

The Birth of Our Savior

Luke 2:1-20

Introduction:

1. The greatest birth in the history of man was the birth of Jesus Christ in Bethlehem some 2000 yrs ago
2. The birth of every child is a marvelous event, but since the world began no birth was as marvelous as the birth of the Savior.
3. The birth of a child usually brings joy and the wondrous birth of Christ has brought more joy to mankind than any other birth
4. The birth of the Savior has even affected our calendars
5. The humility that characterized Jesus' royal visit to planet earth with the stands in stark contrast to the prestigious image associated with world rulers today: Queen Elizabeth II visited the United States, and reporters delighted in spelling out the logistics involved: her four thousand pounds of luggage included two outfits for every occasion, a mourning outfit in case someone died, 40 pints of plasma, and white kid-leather toilet seat covers. She brought along her own hairdresser, two valets, and a host of other attendants. A brief visit of royalty to a foreign country can easily cost 20 million dollars. In meek contrast, God's visit to earth took place in an animal shelter with no attendants present and nowhere to lay the newborn king but a feed trough.

I. A Providential Decree – vs 1-5 ←

A. The Promise – Micah 5:2 ←

1. Micah declared that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem!
2. This promise was given 700 years before the birth of Christ and foretold His birthplace.

B. The Problem

1. The prophet said Messiah would come from Bethlehem, but Joseph and Mary were living in Nazareth.
2. It probably never entered into their minds to go to Bethlehem.
3. Travel was hard and treacherous in those days.
4. An 80 mi trip would have been terribly hard on an expectant mother.
5. Joseph was of the house of David / Bethlehem was the city of David
6. God arranged all these things to ensure that His Son would be born in the right place at the right time.
7. He even used a pagan emperor to do His will

C. The Providential Decree

1. Caesar Augustus decided to do a census for purposes of future taxing
2. "All the world" covered the whole Roman Empire
3. The emperor decreed that everyone had to go back to his hometown to register
4. This was probably not winter when this decree was made
5. Mary and Joseph are the important ones here
 - a) *Caesar turns out to have a supporting role*
 - b) *He is not the main actor*
6. Compliance of the couple (unmarried) – vs 4
7. City of the couple – "Bethlehem" – 75 mi – vs 4
8. Companionship of the couple – "with Mary..." – vs 5
9. Concern of the couple – "great with child" – vs 5
10. Mary knew that she was carrying the Messiah, why didn't they go to Bethlehem on their own without a decree?

II. A PROMISED DELIVERY – vs 6-7

6 And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. 7 And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.

A. The Place Of His Birth

1. A stable
 - a) *Animals around - Smelly*
 - b) *Not very sanitary – flies buzzing*
2. The manger, a feeding trough.
3. The King of Kings was placed in a manger! Why?
4. Two Reasons.
 - a) *The immediate reason: That some old shepherds might find Him.*
 - b) *The eternal reason: That some old sinners might be able to identify with Him and approach Him for salvation!*

B. The Picture In His Birth

1. Swaddling Cloths
 - a) *Swaddling = "bandage".*
 - b) *These baby wraps prefigure His death and burial.*
 - c) *Why did Jesus come? He came to die for you and me!*
2. No room in the inn
 - a) *Great influx of people coming to Bethlehem*
 - b) *Everyone was traveling*

C. The Purpose In His Birth

1. The purpose in this birth was the salvation of the souls of man.
2. Note that it was Mary's firstborn son – not Joseph's
3. Jesus was a baby born to die.
4. He had been the expectation of mankind since the fall in Eden
5. Every lamb, ram, goat, bird, etc., that had been sacrificed down through the ages pointed to this special birth.
6. He is why: Noah built an Ark, Abraham built an Altar, Moses built a Tabernacle, Solomon built a Temple, God built a hill called Calvary!
7. He came down to be our Savior
8. There was a great purpose

III. A POWERFUL DISPLAY – vs 8-20

- In the birth of Jesus, the power of God was on parade before the world

A. The Power Of God's Grace – vs 8-12 ←

1. Shepherds were outcast by society as vile and filthy
 - a) *They were outcast by religion as defiled and unfit to worship.*
 - b) *Some have said that shepherds could not give testimony in court*
2. But they were chosen by Almighty God to be the first to hear the birth announcement.
3. How appropriate that the very men who raised the lambs for the Temple sacrifices were the first to meet the Lamb of God.
4. The message of the angels to the shepherds
 - a) *A Good Message – “good tidings”*
 - (1) “euangelion” – good news, gospel
 - (2) This is the best message ever given to lost man
 - (3) The bad news is that man is a sinner under the curse of God
 - (4) The good news is that God made a way of escape
 - b) *A Glad Message – “good tidings of great joy”*
 - (1) Jesus is the source of joy for lost man
 - (2) Through salvation He brings to man the greatest joy
 - c) *A Global Message – “to all people”*
 - (1) The gospel is not limited to a locality
 - (2) The gospel is to be taken to all the world
5. The angels made a statement about the Savior – vs 11
 - (1) Jesus came to save His people
 - (2) He healed, but He did not come to be a healer
 - (3) He preached, but He did not come to be a preacher
 - (4) He taught, but He did not come to be a teacher
6. The angels made a statement about the sign
 - a) *“Wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger”*
 - b) *This sign would be proof that what the angels said was true*
 - c) *“find” implies that they would have to seek Him*

B. The Power Of God's Glory - vs 13-14 ←

1. Praise for God
 - a) *They praised Him because they are programmed to.*
 - b) *We should praise Him because of who He is and what He has done for our souls!*
 - c) *The angels praised God at Creation – Job 38:7; as they beheld His wonderful works, they praised Him – Rev. 7:11-12.*
 - d) *Now, when they see God step off the throne and be born as a baby in human flesh, their song reaches new heights.*
 - e) *If they can praise Him for what they can see God do, then we should praise Him for what He has done in our hearts – Ps 40:1-2*
2. Peace for Men
 - a) *The world knows little peace because the world has excluded Christ*
 - b) *Every believer knows this peace of God and peace with God*

C. The Power Of God's Gift – vs 15-20 ←

1. Seeking by the Shepherds – “Let us now go..” – vs 15
 - a) *They went promptly*
 - b) *They didn't waste time*
 - c) *They obeyed the message of the angels*
 - d) *They went faithfully – they were not skeptics and scoffers – they believed the message of the angelic visitors*
2. The Speaking by the Shepherds – vs 17
 - a) *The shepherds came and worshipped the baby and were forever changed by their meeting with Jesus.*
 - b) *They came out of curiosity and left rejoicing in the glory of eternal life.*
 - c) *They came wondering what they would find, and they left witnessing about the One who had found them.*
 - d) *The power of God in changing lives is glorious – 2Cor 5:17*
3. The Steadfastness of the Shepherds – vs 20
 - a) *Steadfast in their duty - They returned to their jobs*
 - b) *Steadfast in their devotions – “glorifying and praising God”*

Conc:

1. The Savior is still found by all who seek Him
2. He still changes all who meet Him.
3. No, it wasn't Santa Claus who came to town that first night.
 - a. It was God in the flesh - It was Jesus!
 - b. Do you have room for Him in your life?

2 But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.

8 And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. 9 And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. 10 And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. 11 For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. 12 And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

1 And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed. 2 (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.) 3 And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city. 4 And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:) 5 To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child.

13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, 14 Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

15 And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us. 16 And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. 17 And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child. 18 And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds. 19 But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart. 20 And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.