



GOD in the Manger

The Miraculous Birth of Christ

John MacArthur

A PDF COMPANION TO THE AUDIOBOOK

GOD IN THE MANGER

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

ISBN 0-8499-5557-2

Printed in the United States of America

Study Guide



CHAPTER 1 THE AMAZING FACT OF THE VIRGIN BIRTH

SUMMARIZING THE CHAPTER

Matthew 1:18–25, with supporting reference to Isaiah 7:14, clearly sets forth the truth of Christ’s virgin birth, which necessarily helps us make sense of His special birth, unique identity, and later earthly ministry.

Getting Started (Choose One)

1. Do you like mythology and fantasy stories? If so, what is your favorite one and why? If you don’t like them, what are your main objections to those art forms and why?
2. Do you think it’s appropriate to belong to an organization, association, club, or political party and not accept everything the group stands for? Have you ever tried to maintain such a membership? If so, what was the most difficult aspect?

ANSWERING THE QUESTIONS

1. Name three Old Testament characters whose births were extraordinary. What were the basic circumstances surrounding each birth?
2. How did pagan religions affect people's understanding of Christ's virgin birth? Illustrate the point by describing some of the specific unbiblical theories or myths about the birth of ancient pagan deities.
3. What has been the prevailing attitude toward Jesus' identity ever since the Fall? Why should that not discourage us?
4. What does the concise nature of Matthew 1:18 suggest about the doctrine of the virgin birth?
5. What were two standard characteristics of the Jewish betrothal in New Testament times?
6. Jesus' virgin birth ensures the credibility of what important doctrinal truths concerning His identity and ministry?
7. What twofold difficulty faced Joseph after he heard Mary was pregnant? What intensified the difficulty and made his response harder?
8. What did God do to spare Joseph from responding to Mary's pregnancy as he had initially planned?
9. How does the name Jesus define the purpose for God's Son coming to earth?
10. Was the idea of a virgin birth a completely new one to the Jews?
11. What passage gives the first glimpse that Christ's birth would be special?
12. What two events do the prophecy of Isaiah 7:14 refer to? What were they both signs of?
13. Why is it significant that Scripture uses *'alma* and *parthenos* in Isaiah 7:14 and Matthew 1:23, respectively?
14. What references, implied and directly stated, prove that Mary was not a lifelong virgin?

FOCUSING ON PRAYER

- Thank the Lord for the truth and necessity of Jesus' virgin birth. Ask Him for the strength never to ignore or de-emphasize that doctrinal conviction.
- Pray for Joseph's type of faith and courage to do what's righteous in difficult circumstances.

APPLYING THE TRUTH

Choose one of the following to memorize: Isaiah 7:14; 1 Corinthians 13:12; Galatians 4:4. Memorize your verse in at least two different English versions.

CHAPTER 2 A LOOK AT JESUS' FAMILY TREE

SUMMARIZING THE CHAPTER

Christ's genealogy in Matthew and Luke is far more than two boring lists of Hebrew names that identify His paternal and maternal ancestors. Those lists, through their similarities and differences, help verify that Jesus was fully God and fully man.

Getting Started (Choose One)

1. Have you ever done any genealogical research to identify your ancestors? If not, why not? If so, what was the most interesting discovery you made?
2. How do you usually respond to lists of names as you're reading in the Old Testament? Do you read them carefully or skim over them? What does the relative frequency of such lists suggest about their importance?

ANSWERING THE QUESTIONS

1. What were the four major reasons genealogies were so important to the ancient Jews? Give a brief explanatory comment about each reason.
2. What two facts does the Gospel writers' use of Jesus' genealogical records demonstrate?
3. How does Luke's chronological view of Jesus' family tree differ from Matthew's? Which one presents a more dramatic tone to the chronology?
4. What are the main differences in names between the two lists?
5. What is the clearest, most obvious explanation for the existence of two different genealogies for Jesus?
6. What legal reason further required the recording of two *different* forms of Jesus' genealogy?
7. What potential charge against Jesus by His enemies never occurs in the Gospels? Why?
8. What is significant about the phrase, "being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph" (Luke 3:23)?
9. Why does Luke's genealogy use the term "son" only before Joseph's name?
10. In summary, what four important facts does Luke's genealogy assert that verify Jesus' divine credentials?

FOCUSING ON PRAYER

Praise and thank God that He guarded the accuracy of Christ's genealogy so we might have one more certain proof that Jesus is God's Son.

APPLYING THE TRUTH

Excluding the most well-known names such as David and Abraham, choose one or more familiar names from Jesus' genealogy and read more

about the person in the Old Testament. Use tools such as a Bible dictionary, commentary, and study Bible to help you. What character traits or personal circumstances of the person remind you of Jesus? Which ones seem incongruous for an ancestor of Christ? Explain your answers, and share the main insights from your study with someone else.

CHAPTER 3

THE ANGEL'S ANNOUNCEMENT TO MARY

SUMMARIZING THE CHAPTER

The angel Gabriel's announcement to Mary that she was divinely chosen to bear God's Son, Jesus, the King of kings, Lord of lords, and Savior, was the most startling and far-reaching birth announcement in all of human history.

Getting Started (Choose One)

1. What extraordinary news announcement during your lifetime is most memorable to you? Why? How did you first hear about this news?
2. Do you enjoy having unexpected visits from friends or relatives? Would you say most people share your preference? Why or why not?

ANSWERING THE QUESTIONS

1. Approximately how many Old Testament prophecies and promises are there concerning the coming Messiah?
2. Why was it so amazing that God chose to send an angel to Mary?
3. Where else in Scripture did the angel Gabriel deliver an important message from heaven?

4. What was so remarkable about Galilee's role regarding the birth of Jesus?
5. What is the Hebrew equivalent of Mary and what does it mean?
6. What was so astonishing about God's choice of Mary to bear His Son?
7. Why was Gabriel's first word to Mary so low-key?
8. What heresy does an accurate and complete reading of Luke 1:28 refute?
9. Why was Mary somewhat confused and perplexed when she heard Gabriel's greeting? What additional emotion defined her response?
10. At first, how did Mary likely think she would fulfill the angel's words about conceiving a son?
11. Name three references in Luke 2 that reiterate and underscore Gabriel's declaration that Jesus was indeed the promised Savior.
12. What synonyms for *great* could we use to describe Jesus' life? How was His greatness different from John the Baptist's?
13. In what ways is Jesus' title "Son of the Highest" significant?
14. What does the Bible promise all believers in regard to Christ's Kingdom?

FOCUSING ON PRAYER

- Ask the Lord to give you as much reverence and humility toward His commandments as Mary had.
- If you are a Christian, thank God that He extended His saving grace to you and made you a member of His Kingdom.

APPLYING THE TRUTH

Read and meditate on each of the following Old Testament passages that look ahead to Messiah: Genesis 3:15; 49:10; Deuteronomy 18:15; Psalm 2:6–12; Isaiah 9:6–7; 52:13–53:12; Daniel 2:45; 7:13–14; 9:26; Micah 5:2. Using a concordance and study Bible, do some additional study on

a few important words and phrases from the passages. Write a short summary of how this exercise has been helpful to you and pray for opportunities to apply what you've learned.

CHAPTER 4

WILL THIS NEWS REALLY COME TRUE?

SUMMARIZING THE CHAPTER

Mary visited her older relative Elizabeth and received three confirmations—personal, physical, and prophetic—that she actually would become the mother of Jesus.

Getting Started (Choose One)

1. When you hear promises that involve you personally, is it hard for you to believe they will come true? Is there anything now that would fit this category? Describe the promise and explain why you are or are not struggling to accept its fulfillment.
2. What is the most encouraging word or good deed someone ever spoke or performed on your behalf? What were the circumstances and why was the experience so helpful? How often are you able to encourage others?

ANSWERING THE QUESTIONS

1. In Luke 1, how is the account of Mary's conception miracle similar to the earlier one involving Elizabeth? List at least four similarities.
2. What were three questions or factors that compelled Mary to visit her relative Elizabeth right away?
3. Why was Elizabeth the ideal person to confirm Gabriel's words to Mary?

4. What did the traditional Near Eastern greeting include (Exod. 18:7–9)?
5. How and why was John the Baptist's prenatal leap so significant? Was there any scriptural precedent for such activity? When?
6. What two general principles did Elizabeth's Spirit-filled, prophetic exclamation demonstrate?
7. Who are the four individuals or groups that Elizabeth's statement blessed?
8. How was Mary a model of faith for us?

FOCUSING ON PRAYER

- Pray for your pastor or another Christian leader you know. Ask God to grant Him encouragement and confirmation that his ministry is pleasing to the Lord and that his trust in God's will for his life is credible.
- Ask God for the grace and courage to follow Mary's example of faithful obedience in response to all His commands.

APPLYING THE TRUTH

Memorize John 3:29 or 2 Peter 1:20–21.

CHAPTER 5

A HUMBLE BIRTH IN BETHLEHEM

SUMMARIZING THE CHAPTER

God sovereignly orchestrated, through world and national circumstances, Joseph and Mary's visit to Bethlehem so that Jesus was born exactly according to divine plan.

Getting Started (Choose One)

1. We shouldn't dispute the fact that God is still involved in world events. But is that involvement as evident as it was before Christ was born? Explain your answer.
2. Have you ever had an unusual, humorous, or difficult experience involving hotel reservations? How did the Lord finally resolve the situation? What was the main lesson you learned from it?

ANSWERING THE QUESTIONS

1. Which Old Testament prophet predicted that Messiah would be born in Bethlehem? Why is it clear that his famous prophecy points to Christ and no other figure?
2. Why did the Jews particularly hate the Romans and their occupation of Israel?
3. What was Caesar Augustus' original name? Name two famous Roman leaders he had interaction with when he was a young man.
4. What was the significance of Augustus's Pax Romana?
5. What were the two reasons that Rome required census registrations?
6. Why did the Jews despise Roman taxes so much? What was God's true reason for scheduling the tax registration prior to Jesus' birth?
7. What two pagan Old Testament-era rulers parallel Augustus in the way God used them?
8. What requirement concerning the tax registration did the Romans change to accommodate Joseph and Mary and other Jews?
9. List the various towns, significant since Old Testament times, that Joseph and Mary likely would have passed through on their way from Nazareth to Bethlehem.
10. What reference first affirms Bethlehem as David's city? Name one or two other passages that support this fact.
11. What does the term "inn" in Luke 2:7 really denote? How does that help explain where Mary and Joseph actually stayed when Jesus was born?

12. In what ways was the expression “firstborn Son” important in explaining the uniqueness of Christ’s birth and the kind of rights and privileges He had as a son?
13. What was Luke’s primary point in mentioning Mary’s use of “swaddling cloths”?
14. What’s a more literal translation for “manger” (Luke 2:7)? How does that meaning sharpen the picture even further regarding where the baby Jesus and His parents were staying?

FOCUSING ON PRAYER

- Thank the Lord that He providentially worked in such wonderful ways to ensure that Christ’s birth occurred exactly according to divine plan. And thank Him that He is still in control of world events today.
- Pray that the picture of God’s grace, portrayed so well by Christ’s willingness to be born in a smelly, uncomfortable shelter, would be instrumental in an unsaved friend or relative’s seeing beyond a familiar Christmas story and realizing their need for salvation.

APPLYING THE TRUTH

In your own words, write an expanded version of Luke 2:1–7. Use some of the facts contained in chapter 5 to flesh out and amplify Luke’s original sentences. Conclude with a summary statement that captures the historical and doctrinal significance of the passage. Share your paraphrase with someone and tell him or her how writing it helped you mentally solidify and better appreciate the truths of Luke’s account.

CHAPTER 6

THE HEAVENLY ANNOUNCEMENT OF JESUS' BIRTH

SUMMARIZING THE CHAPTER

The angels' announcement of Jesus' birth was the high point of redemptive history because it was nothing less than a supernatural proclamation of the gospel, which emphasized the nature and scope of the good news.

Getting Started (Choose One)

1. Would you consider the town you were born in small and obscure? If not, do you ever wish it had been? Why or why not? How do you think the area in which you lived shaped your early life?
2. What segment or class of people in your culture do you think is most underappreciated? How do you believe they could be more respected? Why is that and how do you think it would make a difference?

ANSWERING THE QUESTIONS

1. In making His first announcement of Christ's birth to the shepherds, what Old Testament prophecy did God help fulfill?
2. What prominent Bible characters were shepherds at one time or another? What notion does that tend to disprove about the nature of shepherding?
3. In Jewish social and religious circles, why and how were shepherds despised as outcasts?
4. The appearance to the shepherds emphasized what important salvation truth?
5. What is the simple definition of "the glory of the Lord"? Give two Old Testament examples of this.
6. What other Scripture examples would you use to illustrate that the

shepherds' fear in the presence of God's glory was not unprecedented?

7. Did the shepherds really need to be afraid? Why or why not? What other kind of fear would they have understood as appropriate and necessary?
8. What familiar English words derive from "I bring you good tidings" (Luke 2:10)?
9. How can the pervasiveness of the gospel have both a worldwide and individual aspect? Briefly explain each and cite several key Bible passages.
10. What does the term "Christ" mean and why is it so remarkable that the infant Jesus would bear that title?
11. What threefold basis did God the Father have for proclaiming Jesus the Christ? Provide a Scripture reference to support each of the three aspects.
12. What two major truths does the phrase "Jesus is Lord" reveal about Him? What Old Testament prophet foresaw this meaning when he uttered a well-known prophecy?
13. What is the basic purpose of the gospel? What ultimate purpose does that support?
14. What familiar statement summarizes the angelic host's entire praise to God (Luke 2:14)? Each of its final two phrases has long been misinterpreted. Explain how for each one. What is the accurate meaning of each?

FOCUSING ON PRAYER

- Pray that the Lord would grant you the same kind of humility and faith that the shepherds displayed.
- Thank God for the essential truths contained in the gospel, and ask Him that He would seal them to you with a greater-than-ever depth of understanding. Pray that, as a result, you would be a more effective witness.

APPLYING THE TRUTH

During the upcoming month, seek to memorize three passages that speak of Jesus' Messianic office: Prophet (Heb. 1:1–2), High Priest (1 Tim. 2:5), and King (John 18:37). Choose one for additional meditation and in-depth study.

CHAPTER 7 THE TESTIMONY OF SHEPHERDS

SUMMARIZING THE CHAPTER

The shepherds' response of faith and obedience to what they saw and heard from the angels is an excellent illustration of the Christian life: You hear and believe the gospel, you embrace Christ, you tell others about Him, and you go on to live the rest of your life in obedience to Him.

Getting Started (Choose One)

1. What's the most spectacular sight or event you've ever seen? Explain why you chose it. Has witnessing it had any long-term effect on your thoughts or actions? If so, how?
2. Is it easy or hard for you to find your way around an unfamiliar city or neighborhood? Do you tend to ask for directions right away when you're lost, or do you keep on looking for your destination? What is the most rewarding or frustrating experience you've ever had in exploring a new community?

ANSWERING THE QUESTIONS

1. How long did the heavenly host probably remain before the shepherds?
2. What kind of response did the shepherds have immediately after the angels departed?

3. The shepherds wanted to “see this thing that has happened.” What does the Greek for “thing” connote that is not so apparent in English? How could the “thing” be verified?
4. In what manner did the shepherds proceed as they sought Jesus in Bethlehem? Elaborate briefly.
5. What was striking about the experiences the shepherds and Jesus’ parents shared around the manger?
6. What kind of general reaction have people always tended to have to Jesus? Why is that reaction not necessarily sufficient?
7. What sorts of questions did Mary likely ask as she pondered all the events surrounding Christ’s birth?
8. How should Mary’s response and thoughts parallel the mature believer’s Christian experience?
9. Why would Mary and Joseph have brought Jesus for circumcision? Did He, as the Son of God, really need to undergo this procedure? Why?

FOCUSING ON PRAYER

- Ask the Lord for the same eagerness and enthusiasm in obeying God’s commands as the shepherds had.
- Thank and praise God that Mary wanted to please God and that she and Joseph were faithful parents who helped Jesus obey God’s requirements even when their son was an infant.

APPLYING THE TRUTH

Perhaps you have been praying for the salvation of a friend or relative. Arrange to visit the person, with the goal in mind of sharing the gospel with him or her. If you can’t make a personal visit, consider writing an evangelistic letter to the person and enclosing a God-centered tract with your letter.

If at this time you have no unsaved friend or relative to visit, ask the Lord for a good opportunity to share with another believer something significant you have learned recently in your walk with Christ.

CHAPTER 8

THE NEWS TRAVELS FAST

SUMMARIZING THE CHAPTER

The three different responses to Christ's birth—the Magi's worship, Herod's hostility, and the Jewish leaders' indifference—reflect the basic reactions to Jesus Christ that people have demonstrated throughout history.

GETTING STARTED (CHOOSE ONE)

1. In Christmas pageants you saw or participated in while growing up, how were the wise men portrayed? Based on your current understanding, were those depictions accurate? Discuss.
2. Do people's motives—even believers'—in Christmas gift giving measure up to the attitude implicit in the Magi's gift giving to Jesus? What do you think would improve today's custom of exchanging gifts? What, if anything, do you appreciate most about that Christmas tradition?

ANSWERING THE QUESTIONS

1. What sorts of myths and erroneous traditions have distorted people's understanding of the Magi narrative?
2. When and where did Magi originate? What were some of their major distinctives?
3. What basic trait characterized the Magi who sought Jesus? Name two like-minded Gentiles whom the New Testament mentions later on.

4. What have people conjectured about the identity of the star in the East? List at least three speculations.
5. What is the most plausible and probably most biblical explanation to identify the star?
6. What idea does the Greek word for “worship” express? What does that indicate regarding the identity of the wise men?
7. What character traits was Herod the Great known for? How successful was he as a leader before he returned to Palestine as “king of the Jews”?
8. What ethnicity was Herod? Did that prevent him from being familiar with Jewish customs and beliefs?
9. What action did Herod order when the Magi did not report back to him? What did that reveal about his true desire concerning Jesus?
10. What groups constituted the Jewish leaders that Herod summoned to learn more about Christ’s birthplace? Briefly describe each group.
11. How did the Jewish leaders’ intellectual knowledge of God’s Messianic promises benefit them? What more did those men need to do with that awareness? Where did they end up instead?
12. What compensated for the Magi’s lack of knowing the true God and His Word? What was their ultimate incentive in going on to Bethlehem?
13. What was the traditional and historical significance of each of the three gifts the Magi presented to Christ?
14. Why didn’t the Magi return to Herod? What alternative plan did they follow and how did they carry it out?

FOCUSING ON PRAYER

- Do you know anyone whose attitude toward the Lord is like either Herod’s or the Jewish leaders? Pray that God would soften and awaken the person’s heart and grant him saving faith.

- How is your sense of worship and generosity toward Christ right now? If it is lagging, ask God to reenergize it that you might model the enthusiasm of the wise men.

APPLYING THE TRUTH

Memorize Matthew 2:10–11.

CHAPTER 9 RIGHTEOUS PARENTS

SUMMARIZING THE CHAPTER

Because they were righteous and knew Jesus was the Son of God and Savior, Joseph and Mary obeyed God's Law and testified to Christ's birth by bringing their Son to the temple for circumcision, naming, and presentation to the Father.

Getting Started (Choose One)

1. Today's highly industrialized technological societies are quite pluralistic and offer many different political, religious, and economic beliefs. How does this situation compare to Israel at the time of Jesus' birth? In your opinion, how does a pluralistic culture most challenge the spread of the gospel?
2. Has your family or your spouse's family had a habit of observing any special family customs regarding new babies, anniversaries, graduations, or other milestones? If so, which ones have been most meaningful and enjoyable to you? If your family has not observed such customs, why do you think that is?

ANSWERING THE QUESTIONS

1. Name the three major Jewish factions that were representative of Israel's unbiblical outlook at the time Christ was born. Briefly describe each one's beliefs.
2. What basic beliefs and practices characterized righteous Jews like Mary and Joseph?
3. When and to whom did God first introduce the rite of circumcision? What did circumcision symbolize?
4. What did Jesus come to earth to do concerning the Law (Matt. 5:17)? What besides His circumcision illustrates that intention?
5. What difference did Jesus' perfect obedience make concerning His work at Calvary?
6. Why was the choice of a name for their son such an easy one for Joseph and Mary?
7. What were the practical consequences of the Jewish mother's time of ceremonial uncleanness and personal purification? What kind of spiritual reminder was intended for those times?
8. What did the special presentation of Jesus in the temple area indicate? What did it not mean? Was that presentation any more necessary than circumcision or baptism? Explain.
9. What options did Mary have regarding what to bring for her purification sacrifice? What did her choice indicate about her economic situation?
10. What greater reality did the sacrifice for purification preview?

FOCUSING ON PRAYER

- Pray that the Lord would keep you focused on walking with Him and freed from competing worldly influences that seek to distract and divert.
- Ask God to help you be as obedient and faithful to the details of His commands as were Joseph and Mary.

APPLYING THE TRUTH

Do a study on the subject of God's saving nature. Look up the passages cited in this chapter, and by means of a topical Bible or concordance, trace out other passages. What are the key words, concepts, and recurring themes in these verses? What picture do they portray of God's salvation? Ponder what you've discovered and ask God for opportunities to apply those principles and share them with others.

CHAPTER 10 SIMEON'S EYES OF FAITH

SUMMARIZING THE CHAPTER

Simeon's testimony to Christ demonstrated the supreme joy of a righteous Jew to whom God fulfilled His promise and providentially directed him to meet the Messiah. God used him in a brief but significant way to affirm the truth that the infant Jesus was indeed the Christ.

Getting Started (Choose One)

1. Do you often stay up late or get up early to meet somebody or see something? When you do, what motivates you most to do that? Why? Which one was your most memorable or rewarding?
2. What would you vote for as the most revolutionary new concept or invention to appear in your lifetime? Or in the last one hundred years? Why?

ANSWERING THE QUESTIONS

1. How did the meaning of Simeon's name fit so well with his lifelong pursuit?

2. What truths about Simeon's character are synonymous with the description of him as "just and devout"?
3. What was one of the major sources of Simeon's Messianic hope?
4. How was Simeon's hope and desire a precursor to the apostle Paul's? What passage demonstrates this?
5. In what ways did the Holy Spirit work in Simeon's heart and life? Were those phenomena completely new? Why or why not?
6. What did the continual excitement and anticipation of looking forward to Christ do for Simeon's motivation?
7. What other occasion coincided with Simeon's finally meeting Jesus?
8. What was the practical and theological connotation of the expression "depart in peace"?
9. What prophetic utterance by Simeon went beyond the Messianic testimony of Zacharias, Mary, and Joseph? Why was it so shattering and revolutionary, even for believing Jews?
10. What statements from Isaiah should have prepared people for Simeon's statement about the Gentiles?
11. What final words by Simeon tempered the euphoria Jesus' parents felt at his initial pronouncements? Why were those final words directed more at Mary than Joseph?
12. What response to Christ did Simeon predict most Jews would have? What was so painful about that to Mary and other believing Jews?
13. What affliction of soul and spirit did Simeon foresee for Mary?
14. Who, in a sense, is placed on trial by Simeon's prophecy? What does that mean? What is the only response that people must make to this?

FOCUSING ON PRAYER

- Pray that the Lord would make your anticipation for Christ's Second Coming as deep, heartfelt, and persistent as was Simeon's for His first coming.

- Thank God for His sovereignty and faithfulness that, in the midst of the fulfillment of Simeon's prophecy about opposition to Christ, some are yet turning to the Savior in faith and repentance.

APPLYING THE TRUTH

Try memorizing the two stanzas of the Charles Wesley hymn quoted at the opening of chapter 10. Meditate carefully on the key words and phrases. Look up related Scripture references that support and enhance the sentiment of the hymn. What truths impress you the most and in what practical ways might you apply them?

CHAPTER 11 THE SUPERIORITY OF JESUS CHRIST

SUMMARIZING THE CHAPTER

A survey of Hebrews 1 provides a fitting conclusion to a volume on the birth of Jesus Christ. The writer emphasizes the significance and superiority of His person and work by reminding us of Christ's divine nature, His role as Creator and Redeemer, and His glorified position at the right hand of the Father's throne in heaven.

Getting Started (Choose One)

1. Should believers take strong stands on extrabiblical convictions and issues (politics, economics, lifestyle preferences the Bible doesn't address)? Why or why not? Have you ever stood firm on a controversial issue (excluding Christianity) that was a distinctly minority position? What was your position and how did others respond?
2. In addition to Hebrews 1, what New Testament passage on the nature of Christ do you find particularly helpful and encouraging? Why? How has it benefited you in the past?

ANSWERING THE QUESTIONS

1. What vantage point is most important for us in considering the birth of Christ? Explain.
2. What was the writer's main purpose in penning the letter to the Hebrews?
3. Why had many in the Jewish community not placed their trust in Christ?
4. What tangible concepts do the expression "at various times" refer to?
5. The Old Testament is basically what kind of revelation? What is its primary theme throughout?
6. What was familiar to Jews about the phrase "in these last days"?
7. According to Hebrews 1, what is the first aspect of Christ's preeminence? What familiar laws support that? How does this aspect affect believers?
8. What is the second aspect of Christ's preeminence (Heb. 1:2)? What does the term "worlds" refer to in this verse?
9. What does "the brightness of His glory" (Heb. 1:3) indicate about Jesus? What practical ministry can that result in through believers?
10. Name the fourth element of Christ's preeminence and cite the ancient creed of the church—along with the relevant phrase from the creed—that affirms this truth. What does Paul teach about this doctrine?
11. List the fifth aspect of Jesus' preeminence and name the principle He uses in implementing it. How is that principle divinely worked out?
12. What is the sixth manifestation of Christ's preeminence and why is it so crucial?
13. In what way was Christ's sacrificial death most obviously superior to the Old Testament animal sacrifices? What had to be true about His sacrifice for it to be effective?

14. What is the final preeminence of Christ (Heb. 1:3)? When did it take effect? What does it signify now?
15. What were the essentials of the Jews' attitudes and beliefs about angels?
16. Why did the writer of Hebrews use the Old Testament to argue for the superiority of Jesus over the angels?
17. From Hebrews 1:4–14, write down the five ways in which Christ is superior to the angels. In two to four sentences for each point, explain its meaning and significance.

FOCUSING ON PRAYER

- Spend some time thanking God that He oversaw the progressive revelation of the Old Testament that prepared the way for the complete presentation of Christ in the New Testament—and that He did so in a way that preserved for us a full and accurate picture of our Lord and Savior.
- You may know a believer who is new or immature in the faith and struggling with understanding the nature of Jesus Christ. Pray that through Hebrews 1:1–3 they would come to love and embrace His preeminence.

APPLYING THE TRUTH

Memorize at least one of the following passages: Psalm 2:8; John 8:12; Romans 8:16–17; Philippians 2:9–11; Colossians 2:9–10; Revelation 19:6–7.