

Incarnation

What do the stories about Jesus' birth tell us about what he was like?

This account, from Luke's Gospel, describes the announcement to Mary about Jesus and his forthcoming birth. It sets the scene for Jesus' extraordinary life and points to some important things about what Jesus would be like.

Prophecies in the Old Testament foretell the coming of a saviour known as the Messiah. They include that he would be a descendant of the Old Testament hero King David, and that he would be a saviour for God's people. One of the central beliefs in Christianity is that Jesus was the Messiah, and that he fulfilled those prophecies.

The Greek translation of Messiah is 'Christos', which is why Jesus is known as Christ.

The birth of Jesus is announced

The angel came to her and said, "Peace be with you! The Lord is with you and has greatly blessed you!"

*Mary was deeply troubled by the angel's message, and she wondered what his words meant. The angel said to her, "Don't be afraid, Mary; God has been gracious to you. **You will become pregnant and give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus.** He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High God. The Lord God will make him a king, as his ancestor David was, and he will be the king of the descendants of Jacob for ever; his kingdom will never end!"*

Mary said to the angel, "I am a virgin. How, then, can this be?" The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and God's power will rest upon you. For this reason the holy child will be called the Son of God."

Luke chapter 1 verses 28-35

A census is an official count or survey of the population.

Judea was the southern area of Israel, where the capital city of Jerusalem was located.

The birth of Jesus

*At that time Emperor Augustus ordered a **census** to be taken throughout the Roman Empire. When this first census took place, Quirinius was the governor of Syria. Everyone, then, went to register himself, each to his own town.*

*Joseph went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to the town of Bethlehem in **Judea**, the birthplace of King David. Joseph went there because he was a descendant of David. He went to register with Mary, who was promised in marriage to him. She was pregnant, and while they were in Bethlehem, the time came for her to have her baby. She gave birth to her first son, wrapped him in cloths and laid him in a manger—there was no room for them to stay in the inn.*

Luke chapter 2 verses 1-7

To do...

-  Highlight a passage in Luke chapter 1 which explains God's relationship to Jesus.
-  Highlight lines that show God's plans for Jesus.
-  Highlight the lines that show that Jesus was a descendant of King David.
-  Which sections of these passages show that Jesus' birth was:
a) miraculous?

b) humble?

c) royal?

To do...

-  For Christians this birth story affirms that Jesus was God Incarnate. Define 'Incarnate' using the Latin roots of the word, below.

In = into, carn = flesh/ body

The word 'Incarnate' means ...



Photography by Lightstock/Bill Welch

To do...

Christians believe that Jesus was at the same time both divine and human. 'Divine' means that something is holy, sacred, or linked to God.

-  Write one line from either of the passages which shows Jesus was divine.

-  Write one line from either of the passages which shows Jesus was human.