



# Nativity

## THE CHRISTMAS STORY

### NATIVITY 02/03: **THE ARRIVAL**

The first Christmas was sheer chaos. When your life seems chaotic, know this. You are in good company. God loves turning chaos into order and discomfort into peace. Look at creation. He spoke and brought perfect unity to the universe. Look at Mary. He spoke and brought harmony to her home. If God can do that for creation and Mary, you better believe he can do it for you too. Cling to Christ in the chaos. He will bring you order, unity, and peace. When God speaks, everything falls into place.



#### **BIG IDEA:**

God doesn't only move when things seem perfect. He moves in the middle of the madness.



#### **SMALL GROUP OBJECTIVE:**

We will the chaos and conflict in our lives. Then, ask God to give us peace, rest, and breakthrough this Christmas.



#### **SCRIPTURE USED:**

Luke 2:1-7

## TEACHING OUTLINE

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### OPENING:

- What comes to mind when you think of Christmas?
  - Do visions of sugar plums dance in your head?
  - Do you fondly recall laughing around the tree with your family?
  - Do you imagine a Christmas church service where everyone sings silent night off-key?
    - Seriously, why is that song so high-pitched?
- Christmas is the most stimulating season of the year.
  - The lights, smells, sounds, traditions, and experiences captivate us.

### – TRANSITION –

- While most people have a positive perception of the Holidays, many parents think about the unbearable commotion that comes with Christmas.
  - There are presents to buy, boxes to wrap, halls to decorate, parties to attend, and cards to address.
  - Christmas captures our hearts and stimulates our senses.
    - However, it can also crush us, overwhelm us, and leave us longing to nap into the New Year. Christmas is captivating but also chaotic.
- Let's examine the sheer chaos that came with the first Christmas.

### BIBLE STUDY:

Luke 2:1-7

1 In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. 2 This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. 3 And all went to be registered, each to his own town. 4 And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, 5 to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. 6 And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. 7 And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

- While studying this passage, we will uncover two often overlooked characteristics of the first Christmas.

## APPLICATION

- **Environmental Chaos**
  - The first Christmas was chaotic. Plain and simple.
    - It was not a silent night at all.
    - Cesar August sent out orders that every person in the Roman Empire had to return to their hometown to take a census.
      - This was before the invention of automobiles and airplanes.
      - Millions of people saddled up their donkeys to travel to distant lands.
      - For Mary and Joseph, they had to travel nearly 100 miles to Bethlehem, a suburb of Jerusalem.
        - This was one of the most historically significant regions in the whole world.
        - Most Jewish families considered Jerusalem home, as it was the origin of their ancestry.
          - That meant that the city was about to explode overnight.
          - As people piled into town and filled up the hotels, Mary and Joseph ran a little behind.
          - Why? Because she was nine months pregnant.
            - Talk about chaotic. Poor Mary had to travel on the back of a donkey for multiple days, knowing she could give birth at any minute.
            - Can you imagine the discomfort?
  - When your life seems chaotic, know this. You are in good company.
    - God loves turning chaos into order and discomfort into peace.
      - Look at creation. He spoke and brought perfect unity to the universe.
      - Look at Mary. He spoke and brought harmony to her home.
        - Cling to Christ in the chaos.
        - He will bring you order, unity, and peace. When God speaks, everything falls into place.
- Mary's environment was crushing, but so were her emotions.

- **Emotional Conflict**

- She was a pregnant teenager who conceived before the wedding.
- While we know this was the supernatural work of God, I imagine most people were skeptical.
  - Whenever she went out to the market in Nazareth, she undoubtedly faced judgmental stares, harsh whispers, and even a handful of crude remarks.
  - Her life seemed to be in shambles.
    - What did she want to do? What any of us would have wanted.
      - Sleep off the anguish.
      - Her ankles were swollen and her mind was mush, so they made their way to a roadside motel to get a room for the night.
      - There was only one little problem.
        - Due to the mass migration, all the hotels were booked.
        - Joseph pulled up Israeli Expedia to see that there was not a single vacancy in the nation. So what did they do?
        - They crashed with a bunch of animals in a stable.
- While Mary tried to get comfortable on a bed of hay, the Labor pains came in full force. There was no doctor or midwife to assist Mary.
  - In the middle of one of the most chaotic nights of their life, crying rang out over the sounds of sheep.
  - Agony made way for ecstasy as she held her baby boy in her arms.

- **Landing:**

- Jesus came to earth during environmental chaos and emotional conflict.
  - Jesus will come to you in times of chaos and conflict as well.
    - If your family is divided, Jesus can bridge the barriers.
    - If your heart is broken, Jesus can help you pick up the pieces.
    - If your mind is racing, Jesus can help you slow down.
    - In a few decades, Jesus would be crucified and raised to life in the outskirts of the same city — bridging the barrier between God and you.
    - That's the ultimate source of comfort and order.
      - When your emotions run wild, Jesus comforts you.
      - When your environment is in conflict, Jesus brings harmony.
        - That's the glory of the Christmas story. God doesn't only move when things seem perfect. **He moves in the middle of the madness.**

— Break for Small Groups —

*Go through these questions with your circle. Be honest. Be open. Talk through the tough stuff.*

Ice Breaker: Go around your circle and share this week's highs and lows. What was the best part of your week and what was the lowest part of your week?

Q1: What's one thing that stood out to you from today's message?

Q2: What is your favorite Christmas memory or tradition? Why?

Q3: The first Christmas had an element of chaos. What made their situation so chaotic? In what ways is the modern Christmas season also have chaos in it?

Q4: Mary faced unbelievable emotional conflict. What are some places you are feeling emotional conflict in this season?

Q5: What does it look like for you to turn to Jesus when you face environmental chaos and emotional conflict?

Application: Take some intentional time to pray for each other — focus on the chaos and conflict shared in your group. Ask God to give your friends peace, rest, and breakthrough this Christmas.