He is God's son, He was born of a virgin, and He was born in a humble place.

Dig Deeper!

Bethlehem (Luke 2:4)

The name *Bethlehem* means "house of bread." It was a city in the hill country of Judah, about six miles southwest of Jerusalem. It was called the city of David because this is where David was born and where Samuel anointed David as king (1 Samuel 16:1-13). The little town was important to the people of Israel from their earliest days, long before Jesus was born. Caleb's son, Salma, settled in Bethlehem after the conquest of the Promised Land (1 Chronicles 2:50-51). He is considered the founder of the city. One of the judges was from Bethlehem (Judges 12:8-10). The valley to the east of Bethlehem is the setting for the story of Ruth (Ruth 1:1-22). But Bethlehem will always be remembered most as the birthplace of the Savior (Matthew 2:1-6). Joseph took Mary to Bethlehem for the registration required by the king because he and Mary were both from the family of David. Micah, the prophet, said the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2). The wise men visited Jesus in Bethlehem. When Herod saw he was deceived by the wise men, he killed all the children from two years old and under in Bethlehem (Matthew 2:1-16).

STEP ONE – OVERVIEW

- Begin the lesson by asking class members to tell how their family plans to celebrate Christmas this year. Encourage them to find some way to tell the Christmas story and lead the family to celebrate His birth.
- **Make the lesson come alive!** Today's story begins in Nazareth and ends in Bethlehem. Use a map to show these two towns. The trip from Nazareth to Bethlehem was almost 100 miles. The women in your class can sympathize with Mary because she traveled that far, walking and riding on a donkey, when she was almost ready to give birth to her son! The trip may have taken a week or more. Nazareth had a population of about five hundred. Bethlehem may have been much smaller.

STEP TWO – DECLARE WHO JESUS IS (LUKE 1:30-33)

- Ask someone to review Luke 1:1-29 for the background of this lesson. This identifies the angel as Gabriel. He seems to be one of the special messengers of God. He is the same angel who appeared to the parents of John the Baptist (Luke 1:5-20).
- Encourage discussion of how difficult it must have been for Mary to accept this message from an angel. Emphasize her faith in God.
- Ask two persons ahead of time to be prepared to sign a brief drama of the conversation between Gabriel and Mary in verses 26-33. A third person can be the narrator. *Emphasize the angel's message of who Jesus is.

STEP THREE – APPRECIATE HOW JESUS CAME (1:34-35,38)

- Have your drama team continue with the dialogue in verses 34-38.
- Emphasize the angel's message about how Jesus will come.

STEP FOUR – PROCLAIM GOD'S GREATNESS (1:46-49)

- Ask someone to sign Mary's song (Luke 1:46-55)
- Emphasize the words Mary used to tell of God's greatness.

STEP FIVE - WELCOME JESUS (2:4-7)

- Review verses 1-3 for the background to this section.
- Ask someone ahead of time to discuss Bethlehem from "Dig Deeper."

STEP SIX - CONCLUSION

- **So What?** Ask class members what they have learned. Do they have a new understanding of why we celebrate the birth of Jesus and the facts about Mary?