

Christmas Bible Study, Firm Foundation Christian Church, Woonsocket, RI

Notes by James Moriello, in Chronological Order

General Overview of the Study: Old Testament Background, Preview of the Incarnation, Conception Narrative, Birth of Jesus, Infant Jesus

1. Old Testament Background

- a. Genesis 3:15, “her Seed”, first indication of Advent and Virgin Birth in Scripture.
- b. Isaiah 7:14—Virgin Birth of Immanuel (God With Us) prophesied
- c. Micah 5:2—Everlasting God will be ‘Incarnated’ in Bethlehem Ephrathah
- d. Daniel 9:24-27—General time frame of Messiah’s Coming could be ascertained (483 years from decree in Nehemiah 2:8 to the crucifixion, hence heightened anticipation in Israel as seen in Simeon, Anna, Magi)
- e. Theophanies in Scripture—God appearing as a man (Joshua 5:13-15 compared with Exodus 3:5 and John 1:18; also Judges 6:21-23 and Judges 13:9-23)
- f. We can trust Scripture because it is divinely inspired (2 Peter 1:20-21).
- g. Bible prophecy is either fulfilled or it is yet to be fulfilled (Matthew 5:17-18).
- h. Both Old and New Testaments are infinitely valuable and relevant (John 5:39).
- i. God is always on time (Galatians 4:4-5). Jesus was born under the Law.

2. Preview of the Incarnation

- a. John 1:1-18—eternality of God the Son, His activity in creation, the world was dark and death reigned and therefore needed light and life, Christ in His Incarnation both fully God and fully Man, both Son of God and Son of Man, fullness of grace and truth, God’s complete special revelation in Christ Jesus, His attributes clearly show His Deity, Christianity is about Christ and likewise Christmas is about Christ
- b. Matthew 1:1-17, Luke 3:23-38—Genealogy of Jesus Christ, Matthew give the legal line through Joseph and Luke gives the actual line through Mary, chart to follow, God knows each of us by name. Records destroyed in 70 AD.

Matthew 1:1-16	Luke 3:23-38	Comments
	God	Luke brings the line all the way back to God.
	Adam	
	Seth	
	Enosh	
	Cainan	
	Mahalelel	
	Jared	
	Enoch	
	Methuselah	He lived 969 years, oldest on record (Gen 5:27).
	Lamech	
	Noah	This is Noah of the Flood.
	Shem	
	Arphaxad	
	Cainan	
	Shelah	
	Eber	We get the name 'Hebrew' from his name.
	Peleg	
	Reu	
	Serug	
	Nahor	
	Terah	
Abraham	Abraham	Matthew begins his genealogy with Abraham. The promise is through Abraham (Gen 12:1-3).
Isaac	Isaac	
Jacob	Jacob	
Judah	Judah	
Perez	Perez	
Hezron	Hezron	
Ram	Ram	
Amminadab	Amminadab	
Nahshon	Nahshon	
Salmon	Salmon	
Boaz	Boaz	We read of Boaz in the Book of Ruth.
Obed	Obed	
Jesse	Jesse	
David	David	The promise is through David (2 Sam 7:12-16).
Solomon	Nathan	The lines will now diverge after David.
Rehoboam	Mattathah	In Joseph's line are the OT Kings of Judah.
Abijah	Menan	
Asa	Melea	Asa reigned as king 40 years (2 Chron 16:13).
	Eliakim	

(Matthew, Luke)

Jehoshaphat	Jonan	
	Joseph	
Joram	Judah	
	Simeon	
Uzziah	Levi	Uzziah reigned as king 52 years (2 Chron 26:3).
	Matthat	
Jotham	Jorim	
Ahaz	Eliezer	
Hezekiah	Joseph	
	Er	
Manasseh	Elmodam	
Amon	Cosam	
Josiah	Addi	
Jeconiah	Melchi	Jeconiah could not be in the line of the virgin who would bear Christ (Jeremiah 22:30).
	Neri	
Shealtiel	Shealtiel	
Zerubbabel	Zerubbabel	He was a leader in the days of Ezra (Ezra 3:8)
	Rhesa	
Abiud	Joannas	
	Judah	
Eliakim	Joseph	
	Semei	
Azor	Mattathiah	
	Maath	
Zadok	Naggai	
	Eslie	
Achim	Nahum	
	Amos	
Eliud	Mattathiah	
	Joseph	
Eleazar	Janna	
	Melchi	
Matthan	Levi	
	Matthat	
Jacob	Heli	
Joseph	Mary	Matthew gives the legal line; Luke the actual.
Jesus Christ	Jesus Christ	

3. Conception Narrative

a. Luke 1:5-25—John the Baptist’s Birth Announced, Zacharias the father, Elizabeth the mother, filling of the Spirit in the Old Testament and the indwelling of the Spirit in the New Testament (1 Corinthians 3:16), Nazarite vow (Numbers 6:1-4), forerunner “in the spirit and power of Elijah”, Zacharias’ unbelief, opening of the barren womb, God can perform miracles in our lives both ordinary and extraordinary

b. Luke 1:26-38—Christ’s Birth Announced to Mary, the timing, betrothal as a legally binding engagement contract, basis of the announcement is prophetic events which must come to pass, Mary’s response is belief, nature of the virgin birth and the role of God the Holy Spirit, Mary’s humility and willingness to submit to the plans of God

c. Luke 1:39-45—Mary visits Elizabeth, personhood begins in the womb, Mary is blessed above all other women because of her privilege, she receives blessing but has no blessing to confer unto others, Jesus our One Mediator (1 Timothy 2:5), the joy and benefits of Christian fellowship (Psalm 133:1)

d. Luke 1:46-56—The Song of Mary or Magnificat, faithful and God-fearing Mary also needed a Savior being a sinner, God does great things not only generally but He does “great things for me”, God’s mercy comes to those who recognize that they need it

e. Luke 1:57-66—Birth and circumcision of John the Baptist, Romans 12:15 in action, circumcision as a sign under the Old Covenant (Genesis 17:12), God naming a child (Cf. Luke 1:13) in Scripture a sign of great things to come, discussing and disseminating the Gospel through the witness of His goodness and mercy and the value of the testimony of each one of us to that end (Romans 10:14-18)

f. Luke 1:67-80—Zacharias’ Prophecy, visitation for the purpose of redemption is indeed what Christ did, it is God’s method of operation, sanctification (living godly lives), John the Baptist the forerunner, “remission of sins” (Hebrews 9:22) looking forward to His sacrificial work on earth, Christ our guide who lights the way of peace both with the Father eternally and in our earthly lives as we await that day, Jesus the light of truth, love, and forgiveness first God-to-man and second man-to-man

4. Birth of Jesus Christ

a. Luke 2:1-5—the timing, date of the census 8-4 BC, carrying out of the census 6-4 BC, Quirinius' first of two terms as governor, census ordered by Caesar Augustus for “all the world” (that is, under Roman authority)—no concern for convenience of the people re: timing, Herod who ordered slaughter of the children died in 4 BC so Jesus could not have been born later than that if those records are accurate, Pilate was governor 26-36 AD so Jesus was crucified during those years, taking into account Daniel 9:24-27 and the prophecy of 483 years our best guess is that Jesus was born in 4 BC and died 30 AD, time of year of birth unknown but December was very possible, Israel's climate: rainy season Nov-Feb produces much green grass ideal for pasture so shepherds may be found keeping sheep under these conditions, average temperature in Jerusalem December 25th is High 58 Low 44 with very occasional frost and snow

b. Matthew 1:18-25—betrothal in cultural context, miraculous conception Cf. Luke 1:35, bill of divorcement would be sought by Joseph according to Deuteronomy 24:1, Joseph's heart was to do so as gracefully and mercifully as possible, “being a just man” in the divine estimation, angelic visitation and the faith of Joseph, the name Jesus (The Lord shall save), Isaiah 7:14 fulfilled, Mary kept a virgin until after Jesus' birth

c. Luke 2:6-7—firstborn son (Mary had at least 6 other biological children (siblings of Jesus) according to Matthew 13:55-56), swaddling cloths used for wrapping babies and sometimes for burial (significance of), “manger” a feeding trough in a stable or cave, “inn” most likely not a public inn but guest house

d. Luke 2:8-20—diligent shepherds, Jesus the Good Shepherd (John 10), birth witnessed by ‘ordinary men’ of great faith, 2:11 will be the Christmas sermon (Savior, Christ, Lord), angelic praise and its purpose, “peace, goodwill” God-man and man-man, witnessing God's works, meditating on God's works, shepherds do as the angels did, so should we

5. Infant Jesus

a. Luke 2:21-24—circumcision (Genesis 17:12; Leviticus 12:3), purification 40 day period followed by sacrifice (Leviticus 12:6-8), the place: Jerusalem near Bethlehem Ephrath

b. Luke 2:25-35—Simeon, waiting having received direct revelation from God, salvation found in a Person (Jesus Christ), prophecy of Mary witnessing the crucifixion, John 1:1, Hebrews 4:12

c. Luke 2:36-38—Anna, OT prophetess, did the work of an evangelist and was richly rewarded, probably 84 years old in total

d. Matthew 2:1-12—takes place in a house not the manger, magi not kings but astrologers from the east (Persia), “His star” unmistakable but its origin unknown (probably Shekinah Glory, Cf. Numbers 24:17), v. 5-6 danger of knowing many things but missing the truth, gifts symbolic (king, priest, death),

e. Matthew 2:13-15—flight to Egypt, God’s preservation, evil intents of men thwarted

f. Matthew 2:16-18—massacre of the innocents, Herod and his evil heart and deed, ruthlessness borne out of jealousy and rage, depravity of man (Jeremiah 17:9)

g. Matthew 2:19-23; Luke 2:39-40—settling down in Nazareth