

Who Is Jesus

Part Three/ Wednesday, December 19, 2018

The Glorious Advent

1 Brief Review: Week One

2 In our first session two weeks ago, our attention was turned to the pre-existent Jesus.
3 God's foreknowledge caused Him to know that the original man, Adam, would fall into
4 sin. But long before that happened, God already had the plan in place, a way of
5 redemption, which we read about in Ephes. 1:4: **According as he hath chosen us in**
6 **him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame**
7 **before him in love...** We know further that there was an accord in the heavenlies
8 between God, the Father, God, the Son and God, the Holy Spirit when it came to the
9 "making" of man: **Genesis 1:26 And God said, Let us make man in our image,**
10 **after our likeness...** The "Us" was the Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

11
12 In that dimension called eternity, of which we know so precious little, Jesus always WAS
13 and always will BE. His first moment was not as a babe in a manger in Bethlehem.

14
15 Brief Review: Week Two

16 In our second session we considered the Incarnation, that is, God became a man - Jesus,
17 the Christ Messiah of God. John 1:1-6 **In the beginning was the Word, and the**
18 **Word was with God, and the Word was God. [2] The same was in the beginning**
19 **with God. [3] All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing**
20 **made that was made. [4] In him was life; and the life was the light of men. [5] And**
21 **the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.** The "Word"
22 of which John writes is the Christ who was in the very beginning. Yet He willingly
23 became a human being for 33+ years. This is the basis for what theologians call "The
24 Incarnation."

THE BIRTH OF JESUS Caesar Augustus

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29 Luke 2:1 **And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from**
30 **Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed.**

31
32 Pastor's Perspective: *The more you know about secular history, the stronger will be*
33 *your absolute confidence and belief in the Bible. Are you aware that our own month of*
34 *August is named for Caesar Augustus? His real name was Octavian. He was a nephew*
35 *of Julius Caesar and was adopted as heir in Caesar's will. He adopted his adoptive*

1 *father's name, Gaius Julius Caesar and thus began his fourteen year struggle to rule the*
2 *Roman Empire. Julius Caesar was assassinated in the Senate on March 15, 45 BC (the*
3 *famed Ides of March) which united Octavian with Marc Antony and Lepidus in what was*
4 *called the Second Triumvirate. All three wished to cash in on Julius Caesar's popularity*
5 *and pronounced the assassinated Julius a god of the Roman state.*

6
7 *For a time, Octavian and Antony shared the crown, Octavian in Rome while Antony was*
8 *content in Egypt with Cleopatra, whose family had ruled Egypt since the death of*
9 *Alexander the Great (323 B.C.)*

10
11 *Probably everyone in the Empire knew this alliance would not be permanent. It ended*
12 *when Admiral and strategist Agrippa, (not Herod) defeated the combined forces of*
13 *Antony and Cleopatra at the naval battle of Actium (31 BC) off the coast of Greece in the*
14 *Ionian Sea. Both Antony and Cleopatra committed suicide, leaving Octavian in control.*

15
16 *Now in full control of the Empire, Augustus, as he was now known, eliminated all his*
17 *enemies. He established the famous Praetorian Guard, a private security force which*
18 *served the emperors who followed him.*

19
20 *Wanting an accurate assessment of his wide Empire, Augustus "made a decree that all*
21 *the world should be taxed" and counted through the census, which is what brought*
22 *Joseph and Mary to Bethlehem.*

23
24

Augustus died in 14 AD after ruling for 41 years. Jesus would have been a young teenager when the emperor died. Augustus was followed by Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius and Nero, all rulers during the lives of the Apostles of Jesus. That last sentence is extremely important when considering the ministry years of those first followers of Jesus. Paul, for example, was tried on capital charges before Nero (and acquitted) and later tried again before Nero's appointed official and condemned to death by beheading. Peter was also executed at Nero's command. Tiberius was the emperor at the time of Jesus' crucifixion. Much of Pilate's fear of letting Jesus go free was due to Tiberius' former primary counselor, Sejanus. (The story of the downfall of Sejanus is one of the most fascinating in all the history of ancient Rome.)

25
26 **BETHLEHEM**

27
28 Micah 5:2

29 **But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah** (ancient name of Bethlehem dating back to the time
30 of Jacob), **though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall**

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This is the interior of the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem, built under the authority of Emperor Constantine's mother Helena 1600 years ago. The portion pictured here is the Greek Orthodox part of the ancient structure. To the left is the Roman Catholic sanctuary, seen on Christmas celebration TV programs. The segment between the churches belongs to the Armenian church. To the front of the Greek Orthodox church is the nave, beneath which is the small cave, once a stable beneath an old inn, believed to be the site of Jesus' birth. Entrance and exit to the cave are located on either side of the nave (or platform).

He come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.

The Hebrew Scriptures (Old Testament) had numerous prophecies regarding Jesus' birth 2000 years ago. Some Biblical scholars claim over 300 of such prophecies. Some of those prophecies, such as the one listed here from Micah, prophesied that our Lord would be born in Bethlehem. Today, the town is a bustling town of about 30,000, 70% Palestinian. But 2000 years ago the population would have been fewer than a thousand. Yet our Heavenly Father chose this place for the blessed Advent of our Savior Jesus.

Bethlehem was first settled by Canaanites who named the town *Beit Lahama*, so named for a god named Lahama. 1200 years later the Philistines (who had come from the Mediterranean Island of Crete) had a garrison there.

The town is located just 6 miles south of Jerusalem. It was turned over to the Palestinian

1 Authority as a result of the 1995 Intifada (the Palestinian uprising in the West Bank). In
2 Hebrew the town is called *Bet Lehem* (which means House of Bread) and in Arabic it is
3 called *Bet Lahm* (house of Meat).

4
5 For Jews, Bethlehem is the burial place of the matriarch Rachel and the birthplace of
6 King David. Samuel anointed David as king of Israel there (1 Samuel 16:12-13 **And**
7 **the Lord said, Arise, anoint him: for this is he. [13] Then Samuel took the horn of**
8 **oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren: and the Spirit of the Lord came**
9 **upon David from that day forward. So Samuel rose up, and went to Ramah.**
10 David's ancestors, Ruth and Boaz, were married in Bethlehem.

11
12 For Christians, Bethlehem is recognized in the gospels of Matthew and Luke as the
13 birthplace of Jesus and is one of Christianity's holiest sites. (It is very interesting to me
14 that although Bethlehem today is primarily Muslim, the local laws requires a Christian to
15 be elected mayor.)

16 17 THE CHURCH OF THE NATIVITY

18
19 Today there are many churches in Bethlehem.

- 20
- 21 ✓ Greek Orthodox - 15
- 22 ✓ Roman Catholic - 25
- 23 ✓ Protestant - 8
- 24 ✓ Syriac Orthodox - 1
- 25 ✓ Several mosques
- 26

27 The church most people want to see is the historic Church of the Nativity on Manger
28 Square. As indicated earlier, it was built in the 4th century by the mother of the Byzantine
29 (Roman) Emperor Constantine. She was also responsible for the construction of the
30 Church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem.

31
32 Its colorful history: When the Persians invaded in 614, they did not destroy the building
33 because, according to tradition, they were moved by a painting inside depicting the birth
34 of Jesus. The artist had painted the magi in Persian attire. King Edward IV of England
35 donated the wood from English Oak trees for the ceiling and the lead to cover the roof;
36 however, the Turks later melted it down as ammunition in their war against the Venetians.

37
38 The entrance to the church is a very low doorway, through which entrants must bow down
39 to use. It is believed by many that the low entrance was designed to prevent unbelievers
40 from entering the church on horseback.

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The Cave is pictured above, believed to be the stable where Jesus was born. It does not look like a rocky cave because the walls have been covered with heavy tapestries and the floor covered marble. But a peek behind the coverings makes it clear that it is, indeed, a cave. I have been a guest of Greek Orthodox priests here for their 7 a.m. prayer mass. The cave is not large, about 50 feet long and 20 feet wide.

THE GENEALOGY OF JESUS CHRIST

Matthew's Gospel was directed primarily at Jews and chapter 1 gives our Lord's Jewish genealogy. It is divided into three parts:

Matthew 1:16-17 And Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ. [17] So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations; and from David until the carrying away into Babylon are fourteen generations; and from the carrying away into Babylon unto Christ are fourteen generations.

42 generations are shown in this remarkable chapter. Not all of the characters were sterling, clearly showing the absolute humanity of our Lord, for while He lived a perfect, exemplary life, some of his earlier family did not.

- ▶ In Matthew Matthew 1:2: **Abraham begat Isaac; and Isaac begat Jacob; and Jacob begat Judas and his brethren;** The Judas referred to here was not the

1 Apostle Judas Iscariot, but rather Judah, the half brother of Joseph. The early life
2 of Judah was deplorable, but something remarkable must have happened to him for
3 we read in Rev. 5:5: **And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold,**
4 **the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the**
5 **book, and to loose the seven seals thereof.** There it is: Somehow, this man
6 who began his adult life badly concluded it as an ancestor of the Christ - and even
7 more, of Jesus Himself.

- 8
9 ▶ Or consider Matthew 1:10 Matthew 1:10: **And Hezekiah begat Manasseh...**
10 Hezekiah was one of Israel's greatest kings (716-687 B.C.); but his son was a
11 terror, arguably the worst king ever in that land.

12
13 I point this out because it demonstrates that even with a bad start in life, it can all be
14 turned around to God's glory and the fulfillment of a human life.

15 16 **The Annunciation and The Virgin Birth of Jesus**

17
18 The Annunciation is the blessed moment in time when the angel Gabriel appeared to a
19 very young girl (teen) in Nazareth who was a virgin (sexually). His announcement to her
20 was startling!

21
22 Luke 1:26-38 (Bear in mind as you read these verses that they were written by a man
23 named Luke, who was a physician from northern Greece)

24 **And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee,**
25 **named Nazareth, [27] To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the**
26 **house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. [28] And the angel came in unto**
27 **her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art**
28 **thou among women. [29] And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and**
29 **cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be. [30] And the angel said**
30 **unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God. [31] And, behold,**
31 **thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name**
32 **Jesus. [32] He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord**
33 **God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: [33] And he shall reign over**
34 **the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end. [34] Then said**
35 **Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? [35] And the angel**
36 **answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of**
37 **the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be**
38 **born of thee shall be called the Son of God. [36] And, behold, thy cousin Elisabeth,**
39 **she hath also conceived a son in her old age: and this is the sixth month with her,**
40 **who was called barren. [37] For with God nothing shall be impossible. [38] And**

1 **Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me** according to thy word.
2 And the angel departed from her.

3
4 Luke 1:26: “And in the sixth month....”

5
6 The sixth month of what? Earlier in this chapter, we learn that down in Jerusalem, 95
7 miles south of Nazareth, an angel had appeared to an old priest named Zechariah. He
8 and his wife Elisabeth were old (“stricken in years” - Luke 1:7). The angel declared that
9 this old couple would actually still have a child via normal birth. He was to be called
10 John. So...Luke 1:26 refers to the sixth month of Elisabeth’s (cousin to Mary)
11 pregnancy.

12 13 The Virgin Birth of Jesus

14
15 Young Mary was flabbergasted at the message of Gabriel. She was pregnant? How
16 could such a thing be? She was a virgin. (Verse 34) “How shall this be, seeing I
17 know not a man?”

18
19 Incredible theology here! Jesus’ was born of a woman who had never experienced a
20 sexual relationship with a man. It was through the virgin birth that God became man,
21 one perfect person but two natures: one nature being that of Almighty God; the other
22 being that of man—man without sin (Hebrews 4:15 **For we have not an high priest**
23 **which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points**
24 **tempted like as we are, yet without sin.)**

25
26 We are first informed about this in Genesis 3:15: **And I will put enmity between thee**
27 **and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and**
28 **thou shalt bruise his heel.** This, of course, is biologically impossible. There is no
29 “seed of the woman.” The coming One Who would destroy Satan and all his works
30 would be born of a woman, but without a human father.

31
32 The prophet Isaiah increased our knowledge of this: Isaiah 7:14 **Therefore the Lord**
33 **himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and**
34 **shall call his name Immanuel.** “Immanuel” means “God with us.” Isaiah prophesied
35 even more: Isaiah 9:6-7 **For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the**
36 **government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful,**
37 **Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. [7] Of the**
38 **increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of**
39 **David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with**
40 **justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform**

1 **this.** In simple English: God would give to humanity His only Son Who had been with
2 Him from eternity (see previous two lesson notes).

3
4 Verse 27: **“...espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David.”**
5 The word “espoused” simply meant “engaged.” To uncover this remarkable passage, I
6 turn to the written pages of Dr. Dwight D. Pentecost in his superb little book, *Prophecy*
7 *For Today* (Zondervan / page 162-3)

8
9 *Marriage (in that day) was by contract. It was not an agreement between a young*
10 *man and a young woman who had fallen in love with each other. The young couple*
11 *usually had nothing whatsoever to say about the arrangements. Marriage was a*
12 *contract drawn up between the father of a boy and the father of a girl, often when they*
13 *were still very small. There are instances on record where a contract was drawn up*
14 *before the couple was even born. This contract was called “the betrothal” and it was a*
15 *legal enactment, duly signed before judges, which bound the girl and boy to each other.*
16 *This contract could be broken only by a bill of divorcement. Joseph and Mary had*
17 *been “betrothed.” They had not been joined in marriage and the marriage union had*
18 *never been consummated, but they were said to be married and were called husband*
19 *and wife because of the betroth. When it was evident that Mary was expecting a child*
20 *before she and Joseph had come together in marriage union, Scripture tells us that*
21 *Joseph had one of two choices: He could accuse her before the judges, and the law*
22 *said that one who had been betrothed but was found unfaithful could be stoned to*
23 *death and that marriage union would be broken by death. Joseph had a second*
24 *alternative which he was planning to adopt - he could “put her away privily” which*
25 *meant he could give her a divorce.*

26
27 *Now in our relationship to Christ, the very same word used concerning the legal*
28 *relationship of a young man and a young woman is used of our relationship to Jesus*
29 *Christ. In II Corinthians, Paul put himself in the position of a spiritual father to the*
30 *Corinthians and wrote: 2 Cor. 11:2 For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy:*
31 *for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to*
32 *Christ.*

33
34 *In the spiritual realm, we find that this betrothal of the believer to the Lord Jesus*
35 *Christ took place in eternity past. Ephes. 1:3-4 Blessed be the God and Father of our*
36 *Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in*
37 *Christ: [4] According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world,*
38 *that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: (Again as we have seen*
39 *before in this study, this verse speaks of God’s foreknowledge, not His predestining some*
40 *to be saved and others to be lost.*

The Journey to Bethlehem

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2
3 Today, on good roads, it is about an 80 miles jaunt from Nazareth to Bethlehem. Mary,
4 now about nine months along in her pregnancy, made the trip walking or riding some kind
5 of animal - perhaps a donkey.
6

7 The topography between the two locations is not flat! It is very rugged. There is a
8 mountainous ridge, running north and south, through Israel. At times, if a traveler is
9 walking south through southern Galilee, he or she will come to a lofty point in the road
10 that, when gazing west, the Mediterranean Sea can be seen. If Joseph and Mary took
11 the Jordan Valley rift south to Bethlehem, which would have been easier perhaps, that
12 would have brought them to Jericho, just about 20 miles or so east of their destination.
13 But what a 20 miles! Even today, on good roads, powerful busses crawl up the climb
14 toward Jerusalem, often slowing down to 30 miles per hour because of the strain on the
15 motor. Imagine being nine months pregnant and walking or riding a beast up that
16 rugged hill!
17

18 Because of the census, ordered by Augustus, By the time the couple arrived, Bethlehem
19 was crowded. In Luke 2:7, we learn there was “no room for them in the inn.” The
20 Greek word for “inn” is kataluma, which means “guest house.” It was a facility, suitably
21 located at the summit of the town, easily located by travelers. Don’t imagine some large
22 hotel or motel! It was definitely NOT a Holiday Inn! By the time Joseph and Mary
23 wearily approached the facility it was already filled to capacity.
24

25 There are all sorts of books, magazine articles and internet myths about this “inn.” I
26 recently read an article in which the author claimed that Joseph and Mary were never in
27 this “kataluma” inn, but were rather at a home owned by one of Joseph’s relatives. I
28 simply accept what Luke wrote! Somewhere in or near Bethlehem’s guest house, the
29 Prince of God was born and could be seen in a manger, sleeping.
30

31 In many church Christmas plays we see a doll (or sometimes a real baby) lying in a
32 manger made of wood, usually a rather flimsy structure filled with straw. I doubt that
33 such was true as far as the wooden manger is concerned. Wood was at a premium in
34 ancient Palestine but rock was everywhere. There are still many “mangers” one can see
35 throughout Israel, some (at Megiddo, for example) dating back to the stables owned by
36 King Solomon (predating the birth of Jesus by a thousand years). Those mangers are
37 made of stone.
38

39 Jesus was born in the most humble of circumstances. There in the small town of
40 Bethlehem, a scant ten miles from the killing floor of the Romans in north Jerusalem,

1 Golgotha (as the Greeks called it), Jesus came to seek and save the lost, a premise
2 repeated by Paul in our New Testament. But now....the scene shifts!

3 4 The Shepherds

5
6 Luke 2:8-20

7 **And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch**
8 **over their flock by night. [9] And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the**
9 **glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. [10] And the**
10 **angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy,**
11 **which shall be to all people. [11] For unto you is born this day in the city of David a**
12 **Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. [12] And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall**
13 **find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. [13] And suddenly**
14 **there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,**
15 **[14] Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men. [15]**
16 **And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the**
17 **shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this**
18 **thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us. [16] And**
19 **they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger.**
20 **[17] And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told**
21 **them concerning this child. [18] And all they that heard it wondered at those things**
22 **which were told them by the shepherds. [19] But Mary kept all these things, and**
23 **pondered them in her heart. [20] And the shepherds returned, glorifying and**
24 **praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto**
25 **them.**

26
27 It has been my unusual experience to spend a day with such shepherd in field below
28 Bethlehem. I recall one of the shepherds shooting down some pigeons which we had for
29 lunch! Not all that bad, actually. I learned so much from those fellows about
30 shepherding now in this century, but much more importantly as they did 2000 years ago.

31
32 From so many perspectives, this subject is of interest to a child of God. David informed
33 us in Psalm 23 that the Lord is our shepherd. Isaiah also: 40:11 **He shall feed his**
34 **flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his**
35 **bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young.** Jesus Himself spoke on this
36 same theme: John 10:2-4 **But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the**
37 **sheep. [3] To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his**
38 **own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. [4] And when he putteth forth his own**
39 **sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice.**
40 David himself was a shepherd in his early years.

2 By and large, the shepherds cared for sheep and goats. Those large herds that we still
3 see in Israel might not all belong to the shepherd. A villager might own just a few
4 animals so he would hire a shepherd who would add the small flock to another one.
5 After the fields were harvested, the shepherd would allow his sheep to graze on new
6 shoots and on grain left among the stubble. When summer heat set in, shepherds moved
7 their flocks to cooler pastures on higher ground. Sometimes shepherds would put their
8 flock in caves (or sheep cotes as they were called, carved out of soft rock by the
9 shepherds themselves) where they would be protected from wild predatory creatures.
10 Good shepherds were dependable and courageous. At times they risked their lives to
11 protect their flocks: David testified to this: 1 Samuel 17:34-36 **And David said unto**
12 **Saul, Thy servant kept his father's sheep, and there came a lion, and a bear, and**
13 **took a lamb out of the flock: [35] And I went out after him, and smote him, and**
14 **delivered it out of his mouth: and when he arose against me, I caught him by his**
15 **beard, and smote him, and slew him. [36] Thy servant slew both the lion and the**
16 **bear: and this uncircumcised Philistine (Goliath) shall be as one of them, seeing he**
17 **hath defied the armies of the living God.**

18 Night had fallen over Judea. Suddenly, the peace was shattered as the skies came
19 ablaze as “the angel of the Lord” came upon them and “the glory of the Lord shone round
20 about them.” And, yes, they were petrified (“sore afraid” - verse 9).

21
22 The angel, perhaps Gabriel himself, made the grand announcement that up at the top of
23 that steep hill, at the very summit of the town, Jesus Christ, the Savior, was born and they
24 could see Him for themselves, lying in a manger, wrapped swaddling clothes. What are
25 swaddling clothes? When Jesus, the Son of God, came into our world, He was entrusted
26 to responsible, loving parents who sought to meet His every need. He was wrapped in
27 swaddling clothes where were cloths and bands used in the practice of swaddling, or
28 essentially “wrapping” an infant snugly in clothe. The idea behind swaddling is that it
29 helps the infant transition from the womb to the outside world. Swaddling helps a child
30 sleep better, prevents the child from scratching and to reduce the risk of SIDS, sudden
31 infant death syndrome.

32
33 The announcement of the great angel was followed suddenly by a multitude of other
34 angels praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good
35 will toward men.”

36
37 How courageous of the shepherd to leave someone in charge of the sheep and then climb
38 that brutal hill to the place where the baby was. Luke 2:17-18 **And when they had**
39 **seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this**
40 **child. [18] And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them**

1 **by the shepherds.**

2
3 They were WITNESSES of the Christ. That is our role today! Acts 1:8 **But ye shall**
4 **receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses**
5 **unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the**
6 **uttermost part of the earth.** That remains our responsibility today! We are to take
7 the Gospel to those around us and even to the “uttermost part of the earth.”

8
9 Next week we will open with the Magi, the Wise Men. As much as two years could
10 have transpired between Jesus’ birth and their appearance. Remember that Herod the
11 Great ordered the deaths of the Bethlehem babies up to TWO YEARS. Pictures or
12 creches that show both the shepherds and the wise men gathered around our Lord’s
13 manger are well-intentioned, but inaccurate. They were not there together. The wise
14 men came to a HOUSE, not a manger or stable: Matthew 2:11 **And when they were**
15 **come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down,**
16 **and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented**
17 **unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.**

18
19 More on this timeless treasure of Christmas in a couple weeks. Merry Christmas!