

Character 5 JESUS

Scripture Passage: Luke 2:1-7

Attribute: Humble Sacrifice

In some ways, it seems odd including Jesus as a “character” in the Christmas narrative. But, this tension is the very reason He deserves inclusion. In fact this tension lies at the heart of the Christmas story. It’s the heart of the incarnation.

The fact that Jesus, the Son of God, is a character in the story speaks to God’s desire that we, His children, would have a Savior.

But as we ponder this fact, let’s pause long enough to consider exactly how Jesus entered into this world.

First, recall that it’s His world to enter into in the first place! Colossians 1:16 says, “For by [Jesus] all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him” (NIV). This world belongs to Jesus. *He didn’t have to come to earth to experience humanity.* He created humanity in His image! That Jesus even came to us and met us on our terms is an overwhelming example of sacrifice.

But think, really think, for a moment about how Jesus came! He didn’t come to one of the world’s elite cities. He came to a humble village, just off the main road to Jerusalem.

He didn’t come to a palace, or a temple, or a grand stadium. The “stable” He was born in? Probably not half as luxurious as many of the porcelain nativity scenes make it out to be. Church tradition identifies the “stable” as one of the many caves carved in the sides of hills, used to keep animals.

Was His birth announced by heralds? You better believe it was. But, to whom was His birth announced? Heads of State? Nobleman? Rulers of Empires? No. Lowly shepherds working the night shift outside of Bethlehem.

In coming to earth, Jesus humbly sacrificed His place as Prince of the Universe. The Son of God became a vulnerable, dependant baby. Yet, becoming a baby paved the way for Him to become a Savior, a Messiah, an Atoning Lamb. Jesus humbled Himself in a way that is incomprehensible to a culture obsessed with power, status, and position.

But in doing so, He purchased an eternal place of rest and relationship with Himself for all who would believe. What a wonderful time Christmas is to rejoice in such sacrifice and humility!

Food For Thought . . .

1. Take a second and do a little soul-searching. How do you rate on the humble scale? (HINT: If you give yourself a 10-out-of-10, we might need to talk.) Seriously, is humility something that you strive for? Is it challenging to you? Or something you honestly pay no attention to one way or another?
2. Why is humility so hard to come by in our culture (Including, sadly, our *church* culture)?
3. The idea of sacrifice is foreign to many teenagers, especially those who live in middle or upper class homes. Can you think of some ways you might help your students grasp the importance of this concept?
4. Think of one way your family can practice humble sacrifice this Christmas. If you already sacrifice some for the sake of others, consider doing more! Or allowing your children or students to choose an additional way to sacrifice so that others may have more.