

## SESSION 15

# JESUS WAS BORN AND GREW UP. JESUS WAS BAPTIZED

Now God's story tells us about when Jesus the Messiah was born.



MATTHEW 1:18-25

<sup>18</sup> This is how Jesus the Messiah was born. His mother, Mary, was engaged to be married to Joseph. But before the marriage took place, while she was still a virgin, she became pregnant through the power of the Holy Spirit. <sup>19</sup> Joseph, to whom she was engaged, was a righteous man and did not want to disgrace her publicly, so he decided to break the engagement quietly.

<sup>20</sup> As he considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream. "Joseph, son of David," the angel said, "do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife. For the child within her was conceived by the Holy Spirit. <sup>21</sup> And she will have a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins."

<sup>22</sup> All of this occurred to fulfill the Lord's message through his prophet:

<sup>23</sup> "Look! The virgin will conceive a child! She will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel, which means 'God is with us.'"

<sup>24</sup> When Joseph woke up, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded and took Mary as his wife. <sup>25</sup> But he did not have sexual relations with her until her son was born. And Joseph named him Jesus.

## HIS STORY: THE RESCUE

Mary was engaged to a man called Joseph. The Jewish law said that being engaged to someone meant that they had made a very strong agreement to get married. People who were engaged could not just break up easily. They would have to get divorced<sup>175</sup> to break their engagement. While Joseph and Mary were engaged, she lived in her family home. Later, after she and Joseph were married, Mary would move into Joseph's house.

Joseph and Mary had not had sex. But Joseph found out that Mary was pregnant.<sup>176</sup> So he thought that Mary had slept with<sup>177</sup> another man. When a Jewish woman did that, it was very, very bad. Sometimes the people would kill a woman who did that. But God's story says that Joseph was a good man and he did not want to *disgrace her publicly*. This means he did not want all the people to find out because then Mary would be very ashamed. So Joseph decided to quietly break off their engagement.

But it was part of God's plan that Joseph would marry Mary. God knew that Joseph would take care of Mary and her special child. So God sent an angel to talk to Joseph and to tell him about Mary's child. God's angel told Joseph clearly that Mary had not broken her engagement agreement. He said that Mary was pregnant because God had made it happen, not a man. The angel told Joseph that the baby boy should be called Jesus. Remember that in the Hebrew language, Jesus is *Yeshua* and it means 'Yahweh saves.' The angel said he would be called Jesus because he would save his people from their sins.

The angel also said the baby would be called *Immanuel*. This name comes from two Hebrew words for 'God' and 'with us.' So Immanuel means 'God with us'. The prophet Isaiah wrote all of this about 700 years earlier:



ISAIAH 7:14

<sup>14</sup> All right then, the Lord himself will give you the sign. Look! The virgin will conceive a child! She will give birth to a son and will call him Immanuel (which means 'God is with us').

Joseph believed that what God's angel had told him was true. So he did what the angel said to do. He married Mary but he did not have sex with her until after her baby was born. When the baby was born, he named him Jesus.

God's story, written down by Matthew, now tells us about what happened when Jesus was born. Joseph and Mary were away from their hometown of Nazareth when the time came for the baby to be born. The Romans were doing a census - getting information about all the people they ruled over. They told everyone to go to his own town to register for the census. Joseph belonged to the family line of David, so he had to go to Bethlehem, which was the town of David. So Jesus was born in the town of Bethlehem. Today, Bethlehem is a city in the West Bank area of Palestine.

---

175. **divorce** - a legal ruling by a judge or court to break a marriage agreement

176. **pregnant** - going to have a baby

177. **slept with** - had sex with

## SESSION 15 : JESUS WAS BORN AND GREW UP. JESUS WAS BAPTIZED



MATTHEW 2:1-18

<sup>1</sup> Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the reign of King Herod. About that time some wise men from eastern lands arrived in Jerusalem, asking, <sup>2</sup> “Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We saw his star as it rose, and we have come to worship him.”

<sup>3</sup> King Herod was deeply disturbed when he heard this, as was everyone in Jerusalem. <sup>4</sup> He called a meeting of the leading priests and teachers of religious law and asked, “Where is the Messiah supposed to be born?”

<sup>5</sup> “In Bethlehem in Judea,” they said, “for this is what the prophet wrote:

<sup>6</sup> ‘And you, O Bethlehem in the land of Judah, are not least among the ruling cities of Judah, for a ruler will come from you who will be the shepherd for my people Israel.’”

<sup>7</sup> Then Herod called for a private meeting with the wise men, and he learned from them the time when the star first appeared. <sup>8</sup> Then he told them, “Go to Bethlehem and search carefully for the child. And when you find him, come back and tell me so that I can go and worship him, too!”

<sup>9</sup> After this interview the wise men went their way. And the star they had seen in the east guided them to Bethlehem. It went ahead of them and stopped over the place where the child was. <sup>10</sup> When they saw the star, they were filled with joy! <sup>11</sup> They entered the house and saw the child with his mother, Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasure chests and gave him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

<sup>12</sup> When it was time to leave, they returned to their own country by another route, for God had warned them in a dream not to return to Herod.

<sup>13</sup> After the wise men were gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. “Get up! Flee to Egypt with the child and his mother,” the angel said. “Stay there until I tell you to return, because Herod is going to search for the child to kill him.”

<sup>14</sup> That night Joseph left for Egypt with the child and Mary, his mother, <sup>15</sup> and they stayed there until Herod’s death. This fulfilled what the Lord had spoken through the prophet: “I called my Son out of Egypt.”

<sup>16</sup> Herod was furious when he realized that the wise men had outwitted him. He sent soldiers to kill all the boys in and around Bethlehem who were two years old and under, based on the wise men’s report of the star’s first appearance.

<sup>17</sup> Herod’s brutal action fulfilled what God had spoken through the prophet Jeremiah:

<sup>18</sup> “A cry was heard in Ramah— weeping and great mourning. Rachel weeps for her children, refusing to be comforted, for they are dead.”

## HIS STORY: THE RESCUE

Some wise men from the east of Palestine came to Jerusalem. They were following a star that they saw in the sky where they lived. The star was a sign that the wise men knew about. They knew that this special star in the sky meant that a baby had been born who would be *King of the Jews*. So the wise men came to Jerusalem to find out about this baby.

At that time, there was a king who ruled over the Jewish lands. His name was King Herod. The Romans had made him King of the Jews. Herod heard what the wise men had said about a baby being born who would be King of the Jews. Herod thought that this baby might grow up and take over his place as the king. He got together all the Jewish religious experts.<sup>178</sup> These were the chief<sup>179</sup> priests and the scribes.<sup>180</sup> Herod asked them where the Messiah would be born. The religious experts told Herod about something that was written in the Old Testament. It said that a leader and shepherd of Israel would be born in Bethlehem. Herod told the wise men to go to Bethlehem to find the child. He said he wanted to worship the new king. He told them to come back and tell him when they had found the child in Bethlehem.

The wise men followed the star to the house where Jesus was. They gave gifts to him and worshiped him as the new king. God told the wise men in a dream that they should not go back to Herod. So they went home by another way.

One of God's angels told Joseph that Herod was looking for them. The angel said that Joseph should quickly go with Mary and Jesus to Egypt. They went away just in time. Herod was very angry and did not want this new king to take over. So he told his people to kill all the boys in Bethlehem who were two years old or younger. God knew this would happen. It had been written about by the prophet Jeremiah. We can be sure that Satan wanted all these boy babies to die. Satan did not want the Rescuer to come. He knew about God's plan to send a man who would destroy him and his rule over the people of the earth. Satan wanted to stop God's rescue plan.

Later, after Herod had died, God told Joseph that it was time to leave Egypt. So Joseph, Mary and Jesus went back to Israel. They went back to their hometown of Nazareth. One of the men who wrote God's story at that time was called Luke. He wrote about how God was with Jesus as he grew up in Nazareth.



LUKE 2:40

<sup>40</sup> There the child grew up healthy and strong. He was filled with wisdom, and God's favor was on him.

Luke also wrote about a time when Jesus was twelve years old. He went with Joseph and Mary to Jerusalem to go to the Passover festival. This was a festival that was held once each year in Jerusalem. At the Passover festival, the Jewish people remembered how God had killed the firstborn son and animal in every Egyptian house. They remembered how he had passed over the houses of the Israelites who had put blood on the doorposts of their houses.

---

178. **Jewish religious experts** - people who know all the rules and laws of the Jews

179. **chief** - the leader

180. **scribes** - Jewish religious leaders who were experts in Jewish law and could read and write

## SESSION 15 : JESUS WAS BORN AND GREW UP. JESUS WAS BAPTIZED



LUKE 2:41-52

<sup>41</sup> Every year Jesus' parents went to Jerusalem for the Passover festival. <sup>42</sup> When Jesus was twelve years old, they attended the festival as usual. <sup>43</sup> After the celebration was over, they started home to Nazareth, but Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. His parents didn't miss him at first, <sup>44</sup> because they assumed he was among the other travelers. But when he didn't show up that evening, they started looking for him among their relatives and friends.

<sup>45</sup> When they couldn't find him, they went back to Jerusalem to search for him there. <sup>46</sup> Three days later they finally discovered him in the Temple, sitting among the religious teachers, listening to them and asking questions. <sup>47</sup> All who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers.

<sup>48</sup> His parents didn't know what to think. "Son," his mother said to him, "why have you done this to us? Your father and I have been frantic, searching for you everywhere."

<sup>49</sup> "But why did you need to search?" he asked. "Didn't you know that I must be in my Father's house?" <sup>50</sup> But they didn't understand what he meant.

<sup>51</sup> Then he returned to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them. And his mother stored all these things in her heart.

<sup>52</sup> Jesus grew in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and all the people.

After the festival in Jerusalem was finished, Joseph and Mary started to go back to Nazareth. They were with a large group of other Jewish people. So they did not notice that Jesus was not with the group. At the end of the day, they saw that Jesus was not with them. So they went back to Jerusalem and found him. Jesus was sitting in the temple talking to the Jewish religious leaders. God's story says that Joseph and Mary and everyone else was *amazed at his understanding and his answers*. They were very surprised<sup>181</sup> because Jesus knew God's written words so well. They were amazed<sup>182</sup> that he knew so much when he was only a twelve-year-old boy. Jesus knew these things because he was the Son of God.

Mary asked Jesus why he had done this. Jesus asked her why they had looked for him. He said they should have known he would be in his Father's house. Jesus wanted them to remember who he really is – the Son of God. The temple was the house of God among the Jewish people. Jesus said he was in his Father's house. He was telling them that God is his Father.

Now God's story tells us more about John. Remember that God had given John the job of getting the people of Israel ready for the Messiah. Matthew wrote about the things that John said to the people.



MATTHEW 3:1-6

<sup>1</sup> In those days John the Baptist came to the Judean wilderness and began preaching. His message was, <sup>2</sup> "Repent of your sins and turn to God, for the Kingdom of Heaven is near." <sup>3</sup> The prophet Isaiah was speaking about John when he said,

---

181. **surprised** - to see something that you do not expect to see

182. **amazed** - to be very, very surprised about something you see

## HIS STORY: THE RESCUE

“He is a voice shouting in the wilderness,  
‘Prepare the way for the Lord’s coming!  
Clear the road for him!’”

<sup>4</sup> John’s clothes were woven from coarse camel hair, and he wore a leather belt around his waist. For food he ate locusts and wild honey. <sup>5</sup> People from Jerusalem and from all of Judea and all over the Jordan Valley went out to see and hear John. <sup>6</sup> And when they confessed their sins, he baptized them in the Jordan River.

John lived in the wilderness in an area that is east and north of Jerusalem. He lived near the Jordan River. He dressed in clothing made from the hair of camels.<sup>183</sup> He ate wild honey and locusts. He spoke the word of God to the people. People from far away heard about John. Many people came to hear what John was saying. John told them to *repent*. Repent means to change your way of thinking and see yourself in the same way that God sees you. John was telling the people to stop trying to follow all of God’s laws, because that was impossible. God wanted the people to see that they were sinners and that they needed him to rescue them. God wanted them to remember that they needed him to save them from having to pay for their sins. He sent John to tell the people these things.

The prophet Isaiah wrote about John. Matthew repeated the words of God that Isaiah had written many years before: “*Prepare the way for the Lord’s coming! Clear the road for him!*” This message was about John and his work to get the people of Israel ready for the Rescuer to come.

God’s story says that more and more people came to listen to John’s message. They came from Jerusalem and from all over the Jordan Valley. Many people listened to what John said and believed it was true. They agreed that they were sinners and that they needed God to save them. After they accepted what John said, the Bible says that *he baptized them in the Jordan River*. This means that John helped them to go under the water and then come up again. They did this as a sign that they had repented. They had agreed with God that they were sinners and they were waiting for God to rescue them. They were ready and waiting for the Messiah to come.



MATTHEW 3:7-10

<sup>7</sup> But when he saw many Pharisees and Sadducees coming to watch him baptize, he denounced them. “You brood of snakes!” he exclaimed. “Who warned you to flee the coming wrath?”

<sup>8</sup> Prove by the way you live that you have repented of your sins and turned to God. <sup>9</sup> Don’t just say to each other, ‘We’re safe, for we are descendants of Abraham.’ That means nothing, for I tell you, God can create children of Abraham from these very stones. <sup>10</sup> Even now the ax of God’s judgment is poised, ready to sever the roots of the trees. Yes, every tree that does not produce good fruit will be chopped down and thrown into the fire.

---

183. **camels** - large hairy animals with long necks and long legs that can live in very dry places

## SESSION 15 : JESUS WAS BORN AND GREW UP. JESUS WAS BAPTIZED

Not everyone who came to hear John believed what he said. Matthew wrote that many Pharisees and Sadducees came to hear John. The Pharisees were religious leaders of the Jewish people. They taught the people to try to follow all the laws of God and the laws that the Jews had made up themselves. The Sadducees were the religious leaders of the Jewish temple and the priests. They thought that God would be happy with them just because they were the descendants of Abraham. The Pharisees and Sadducees had a lot of power over the people.

John knew that the Pharisees and Sadducees did not agree with God. He spoke to them and said they were like snakes who were trying to crawl away from God's anger. God knows what people are really thinking. He knew that these religious men did not really believe that they were sinners or that they needed God to rescue them. John spoke the words of God to them. He said that God would cut them down like fruit trees that did not have any fruit.

When John was baptizing people, he spoke about someone who was going to come soon.



MATTHEW 3:11,12

<sup>11</sup> “I baptize with water those who repent of their sins and turn to God. But someone is coming soon who is greater than I am—so much greater that I’m not worthy even to be his slave and carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. <sup>12</sup> He is ready to separate the chaff from the wheat with his winnowing fork. Then he will clean up the threshing area, gathering the wheat into his barn but burning the chaff with never-ending fire.”

John said that he was baptizing them in the water of the Jordan River. He said that this was just to show that the people had repented - that they agreed with God that they were sinners. But John said that the Promised One would be much greater than him. The One who was coming would baptize people with the Holy Spirit and with fire. The meaning of this is made clear later in God's story.

John said that the coming One would separate the people into those who really believed that what God said was true and those who did not really believe God. He said that the Messiah would send the people who did not believe God to be burned up by a fire that never goes out. This means that those people who did not believe the things that God said would be punished forever.



MATTHEW 3:13-17

<sup>13</sup> Then Jesus went from Galilee to the Jordan River to be baptized by John. <sup>14</sup> But John tried to talk him out of it. “I am the one who needs to be baptized by you,” he said, “so why are you coming to me?”

<sup>15</sup> But Jesus said, “It should be done, for we must carry out all that God requires.” So John agreed to baptize him.

<sup>16</sup> After his baptism, as Jesus came up out of the water, the heavens were opened and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and settling on him. <sup>17</sup> And a voice from heaven said, “This is my dearly loved Son, who brings me great joy.”



## HIS STORY: THE RESCUE

Jesus went to John to be baptized. Why did he do this? John baptized people who agreed with God that they were sinners. But Jesus had never sinned. He had never done anything to disobey God's perfect laws. Jesus was just like God in the way that he thought and acted. He always did what God wanted him to do. So why did he go to be baptized? John asked Jesus the same question. John said that Jesus was the one who should baptize him.

Jesus told John that he must be baptized because it was what God wanted. Even though Jesus did not need to repent, he wanted to do everything that God said. If he did not do this, people could say that he did not obey God in every way. So John baptized him.

Matthew wrote about what happened just after Jesus came up out of the water. God's Spirit came down like a dove<sup>184</sup> and landed on Jesus. This was a sign that Jesus would live his life always being close to God. He would always trust God to guide him and to take care of him. God's Spirit would give him wisdom and strength to do the work that God wanted him to do.

God the Father saw that Jesus was obeying everything that he had said. He wanted the people to know what he thought about Jesus. He said, "*This is my dearly loved Son, who brings me great joy.*" God was totally happy with everything about Jesus and he loved him very much.

Another man who wrote about the life of Jesus in God's story was called John. This is a different John to the one who was baptizing people in the Jordan River. John wrote about something that happened the day after Jesus was baptized.



JOHN 1:29

<sup>29</sup> The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"

John called Jesus *the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world*. For over a thousand years, the people of Israel had killed lambs in the tabernacle and in the temple. Once every year, the blood of lambs was sprinkled on the top of the Ark of the Covenant in the Most Holy Place in the Temple. God had told the people to do this to show that they agreed with him that they should die for their sins. The animals died in their place so that they did not have to die. So why did John call Jesus 'the Lamb of God'?

John was saying clearly that Jesus would be sacrificed to pay for sin. His sacrifice would not just be for the sins of the people of Israel, but it would take away the sins of the whole world.

---

184. dove - a bird that is a sign or symbol of peace



## SESSION 15 : JESUS WAS BORN AND GREW UP. JESUS WAS BAPTIZED



1. God's story says that an angel came to speak to Joseph. What are angels?
2. What do the names Jesus and Immanuel tell us about Jesus and the work he would do?
3. What does it mean when someone repents?
4. Why did Jesus want John to baptize him?
5. When John called Jesus the Lamb of God, what did he mean by that?
6. Do you think Jewish people understood what John meant by calling Jesus the 'Lamb of God'? Why or why not?



This lesson has been adapted from the book *His Story: The Rescue, The Bible message from Genesis to Christ in easy English* (ISBN: 978-0-9944270-4-5)

Scripture quotations are taken from the Holy Bible, New Living Translation, copyright ©1996, 2004, 2007, 2013, 2015 by Tyndale House Foundation. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Carol Stream, Illinois 60188. All rights reserved.

Copyright © 2018 AccessTruth. All Rights Reserved. Except as may be permitted by the Copyright Act, no part of this publication may be reproduced in any form or by any means without prior permission from the publisher. Requests for permission should be made to [info@accesstruth.com](mailto:info@accesstruth.com)