



**CHRISTMAS
WITH THE FOUR
DISCIPLINES**



WARM UP

Tell us about a Christmas memory



THE FOUR DISCIPLINES

You have probably heard about the four theological disciplines when we've been choosing a Bible study sometime. They are the four different disciplines that a seminary student undertakes as a part of their training. They are:

- ◆ Exegetical – Reading and understanding the text of the Bible
- ◆ Systematic – Categorizing the information in the Bible into a working “theology”
- ◆ Practical – Putting the information from the Bible to work in people’s vocations and worship
- ◆ Historical – Understanding the history of Christian interpretation and work, as well as understanding Biblical times

Which of the four disciplines are you most drawn to? Why?

OUR FOUR WEEKS

We have four weeks before we take a little break. In that time, we will look at Christmas through the lens of the four disciplines:


- ◆ Exegetical – The Biblical record including the Gospel accounts and Old Testament prophecies
- ◆ Systematic – Looking at the theological importance and meaning for Christ's birth
- ◆ Historical – The historical data surrounding Jesus' birth
- ◆ Practical – Christian traditions and ways of celebrating Christmas

How do you see each of the disciplines working and informing the others?

EXEGETICAL – THE OLD TESTAMENT

The Old Testament contains several allusions to and prophecies about the birth of Jesus. Most of these were impossible for the original authors to notice when they were writing their texts, but became apparent after Jesus was born.

Both the narrative of the Old Testament (Torah, stories of the Kings) as well as the prophets (Isaiah, Micah) contain information relating to Jesus' birth.




What is your favorite Old Testament story or prophecy that points to Jesus' birth?

EXEGETICAL – OLD TESTAMENT NARRATIVES

Genesis 3:14-15 – Called the “proto-evangelium” or “the first Gospel,” this promise alludes to the birth of an descendent of Eve who would crush the head of Satan

2 Samuel 7:11-17 – Here God promises that a descendant of David will sit on the throne of Israel forever.




What clues do these passages give us about Jesus?

EXEGETICAL – OLD TESTAMENT PROPHECIES – ISAIAH

Various sections of Isaiah allude to Jesus' birth and are quoted by the Gospel writers as being clear prophecies about Him. Notably:

- ◆ Isaiah 7:10-14 – Emmanuel
- ◆ Isaiah 9:1-7 – Names of Christ
- ◆ Isaiah 11:1-5 – The Root of Jesse



What clues do these passages give us about Jesus?

EXEGETICAL – OLD TESTAMENT PROPHECIES – OTHER PROPHETS

Isaiah doesn't hold a monopoly on Christmas prophecies. Other prophets weighed in as well. Notably:

- ◆ Micah 5:1-5 – A Bethlehemite king born who brings peace
- ◆ Hosea 11:1 – Jesus' childhood stay in Egypt
- ◆ Jeremiah 31:15 – Jeremiah prophesies about the slaughter of the innocents by Herod



What clues do these passages give us about Jesus?



EXEGETICAL – NEW TESTAMENT

The New Testament obviously contains the story of Jesus' birth, but additionally the Epistles help us understand the impact and importance of His birth into our world.

Throughout the Epistles, we see God continuing to speak to us about the importance of Jesus' birth.

What would you say is an example of the meaning of Christ's birth?

EXEGETICAL – NEW TESTAMENT - GOSPELS

There are two Gospels with concrete infancy narratives, Matthew and Mark. John focuses not on a narrative, per se, but on the spiritual impact of Jesus' incarnation.

- ◆ Matthew 1:18-25
- ◆ Luke 2:1-20
- ◆ John 1:1-18

What do you notice distinctly in each one?

EXEGETICAL – NEW TESTAMENT - EPISTLES

The Epistles provide us not a story of Jesus' birth, but rather the meaning and power of Jesus' birth into our world.

- ◆ Galatians 4:4-5
- ◆ Colossians 1:15-20
- ◆ Titus 2:11-14

What is the main point of each of these Epistle readings?



NEXT WEEK

Join us next week as we talk about Jesus' birth
through the HISTORICAL discipline