

LUKE 2:8-20

LESSON: THE SAVIOUR'S BIRTH (CHRISTMAS) — December 25, 2016

INTRODUCTION:

Chapter 2: 1-7

2:1 And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus that all the world should

be taxed. ¹While God was preparing the world for the coming of the Savior He moved the heart of the Roman emperor to send out an order saying that everyone had to go back to the city from which his people had come (their birthplace), in order to be registered. Caesar Augustus was the one who gave the order that the people should register themselves. The purpose of the registering of people was to charge taxes. Taxes signified a census upon which to know that all would be taxed. The Jews came to regard the census as a distasteful symbol of Roman oppression. Augustus was the grandnephew of Julius Caesar, and was adopted as his son. After the murder of Julius Caesar, young Octavius Augustus ruled with Mark Anthony and Lepidus in a triumvirate. Then for more than forty years Augustus served by himself as the first emperor of the Roman Empire. It was during his reign that Christ was born. "*All the world*" indicates only the twenty-seven provinces the Roman Senate and the emperor ruled over.

2:2 (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.)— Judea was under the rule of Rome and Caesar Augustus was the reigning emperor, while at this time Cyrenius (or Quirinius) was governor of Syria. Judea was included in the province of Syria. The scepter had most definitely departed from Judea. And this was the first registration of its kind.

2:3 And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city. Therefore, no matter where the people lived, they had to go back to the city they were born to be taxed. The Romans ordinarily enrolled men where they were currently living, while the Jews counted families according to their ancestral hometowns. Joseph's family hometown was Bethlehem in Judea, but he lived in Nazareth in Galilee.

2:4 And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem;— Joseph and Mary lived in Nazareth of Galilee but they had to get to the city of David, Bethlehem to be taxed; the city of Joseph's birth. That meant that Joseph and Mary had to travel about 80 miles in order to register for the census. That would explain why Joseph and Mary had to

¹ <http://www.family-times.net/commentary/the-birth-of-jesus/>
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sunday-school.html>

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return to Bethlehem at a most inconvenient time—in the ninth month of Mary’s pregnancy.

2:4b **...(because he was of the house and lineage of David:)**— Joseph was in the royal line of succession through King Solomon and therefore of David’s lineage. Mary was also a descendant of Solomon’s brother Nathan. Both Mary and Joseph were direct descendants of King David. Matthew’s genealogy gives Jesus’ legal or royal lineage through Joseph. Mary’s ancestral line is recorded in Luke 3:23-38. Also look at (Matt.1:1, 16, 20; Lk.2:4).

²Just before the Babylonian captivity God had cursed the royal line, saying that no King would ever come from them again (Jer. 22:28-30) and yet He had promised David that descendants of Solomon’s would rule over Israel forever. (1 Chron. 17:11-14)

Jesus was a blood relative of Mary’s, and therefore of the house of David. When Joseph married Mary, Jesus became his legal son and therefore entered the Royal line. Now He was of the house and lineage of David. But since He and Joseph were not biologically related, He escaped the blood curse. Thus Jesus became the only man since 600 BC qualified to become the King of Israel and sit on David’s throne, something Gabriel had promised to Mary (Luke 1:32-33) and that will be fulfilled in the Millennium.

2:5 **To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child.** Joseph took with him Mary, his espoused wife who was nine months pregnant by this time. The taxation forced Joseph to Bethlehem. Being espoused to Joseph was a binding engagement to be married, and to end it, require a paper of divorcement.

2:6 **And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered.**

³Galatians 4:4 says “But when the time had fully come, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the law.” The phrase “had fully come” speaks of something that is complete and fully developed. It means that God had prepared all of history from the beginning for this special moment; He had set the stage for the entrance of His Son into the world. Mary was about to give birth; about to deliver.

2:7 **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.** Mary and Joseph had arrived in Bethlehem but there was no room in the Inn; all the rooms were full. There were so many people in town to pay their taxes that they had to go to the stable; or it was a little cave cut into the hillside behind the Inn. This was not the place Mary had imagined delivering her baby. However, she delivered her firstborn son; the Son of God. He was wrapped in swaddling clothes (that is, strips of cloth). Swaddling clothes kept a baby warm and gave it a sense of security, and believed that the strips would protect his internal organs. The custom of swaddling

² <http://gracethrufaith.com/ask-a-bible-teacher/the-house-and-lineage-of-david/#more-12369>

³ <http://www.keepbelieving.com/sermon/2007-12-05-When-Was-Jesus-Born/>

<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sunday-school.html>

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infants is still practiced in many Eastern countries. The baby was laid in a manger which was a feeding trough that fed the animals. Could you imagine, the Messiah in such an humiliating and lowly place?

LESSON: I. THE ANGEL'S REVELATION OF THE SAVIOUR'S BIRTH Luke 2:8-14

2:8 And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.

Now there were some shepherds in a field in this same country (the area around Bethlehem) watching over their sheep that night. ⁴These shepherds had to watch for wild animals attacking the sheep at night. We all know that Jesus is the Great Shepherd and we as Christians are spoken of as "*sheep*."

2:9 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.

There is a commotion appearing in the heavenly sky as the shepherds were abiding in the field. The appearance of an angel of the Lord is bringing God's glory to shine all around these shepherds. In reality, the religious people would snub and ignore these shepherds; despise them because they were unable to attend services and keep the ceremonial laws of washing and cleansing, but here, an angel comes before them. It was such a spectacular night in the field of the open sky! God gave His first message of His Son to common shepherds that were watching over sheep.

2:10 And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be

to all people. The angel's appearance was that of splendor and glory, and the angel's message was one of reassurance and Good News! They were not to be afraid because the angel wanted them to hear this Good News that was to be of great joy for **all** people. If someone was bringing good news to you that would encourage and make you happy, they wouldn't want you to be afraid of the messenger! The Gospel of Jesus Christ is Good News! Praise God!

2:11 For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

This is the day! It happened this day in the city of David, a Savior—the Messiah is born! Bethlehem was about 5 miles south of Jerusalem. It ⁵is called the "*city of David*" because David grew up there along with his father Jesse and his seven brothers (1 Samuel 16:9). In fact, David tended sheep in the fields outside the village just as the shepherds were doing the night the angel appeared to them. This Messiah that was foretold in the Old Testament! Some of the Jews had been awaiting and looking for His arrival for

⁴ <http://www.lovetheLord.com/books/luke/04.html>

⁵ <http://www.keepbelieving.com/sermon/1997-12-21-Christmas-Joy/>

<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sunday-school.html>

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years to deliver them from the Roman rule—He is Christ the Lord! Three titles reveal the greatness of Mary's Son in this verse.

1. This Christ child is the **Saviour** of the whole world. Saviour is actually an Old Testament word that means *"One who delivers his people."*
2. He is **Christ**, the Gr. equivalent to Messiah which means *"the Anointed One"*, who has come to save the world, and...
3. He is **Lord**, the Gr. word for Master; used to translate the covenant name of God showing His Deity to **be** over all people and things!

2:12 And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

The angel reveals a sign for the shepherds to find the baby. The sign is that they will find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

2:13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,—

Without warning, without prior announcement; it means that the angels weren't there, and then they were everywhere; a multitude of the heavenly host praising God in all splendor. The spectacular appearance of the heavenly host means an army of angels, ten thousand times ten thousands. The shepherds had a special glimpse into the spiritual world.

2:14 Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men. The angels did two things:

1. They cried out for glory to be lifted up to God in the highest.
2. They cried out for peace, for good will toward men. By peace is meant the peace of reconciliation, the good will between God and man.

God's gift of peace will come not to all men but to those whom God is pleased to call to Himself.

II. THE SHEPHERDS' WITNESS TO THE SAVIOUR'S BIRTH Luke 2:15-20

2:15 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. Just as soon as the angels came, they were gone away from the shepherds into heaven.

There was excitement around!

1. The shepherds immediately decided to visit. And *"the shepherds said to each other, Let us now*



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go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass..." Going to Bethlehem meant they were located some distance away, but they were willing to make the trip in order to see *"this thing"* (the birth of the babe) *"which is come to pass"* that the angels had proclaimed.

2. The shepherds realized this message that they had received, was from the Lord. *"The Lord hath made known unto us."* These shepherds are good examples for us to imitate today. They received by faith the message God sent them, and then responded with immediate obedience.

2:16 And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger.

3. They rushed with haste to see for themselves. They found Mary, Joseph and the baby was lying in a manger.

2:17 And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child.

4. The shepherds shared the message. They were the first to bear witness to the Savior of the world. In that day, the shepherds were so little trusted that a shepherd's testimony would not be accepted in a courtroom, but God! God used them to tell others about the Savior. This was a solemn obligation as well as a great privilege.

2:18 And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds. To those who knew nothing about the Lord, but heard it from the shepherds, were full of wonder at the things they heard, but they never responded and never moved to find Him for themselves. Most believed that only priests and high priests had this type of experience with God.

2:19 But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart. As these events occurred with the shepherds, ⁶Mary knew that Jesus was special. She knew that He was the Son of God, and she pondered all these events in her heart; quietly treasuring all these things.

2:20 And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them. The excited shepherds were still rejoicing; glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen as they returned to their flock.

⁶<http://www.lovetheLord.com/books/luke/04.html>
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sunday-school.html>

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SUMMARY:

That night, some shepherds were in a field outside the village in the same country (Bethlehem) guarding their sheep, when before their eyes in the night sky, an appearance of an angel of the Lord was seen before them. And the glory of the Lord was shining all around them. At such a spectacular sight, fear came upon the shepherds. But, the assurance by the angel of the Lord led the shepherds to not be afraid because he brought Good News that would fill them and everyone else with great joy! The Good News by the angel of the Lord was in regard to God's Son, the Messiah (Jesus) that had just been born. They gave the place that the shepherds could find Him—in the city of David, which is Bethlehem. They let the shepherds know that He was the Savior, Christ the Lord that was born on that day. They gave a sign for the shepherds to find Him. They were told to look for the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. Suddenly a multitude of the heavenly host appeared with that angel giving praise and glory saying *"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men"* (**2: 8-14**).

And then quickly the angels disappeared and the shepherds decided to go to Bethlehem to see what the angels had revealed to them. They rushed with haste and saw with their own eyes Mary and Joseph with the babe lying in a manger. When they had witnessed this, they began spreading this Good News concerning child to others. Shepherds became the first New Testament evangelists! To those who knew nothing about the Lord but heard it from the shepherds were full of wonder at the things they heard. They never responded and never moved to find Him for themselves. And Mary pondered; quietly treasuring all those things in her heart. The excited shepherds were still rejoicing; glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen as they returned to their flock (**2:15-20**).

APPLICATION:

The journey to Bethlehem was not an easy one. I know it came with struggles. Oh but the happiness that came from the struggle brought a bundle of joy. We might go through many struggles in our journey, but it can never be as the journey Jesus had to go through. His journey was a fulfillment to make our journey easier, if we only rely on Him! He not only was in Mary, but He is now in us! How can that be? He is God! All things are possible by Him!