

STUDIES IN LUKE

TOPIC: The Birth of Jesus Christ

SCRIPTURE: Luke 2:1-20

MEMORY VERSE: Luke 2:7

Lesson 3

Luke 2:1-20

INTRODUCTION: This chapter records the most wonderful event to take place in all the history of mankind. The virgin birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is the central New Testament doctrine upon which all other doctrines stand. In the last chapter, Luke records how Mary had stayed to help her cousin Elisabeth during the last three months of Elisabeth's pregnancy. (Luke 1:56) However, Luke does not record how Joseph learned of the virgin birth. By the time Mary returned to Nazareth, she was already over three months pregnant. When Joseph learned that Mary was expecting a baby, he must have been heart-broken to think that his beloved Mary would be unfaithful to him. Matthew records how God broke the news to Joseph in a dream. (Matthew 1:18-25) This chapter takes up the story of the virgin birth about six months later when Mary is near the time to deliver the Christ child. This chapter records **THE BIRTH OF JESUS CHRIST**.

I. THE BIRTH OF JESUS AT BETHLEHEM v 1-7

- A. Joseph and Mary were required to travel to Bethlehem in order to pay their taxes v 1-5**
CAESAR AUGUSTUS (v 1)-He was the adopted son of Julius Caesar who became emperor after the death of Julius. His actual name was **OCTAVIANUS** but he chose the title Augustus in an attempt to make a god out of himself in the eyes of the people he ruled.
CYRENIUS (v 2)-the appointed governor over Syria. Cyrenius is the Greek spelling for Quirinius, his Latin name.
Joseph and Mary lived in Nazareth in Galilee, but the Old Testament prophecies stated that Christ would be born at Bethlehem. (Micah 5:2) If Jesus was born in Nazareth, then the scripture would be broken. So, God moved upon the heart of the pagan emperor, Caesar Augustus, to tax the people. Each family had to go back to their home town where their official records were kept to pay their taxes. This decree required Joseph and Mary to travel to Bethlehem Judah which was over 100 miles away. Without knowing it, this world emperor had been used of God to bring about the fulfillment of the scriptures.

- B. The Lord Jesus Christ was born at Bethlehem v 6-7
Bethlehem was a small town located about six miles south of Jerusalem. Apparently, there was only one “*inn*” (v 7) in Bethlehem, and it was full. Perhaps the innkeeper, upon seeing Mary’s condition, felt sympathetic enough to let her use his stable in which to deliver her baby. It was there in a lowly stable that Christ was born. (Isaiah 7:14; Genesis 3:15; Galatians 4:4; I Timothy 3:16)

NOTE *Even in Christ’s birth, His death is pictured:*

- 1) Jesus was “*wrapped in swaddling clothes*” (v 7)--These are the same type of linen rags used to wrap the dead for burial. Jesus was born to die.
- 2) Jesus was laid “*in a manger*” (v 7)--This “*manger*” (cattle feeder) was made of rough wood nailed together in a criss-crossed design. The manger pictures the old rugged cross.

II. THE VISIT OF THE SHEPHERDS TO BETHLEHEM v 8-20

- A. The angel of the Lord announced the birth of Christ to the shepherds in the field v 8-14
The winter months are the time of year when there is enough rain for grass to grow in the fields around Bethlehem. Even today the shepherds of that area take their flocks out into the fields to feed during the months of November and December. When Jesus was born, God did not choose to give the announcement of His birth to the chief priests, king, religious leaders, wealthy, or wise of that day. Instead He sent the wonderful news that Christ was born to the humble shepherds out in the fields. This “*good news*” was not just for the educated, not just for leaders, not just for those of high class, but was to (v 10) “*all people*”. (Isaiah 9:2; 9:6; Mark 12:37)
- B. The shepherds went and told the good news “*abroad*” v 15-20
The shepherds came into Bethlehem, and found the Lord Jesus lying in the manger just as the angel had told them. These shepherds became the first missionaries of the virgin birth for they went all over the area telling everyone they saw about the birth of Christ. (Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 1:8)

TEACHER TIP: IF YOU PREACH WHAT IS NEW, IT WON’T BE TRUE. IF YOU PREACH WHAT IS TRUE, IT WON’T BE NEW.

NEXT MEMORY VERSE: Luke 2:5