

By Faith Lesson 19b

"Thou art Christ, the Son of the Living God"

When the time of God was at hand, the promises of the Old Testament concerning the Messiah were fulfilled: Christ was born into the world.

Christmas, Bethlehem

The Savior was conceived by the Holy Ghost and born of the Virgin Mary. Thus, redemption began already in holy conception. According to the prophecy, Jesus was born in Bethlehem, where Jesus' foster parents had gone to be taxed.

Nazareth

Jesus' home city was Nazareth. There, Jesus "increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man." When He was twelve years of age, He went with His parents to the temple of Jerusalem, in which Pharisees marveled at His wisdom. They could not comprehend in their unbelief that already at the age of twelve Jesus Christ, as God, spoke that which He had heard from His Father.

John the Baptist

At the age of 30, Jesus began His public work. This period of time, about three and one-half years, is also called the time of Jesus' prophetic ministry. When John, the Baptist, the Crying Voice in the wilderness, the Preparer of the Way, baptized Jesus, God anointed His Son for this mission. Jesus clearly expressed his program. The Father had sent Him to preach the Gospel of the kingdom of God.

Proclamation of the Mission

The proclamation and doctrine of Jesus differed completely from that of the Pharisees and scribes. He spoke as one with authority. Jesus delivered His first public sermon in the synagogue of His home city.

Miracles

The Gospels relate how Jesus confirmed His speech with many miracles. The first miracle mentioned in the Bible was performed by Jesus at the wedding of Cana, where He changed water into wine. Wherever Jesus went, the blind received their sight, the deaf began to hear, the lepers were cleansed and the dead were awakened and the Gospel was preached unto the poor.

With all of these miracles, Jesus revealed that He was the Son of God and all who believed on Him found the way, the truth and the life.

Parables

In His sermons and teaching, Jesus spoke many parables. Parables were matters taken from everyday life, and in their light Jesus explained the kingdom of God.

The Friend of Sinners

Jesus was the friend of penitent sinners. He did not come for the healthy and the self-righteous, but He came to call the sin-sick unto repentance. The Pharisees, wandering in the darkness of self-righteousness, were Jesus' most bitter enemies. They did not know the Lord of glory.

Maundy Thursday

When His prophetic mission was over, Jesus spent with His disciples the last evening, when He instituted the Holy Communion. At the same time, He spoke of the mission He had received from His Father, which was the reason for His coming into the world.

The disciple called Judas Iscariot betrayed Jesus on the same night. Jesus was imprisoned and by the decision of a large council He was condemned before the governor, Pontius Pilate, to a shameful death on the cross.

Good Friday

Jesus was crucified on the hill of Golgatha between two thieves. There, Jesus suffered and atoned in His sinless body the sin debt of the whole world.

Easter

Jesus was buried nearby in a rock tomb. When the women came on Easter morning to anoint the body of Jesus, the tomb was empty. Christ had arisen from the dead! The sting of hell and death was broken.

"Peace be unto you."

Jesus appeared many times unto His disciples following His resurrection during a time of 40 days. At this time, He renewed and confirmed unto His own the work which they soon began to perform.

The Ascension

Forty days after His resurrection, Jesus ascended into heaven from the Mount of Olives. Nevertheless, He had promised that He would not leave His own as orphans.

Pentecost

According to His promise, Jesus sent unto His own disciples the Holy Spirit in a visible manner as a Spirit of strength and power. Now, the disciples set boldly to preach the gospel of the kingdom of God concerning the resurrected Christ.

Read John 3:16-18. These verses explain in a few words why Jesus came into the world. Jesus was the true God, who came from heaven and took the form of man. He was a man "tempted in all things", but there was no sin in Him.

Being sinless, Jesus could with each word, step and deed fulfill the holy Will of God in our behalf. In His suffering, death and resurrection, He prepared righteousness for us. This gift of righteousness cannot be obtained with any human act; rather, it is owned through faith in the kingdom of God upon this earth.

To the child of God, the Lord Jesus Christ is not just the historical Jesus, but a resurrected, living Savior, who lives through His Spirit in His kingdom. He pardons the tempted ones and cares for sinners with His grace.

Exercises

1. Find the Gospel According to St. Mark. The Gospel of Mark briefly tells of the ministry of Jesus. Choose a portion of text from the Gospel of Mark for each of the side headings of this chapter and place it under the appropriate picture.

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2. Search the Gospel of Mark for the place where Jesus forgives the lame man his sins.
3. Discuss the events which occurred during Jesus' way of suffering from Gethsemane to Golgatha. Find Songs of Zion which are appropriate to this theme.