

Luke 2:1-20

So far, in Luke chapter 1, we have learned that what we read on these pages is “exact truth.”

1. Luke investigated the accounts of many people
2. He personally interviewed numerous eyewitnesses
3. He carefully investigated and researched the story of Jesus and gave us the exact truth.

The actual story begins with...

1. 2 Angelic visits (one to Zecharias and one to Mary)
2. 2 Miraculous events (one in an old barren womb and one in a young virgin womb)
3. 2 Promised births (John the Baptist and Jesus the Messiah)
4. And one song of praise

Last week we saw the first of those angelic visits and miraculous events accomplished and the first of those promised births fulfilled as Elizabeth gives birth to John.

Now this morning, we will see the second of those angelic visits and miraculous events accomplished and the second of those promised births fulfilled as Mary gives birth to Jesus. The whole series of events happens in the least likely way!

### **I. The Least Likely Place v1-5**

*Now in those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus, that a census be taken of all the inhabited earth. 2 This was the first census taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. 3 And everyone was on his way to register for the census, each to his own city. 4 Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the city of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David, 5 in order to register along with Mary, who was engaged to him, and was with child.*

Joseph and Mary assume that their family will start out in, and maybe even settle in, Nazareth. God uses the emperor’s census to move them back to Joseph’s hometown—Bethlehem.

1. This was not where Mary and Joseph had dreamed of starting their family!
  - a. Mary is pregnant, and close to her due date! They have settled in Nazareth.
  - b. This is inconvenient...almost oppressive to have to travel 90 miles from Nazareth to Bethlehem!
  - c. God...we thought You were in this!! You know that Mary shouldn’t be making this trip Lord! Why would You put us in this position?
  - d. This law of Caesar Augustus caused Mary, Joseph, and unborn Jesus undue suffering.
2. But, God’s people should never fear the laws of men.
  - a. Caesar's purpose was to tax
  - b. God's purpose was to enter humanity in the least likely place
  - c. Caesar thought he had a new plan.
  - d. This was God’s plan from the beginning!
  - e. Mic 5:2 *You, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of*

*Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days.*

1. Caesar was God's instrument, not his opponent!

2. Prov 21:1 *The king's heart is a stream of water in the hand of the Lord; he turns it wherever he will.*

3. God's people should never fear the laws of men, for the only one who is really sovereign is our God!

## **II. The Least Likely Birth**

*6 While they were there, the days were completed for her to give birth. 7 And she gave birth to her firstborn son; and she wrapped Him in cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.*

Mary undoubtedly had an idea of what the birth would be like.

1. She had undoubtedly seen several in her lifetime.
2. She probably expected to give birth in the comfort of her own home, her own room, her own bed.
3. But this was the least likely, least expected birth.

There was no room.

1. That was not exactly true.
  - a. There was the innkeeper's room!
  - b. There were plenty of guests who could have given up their room.
  - c. They were oblivious to the fact that redemption was coming to the world
  - d. So Jesus was laid in a manger.

This is not how I would have come to earth, had I been Jesus.

1. I would have been born in a mansion, not in a manger
2. That is not how Jesus did it.
3. He came, not in prosperity, but in poverty.

*Let us beware of despising the poor, because of their poverty. Their condition is one which the Son of God has sanctified and honored, by taking it voluntarily on Himself. God is no respecter of people. He looks at the hearts of men, and not at their incomes. Let us never be ashamed of the affliction of poverty, if God thinks fit to lay it upon us. To be godless and covetous is disgraceful, but it is no disgrace to be poor. A lowly dwelling place, and coarse food, and a hard bed, are not pleasing to flesh and blood. But they are the portion which the Lord Jesus Himself willingly accepted from the day of His entrance into the world. Wealth ruins far more souls than poverty. When the love of money begins to creep over us, let us think of the manger at Bethlehem, and of Him who was laid in it. Such thoughts may deliver us from much harm. J.C. Ryle*

### III. The Least Likely People

*8 In the same region there were some shepherds staying out in the fields and keeping watch over their flock by night.*

Shepherds were a despised class of people.

1. They had a bad reputation...and were known for stealing from locals as they moved around with their flocks
2. They were considered unreliable and were not allowed to give testimony in the law-courts.
3. They were not allowed to observe the ceremonial law which meant everything to religious people.

And yet!...these despised shepherds are the first to receive the announcement of the gospel.

#### 1. Good news came to them v9-10

*9 And an angel of the Lord suddenly stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them; and they were terribly frightened. 10 But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which will be for all the people;*

1. I bring YOU good news which will be for all the people
  - a. They did not deliver this news to the Scribes or Pharisees
  - b. They did not deliver the news to the high priest or the religious socialites
2. The good news came to them, the scorned, the despised...and to us!!!
3. Think of all of the ways this good news has come to you!
  - a. Average home has 4 bibles
  - b. A church on every corner
  - c. Resources galore...and freedom
  - d. and if you have attended this church you have heard it every sunday!
4. We are without excuse! Good news has come to us.

#### 2. Good news came for them v11-14

*11 for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. 12 This will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." 13 And suddenly there appeared with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, 14 "Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased."*

1. Notice how the angels said that there has been born "for you" a Savior.
2. This will be a sign "for you."
3. Good news not only came to them, but for them...and for us!!!
4. Don't you think for a moment that this good news is not for you!
5. John 1:12 *But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name*

Verse 11 is the only time we see all the titles of Jesus brought together—Savior, Messiah, Lord.

1. He will save His people from their sins.
2. He is the Christ, the Messiah promised to Israel.
3. He is Lord...God, maker and ruler of all.

He came to us and for us as our savior, our messiah, our Lord! Do You know Him? GOSPEL

### 3. Good news came through them v15-20

*15 When the angels had gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds began saying to one another, "Let us go straight to Bethlehem then, and see this thing that has happened which the Lord has made known to us." 16 So they came in a hurry and found their way to Mary and Joseph, and the baby as He lay in the manger.*

1. These shepherds were the first evangelists!
2. They were the first to experience the good news.
  - a. They said, let us go see this thing
  - b. They went in a hurry! They didn't procrastinate.
  - c. They went to get the full experience
3. They were the first to spread the good news.

*17 When they had seen this, they made known the statement which had been told them about this Child. 18 And all who heard it wondered at the things which were told them by the shepherds. 19 But Mary treasured all these things, pondering them in her heart. 20 The shepherds went back, glorifying and praising God for all that they had heard and seen, just as had been told them.*

1. They were the first to spread the good news.
  - a. They shared the Word with Mary and Joseph and obviously with others they ran into along the way back to their flocks.
  - b. This is who God trusted the good news to...shepherds.
2. I sure wouldn't have! They are the least likely people.
  - a. But, they are the people God often chooses to use.
  - b. 1 Corinthians 1:26-29 *For consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble; 27 but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong, 28 and the base things of the world and the despised God has chosen, the things that are not, so that He may nullify the things that are, 29 so that no man may boast before God.*
    - c. People like us!!! No matter how unlikely you may feel this morning, if God can use the shepherds...he can use you!
3. Is there anything we can do with our lives that is any better than being a channel for the good news to others?

4. *Most men are not satisfied with the permanent output of their lives. Nothing can wholly satisfy the life of Christ within his followers except the adoption of Christ's purpose toward the world he came to redeem. Fame, pleasure and riches are but husks and ashes in contrast with the boundless and abiding joy of working with God for the fulfillment of his eternal plans. The men who are putting everything into Christ's undertaking are getting out of life its sweetest and most priceless rewards.*  
J. Campbell White

Conclusion:

Jesus was born in the least likely place, in the least likely way, and his birth was announced to the least likely people...people whom the good news came to, for, and through.

1. The good news has come TO you this morning. Have you heard it and understood?
2. The good news has come FOR you this morning. Have you believed it and received it?
  - a. If so...then that good news should be coming through you...are you spreading it?
  - b. If not, you can believe and receive it this morning!
    1. Repent
    2. Believe
    3. Be changed!