

Basic Training: The Soldier's Manual

Lesson Ten: Life Of Christ

A. The Biblical And Historical Narrative:

1. **When we left off, the scriptures had fallen silent... The 400 years of silence.** Due to their unfaithfulness God sent a famine to His people of hearing the words of the Lord. No prophet and no prophecy. No voice of God was heard. The people were left to think about their relationship with God in this quietness & wait for the arrival of the Messiah. But they were not without guidance... for they had the scriptures. These not only told that a Savior and King was coming, but pinpointed the general time when He'd arrive. So its no surprise that when we flip that blank page between the testaments over, we find faithful people of God watching & hopefully anticipating something big!
2. **God breaks the silence in an incredible way!**
 - a. The year was around 4BC. Herod was ruling over Judea. A man named Zechariah was serving as priest in the temple. He and his wife Elizabeth were old and unable to have children. As Zechariah was working, an angel appeared which promptly frightened him. He is told his prayer had been heard and he and Elizabeth would be given a son. But this wasn't just any son, this would be the one who would prepare the way for the Lord. This son would be the fulfillment of prophecy made over 400 years before **(Luke 1:13-17)**. Zechariah is made mute until the child is born and he writes, "His name is John" (*His name means Grace*)
 - b. When Elizabeth was six months pregnant, Gabriel, the same angel, appears to Mary and announces that she too will have a son. Now Elizabeth was barren, Mary was a virgin! This was incredible. This Son would be special... the Son of the Most High God! This Son would reign on the throne of David. He would have a kingdom that would never end. So, all those promises and prophecies are about to be fulfilled... by MARY! **(vs. 31-34)** (*Jehovah Saves... Jehovah Saves By Grace*)
 - c. There's a problem here... Mary was in the process of being married to a man named Joseph. They had kept themselves pure but now his wife to be is suddenly pregnant? They were so deep in the process that to end the relationship he would have to divorce her, which he planned to do. But an angel appeared in a dream revealing all that transpired & what Jesus would do **(Matt 1:19-23)**
 - d. Three months later John was born. News of the event spread throughout all the land and wonderment seized the hearts of the people. Remember, its been 400 years since they've heard anything from God and they are eagerly awaiting the fulfillment of some pretty incredible things. Has the time come? **(Luke 1:65-66)**
3. **Finally the moment all of history has been pointing to has come... Jesus is born**
 - a. The scene was set three months later in a sleepy town called Bethlehem. But it was abuzz with activity due to a required census. People from all over had returned to their homeland to be counted in the census. Mary and Joseph arrive in town and Mary was 9 months pregnant. They had evidently been there a little while when it came time for Jesus to be born **(Luke 2:4-7)**. They were staying with relatives, but the house was crowded. The lower level of the home would've

doubled as place to keep some animals at night. Either Jesus was born here and then laid in a manger or born elsewhere in the house & then taken down there. We don't know what, if any, animals were present at this time.

- b. At the same time, there were some shepherds out in a field with their sheep. Angels appeared to them announcing the birth of Jesus. The angels told the shepherds how they could recognize the child of promise. They worshipped God and declared the peace for mankind which this birth meant **(Luke 2:11-14)**
- c. At 8 days of age Mary & Joseph take Jesus to be circumcised. Why? They were obedient to the law. It was then that they officially name their child Jesus. They were careful to obey God completely in everything **(Luke 2:21)**. At 40 days old, Jesus was presented in the temple where Simeon and Anna get a chance to see Jesus, hold Jesus, & they rejoice having seen the salvation of the Lord **(v. 22-38)**
- d. As a toddler, a group of wisemen (star experts) see a star that told them a king had been born in Judea. So they traveled to Bethlehem and asked Herod, the king of the area, where was the child born king of Jews. Herod ordered the execution of all male children under 2. Joseph & Mary fled to Egypt until the threat subsided then returned to Nazareth where Jesus was raised **(Matthew 2:16-18)**
- d. From here we know nothing about the childhood of Jesus. He was raised in blue collar home, the son of a carpenter. At 12 years of age, Mary and Joseph took Him to the temple where Jesus got left behind on accident. When they came back and found Him, Jesus explained how they shouldn't be shocked because He was doing His Father's work. Jesus continued to grow up **(Luke 2:48-49,52)**

4. When Jesus was 30 years of age, His official ministry began

- a. His work kicked off with His baptism by John in the Jordan River. John was preparing the way for Jesus by preaching and baptizing people. One day Jesus showed up to be baptized. John expressed his feelings of unworthiness, but eventually did. He saw the Holy Spirit descend like a dove and the Father spoke from Heaven saying, "This is my beloved Son...". Next, Jesus was driven into the wilderness where He fasted for 40 days and then faced intense temptation directly from Satan himself. Jesus stood firm quoting scripture as defense **(Matt 3:16-4:1)**
- b. One of the first things Jesus did as part of His ministry was the selection of a special group of twelve disciples. They would eventually be called apostles. The first four were fisherman. The rest were men from very different backgrounds. These men left everything to follow Jesus and learn from Him. These men would eventually be sent by Jesus into all the world to preach the gospel and continue His work after He ascended back to Heaven **(Matthew 4:18-20)**
- c. Jesus lived with incredible purpose and determination. He was focused on doing His Father's will always, even when this meant incredible suffering for Him **(John 6:38)**. He came to show mankind the Father **(John 14:6-9)**. He came to seek & save the lost **(Luke 19:10)**. He came to give us life and give it abundantly **(John 10:10)**. He came not to be served, but to serve **(Mark 10:45)**
- d. Consider some major events during the time of the ministry of Jesus...
 - 1) During the 1st Passover of His ministry Jesus goes to Jerusalem and cleanses the temple. Driving out people who turned God's house into a house of commerce and took advantage of people in need. He'd do this twice

- 2) After some training, Jesus sends the 12 apostles out on a mission. They were to teach and He gave them the power to heal people. Later, Jesus would do this again but this time He would send out 72. This is often called “The Limited Commission” – Prepping them to go worldwide!
 - 3) Jesus often had run ins with the Jewish leaders. The Pharisees and Sadducees along with the chief priests were the main culprits. They often attacked Jesus for healing people on the Sabbath day. They attacked Jesus for breaking the traditions they made up. Ironically they never denied the miracles, but ignored what they meant. That Jesus was God’s Son.
 - 4) Jesus had an inner circle of disciples... Peter, James, and John. He took these up on a mountain where He was transfigured... changed into a glorious body. Moses and Elijah appeared on either side of Jesus. God spoke and said, “This is my beloved Son, hear Him!”
 - 5) On one occasion a woman caught in the act of adultery. The law said she should be stoned, along with the guilty man. Jesus told the one who was without sin to throw a stone first. They all walked away. Jesus said He didn’t condemn her either but to go and sin no more.
 - 6) On the Sunday before His death, Jesus entered Jerusalem. He was riding the foal of a donkey. The people lined the streets, they laid down their coats and palm branches and shouted, “Hosanna in the highest.” This was the fulfillment of prophecy of the Messiah who would be king.
 - 7) The night before His death, Jesus had the disciples prep a room so He could celebrate the Passover for them. Jesus would die on the cross the next evening as the ultimate Passover Lamb. So this is His only chance to do it. At the close of their celebration, Jesus took unleavened bread and fruit of the vine and created a new memorial meal... A remembrance of Him, His death, and the covenant man would enjoy through His blood.
 - 8) That night He went to the Garden of Gethsemane with His disciples to pray. His disciples kept falling asleep. Jesus prayed for the cup, His death, to pass from Him. He was seeking another way around the cross. But that wasn’t His Father’s plan. As Jesus walks off with His disciples He sees Judas coming with soldiers behind him. Judas walks up and greets Jesus with a kiss... nothing holy about it. Jesus is arrested and taken to court. Jesus spends that night being questioned & accused in a kangaroo court by the Jewish leaders until the next day when a Roman trial could begin
 - 9) The next day, Jesus appeared before Pilate and Herod. He was shamefully mocked and brutally beaten. The crowds demand Jesus be crucified, even allowing a hardcore criminal to be released instead.
5. Throughout all of these events Jesus was very busy teaching and performing miracles. These showed Jesus’ authority as the Son of God, proving His claims were true. Jesus He showed people about how real righteousness begins on the inside. That people matter and we need to care about everyone. That the kingdom of God would be filled by people who are humble, trusting, and sincere. That we need to look for chances to serve others instead of waiting to be served. That it all boils down to loving God and others completely **(Luke 7:21-22; Matt 5:20, 18:3-4; 22:36-40)**

6. Now let's simply read of His death **(Mark 15:15-39)** → Other events... Thief who repented, Jesus saying Father forgive them, veil of temple torn, side of Jesus pierced
7. Three days later, on Sunday morning, the stone was rolled away and Jesus walked out. He then met with His disciples and was seen alive by many people. The empty tomb was an impossible problem for His enemies to solve. His work of redemption was done, but His work on our behalf did not end there. We have in Jesus a compassionate and faithful High Priest who is there to help us in our weaknesses **(Hebrews 4:14-16)**

B. Lessons From The Narrative

1. We should never question that God truly loves us **(John 3:16)**
2. We should also never question that we have a friend in Jesus who understands **(Heb 2:17-18)**
3. We should always appreciate the severity of sin **(John 1:29)**
4. We should seek and be committed to real religion. Some people will say, "Give me Jesus but I want nothing to do with religion." This is an overreaction to a problem. Religion isn't the problem. A lack of sincerity and the presence of selfishness is! **(Matthew 23:23)**
5. We should develop an authentic and active love for all mankind **(Matthew 9:36; 14:14)**
6. We should spend more time seeing and loving Jesus. The gospels don't just tell us what Jesus did, but who Jesus is. Sometimes we get so caught up in doctrine and theology that we forget to admire Jesus. So many of our issues are simply because we don't love Jesus enough. Perhaps if we knew Him better we'd love Him more! **(John 1:1-18)**

C. The Scarlet Thread Running Through The Biblical Narrative:

1. Ever since Adam and Eve sinned in the garden of Eden we have been talking about that scarlet thread. All of those prophecies, all of those promises, all of those shadows were pointing to Jesus. Not just pointing, but finding their fulfillment in Him. All of those laws, instructions, & teachings were about Jesus. Mary said, "He's here!" **(Luke 1:46-55)**