

**December 21, 2025 (Lesson 3)**

## **THE SAVIOR IS BORN**

- 1. Humble Birth** (Luke 2:1-7)
- 2. Angelic Announcement** (Luke 2:8-20)
- 3. Seeing God's Salvation** (Luke 2:21-38)

**Central Truth:** Jesus was born to be the Savior of the world.

**Focus:** Examine the events surrounding Christ's birth and accept Him as Savior.

**Evangelism Emphasis:** Jesus was born to be the Savior of the world.

**Golden Text:** "For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord" (Luke 2:11).

Nothing in all the world's literature is loftier and more beautiful than Luke's description of the birth of Jesus. Luke looked more deeply into the birth of Christ than any of the other writers. It seems likely Luke came to know Mary, the mother of Jesus, and discussed many of these things with her. That is the most plausible explanation for the way he would have learned them. And he recorded the events as he was inspired by the Holy Spirit.

Everything in the course of human history led to the coming of the Son of God. The Jews had long awaited the coming of the Messiah, and in their waiting they had become generally complacent. The rest of the world lay in spiritual languor. When the Messiah did come, it was in a very simple manner. The few who knew of His coming were common people who enjoyed no worldly fame. Despite its humble nature, the coming of Christ shall always be the most important birth in history.

Throughout the life of Jesus, from His birth to His death, two facts constantly merge together giving us a great assurance that He was, in fact, the Messiah, the Son of God. These are the prophecies of the Old Testament and the providence of God in making their fulfillment possible in the life of Jesus. There are those who say Jesus arranged circumstances in such a way as to make it appear He was the one intended by the prophecies. How could He arrange the circumstances of His birth, that is, if He were an impostor, as some foolishly suppose? These circumstances are too numerous to be mere coincidence.

## 1. HUMBLE BIRTH

### A. The Chosen Place (Luke 2:1-4)

<sup>1</sup> And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be taxed.

<sup>4</sup> 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).

As Christians, we should take courage from what this lesson reveals. It is certain that while people are often completely unaware of God's activities, He is, nevertheless, working out His plan among us. He even uses kings and emperors. While Caesar Augustus was probably acting out of personal greed in ordering a census, God was using him to arrange the scene for the advent of His Son.

It is marvelous to realize while Caesar was doing what he considered something completely under his own control, God was providentially arranging to have a maiden in a certain place at a certain time. Also, notice God's perfect timing. The taxing brought Mary to Bethlehem just at the time she was to give birth to a Son. In Psalm 31:15, we read the times are in God's hands. This fact is again stated in Acts 1:7, where we are told God has power over the "times [and] seasons."

God had, through Micah the prophet, told the world the very place where the Messiah was to be born (Mic. 5:2). This prophecy was given about seven hundred years before the fulfillment.

The prophet had said the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem, but Mary lived in Nazareth. Still, Christ was born in Bethlehem as predicted. "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" (Rom. 11:33).

**Fiction or Fact?**

If Christmas is just a nice legend, in a sense you are on your own. But if Christmas is true, then you can be saved by grace.—Timothy Keller

## **B. The Ordained Time** (Luke 2:5-7)

<sup>5</sup> To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child. <sup>6</sup> And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. <sup>7</sup> 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.

Under Roman law, all women had to be registered and pay taxes as well as men. It was not necessary for a wife to go personally for registration, yet Mary chose to journey with Joseph to Bethlehem. This, it must be remembered, was despite the fact that she was in advanced pregnancy. Joseph, knowing that Mary's child would be born soon, and mindful of the miraculous nature of the conception, did not take the chance of leaving her behind in Nazareth, where she may have been subjected to gossip and insult. Moreover, the townspeople may have surmised that Joseph had departed from her. Whatever the cause for her journey, it was ordained of God that Mary be in Bethlehem when her child was born.

Because of the registration and taxation, the lodging places were all filled. Joseph was forced to find accommodations in a stable, no doubt the one that served the inn. The manger in which Jesus was laid was the feeding place for the stock. This would have been filled with hay, and Mary would have needed to put warm coverings over it. The "swaddling clothes" (v. 7) were the normal covering for a newborn child. The child was wrapped or swaddled in long bands of soft fabric.

Several notable individuals, including David and Ruth, had resided in Bethlehem, and the city was well aware of this, but it was not aware that a baby born in a stable and laid in a manger was greater than them all.

§      *How do we know the statement "while they were there" (v. 6) was a matter of providence and not coincidence?*

## **2. ANGELIC ANNOUNCEMENT**

## **A. Sudden Appearance (Luke 2:8-14)**

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

The Lord did not send the angels to the high priest or the religious leaders of the nation, but rather to humble working men. They were busy tending their flocks. Many Bible scholars believe these were temple shepherds watching flocks intended for sacrifice. Whether this is the case or not, at least they were men in pursuit of their own calling—they were doing their work.

Bethlehem is in hill country, which made good pastureland for the flocks. The shepherds stayed with their flocks night and day. As the shepherds were busy at their task, an angel of the Lord appeared to them and the glory of the Lord shone around them.

The words “came upon them” (v. 9) present the idea of a sudden appearance. The suddenness of the angel’s appearance and the brightness of the “glory” caused these men to fear. This divine presence was the same glory that stood over the mercy seat in the Old Testament tabernacle (Lev. 16:2).

The angel’s first message to the shepherds was, “Fear not,” for God was sending them a message of joy for “all people” (Luke 2:10). Angels were the first to announce it, but the task of telling all people would later become the mission of men and women.

No one could know this baby was “Christ the Lord” except by revelation. Jesus, in outward appearance, resembled other men. He did not have a “halo” about His head or any other sign of identification. Therefore, Isaiah said of Him, “He hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him” (Isa. 53:2).

God permitted Jesus to be born in a shelter for cattle in order that He could be easily identified by the shepherds. They would find only one Child in those circumstances; therefore, there could be no doubt concerning the “sign” (Luke 2:12).

Only one angel spoke to the shepherds, but he was backed up by a myriad of angels (v. 13). Their anthem was in response to what the first angel had proclaimed.

The angels declared three amazing truths (v. 14). First, the birth of Jesus on the earth glorified God more than any other event. Of course, by that we mean all that accompanied His birth, including the Cross and the Resurrection.

Second, the birth of Jesus brought peace to the heart of believing people on the earth. This was not an announcement that world peace would then be ushered in. Rather, those who would believe the “good tidings” would have “peace with God.” Ultimately, however, what Jesus began by being born on earth will result in universal peace, when the kingdom of God is finally established on the earth.

Third, the angels sang of “good will toward men”; that is, the birth of Jesus was an act of God’s good will in our direction. We deserve the wrath of God because of our sins, but God showed His good will in sending a Savior.

### **Back to Bethlehem**

Christmas should be a day when our minds go back to Bethlehem, beyond the noise of our materialistic world, to hear the soft flutter of angel wings.—Billy Graham

#### **B. Immediate Response** (Luke 2:15-20)

<sup>16</sup> And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. <sup>17</sup> And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child. <sup>18</sup> And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds.

Although the angel had not explicitly instructed the shepherds to go into Bethlehem, the message had such an effect on them that they went. The shepherds seemed to have understood that the Lord had chosen them to receive the glorious message. It is not possible that they could have fully grasped the significance of what they had seen, but their response was one of complete acceptance and absolute confidence.

After finding “Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger” (v. 16), the shepherds hurried to tell others of this great news. They evidenced no timidity, but were bold to reveal what they had seen. Hence, they became the first to publicly bear witness to Jesus Christ (v. 17).

It is not surprising that all who heard what the shepherds said to them were amazed (v. 18). The story they conveyed was good news of the highest order. Also, we can easily understand that Mary treasured all these things in her heart and “pondered” over them (v. 19). She already knew how the angel Gabriel had appeared to her, and she knew she had conceived the child by the Holy Spirit. Now Mary heard that the birth of her child had been attended with an angelic host proclaiming that her son would be the Savior.

§ *After the shepherds spread the good news, where did they go, and why (v. 20)?*

### **3. SEEING GOD’S SALVATION**

#### **A. Presentation by the Parents (Luke 2:21-27)**

<sup>21</sup> And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the child, his name was called Jesus, which was so named of the angel before he was conceived in the womb. <sup>22</sup> And when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were accomplished, they brought him to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord.

<sup>25</sup> And, behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon; and the same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was upon him. <sup>26</sup> And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord’s Christ.

Our Lord was willing to humble Himself completely in order to save us. He, the great Lawgiver, became subject to law. So, on the eighth day of His life on earth, He was circumcised and given the name *Jesus*, which means “Savior” (v. 21).

The act of presenting the firstborn to the Lord looked back to the Lord sparing the firstborn of the children of Israel when the death angel passed through the lands of Egypt. Since the Lord spared the firstborn, He claimed them for Himself (see Ex. 13:1-3).

From this custom we derive the practice of baby dedication. It is most appropriate for Christian parents to dedicate their children to the Lord. In actuality, the real meaning of baby dedication must be sought in the intention of the parents. Since the child is unaware of what is going on, baby dedication is, in reality, a dedication of parents in which they pledge to rear their children in “the nurture and admonition of the Lord” (Eph. 6:4).

In Luke 2:23, observe how carefully Mary and Joseph governed their conduct by what “is written.” To them the Scriptures were not just the writings of the ancients, but the binding rule of their life. The reference to “the law of the Lord” (v. 24) is Leviticus 12:8. There it is stated the mother was to give pigeons or turtledoves “if she be not able to bring a lamb.” This is evidence that Mary and Joseph were poor.

Jesus was born during a dark time for Israel. They were subject to Roman tyranny, and more and more the yoke of bondage was being placed upon them.

Yet, the Israelites found “consolation” (Luke 2:25) in the hope that God was about to send them their great deliverer, the Messiah. When the pressures became intense, they could console themselves with the prophecies God had promised a “just and devout” man named Simeon that he would see “the Lord’s Christ” (v. 26).

The same Holy Spirit who revealed to Simeon that he would see the Christ led him to be at the place where the promise would be fulfilled (v. 27). If we are sensitive to the Spirit's leading, we will often be in the place of blessing.

### **A New Way of Living**

It is impossible to conceive how different things would have turned out if that birth had not happened whenever, wherever, however it did. . . . For millions of people who have lived since, the birth of Jesus made possible not just a new way of understanding life but a new way of living it.—

Frederick Buechner

### **B. Prophecy and Praise (Luke 2:28-38)**

<sup>28</sup> Then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said, <sup>29</sup> Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: <sup>30</sup> For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, <sup>31</sup> Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; <sup>32</sup> A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.

<sup>38</sup> And she coming in that instant gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem.

In verses 28-29, we hear the words of a man for whom death has lost its terror. He feels perfectly content to die now that he has held “in his arms” the Christ. As Christians, we can rejoice that since God has always fulfilled His promises, there is no reason to question He will fulfill those set for the future. “For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him. Amen” (2 Cor. 1:20).

Simeon was made, by the Spirit, to see that the salvation God was providing was not to be dispensed solely to Israel, but was for “all people,” even the Gentiles. Yet, it was to be to the “glory” of Israel, for she was chosen to be the people from whom the Savior would come (Luke 2:31-32).

“And Joseph and his mother marvelled at those things which were spoken of him” (v. 33). Though by now they were aware this child was to be special, each new revelation of His mission



brought a new sense of wonder and amazement to them. That which they had become aware of privately was now being confirmed by many witnesses.

Though Jesus was to be the source of salvation, He would not be received by all. Many would “fall” (stumble) because of Him (v. 34). Still, many others would be lifted from sin and shame by trusting in Him. The suffering and shame Jesus would endure was the path to the glory that would come later; therefore, Jesus, “who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame” (Heb. 12:2). Simeon declared before God would accomplish His purpose in Christ, Mary as a mother would suffer severe torment of mind and spirit (Luke 2:35).

In verse 36, “Anna, a prophetess . . . of a great age,” stepped into the scene. She did not leave the temple but rather “served God . . . night and day” (v. 37). She had also been praying for the Messiah to come. She may have heard Simeon’s prophecy and could not help but break forth in thanksgiving of the fact that the long-awaited One had finally appeared.

There seems to have been an inner circle of people who “looked for redemption” (v. 38). She had no doubt spoken to them before and perhaps had assured them that God would fulfill His promise. Now she could speak to them “of him.”

§      *How is Anna’s dedication to God described in verses 37-38? How should her devotion be an example to us?*

## **GLORIOUS STABLE**

The world would have arranged for Jesus to be born in a royal palace, suitable surroundings for the King of kings. Human planners would have placed God’s only begotten Son in the lap of luxury. Surely nothing could be quite good enough for Him! But such an arrangement would have missed the point entirely. It would have been an attempt to use pomp and circumstance to save a fallen race. In that case, an angel would have done better than a baby!

The Incarnation means infinite condescension. Not pomp, but poverty is required; not heraldry but humiliation. Jesus, “being in the form of God . . . took upon him the form of a servant” that He might bring “many sons unto glory” (Phil. 2:6-7; Heb. 2:10). His birth made that stable glorious!

#### **Daily Devotions**

- M. Sure Prophecy (Isaiah 9:2-7)
- T. Source of Our Peace (Isaiah 53:1-5)
- W. God’s Anointed Son (Psalm 2:1-12)
- T. Miraculous Conception Foretold (Luke 1:26-35)
- F. Virgin Birth (Matthew 1:18-25)
- S. Cause for Rejoicing (Matthew 2:1-11)