

Joy to the World: The True Meaning of Christmas
Lesson 4 “Why Was Jesus Born In A Manger?”

I. Introduction - We are concluding a series about *The True Meaning of Christmas* today. My goal has been to bring out hidden insights from the Christmas story that will help us know God better, see the world more clearly, and appreciate this story in a greater way.

A. One of the interesting things you’ll find is that many of the same issues that surrounded the birth of Christ still affect us today.

1. Week 1 - We talked about “The Incarnation” and why God had to send Jesus to the earth to save us. We looked at *Isaiah 59:16* that says *God looked for an intercessor, but couldn’t find one, so He brought salvation through His own arm!*
2. Week 2 - We talked about what was going on “Behind the Scenes of Christmas Story.” *Revelation 12* tells us war broke out in heaven when Jesus was born. Satan tried to kill him through King Herod, but God prevailed by speaking to Joseph and Joseph took Jesus and Mary to Egypt to hide out for 3 1/2 years.
3. Week 3 - We talked about how to be led by God. It was the mixture of the word and spirit that led the magi to Jesus. Today, must put the word first and then allow the spirit to illuminate it to be brought into God’s plan for our lives.\\B.

B. Today we are going to close out the series by answering the question, “Why Was Jesus Born In A Manger?” In a little village south of Jerusalem called Bethlehem? That seems like the most random and obscure place for the king of kings to be born.

1. What we’ll find is God hides the most profound answers in the most random and obscure places. He doesn’t hide these things from us. He hides them for us **In Christ and in the word.**
2. We’ll also find Jesus’s birthplace was prophetic of His destiny as the redemptive lamb of God that would take away the sins of the whole world.

II. Why Was Jesus Born in a Manger

A. Why Bethlehem? It was a fishing village of 3,000 people. Who finds a king there?

1. Interesting facts about Bethlehem.
 - a. A previous great Jewish king was born there - David. Bethlehem was known as the City of David and Jesus was known as the son of David.
 - b. Bethlehem means “House of Bread” in Hebrew. Jesus was the bread of life that came to Bethlehem to be housed in a flesh and blood body.
 - c. Bethlehem is first mentioned in **Genesis 35:19-21** as the place Rachel was buried. Rachel means ewe/lamb. Jacob pitched his tent beyond the Tower Eder (Hebrew translation “Tower of the flock/Shepherd’s Tower.”)

- d. According to Jewish tradition the passover lamb that would be offered in the temple was required to be born in hills of Judea near Bethlehem. The lambs had to be unblemished lambs who were born in the Migdal Eder as many believe Jesus was. After they were born they were then wrapped in swaddling clothes so they wouldn't break their legs (none of Jesus's bones were broken on the cross (**John 19:36**)). If they met all these requirements they would be certified as qualified to be a passover lamb.
- e. **Micah 5:2** prophesied the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem in 800 b.c. The problem for Jesus fulfilling that prophecy was his parents lived in Nazareth over 700 miles away.
- f. How did God get them there? He used a bad governmental tax plan. **Luke 2:1-5**. The governmental plan forced Joseph and Mary to travel back to Bethlehem where Joseph and Mary were from.

B. Why a Manger?

1. **Revelation 13:8** and **John 1:29** - Jesus was marked out as the lamb who would remove the whole world's sin from the beginning of time.
2. **Luke 2:6-7**
 - a. No room in the inn. In the Greek the idea is a guest room in someone's house, not a hotel.
 - b. Jesus was born in a manger **phátne** (to eat); a crib (for fodder):— manger, stall. Jesus was born like a baby lamb. Many theologians believe he was born in a stall in the Migdal Eder. Mary then wrapped him in swaddling cloths, just like a baby lamb.
3. **Luke 2:8-18 The Shepherds**
 - a. God sends an angel to appear to the shepherds (different than the magi). This angel announces the birth of Messiah.
 - b. These shepherds lived in the hills of Judea near Bethlehem and were the ones responsible for raising passover lambs. They tell the shepherds the most curious thing. This Messiah who has been born will be born in a manger and wrapped in swaddling cloths; just like passover lambs. **God know how to communicate in language we understand ex: magi were political leaders and God spoke to them about a king.**
 - c. The message - Peace, goodwill toward men. The time of law and wrath is coming to a close. Messiah is bringing in a dispensation of grace.
 - d. The shepherds came to Bethlehem to see what God had revealed. When they arrived they saw the Babe in a manger wrapped in swaddling cloths - the unblemished passover lamb who was the savior of the whole world.
 - e. **Verses 17-18** God is providential in who He chooses. Why did He choose these shepherds? First, they would have understood the message about the passover lamb, but second they would have been the ideal candidates to share this same message with the rest of the world.

III. Conclusion

A. God knows how to speak to you in language you understand. If you are struggling to hear God right now or you have a problem that is a mystery to solve get into the word. ***Colossians*** tells us our lives are hidden in Christ. Find out what is in the word and what God has promised you in Christ. God will speak to you in language you understand.

As you spend time in the word, your mind and heart will get sensitive to the language of the spirit and God will reveal His redemptive plan to you about the situation you are in.

B. Transition to Craig