

The Story Adult Study Guide

For the Week of December 15, 2019

Chapter 22: “The Birth of the King”



Key Events: the birth of the Savior announced, birth of Jesus, visit of the Magi, flight to Egypt, the boy Jesus visits the temple

Key Characters: Mary, Joseph, Jesus (see page 492 for descriptions)

Bible Reference for this Chapter: Matthew 1-2; Luke 1-2; John 1

1. Read the opening paragraph on page 309 (John 1:1-5). What are the meanings of these terms referring to Jesus: *Word*, *life*, and *light*?

Note on page 310: “The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David . . .” There is a common ancestral link between the lineage of Joseph (Matthew 1) and the lineage of Mary (Luke 3).

2. There are several Old Testament prophecies fulfilled in the events of Jesus’ birth.
 - a. The Messiah would be born in _____ . Micah 5:2
 - b. He would be born of a _____ mother. Isaiah 7:14
 - c. He would be the heir to King David’s _____. Isaiah 9:7
 - d. The Messiah would be called _____, which means “God with us.” Isaiah 7:14
 - e. Following his birth, he would spend time in _____. Hosea 11:1
 - f. A massacre of _____ would occur at his birthplace. Jeremiah 31:15
 - g. A _____ would prepare the way for the Messiah. Isaiah 40:3-4

How are these details much more than mere Bible trivia?

3. The angels proclaimed, “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.” (page 313 and Luke 2:14) In the King James Version, it reads, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.” How does the world’s view of “peace, good will toward men” compare to the meaning in this Bible passage?
4. How did each of these people react to the good news of the Savior’s birth: the shepherds, Mary, Simeon and Anna (Luke 2:25-38), the Magi (wise men)? What do their reactions have in common?
5. Isaiah 9:6 states, “For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.” What do these four Messiah titles mean?

6. So far in *The Story*, we've explored God's Word from the time of Adam and Eve to King David (chapters 1-12). As you now celebrate the birth of Christ, how has the Holy Spirit blessed you through your Bible journey?

SCHEDULE REMINDER: There are no *The Story* studies the next 3 weekends, December 22, 29 and January 5. We continue with chapter 14 "A Kingdom Torn in Two" on the weekend of January 12.

Prayer Suggestions

- Thank and praise God for the gifts of forgiveness and salvation through the Christ-child.
- Pray for a joyful heart of faith to believe and share the good news of the Savior.

Study Guide Helps

1. These terms refer to the deity of Jesus and his connection to God the Father. Jesus was and is God in the fullest sense. Jesus' divine nature is affirmed in his eternal character (*with God in the beginning*) and his omnipotence/power in creation (*through him all things were made*). Word = God and his will are revealed to the world through his inspired Word. Jesus was the "God becoming man" manifestation of God's Word and will (see John 1:14 – *the Word became flesh*). Jesus was "God in the flesh" who personified the Father to the world, and the God/man Christ was the fulfillment of the Word (gospel) promises. Life = Jesus had human life in himself, and death could not hold him. As the "resurrection and the life", Jesus was/is the only source of eternal life through his work of redemption. Light = Jesus was/is the Light of the world who holds out the wonderful hope of life with God now and in eternity. As the Light, he shows the only way to God in a dark world of unbelief and despair.

Note on page 310: See Matthew 1:6 and Luke 3:31. The common link is David (and obviously all the ancestors that precede David). Both Jesus' biological mother and stepfather were in the family line of David and Abraham.

2. a= Bethlehem; b= virgin; c=throne; d=Immanuel; e=Egypt; f=boys/children; g=messenger/forerunner. Prophecies fulfilled in Christ reveal the magnificence, wisdom and intricacies of God's blueprint of salvation. They also make it clear to Jews and Gentiles that Jesus was the Christ (anointed/chosen One) promised and sent by God. The fulfilled prophecies also demonstrate the unique nature of Christ's mission on earth to be a spiritual Savior from sin, death, and the devil.

3. People who don't know or believe in God think primarily of earthly needs and wants, not of things spiritual or eternal. Thus the world seeks harmony among people and relief from worldly conflict, turmoil, and war – this is our culture's concept of Christmas peace. As long as there is sin, temporal harmony is not possible (or any peace that is established is limited and does not last). The angels spoke of a peace between God and mankind: the sin that separated our righteous God and hostile man would be covered in the perfect life and the sacrificial death of the Savior. In Christ, God no longer holds sin against us, but offers hope and comfort that lasts forever. Peace with God is received by faith in Jesus and is spiritual, but it leads to a response of love and kindness to others.

4. The shepherds went to Bethlehem to see Jesus, they spread the news, and glorified and praised God. Mary believed and followed God's message through Gabriel, she sang a hymn of praise (called the *Magnificat*), and she treasured and meditated on everything that happened. Simeon and Anna (who knew/ believed the Messiah would come in their lifetimes) acknowledged Jesus as the promised Messiah, and they praised and thanked God. The Magi traveled a great distance, worshipped the Savior, and offered him gifts. All these reactions were faith-filled responses compelled by God's love in Christ, were joyful and worshipful, involved witnessing and proclaiming to others, and are great examples to follow for our Christmas observances today.

5. These terms are royal titles assigned to the Christ-child, the coming Son of David. Wonderful Counselor = the Messiah is the supreme king who would carry out a mission to counsel (direct and sustain) the world for its spiritual and eternal welfare. Mighty God = stresses his omnipotence (divine power) to accomplish the mission. Everlasting Father = he is an enduring and compassionate provider and protector. Prince of Peace = he provides reconciliation and healing between God and man; he ends the hostility through his redemption (see point #3 above).

6. Answers will vary. Share personal reflections and blessings from *The Story* study thus far. The intended purpose of *The Story* is to see/understand the entire story of God's salvation in its chronological order and Bible context. God-willing, the Holy Spirit has given us an increased grasp of God's plan, a greater appreciation of God's love, many insights and applications for our lives in Christ, and a gospel-motivated desire to serve God and share his love and gospel with others.