

The Birth of Jesus, a Work of The Spirit

Welcome/ Christmas Services

Intro: Our family loves watching Christmas Movies. One of my favorites is, *The Grinch Who Stole Christmas*, which I have probably seen a dozen times. However, recently I noticed something I have never seen before. Ron Howard, the director, included a lot of his family in the movie; his dad, brother, daughter and of course Ron himself are all in the movie. They have been there all along. I was so focused on the Grinch that I just missed it.

This year, I was reading through the Christmas story, and of course I have read it countless times, but this year I noticed a new character, who has been there all along. At Christmas, we are so focused on Jesus that we miss the presence and work of the Holy Spirit.

Read: Luke 1:26-45

1. The Holy Spirit Announces Christmas.

Explain: Before Jesus was born, the Spirit is already at work announcing his arrival and preparing hearts.

Elizabeth: When Mary was pregnant, probably for her own safety, she left town and went to live with Elizabeth who was probably an aunt. When Mary arrives, Elizabeth goes out to greet her. When Elizabeth hears Mary's voice, her baby, John the Baptist, leaps in her womb. Elizabeth is filled with the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit gives Elizabeth prophetic insight:

Luke 1:42-43, "Blessed are you among women and blessed is the child you are to bear. But why am I so favored, that the mother of my Lord should come to me." This is not the greeting normally associated with a pregnant teenager. Usually the message would have been, "bless your heart." Which is southern for, "You're so stupid." Instead, the Holy Spirit is working in this moment to encourage both women. Elizabeth is the first person, after Mary herself, to recognize Jesus as the Messiah. For Mary, Elizabeth's pregnancy and encouraging greeting were confirmation the angel's message could be trusted. After all, Elizabeth was "very old", most scholars believe she was between 60-70 years old. When Mary arrives and sees Elizabeth is indeed pregnant and hears the encouraging message, she knows she is not alone. God is present. She can trust Him.

Illustrate: Bricks prophecy, retreat center.

Argue: "The Holy Spirit will teach you all things" is a promise from Jesus in **John 14:26**.

Romans 8:14, The Children of God are led by the Spirit of God. **Acts 8:29** – The Spirit told Philip, "Go to that chariot." **Acts 13:2** – The Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul."

Apply: God wants to speak, if we will make room, if we will quiet the noise and open our hearts, He will speak to us. We will see that over and over next year.

2. The Holy Spirit Conceives Christmas. (Luke 1:35)

Explain: The angel said, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you." (**Luke 1:35**) Jesus has eternally existed but was born into the world, as a man at Christmas. The Holy Spirit has also eternally existed; he fell on the church at Pentecost.

- **Genesis 1**- Creation was born after the Spirit was hovering over the water
- **Luke 1**- Jesus was born after the Spirit hovers over Mary's.
- **Acts 2**- The church was born when the Spirit hovers over the apostles.
- **Today**- You and I are born into the family of God by the Spirit.

Argue: **1 John 3:9**, "Those who have been born into God's family do not make a practice of sinning, because God's life (seed) is in them." The Greek word here is actually *sperma*. John is saying, very clearly, God has implanted His own life, nature, and power inside the believer through the new birth.

Illustrate: Acorn- there is a tree inside here.

Argue: **2 Peter 1:3**, "He has given us everything we need for life and godliness." **John 3:5-7**

Apply: You have all you need. In America, we obsess over what we do not have. This destroys gratitude, steals our joy and fills us with envy and coveting. However, when we recognize we are children of God and have everything we need for life and godliness our hearts are filled with gratitude and joy.

3. The Holy Spirit Inspires Worship for Christmas.

Explain: When God is present, when God is at work among His people, worship is the only reasonable response. In fact, while Jesus is still a baby, the Spirit creates a chorus around His birth.

- **Wise Men:** The Wise Men worshipped, they bow before Jesus and offered him treasure.
- **Mary:** After being chose, breaks out in worship. **God lifts the lowly!**
- **Zechariah:** Breaks out in worship, **God keeps His promises!**
- **Angels:** Angels break out in worship, **God brings peace!**
- **Simeon:** Simon breaks out in worship, **God brings salvation!**

When we understand the magnitude of what happened at Christmas and what it means for us, we are inspired to worship. In the Bible, the Greek word often translated worship is προσκυνέω (*proskuneō*), literally means "to bow down or to prostrate oneself" an act showing reverence, honor, and submission.

How do we worship?

- **Singing/Adoration:** Praising God for who He is. Psalms (football/basketball)
- **Thanksgiving:** Expressing gratitude for God's gifts, grace, and salvation.
- **Confession/repentance:** Acknowledging sin, seeking forgiveness, turning away
- **Supplication/Intercession:** Bringing our needs and the needs of others before God.
- **Obedience/surrender:** Offering our lives as a living sacrifice
- **Giving:** Honoring God with my money. Roughly **15–20%** of Jesus' teachings, **40%** of His parables, more than any other single topic, a measure of our maturity.
- **Serving:** **Ephesians 2:10**

Following Jesus is worshiping Jesus!

Argue: **John 4:23–24**: "God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth." Come to me, drink living water, be free, become a fountain...

Apply: What does your life orbit around?

Invitation