

Life Lesson New Testament 3  
*The Birth of Jesus*  
Text: Luke 2: 1-38

Introduction

All through the Bible, the prophets told of the Messiah. Then the angel Gabriel came to give the news that the Savior would soon be born. At last, the prophecies were about to be fulfilled.

The Story

The angel Gabriel told Mary and Joseph that their child would be the son of God. But one thing must have puzzled them. All the prophets said that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem. Mary and Joseph lived in Nazareth. They had no reason to go on a long, difficult trip by donkey to Bethlehem.

Then, one day, they understood. The Romans who ruled the Jews made a new law. Everyone had to go to the city that was his family home and pay tax. Joseph was descended from David, who was from Bethlehem. He and Mary would have to leave home and travel to Bethlehem to pay their taxes.

When they arrived they found the little city crowded with other people who had come to pay their taxes, too. It was so crowded that there was no room for them in the inn (like a motel). Every place was full up. Poor Joseph must have felt desperate, because it was evident that Mary would soon have her baby.

At last he found a place to spend the night – in a stable! At Christmastime we see lots of decorative stables and hear stories about the soft hay and the warm, kind animals. Actually, it wasn't a nice place at all. It was like a smelly barn with mice and bugs. It probably was cold, too.

The Son of God – the long promised Messiah – was born, not in a hospital or even a nice, clean house, but in a smelly old barn. The king of Heaven humbled himself to become a little, helpless baby, born to a poor family, so that he could one day pay for the sins of His people. There was no cradle or baby bed for him to lie in, so Mary wrapped him in swaddling clothes (the kind of clothes babies wore then) and put him in the manger where the cows and donkeys ate.

Mary and Joseph named him Jesus – Savior – like the angel Gabriel instructed them.

His birth wasn't noticed by the rich people and by the important folks in the kingdom. It didn't go unnoticed by everyone, though. There were shepherds in the fields near Bethlehem watching over their flocks that night. Suddenly an angel appeared to them and the Lord's glory shone all around them. They were scared!

“Don't be afraid,” the angel said. “I bring you good news of great joy. Unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Savior, who is Christ, the Lord. You will find a baby, wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger.”

A heavenly host joined the angel then, praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.”

Then they were gone. Can you imagine how the shepherds felt? Their whole nation had been waiting for years to hear the news that the Messiah was born, and they were the ones to hear about it first. But what a strange message – that they would find the Messiah in a stable and lying in a manger.

They said, “Let’s go and find this baby.” They went to Bethlehem and found Mary and Joseph in the stable and they saw the baby lying in a manger, just as the angel said. They went away, telling everyone what they had seen.

There were other people who heard the message about Jesus’ birth, too. When Jesus was about forty days old, Mary and Joseph took him to the temple in Jerusalem to make the special sacrifice that God commanded for the firstborn sons. People who could afford it were supposed to offer a lamb. Poor people, though, could offer a pair of doves. That’s what Joseph and Mary brought, so we know they were very poor people.

A man named Simeon came to the temple that day. God had promised him long ago that he would see the Messiah before he died. When he saw Jesus, God’s Holy Spirit told him that “This is the one!”

Simeon praised God and said, “Now I can die in peace because I’ve seen with my own eyes the salvation of God. He will be a light to the Gentiles and the glory of the Israelites.”

There was a lady named Anna who was in the temple that day, too. She loved God and served him night and day in the temple ever since her husband had died many years before. God spoke to her, too, and told her that the baby was the promised Messiah. She told everyone she saw about Jesus.

### The Life Lesson

The shepherds, Simeon, and Anna, all heard God’s message and believed that Jesus was the Messiah. That’s just what God wants you to do. Being saved means believing that Jesus is God and surrendering to him as Savior. I hope you, too, will hear God’s message and believe.

## Review Questions

Where did the prophets say that the Messiah would be born?

*Bethlehem*

Why did Mary and Joseph go to Bethlehem?

*To pay their taxes.*

Where did they stay in Bethlehem?

*In a stable, because there was no room for them in the inn.*

Where was Jesus born?

*In the stable in Bethlehem*

What was His first bed?

*A manger where animals eat.*

Who were the first to hear the Good News?

*Shepherds who were out in the fields with their sheep.*

Who else did God tell that Jesus was the Messiah?

*Simeon and Anna*

Who do we know that Mary and Joseph were poor?

*They gave the offering that poor people gave -- doves.*