

Personal/Small Group Study

Week of December 4, 2023 A.D.

The Message of the Manger

Jesus was born in a manger – not a palace. Think about that. The King of kings, the Lord of lords, the God of the universe, was born not in a palace – but in a manger. Keep in mind that image (and the message which it conveys) while we study today's lesson.

(Note: For every question which appears in this study, always give the reasoning and/or the explanation for each of your answers.)

Read Luke 2:8-20

1. Jesus could have chosen to be born in a palace. Instead, Jesus chose a manger as the place from which to make His entrance into the realm of human flesh. What does this choice tell us about Jesus' desire to have a personal relationship with the people of planet Earth? Is there any other way that Jesus could have established a personal relationship with us?

Read Luke 2:8-12

2. What role did humility play in the life of Jesus? What role does God expect humility to play in the life of a follower of Christ?

Read Colossians 3:12

3. Is humility a required character trait for any (and every) person who claims to be a follower of Jesus the Christ? If the word "humility" is removed from the verse at Colossians 3:12, does that verse still have the same meaning and impact as it does as it is currently written?
4. Please give at least one example of how Jesus demonstrated each of these virtues (i.e. compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience) during His life as a human being on planet Earth.

Read Luke 2:10-11

5. If God had sent an army of angels to save the first century Jews from the oppression of the Roman Empire, would that one-time occurrence be remembered today as good news of great joy (a) for the Jews? and (b) for all the people?

6. Was Jesus in fact a Savior? If so, how and for whom?
7. Shepherds tend sheep. The Jews sacrificed sheep on the altar in the temple for the forgiveness of their sins. Do you think that there is a reason why God chose to announce the birth of Jesus to shepherds?

Read Colossians 3:13

8. Is it accurate to say that it is God's desire that the people everywhere should forgive one another so that mankind may have "great joy" and so that mankind may experience "peace on earth"? Is there any person whom you have yet to forgive? If so, why not, at this very moment, forgive them as the Lord has forgiven you?

Read Isaiah 9:6-7

9. Does this prophecy refer to the first coming of Christ or to the second coming of Christ?
10. Which portions of this prophecy were fulfilled at the first coming of Christ? Which portions of this prophecy will be fulfilled at the second coming of Christ?
11. In what respect is Jesus currently the Prince of Peace for the people of this planet? In what respect will Jesus in the future become the Prince of Peace for the people of this planet?

Read John 3:16-18

12. Is the manner in which the church in America annually celebrates the birth of Christ an appropriate expression of the awe, wonder, gratitude, and love which is rightfully owed to God for the gift of eternal life which He gives to all who believe?

Consider: Christmas is a time to celebrate the reality that God became a man and that He died on a cross as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. Our celebration of Christmas should honor Christ by modeling His humility, His forgiveness, and His love in our relationships with the people whom God has placed in our lives.