

Proclaimed

Dec. 20, 2020

Luke 2:4-19

In today's lesson we read about the birth of our Savior; the promised Messiah. Why did the angels PROCLAIM Jesus? Why did the shepherds PROCLAIM him? Because this child was and is the redemption of all mankind.

Most scholars believe Isaiah provides the first reference to the coming Messiah. Isaiah 7:14 says this Messiah will be born of a virgin and in Luke 2, we see the birth of Jesus and He is born to a virgin (Luke 1:27, 34). Throughout the Old Testament we see that God had a plan for our redemption and according to Micah 5:2, the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem.

How do you get the news out when there is a birth? Do you call your family, post on social media, take out a newspaper ad? Why? Because it is good news, and you are excited about it. The "angel of the Lord" had "good news of great joy" that he was excited to tell — PROCLAIM.

What is Christmas for? Christmas is "for you" because from the very beginning God had a plan for Jesus to be born as that perfect sacrifice which enabled us to be a part of His family! Christmas was foretold so we would PROCLAIM the birth of a Savior, Christ the Lord. Will you proclaim CHRIST THE SAVIOR IS BORN during Christmas 2020? [excerpts from Russ Wilkins]

Fulfilled (Luke 2:4-7)

- Joseph and Mary had traveled 90 miles from Nazareth in Galilee to Bethlehem near Jerusalem.
- Caesar Augustus (grandnephew of the Roman Emperor Julius Caesar) had ordered a census to be taken. Joseph had to go to Bethlehem, the ancestral home of the descendants of David.
 - Remember God had sent Samuel to Bethlehem to find and anoint David as king. (1 Sam. 16)
 - The census data would be the basis for Rome to tax most of the known world.
- Mary traveled with Joseph even though she was "**great with child**". Why? Couldn't she have stayed with her relatives in Nazareth? We only know that God's plan was being fulfilled.
- "**While they were there ... the days were accomplished**"
 - Luke indicates Mary and Joseph were in town at least a few days before the birth.
 - Paul says in Galatians 4:4, Jesus was born "**when the fulness of the time was come**".
 - God designed all of history for this moment!
- Mary delivered "**her firstborn son ... and laid Him in a manger**".
 - When Joseph and Mary arrived, all the rooms in town were occupied. Jesus was born where livestock were kept.
 - A subtle but key detail is that Mary wrapped the baby in swaddling clothes and laid Him in a manger.
- All circumstances of Jesus' birth fulfilled Messianic prophecy.
 - **What parts about the story of Jesus' birth stand out to you?**
 - **Does God's timing of events seem inconvenient to us?**



Announced (Luke 2:8-14)

- **Bethlehem** lies in the Judean hills about 6 miles south of Jerusalem. The area is known for many flocks of sheep.
- **Shepherds** were often considered to be on the lowest rungs of society in the literature of the Bible.
 - In certain seasons, the flocks would be in the fields at night, requiring some shepherds to remain awake and alert to protect the sheep from predators.
- **“Angel of the Lord”** – ‘angel’ means ‘messenger’
- **“came upon them”** – a close presence to them
- **“the glory of the Lord”** – we are not told what this manifestation looked like except that it
- **“shone round about them”** - Artists Govert Flinck (1639) envisioned the image above, and Thomas Cole (1834) painted the scene to the right.
- **“I bring you good tidings of great joy!”**
 - The scripture tells us the shepherds were terrified, as I am sure we would be today. The angel calms their fears and quickly points to this being a joyful occasion for all people.
- When did the good news happen? **“this day”**
- A child is born – **“in the city of David”** (Bethlehem)
 - **“Saviour”, “Christ”, “Lord”** – Each title reveals important information.
 - He would save them from their sin; He is the ‘appointed One’ (Messiah); and He is God.
- At this point, the angel offered a sign by which they would know the truth of his proclamation.
 - **“find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger”**
- **Why did the angel give the shepherds a sign? What sign has been given to us?**



Found (Luke 2:15-19)

- Perhaps as suddenly as they appeared, the angels departed. What would the shepherds do now? **“let us go into Bethlehem and see this thing which is come to pass”**.
- Up until this time, the shepherds were focused on taking care of the sheep. Now the angels had departed, and they immediately wanted to go and see firsthand what had happened.
 - The Lord and **“made known”** this unique event.
- **“They came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger.”**
- Immediately, the shepherds began to PROCLAIM the message the angels had given them.
 - Certainly, Mary and Joseph heard the shepherds, but it also appears people from the town were part of the shepherd’s audience. What a joyous day to celebrate Christ’s birth!
- Luke records that Mary cherished these things in her heart. This is clear evidence that Mary was interviewed by Luke to give this first-hand account.
- **Jesus is available to all who seek Him.**
- **What attracted you to Jesus? Did you tell others?**

Biblical Truth:

Jesus brings salvation to all who trust in Him.

... and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Isaiah 9:6

