

Peace be with you, listening friends. We greet you in the name of God, the Lord of peace, who wants everyone to understand and submit to the way of righteousness that He has established, and have true peace with Him forever. We are happy to be able to return today to present your program *The Way of Righteousness*.

In the last lesson, in our study in the holy Gospel or *Injil*, we saw how God sent His angel, Gabriel, to the land of Palestine, to the city of Nazareth, to a virgin named Mary. The angel appeared to that virgin to tell her that she would become pregnant by the power and Spirit of God, and that she would give birth to a son and name Him **Jesus**. Jesus means **the Lord saves**. Thus, we saw that the time had arrived for which God's people had been long awaiting! **The Redeemer**, whom God had promised on the day that Adam and Eve sinned, **was in the womb of a virgin**, about to come into the world!

Our program today is called "**The Messiah is Born!**" Before we return to the Gospel to see how Jesus the Messiah was born, let us describe **the time** in which He was born. The emperor of Rome, Caesar Augustus, was ruling over many countries including the land of the Jews. However, the Roman empire would not hinder God's plan to send the Redeemer into the world. In fact, God planned to use the Romans to fulfill the words of the prophets.

Can you remember the words of the prophet Micah who came seven hundred years before the Messiah? Micah announced that the Messiah would be born in **Bethlehem**, the hometown of King David. However, Mary, who would give birth to Jesus, did not live in Bethlehem, but in **Nazareth**, a city found

approximately 150 kilometers north of Bethlehem. How then would the Messiah be born in Bethlehem?

Ah, friends, as you know, nothing is too hard for the Lord God! He is God, and has the final word concerning everything that takes place on earth. He knows everything that is going to happen. Today we will read that, as the time for Mary to give birth drew near, the great emperor of Rome issued a decree, saying: "Let every man and woman go to the city of his ancestors to register there and pay a tax!" This meant that both Mary and Joseph would have to go to Bethlehem, to the city of King David, because they belonged to the descendants of David. Now let us return to the Gospel of Luke, chapter two, and hear how Jesus the Messiah was born in **Bethlehem**, exactly as God had promised long before.

The Scripture says:

*In those days **Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world... 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. 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.***

We must pause here. Did you notice the circumstances in which the Messiah was born? The Messiah was born as a **peasant**, in very lowly circumstances. He was born in an animal stable, because the inn in Bethlehem was full. The One who was to be the Savior and the Judge of the world was born in a smelly stable! Perhaps some are thinking: "This is incredible! If Jesus is the Savior of the world and the Lord of glory who will judge all the children of Adam, why was He not born in a palace, with great glory, so that everyone might know that He is the King of kings and the Lord of lords?"

Friends, we must remember: **God's thoughts are different from man's thoughts**, and the glory of God is different from the glory of the world. Surely, the birth of Jesus was accompanied by great glory, but most of the children of Adam did not recognize it, because **God's glory** and **the world's glory** are so different.

To illustrate, perhaps you have seen rich people who live in large and beautiful houses, wearing expensive clothes and living a life of luxury with servants attending to their every desire. That is the glory of the world.

However, **God's glory** is different from the **world's glory**. That is why the Messiah, who came from the presence of God, was not born in comfort and luxury. He was not like many rich people who do not understand the misery and hardships of the poor. No. The One whom God sent to rescue the children of Adam from the power of Satan and sin was born in lowly circumstances, even in a stable! Thus, no one can say that the Messiah came only to save the wealthy, or that He doesn't understand the feelings of the poor. God wants everyone to know that the Redeemer whom He sent came

into the world to deliver **everyone** who believes in Him-old and young, men and women, rich and poor, free and slave. Thus the Scripture says: *"For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich!"* The Messiah is the only one who ever **chose** to be born. And He chose to be born as a poor man! Think about this: Perhaps another reason Jesus was born in a stable was to remind us that He is the "Lamb of God." Lambs are born in stables. We'll learn more about Jesus' title as the "Lamb of God" in lesson 64.

Now let us continue the story of the birth of the Messiah and read the most wonderful part. On the night that Jesus was born in a stable, God sent His angels to some shepherds who were watching their flocks in the fields surrounding Bethlehem. Listen to how God made known to them the good news about the birth of the Messiah.

The Scripture says:

*And there were shepherds living out in the fields near by, keeping watch over their flocks at night. **An angel of the Lord** appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. **Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ, the Lord!** This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, "**Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests!**"*

*When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about." So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them... **The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.***

To whom did God first make known the good news about the birth of the Messiah? Did He give the good news to the Roman emperor, the wealthy, or the religious leaders? No. God first announced the news of the Messiah's birth to peasants; to humble shepherds who were waiting for Him to come! How thrilled the shepherds were to see the baby Jesus! What an awesome privilege! **They had seen the One about whom all the prophets wrote: the Messiah, the Savior of the world, the Eternal Word of God wrapped in the tiny body of a baby!**

Continuing in the Gospel, let us see what happened about one year after Jesus was born. We have just heard how God announced the birth of Jesus to some **peasants** by His **angels** which appeared in the sky. Now we are going to hear how God announced the Messiah's birth to some **Magi** or *wise men* by a large and beautiful **star** which appeared in the sky. Listen to what is written in the Gospel of Matthew, chapter two.

The Scripture says:

*After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, "Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? **We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him.**" When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. When he had called together all the people's chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Christ was to be born. "In Bethlehem in Judea," they replied, "**for this is what the prophet has written:** 'But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you will come a ruler who will be the shepherd of my people Israel.'" Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. He sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and make a careful search for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him." (However, in his heart, King Herod planned to kill the child, for he did not want anyone to be king, except himself!)*

After [the Magi] had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen in the east went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold and of incense and of myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.

That, in brief, is the story of the birth of the Messiah. What can we say about all we have heard today? One thing we can say with certainty is that the birth

of Jesus, the Messiah, is **unequaled** in the history of the world! Among all the prophets and kings and peoples of the world, never has another been born as Jesus was born!

We have seen today that the Messiah was born of a **virgin, by the power of God, exactly as God's prophets had prophesied**. We have heard that Jesus was born in the town of **Bethlehem**, just as the prophet Micah had announced some seven hundred years earlier. We also saw how **God sent His angel and a glorious radiance from heaven** to some shepherds to make the good news known to them, saying: *"I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ, the Lord!"* Then we saw how a **multitude of angels appeared with the first angel, praising God** and saying, *"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests!"* We also saw that **God placed a great star in the sky** to announce to some wise men who lived in a far away land, that the Messiah, the King of kings, the Savior of sinners had been born!

Friends, what then shall we say about all of this? We can say this: No man has ever been born like this Man. Jesus' birth is unique. Concerning His birth, **Jesus is incomparable!** We cannot compare Him with others. Jesus was more than a prophet. **He is the One of whom all the prophets spoke. He is the Messiah from heaven!**

Friends, if Jesus were simply a prophet among many prophets, then **why** did all of God's prophets announce His coming before He was born? **Why** did the angels come down from heaven to celebrate His birth? If Jesus were merely a

prophet among many prophets, then **why** did God place a great star in the sky to proclaim His birth? And **for what reason** was He born of a virgin? **May you carefully consider these important questions.**

Thank you for listening. In the next lesson, God willing, we will see how Jesus the Messiah began His ministry upon earth....

God bless you as you reflect upon the angel's message to the shepherds:

"Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people! Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord!"

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