

The Christmas Month

For years our family did not celebrate Christmas; this celebration isn't in the Scriptures, and our society has so skewed Christmas that we felt repelled by the commercial - religious duo that made us think more of Babylon from Revelation 18 than the true joy over the birth of Jesus Christ.

When we were living in Bangkok, however, we saw how the Church has to use every means available to reach into a culture that is at odds with the Kingdom of God, and that requires taking advantage of every possible cultural link that might open a door for sharing the wonderful news about Jesus Christ. Once we began to "look" at our culture with these eyes, we immediately saw the possibilities inherent in the American fascination with Christmas. However corrupted Christmas can be, it is still an open avenue for communicating the powerful message of the incarnation of the Messiah. Rather than withdrawing from the battle and surrendering the month of December to the devil, the Church needs to come out proclaiming and celebrating this event which virtually embodies the gospel: the second Person of the Triune God becoming the Head of "the new, redeemed human race."

For this reason, we of Grace Church go all out during the entire month of December by proclaiming every Sunday some aspect of the event that changed the world: the birth of the Son of God! In addition, the Church will greatly benefit by using the entire month of December to explore the depths of this doctrine, for we too little appreciate what our marvelous God did by humbling Himself and taking our humanity into Himself! For this reason, our topic this month is: you guessed it, the incarnation of Christ.

Lesson 1

1. Scripture Study: Matthew 1:18-25. Learn to be an observant reader by reading once just for the big picture, and then return to read, noticing the details. Use your marking pen and yellow marker to help you make these observations. *(15 minutes)*

You are studying what is doctrinally called “the Virgin Birth,” or “the Incarnation.”

What indicates that Mary was a virgin when this child was conceived?

Why do you think that it was important for the Messiah to be born of a virgin?

Do you see a promise in this text that you can claim for your life?

What did Jesus come to save you from? How is this different from what many people wish to be saved from?

2. Prayer Time: *(10-15 minutes)*

Ask the Holy Spirit to open your heart eyes to see more into the Divine Mystery of who Jesus Christ really is!

Now spend some time verbally declaring out loud some of the grand truths you know about Jesus Christ! Proclaim His honor and glory into the heavenlies, for this glorifies Him and establishes something in the spiritual dimension.

Thank God the Father for sending you His son! Thank the second Person of the Trinity for having you specifically in mind when He humbled Himself to become a baby. Thank the Holy Spirit for His role in bringing you the Savior!

Read Matthew 1:21 as His promise to you, as you hold up to Him some areas of your life where you are struggling against sin!

Pray Matthew 1:21 over others that come to your attention.

Ask the Holy Spirit to lead you to someone with whom you might share this great news today.

Lesson 2

1. Scripture Study: Read Isaiah 7:14. The context explains how Isaiah prophesied this to Ahaz; and in its original setting, it was a word that indicated that (we are not certain which) before Isaiah could marry a virgin or Ahaz could marry a virgin queen, and before she could conceive a male who would be of age, this Assyria upon whom Ahaz was depending (rather than God) would cruelly destroy them. And this did, in fact, happen just as prophesied. *(10 minutes)*

A sign is not necessarily something which is supernatural, but something which happens as predicted that points to something else; e.g. the shepherds were to find a “sign” which was a baby wrapped in swaddling clothes lying in a manger. (Luke 2:12)

Isaiah’s point: a baby is soon to be born who will be named Immanuel as a way of declaring God’s faithfulness to us. The naming of this child did not indicate that this child would be God, but this provided a Messianic prophecy for the next work of the Spirit.

Many prophecies have an initial fulfillment, which are later taken by the Spirit into another situation in which a truly supernatural fulfillment occurs. Matthew fully intends for us to recognize the fulfillment in Isaiah’s prophecy, and to realize that this really is God coming to dwell with us! *(10 minutes)*

Study Questions: Let’s take time now to collect the data given to us. *(5 minutes)*

What is Joseph’s problem?

How does he find out what to think or do?

Why is the Messiah named Jesus?

What will the Messiah do?

What does “His people” mean since most of the Jews rejected Jesus?

Since Jesus is never actually called “Immanuel,” what is Isaiah telling us?

Prayer Time: *(15-30 minutes)*

Take Matthew 1:23 into prayer by reading it aloud to the Lord and using it to declare the Lord’s praises!

Try singing to the Lord either in English or in tongues, but just free-flow as you declare in the presence of angels and evil spirits the greatness of God who prophesies things long before they happen!

Be sure that the Lord is sovereignly overseeing your life so that you can boldly come to Him in order to pray His will into your circumstances!

Remember, few believed or realized what God was doing right under their noses, so you are privileged to be one who is participating with God in bringing His salvation into situations through your prayers, even when others do not yet see the answers!

Picture the Lord’s answers in your life and begin to rejoice before Him!

Spend a moment enjoying the Lord and His faithful provision for your life!

Lesson 3

Scripture Study: Read Matthew 2:1-12. Read through it quickly looking for the big picture, the overall action; then reread it slowly, looking for the details. *(10 minutes)*

Bethlehem is only five miles from Jerusalem, but it is there that the Magi traveled, possibly because they had lost track of the “star” which they were following. Tradition holds that the Magi were three kings, but we simply don’t know. More than likely they were astrologists, but it is not entirely foreign for the true God to break into the lives of true seekers and speak to them in unusual ways.

Notice something that is so anti-Jewish: the worship of a person! Notice also that the entire city of Jerusalem was troubled. The worship thing might have been part of it, and the political issue of a Jewish King coming into a Roman world might have presented some anxiety as well.

Once again Matthew pins down the place of the Messiah’s birth long ago predicted by the sovereign Lord God! Bethlehem was the city of David, and the Messiah was to be David’s son, a fact already mentioned by Matthew. Feel the power of this scene of worship! The three extraordinary gifts (a king’s ransom) certainly suggest the number of the Magi as being three; but the reality is that these gifts probably financed their flight into Egypt!

Scripture Memory: Read Matthew 1:21 slowly several times and then begin to look away and try saying it out loud so as to fix it in your memory! You will want to use this verse in praying over your own sins as well as the sins of your friends, so learn it well. *(5 minutes)*

Prayer Time: *(15-30 minutes)*

Bow down physically in some fashion and worship God the Father for sending to you His very own Son!

Visualize the Lord Jesus who is now no longer a little child but is risen, ascended, and seated on His throne at the right hand of the Most High God! Use your voice to declare His glory and begin to worship Him with all your might!

Pray His will into your life with the confidence that comes from seeing that it was God’s idea and initiative to rescue you from sin and the devil!

Take your place as seated with Christ and pray for others for whom He came to save! Pray against the blindness that Satan causes in the lost. (2 Corinthians 4:4)

Ask the Holy Spirit to come now and fill you before sending you into your day!

Lesson 4

Scripture Study: Matthew 2:13-23. (*10 minutes*)

See how active angels were in this entire event. Do you realize that you have an angel (if you are one of the chosen)? Read Matthew 18:10 where “these little ones” are not children but Believers (read the context). See also Psalm 34:7.

When you pray, do you listen for the Lord to speak back to you in your inner man? (John 10:27) This is one reason to spend time getting still and waiting upon the Lord.

In verse 23, Matthew is not quoting any specific prophet, because he is summing up the prophetic message that predicted how despised Jesus would be; for while Bethlehem was a city with status, Nazareth was always said with a sneer. The Hebrew word for Nazareth has a connection with the word “branch” in Isaiah 11:1, so Matthew may be saying that this child of David’s royal line was cut down to a mere stump or shoot.

Study Questions: (*5 minutes*)

What conclusions can you draw about Joseph?

What do you see in this man?

Why do you think Matthew keeps quoting the prophets to back up the actual events?

Prayer Time: (*15-30 minutes*)

Begin with a different type of worship. Kneel down and get still; then submit yourself to the Lord’s voice. Then, after a period of quietness, submit yourself to the Lord’s Scripture. This is worship.

Tell the Lord out loud that you believe that He is in control of your birth and the events in your life; then praise Him for this!

Now ask the Lord to fill you afresh with the Holy Spirit.

Use your faith to ask God to deliver you from the evil one. Remember that Jesus taught us to pray this way.

Pray against the blinding that Satan does against the unbelievers.

Lesson 5

Scripture Study: Read Philippians 2:6-11 carefully several times. This is the classic passage on the incarnation of the Second Person of the Trinity. *(10 minutes)*

What does this say about His deity?

The Humiliation of Christ consists of two things: He emptied Himself, not of His essential deity, but of His glory and of His functioning as God. He also humbled Himself to become subject to the demands and the curse of the law. His Humiliation had five aspects: incarnation, suffering, death, burial, and descent into Hades.

Scripture Study: Reread Matthew 1:21-23. Is it clear to you why Jesus needed to be born of a human but not with a natural father? The sin nature is passed on through the father, and Jesus was coming as the second Adam, or what we call the Federal Head of a new humanity. *(10 minutes)*

The Incarnation and the Virgin Birth are things Satan hates, because this is how God prepared the Savior to truly represent all who would ever be saved.

Looking at 1:21, Jesus is the name Joshua, which means “Jehovah is salvation” or “Salvation is of Jehovah,” and what we are studying is how He saves His people from their sins.

What thoughts come to mind as you reflect upon Christ undergoing this for you?

Prayer Time: *(10–25 minutes)*

Ask the Holy Spirit to fill you for worship.

Praise the Savior for humbling Himself to come under the covenant of works in order to be able to save you from your sins.

Become still now and wait quietly before the Lord.

Now pray His will into the areas of your life that need His provision.

Pray for this Savior to send His people into the world to win souls.

Lesson 6

Scripture Study: Read John 1:1-18 carefully. Be sure to use your marking pen, because this text is full of things for you to notice. *(10 minutes)*

Who is being called “the Word”?

What is His nature?

What was His role in creating the world?

As you examine 1:13, can you see that you believed, not as a result of your will, but because of God’s will? Otherwise you will take credit here, but the credit for your believing goes to God.

Looking at 1:14, when people saw Jesus, what did they behold, if they had eyes to see?

Identify further evidences of Christ’s deity mentioned in 1:15 and 1:18.

Scripture Memory: John 1:1-2, 14. This makes a great passage to lock into your memory bank. *(5 minutes)*

Prayer Time: *(15–30 minutes)*

Receive Jesus afresh today as your Savior from sin, from the darkness, from Satan!

Receive the Holy Spirit into your inner man by asking and receiving!

Join the angels in praising and worshipping God for revealing Himself in Jesus!

Bring all your troubles to this great Savior and believe in Him to save you!

Pray that the eyes of others will also be opened during this special season.

Lesson 7

Scripture Study: Reread John 1:1-18. (*10 minutes*)

John 1:4 says, “In Him was life,” and it was “His life” which then became the “light”; i.e. the truth, the revelation that would shine into the darkness and set men free. Check John 5:26.

Why do you think there was and is life in Jesus Christ?

What was the role of the incarnation in causing this light to shine into our darkness?

Looking at 1:18, in what way has Jesus “explained Him?”

Scripture Study: Read John 5:21-27. (*5 minutes*)

What do you think the Incarnation has to do with Jesus being the One who will judge? The Father has given Jesus the Life, the Judgment, and the Authority. Why does the incarnation affect all of this?

Can you see why the devil hates the doctrine of the Incarnation or the Virgin Birth?

Prayer Time: (*15–30 minutes*)

Use your voice to “hallow Thy name” by giving honor to Jesus and to the Father who sent Him!

Worship God for sending His Son in a way that qualified Him to represent you before the throne!

Learn to develop a growing language of worship, for this exalts the Lord and defeats the darkness!

Praise and worship the Lord over all of your problems this morning! Honor Him in your troubles.

Pray for others to turn to Jesus for salvation!

Lesson 8

Scripture Study: Read Hebrews 2: 9-18 carefully. *(10 minutes)*

Look at 2:9, and state Jesus' purpose.

But in 2:10 notice that it is He who is bringing "many sons to glory." What do you think Jesus has in mind for you in this regard?

And then the question comes, "How will He accomplish this off-the-chart task?" Read 2:11-18 and answer this question of "How?"

Note that in 2:16 our translation says, "descendant of Abraham," but it would be better to translate it as "seed of Abraham." This is not referring to natural descendants, as should be obvious from the entire book of Hebrews. Jesus took upon Himself the humanity of those for whom He died; i.e. the true seed of Abraham. Remember that: "not all Israel is Israel." (Romans 9:6)

Scripture Meditation: Let your eyes drink in Hebrews 2:14 by slowly reading and rereading this verse. Allow yourself the time to get "stuck" on one word or phrase. Just let the words come inside and find room in you.

(5 minutes)

Prayer Time: *(10-30 minutes)*

Bow in awe. Just be silent in His Presence.

Try singing praise to Him or simply speak it out loud if singing isn't working for you.

Praise Him for freeing you from the fear of death!

The old King James says that He is able to "succor" you, and you need to just let Him comfort you and minister His help to you right where you are hurting. Receive.

Pray His "succor" into the lives of others who are on your mind.

Lesson 9

Scripture Study: Read Luke 1:5-56. Even though it's a long passage, we'll read it for several days. *(15 minutes)*

As you notice the ministry of angels in these birth accounts, read Hebrews 1:14 where it says that angels are ministering spirits for the sake of those who will inherit salvation; which means that they are not ministering for those who will not inherit salvation.

The meaning of 1:16-17 is usually misunderstood. He is not talking about dads deciding to be good fathers; rather it is a reference to the godly patriarchs (the fathers) of Israel being united to their "children"; i.e. the people of that day. In other words, Malachi and the angel are saying that unless "the sons of Israel" (1:16) turn back to the Lord, there is going to be very strong judgment! Enter John the Baptist to take up the same type of task Elijah had. And poor old Zachariah did not quite get this angel's drift! His questioning was a questioning of the angel's veracity. Not a good idea! Gabriel was prompted to even announce his name! (1:19)

Notice how different was Mary's response. (1:34) The English misses it here, for Mary actually says, "How will this be...?" She isn't questioning Gabriel. She just wants to know how he plans to achieve this since she is still a virgin.

Mary is a real example of...

Look at 1:37 where a more accurate translation reads: "Because/for not without power according to every word (rhema) of God." In other words, Mary believed the word of the Lord, and therefore the power was there also.

What lesson do you think Zachariah gained from this experience?

Prayer Time: *(15–30 minutes)*

Take Luke 1:46–55 and read it before the Lord loudly.

Now try singing it to the Lord if you have this freedom. Hey, I can't sing; just go for it! Staying filled with the Spirit involves asking every day, along with singing and giving thanks. (Ephesians 5:18-20)

As a son or daughter of the Lord, pray His promises with confidence into your areas of stress!

Pray for your Church to be unified so that together you may win the lost!

Lesson 10

Scripture Study: Reread Luke 1:5-56; you are probably beginning to notice little details which you missed before. *(15 minutes)*

Notice that we see here the fulfillment of the Old Covenant Church, as a godly priest is used to father the greatest of the Old Testament prophets. (Matthew 11:11)

How is the Church's mission similar to John the Baptist's, but different?

Notice that Mary has found favor with the Lord. (1:28, 30) What is favor? If a person favors us, it means _____.

Study this invaluable thing called "favor," for it greatly influences your life. Read 2 Corinthians 1:11, and you will see how our praying for others gives them favor. Peter tells us that when we suffer in order to maintain a good conscience, this finds favor with the Lord. So favor is _____.

Prayer Time: *(15–30 minutes)*

Thank God for the favor He has extended to you in your life so far, and ask Him for more.

Declare the greatness and splendor of Jesus Christ into the heavenlies, and assert His glory and His victory over every other power!

Now pray His will upon the earth, as this is your calling!

Intercede for your Church and for the lost.

Pray God's Divine power into situations that look impossible, because you remember that no word of God is without power!

Lesson 11

Scripture Study: Read Luke 1:57-80 and don't forget to interact with the text in the margins, making your own commentary as you go. *(15 minutes)*

Where did Elizabeth learn that she was to call her son John?

Do you think that Zachariah and Elizabeth were in unity in this whole venture?

Why did Zachariah ask for a tablet in order to write his son's name?

Why do you think God chose this particular discipline for Zachariah?

Can you think of any application of Zachariah's discipline which might be the Lord speaking to you?

What connection might there be between Zachariah's recent breaking and his new obedience with the fact that he was filled with the Holy Spirit and began to prophesy?

What role do you think Zachariah played in training and equipping his son to come into this calling?

As a parent or as a friend, what is our role in helping others come into the callings of God that are on their lives?

Prayer Time: *(15–30 minutes)*

Take Zachariah's prophecy and read it out loud before the Lord, using a voice that he might have used!

Now enter into praise and worship of the Lord God!

Ask the Holy Spirit to fill you, and then use your faith to receive His filling.

Wait on God.

Pray as you sense the Holy Spirit taking you into things that are on His heart.

Lesson 12

Scripture Study: Read Luke 2:1-20. *(15 minutes)*

Why do you think Luke was led by the Spirit to include such specific historical details in 2:1-6?

Why do you think that God the Father had His Son “born” into such lowly circumstances? (2:7)

What are the differences (and why?) between the first people God calls to worship His Son and those who come later from other countries?

Examine the famous saying of the angels in 2:14. What do you think the angels meant by this saying? How does this relate to the fact that Jesus was and still is at war with the devil?

Do you ever use this verse when interceding for your city or for something that is going on in the world? If not, may I encourage you to use this as a holy weapon?

Do you actively take advantage of the peace that Jesus gives you with God and within yourself? Read Philippians 4:4-8 and see how you are to participate in what the angel said.

Prayer Time: *(15–30 minutes)*

Get still. Receive His peace.

Using Philippians 4:4-8, begin to give God the thanks He deserves for all His goodness to you. Then bring Him your petitions along with your thanksgiving, but actually leave your issues in His hands.

Live out of this peace, and move in the Holy Spirit so that you can now pray His help into the lives of others who need Him.

Ask God to use you to share this glorious news with others.

Lesson 13

Scripture Study: Read Luke 2:21-38. *(15 minutes)*

Joseph and Mary take Jesus the five miles to Jerusalem in order to dedicate Him and to offer a sacrifice for the purification of Mary after childbirth. But notice that they will have returned to Bethlehem in order for the Magi to visit them some time later, and before they receive word to flee quickly to Egypt.

Notice that the old man, Simeon, who meets them is not said to be a priest, but look at his qualifications: he is righteous, devout, looking for the Messiah, and he regularly hears the Holy Spirit speak to him! Plus he obeys, for he is at the right place at the right time. The text should read, "he came by the Spirit into the temple." The Spirit was "upon him"; and he recognized which infant was the Messiah, which is pretty impressive! (2:27-28)

Watch Simeon move under the anointing to do priestly and prophetic things as he prophesies over Jesus by the Spirit, and then blesses the parents, while speaking only over Mary.

(2:29-35) Notice how he simply leaves Joseph out of the picture, possibly because Joseph is not the biological father and he is not going to be around for Jesus' adulthood. Remarkable. Wouldn't it be interesting if we learned that Simeon was a widower also, for here we see an unusual sight for that day: a woman remaining single for all those years in order to give herself to prayer for the coming of the Messiah. We also see that there was a company of those people who believed and waited and prayed for this marvelous event. Don't you just know that the Lord will also have those who do something like this before He returns?

Does something in this passage speak to you specifically for your life?

Is this a word from the Lord for you?

Prayer Time: *(15–30 minutes)*

Ask the Holy Spirit to fill you now before you even begin to pray.

Sing out or speak out your praises of God for sending His Son to become your personal sacrifice so that you might come close and be a son or daughter to Him.

Imagine going into your day being filled with the Holy Spirit and being led by Him; and then believe God for this to be what happens!

Learn to use His word and His promises for how you approach your day, and for what comes out of your mouth!

Join the Lord in praying for His Kingdom to come into the areas he has given you responsibility to oversee.

Pray for your Church leaders so that they will move in the Holy Spirit to lead the Church.

Lesson 14

Scripture Study: Read Hebrews 1:1-4 carefully; you will want to pick the compact sentences apart and perhaps number and mark them so as to more fully come to grips with one of the highest theological statements about the nature of Jesus the Christ. *(10 minutes)*

God is the subject of the first verb in this book that uses the word “God” 68 times! God has spoken through angels, in a burning bush, via a donkey, in thunder claps, in a still small voice, by dreams, by visions, through the Urim and Thummim, by a pillar of fire, by a cloud, by judgments, by turning a rod into a snake, etc.; but now He has climaxed all that with His final word in one who has the quality of being Son! (The “His” is not in the Greek) Number the seven things God says about Christ as Son: (1) heir of all things, (2) through whom He made the universe, (3) outshining of God’s glory, (4) the exact image of His substance, (5) actively sustaining and carrying all things forward toward its goal by His power, (6) made a final cleansing from the defiling work of sin, and (7) He sat down at the place of honor and power, showing how final and complete is the work. While the Son has always been far above angels, He has demonstrated something that is so far above angels that it can be said that He has inherited a name that is far better! This is said because these Christians were drifting into a very unhealthy interest in things like angels.

Scripture Study: Go back and reread Matthew 1:21 and 23 with the thoughts about Him which you just studied in Hebrews. *(5 minutes)*

Just ponder the mystery of the Eternal Second Person of the Trinity, the Logos, deciding to come as an infant so that He could save you from your sins.
What thoughts come to you about this?

Prayer Time: *(15–30 minutes)*

Worship your Savior with silent adoration, and then move into spoken adoration! Use your mind to remember all that you have read about this Son and thank and praise God for sending Him to save you from your sins. Surrender to His achievements, by which I mean: believe that His work of redemption has taken effect in your life. Now pray His honor and glory into your life situations. Ask Him for the lost to be saved, because many belong to Him!

Here are some thoughts about the Incarnation of Christ or the Virgin Birth.

Christians often fail to grasp the strategic importance of the Incarnation, but you can be sure that Satan understands it very well.

The Incarnation guarantees that all the rest of salvation will be accomplished. Without this truth (doctrine), there could be no salvation, for Christ did not just become a man; He actually took upon Himself the flesh and blood of those whom Hebrews calls, “the children.” (Hebrews 2:14) He came specifically for “the seed of Abraham” (Hebrews 2:16), and joined Himself to these. Galatians 3:16 says, “Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. He does not say, ‘And to seeds,’ as referring to many, but rather to one, ‘And to your seed,’ that is, Christ.” This seed was not the natural descendants of Abraham, but rather all those who would ever be saved, which included some Jews and many Gentiles.

Jesus joined Himself to those whom He would specifically represent as the new Federal Head. Just as Adam had been the head of the race, and what he did took effect for us all; now Jesus assumes this unique place and represents those whose nature He took upon Himself.

Jesus joined us through Mary, but it was the Father God (by the Holy Spirit) who supplied the actual fathering so that Christ was divine and yet without our sin nature. He was, “born of a woman, born under the law”

(Galatians 4:4) so that He could earn salvation in a way that directly took effect upon us the same way in which Adam’s failure took effect upon all that he represented.

Romans 5:12f explains this.

It is His Incarnation that allows Jesus to obey God and have it count for us. It is His Incarnation that allows Jesus’ obedience to bind Satan and have it count for us. It is His Incarnation that allows Jesus to stand in for us (whoever will be saved), and it is His Incarnation that allows His resurrection to include us.

Jesus is the “last Adam”; which is to say, the second Adam or the other Adam; for He represented His people just as the first Adam represented his. “For since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead.” (1 Corinthians 15:22) It’s the Incarnation which brought Jesus into this position as “the Man” or “the Adam” who accomplished this for us.

Paul drives this point home when he said, “The first man, Adam, became a living soul. The last Adam became a life-giving spirit.” (1 Corinthians 15:45) In these verses it becomes clear that through the Incarnation, Christ became more than just a human. He became the sinless Man who had no sin nature so that He could fulfill the covenant of works in which Adam so miserably failed!

He then cut the New Covenant with God the Father, and then all He represented were included in this Covenant. This is the nature of Covenant. When David and Jonathan cut the Covenant of friendship, it included their families, and this is demonstrated when David goes looking for anyone left in Saul’s line to whom he might show Covenant-loyal-love, which is the obligation of the Covenant.

However, to qualify as the new Federal Head and establish a New Covenant, Christ must be fully God and fully man in order to satisfy the justice of God at the cross. He must be God to be able to pay the infinite price for sinning against the infinite God, and that requires that he be God. He must be a man in order to represent those whose sins had to be completely punished. Thus, the Incarnation is the height of love and wisdom and power expressed toward us!

If you understand the significance of the Incarnation, then you can see why Satan is very interested in having people dismiss this truth as unnecessary or irrelevant. And if you understand the significance of this doctrine, then you can understand how our admiration and awe of God reach new levels and thrust us into spontaneous worship!

Lesson 15

Doctrinal Study: Read through the previous teaching on the nature of the Incarnation. *(15 minutes)*

Write down the things that you do not understand in this teaching, because for most of you, this will be new material, and it deals with concepts which are entirely foreign to our Western, modern culture. The fact that our modern translators frequently translate the Greek word for “seed” as “descendant” illustrates that we are missing the Biblical category to understand certain Bible concepts.

In the first Messianic promise found in Genesis 3:15, there is the contrast between two “seeds”: the “seed of the woman” (Christ), and the “seed of the serpent” (all who would ultimately belong to the devil and spend eternity with him). You can see what would happen if they had translated this Biblical word “seed” as “descendant,” but they have done exactly that in other places.

Things which I need to learn more about:

Questions which I would like to ask:

You can read about such things in Wayne Grudem’s Systematic Theology or Louis Berhof’s Systematic Theology, both published by Eerdmans.

Prayer Time: *(15–30 minutes)*

Read Paul’s words from Ephesians 1:15-18 out loud before the Lord.

Now read them again as your own prayer for “a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him” to be given to you!

Whether you understand little or much, praise and worship the Christ as the Ultimate Worthy One!

Use every excellent thing you can think of to verbally declare His honor and glory into the spirit realm.

“The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy” (Revelation 19:10), which means that as you declare all this about Jesus, the prophetic realm opens up for you to believe and move in God’s anointing!

Now pray His will into your duty station, for He has placed you in some trouble spots so that He might move through you and your prayers.

Lesson 16

Doctrinal Study: Reread the previous section on the Incarnation. It takes work to dig into these Biblical ideas that may be new to you, so you should expect to have to read and reread, which is what study involves. It takes reflection, openness, and investigation into Scripture verses in order to learn to think Biblically. *(15 minutes)*

If Christ became your Federal Head (your official representative) even before you were born, how might this deepen your understanding of the grace of God?

In Adam you inherited a sin nature; in the last Adam you inherited a _____ nature.

In Adam you were born under the curse of the law and were a child of disobedience. In Christ you were reborn under the blessing and were made a child of...

See what other things you can think of that have radically changed, simply because in the Incarnation Christ took upon Himself your flesh and blood in order to fully represent you.

Prayer Time: *(15–30 minutes)*

Get still and wait upon such an awesome God!

Respond to the Spirit's leading by going into singing and worship or into intercession.

Each day ask the Holy Spirit to fill you afresh, and then receive His anointing.

Each day pray for the lost.

Lesson 18

Scripture Study: Since studying the doctrine (the revelation truth) of the Incarnation, reread the Holy Spirit's account of the birth of Jesus in Matthew 1:18–25. (*10 minutes*)

What kind of a test do you think 1:18-19 indicates that Joseph and Mary experienced? Since they both passed their test with flying colors, can you draw any lessons from them that will help you pass your tests? Like what?
Do you think that angels have bearing on your life? If so, what and why?
Why was it important for the Christ to be fathered (conceived) by the Holy Spirit?
Why is it important that you realize that Christ was not created but had always existed?

Scripture Study: Read John 8:56–58. (*10 minutes*)

What was Jesus telling us about His previous existence?
When Jesus used the phrase “I Am” concerning Himself, what was He saying about Himself?
Read John 17:5 also, for what did Jesus possess before His Incarnation?

Prayer Time: (*10–20 minutes*)

Glorify God by praising and worshipping Him this morning.
Bask in His presence and savor being near Him.
Receive His love into your life.
Pray for all those who need to hear the Word of the Lord in their lives.

Lesson 18.5

Scripture Study: Reread Matthew 2:1-23. (*15 minutes*)

Notice how the Gentiles figure into this scene: Herod hating and the Magi worshipping.
Why do you think the Bible focuses on this Gentile response to the birth of the Christ?
What are the evidences of the supernatural in this passage?
How did Satan respond to the birth of this Child?
Do you think Satan has given up trying to kill this Child and this holy event?
Why is the Incarnation important to your life?

Prayer Time: (*15–30 minutes*)

Begin by thanking God this morning for the Incarnation of Christ!
Use your authority in Christ to proclaim Christ's victory in binding the devil and in crushing the devil so that his house may be spoiled.
Now worship the Lord.
Declare His faithfulness and goodness over the places in your life where you have been struggling.

Lesson 20

Scripture Study: Reread Luke 1:5–38. (*10 minutes*)

Do you believe that God is in as much sovereign control of your life as He obviously was of Zachariah's life?

Do you think God is as patient with you when you blow it as He was with Zachariah?

Can you glean any help in capitalizing upon your opportunities to glorify God by noticing how your unbelief and your words can make a great difference?

In 1:29, Mary was very perplexed. Are you ever perplexed by the things that God says to you or about you?

Explain how Mary responded so that you can learn from her life.

Scripture Meditation: Luke 1:38. Read this verse slowly out loud, over and over, allowing the words to come into your very soul. Chew them and swallow like the cow chews its cud. Then spit it back up and chew it again. This is meditation. The power is in the Word, so just let the Word do its work. (*5 minutes*)

Prayer Time: (*15–30 minutes*)

Read Luke 1:38 before the Lord, and then bow down and surrender yourself to the plans, timings, and purposes of God.

Mary soon broke into a spontaneous song, so why don't you sing to the Lord also?

Take a good look at your difficulties from the Lord's viewpoint and see how to pray His will into the circumstances.

Ask the Lord that, as He harvests souls, to send you and your friends to harvest with Him.

Lesson 21

Scripture Study: Reread Luke 1:26–80. *(15 minutes)*

Can you recognize the Trinity in the birth of the Christ?

The Father is choosing and ordaining, the Logos is coming, and the Holy Spirit is implementing the Father's will! They always work as One, because They can never be anything other than One.

Look at 1:32 and notice Gabriel's reference to the throne of David. What does this say about the Messianic promises and fulfillment? Read Psalm 2:7-9,12 and 89:26-29 where you will also see the Covenant prophesied that was to be between the Father and the Son: the New Covenant, which includes all whom Jesus represented as Federal Head.

Why do you think the Bible records these prophetic songs of praise?

Prayer Time: *(15-30 minutes)*

Kneel down and ask the Holy Spirit to fill you now.

Then begin to sing your praise song to the Lord!

Worship is your calling and your weapon, so worship the Lord in faith over the problems you have been assigned to oversee.

Pray that many will be saved during this Christmas season!

Lesson 22

Scripture Study: Reread Luke 2:1-20. *(15 minutes)*

Why do you think that the angels spoke to humans so that they would go seek out the Christ Child and worship Him?

Read John 4:22-24. Why is worship so important and powerful?

Why does Satan hate the outspoken, unashamed worship of Jesus the Christ?

Why do you think the angels picked these simple shepherds to be the first who would hurry to find and worship the Messiah?

What information did the shepherds have with which to worship?

How did all of this permanently impact the shepherds' lives? (2:20)

What can you learn for your life by seeing what Mary did? (2:19)

Prayer Time: *(15–30 minutes)*

Read Luke 2:14 to the Lord. Speak it back to the angels!

Now sing this to the Lord and go from there!

God inhabits the praises of His people.

Hang out in His presence for a few minutes and just enjoy Him.

Bring your every care to the feet of Jesus and leave them with Him who is the King of kings and the Lord of lords.

Lesson 23

Scripture Study: Re-examine Matthew 1:23, paying special attention to one of His names: Immanuel!
(15 minutes)

It means, “God with us,” or maybe even better, “God is with us.” This is the most amazing thing, and the miracle of all miracles behind the Incarnation: God wants to be with us! He wants to do more than visit us; He wants and intends to actually dwell with us! Does this not beat all: the Almighty God, the Creator God, the Savior God does all this just so that He can have us with Him?

Hebrews speaks of Jesus “bringing many sons to glory,” and that “therefore He was not ashamed to call them brethren.” Wow! (Hebrews 2:10-11)

This was the reason God instructed Moses to build the Tabernacle. “Let them construct a sanctuary for Me, that I may dwell among them.” (Exodus 25:8)

The Incarnation of Christ was the ultimate act on God’s part to bring us into this type of union and fellowship!

Now read, “Behold the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them.” (Revelation 21:3)

The conclusion of the Incarnation will be...

Meanwhile, the Church, which is His Body, is “being built together into a dwelling of God by the Spirit.” (Ephesians 2:22)

Can you understand the strategic importance of the Church as a direct result of the Incarnation?

Prayer Time: (15–30 minutes)

Hebrews says that since Christ is your High Priest, you can come boldly to His throne and find it to be a throne of grace so that you might find mercy and grace to help you in the time of your need.

So, come. Bow down. Acknowledge His Presence.

Wait quietly before Him in silent adoration.

Extend your hands toward Him and express your love to Him.

Draw His love for you right into your being.

Pray that the Church you know best will be filled with this enjoying God dwelling in their midst!

Lesson 24 and 25

Scripture Study: Reread key verses this morning. Matthew 1:21, 23; Luke 1:32, 33, 35.

What you have just read is part of the “testimony of (about) Jesus.” When you declare Who He was, Who He is, and Who He is to come, you are establishing the “testimony of Jesus.” How does this change your world and your life experiences?

Peter clues us in as to why God chose us: “so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.” (1 Peter 2:9) Your priestly ministry is built around your proclaiming “the testimony about Jesus.”

So what does this say about the critical role worship plays in your personal life, in your family life, and in the life of the Church?

“For the testimony of (about) Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.” (Revelations 19:10) So... take heed; it is your proclaiming Who He is into this world, both by worship and by witness, that you establish the atmosphere of the prophetic realm!

What are the practical implications of all of this in your life?

Once again, state why Satan hates it when you experience and proclaim the Incarnation of Christ.

This Christmas, what are ways that you can glorify the Savior in your family or group settings?

Can you see why Jesus said to you/the Church, “You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth”? (Acts 1:8)

What is it that the Holy Spirit loves to do?

And is this not “proclaiming the excellencies” and “the testimony of Jesus”?

Prayer Time: *(However long....)*

Oh, this is the time to tell the angels to move over, because one of the children has come forth to give God His due!

Stand or kneel or lie upon the floor; but get yourself into a place of reverence and adoration!

Declare His pre-existent worthiness and holiness!

Worship Him for His humiliation in the Incarnation.

Worship Him for His suffering.

Worship Him for loving you.

Thank Him for eternal life.

Ask Him for the salvation of those you know who need to be included!

Lesson 26

Scripture Study: Read Acts 1:8. *(15 minutes)*

Now that you have studied God's desire to dwell with us, and His powerful act in the Incarnation, does this shed fresh revelation on you about the Church's role in witnessing? And when He says, "...and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age"? (Matthew 28:20)

Prayer Time: *(15–30 minutes)*

Ask the Lord to fill you with His Spirit.

Do you sing in tongues? If so, do this now; and if not, sing a "new song" in English.

Ask God to bring others into "hallowing His name" with you.

Pray His authority into the situations that you see that need His help.

Prophetically, stand in the trouble spots you especially feel and then receive His will into these places as one commissioned to pray this way.

Then, spend some time just delighting yourself in the Lord.

Pray His will into your day.

Lesson 27

Scripture Study: Read Matthew 6:6-15. *(15 minutes)*

Why does Jesus want you to begin your prayers with relating to God as your Father?
Why is it important to begin with heaven as you come to God, even though you have many concerns which are on the earth?

Why is it critical that you be eager for the Kingdom of heaven to come if you want to see situations from God's point of view?

And what does this have to do with your "daily bread" type of needs being met for the glory of God?

Do you actually ask God Himself to provide your practical needs day by day? Might not this be a good idea?

Do you pray every day in faith, asking God to deliver you and yours from the evil one?

Might not this also be critical to your well-being?

Notice that this prayer session ends with a time of praise and worship. Another God-idea.

Prayer Time: *(15–30 minutes)*

Read Matthew 6:9 to the Lord and then enter into hallowing His name!

Read Matthew 6:10 to the Lord and then let the Holy Spirit fill you and take you into praying God's Kingdom reign upon the earth.

Read Matthew 6:13b to the Lord, and then finish with a time of praising God.

Lesson 28

Scripture Study: Reread Matthew 6:6-15. *(15 minutes)*

Why does God want you (the Church) to be the instrument of praying His authority, His Kingdom, His will upon the earth?

How is this all connected with the Incarnation of Christ?

What happens to your prayer if you are unconsciously or consciously harboring unforgiveness?

Why do you think Jesus tells you to daily ask God your Father for your daily needs?

What do you think Jesus has in mind when He tells you to pray against temptation and evil?

Why do you think that Jesus expanded His initial warning about the effects of not forgiving?

Prayer Time: *(15–30 minutes)*

Begin to cultivate the habit of forgiving everyone who has hurt or offended you.

Ask the Holy Spirit to fill you today so that you can “hallow His name” all day long.

Use your faith and your voice to declare the goodness of God and His right to recognition!

Pray His Kingdom to come into all the trouble spots that are affecting your life!

Submit yourself to the authority of the Lord and to His human authorities as a part of moving in His Kingdom.

Pray His authority over the Church fellowship of which you are a part.

Lesson 29

Scripture Study: Read Matthew 4:1-11. Be sure to use your marking pen and highlighter. *(15 minutes)*

Remember, this is Christ, the last Adam, the Federal Head of “the children”; and He is representing all those whom He represents! He accomplished what Adam failed to accomplish, and just as you once shared in Adam’s failure, you now are sharing in what Jesus Christ accomplished!

How does 4:4 apply to your resisting the devil?

How does 4:7 apply to your resisting the devil? Testing God here means that you are putting God on trial when it is you who is being tested, not God. This is very different from Malachi 3:10-11 where God commands us to test Him, which means to so trust Him that we prove that He is faithful to His promises.

How does 4:10 apply to your having authority over the devil?

Prayer Time: *(15–30 minutes)*

Worship Christ as the Federal Head who is representing you in the New Covenant!

Read Matthew 4:4 before the Lord and pray accordingly.

Read Matthew 4:7 before the Lord and pray accordingly.

Read Matthew 4:10 before the Lord and pray accordingly.

Spend some time just thanking the Lord for His goodness to you.

Confess His goodness over every place where you are experiencing a need or a difficulty.

Lesson 30

Scripture Study: Read Matthew 12:25-30. *(15 minutes)*

Can you see why unity in the family and in the Church is so essential to having the power over the devil?

Can you see why it is important for you and the Church to cast out demons?

Can a man be “sort of with Jesus” or “a little bit committed” to Jesus and have it be the real thing?

Jesus has been “spoiling the strong man’s house” since He came out of the forty days of temptation filled with the Spirit. How does His having bound the devil apply to your life?

What do you think is the role Jesus envisions for the Church in destroying the works of darkness and carrying on this work of “spoiling the strong man’s house?”

Scripture Comments: Matthew 12:31-33. (This really is not part of this lesson; I just don’t want someone to get tricked by the enemy.)

The devil likes to tell some that they have committed the unpardonable sin; but of course, he is a liar.

The people who have committed this sin are way past listening to this warning because they are too hardened to care.

People can reject the gospel and later repent and be forgiven; but there are those who really understand who Jesus is and then attribute the spirit He worked by to the devil. This type of blasphemy in calling the Holy Spirit in Christ something from Satan so changes a person that they will not repent and will not desire God’s forgiveness until it is too late.

Prayer Time: *(15–30 minutes)*

Worship Jesus as your Savior from the devil, from sin, and from death!

Use the truth you know about His victory over Satan to proclaim His glory and your freedom!

Enjoy the Savior’s victory. Savor it. Dwell in His glorious achievements.

Pray His promises that He will deliver His people from their sin.

Receive His peace every day and live in it all day, as this is part of your protection.

Agree with the Lord for the salvation of all who have visited your Church during this month of December.

Lesson 31

Scripture Study: Read Psalm 100. (*15 minutes*)

What does God say about using your emotions to honor Him?

The way to really serve God is with an attitude of ...

Can you say why? Have you figured this out yet?

Can you see why and how it is pleasing to God for you to come to Him, singing as you come?

When you come to Him this way, what seems to follow? (Verse 3)

In verse 5, the Lord gives the reason for all this. It is the devil's constant suggestion that the Lord is not good; and then whenever possible he will step this up to an even higher level and accuse God with mockery. Your willingness to recognize and declare the Lord's goodness is right at the heart of how you resist and overcome the devil!

The devil comes when you complain because, in most cases, it can be interpreted as a small accusation against the Lord. But Psalm 100 is a manual for overcoming the devil and bringing honor to Jesus.

What a wonderful way to finish one year and enter into another: with such great shouting and singing and thanking the Lord, who has set His loving kindness (this is His loyal-covenant-love) upon you!

Prayer Time: (*15–30 minutes*)

Read Psalm 100 before the Lord and then follow the Spirit into doing it!

Read different portions of this Psalm to the Lord and keep going.

Do experiment with shouting, singing, declaring, proclaiming, and announcing the goodness of the Lord.

Ask God to help you make this a habit of life as you enter a new year. Let this be the year of your praise to the Christ who came for you!