

Christmas #3

Luke 1:26-2:7

Merry Christmas and thank you again for joining us. Would you please turn in your Bibles with me to Luke 1, verse 26? Tonight we're going to remember some of the most famous scenes of the first Christmas through the eyes of Dr Luke.

Dr Luke was not an eyewitness to any of the events of the 1st Christmas. Rather, Luke compiled an in depth, highly detailed account of the events in his gospel through interviewing those who were there, those who were on scene.

And you can be sure that Dr Luke spent significant time with Jesus' mother Mary in order to get the level of detail that we only see in this gospel account.

Now the first 25 verses of Luke 1 describe the miracle of the announcement of the birth of JTB. We don't have time to go into all of that this morning, so that's why we'll pick up right with Mary in v 26

26 Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, the sixth month is the sixth month of pregnancy for Mary's cousin Elizabeth, who would later give birth to John the Baptist. This is all described in the first 25 verses of chapter 1 here.

27 to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. During a betrothal, a man and a woman were considered as husband and wife, even though they lived apart and didn't consummate the marriage yet.

This is far different from our culture today where young people are more commonly in what are called situationships

Betrothal was a significant status in those days. Only divorce or death could terminate the betrothal, and from then on society considered them widow or widower.

28 And having come in, the angel said to her, “Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women!”[fn] the Greek word translated highly favored is “charitoo”, and means highly blessed or much graced.

This word is used only one other time in the bible, not in describing Mary, but describing us—it’s in **Ephesians 1:6 to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved.**

You and I are highly favored, not because of who we are, but because of where we are, forgiven in Christ Jesus. **2 Corinthians 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.**

Read the last part of verse 28 **blessed are you among women!** Notice it says among women, not above women. There is no scripture anywhere in the bible that suggests that Mary be worshiped or prayed to. In fact, Jesus’ mother isn’t even mentioned in the bible after Acts chapter 1.

So we know we aren’t to pray to Mary or exalt Mary, but there are some things we can learn from her....

29 But when she saw him,[fn] she was troubled at his saying, and considered what manner of greeting this was. The fact that Mary is troubled at this saying shows her humility. Mary was shocked to hear such a compliment from an angel.

It's a reminder how truly godly people don't go around thinking about how godly they are!

30-31

30 Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. 31 And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name JESUS.

Jesus is the Greek form of the Hebrew name Joshua, which means "Jehovah is Salvation".

There is true power in the name of Jesus. Many people are comfortable and will even use the word God, but when you say "Jesus" it brings an entirely different reaction from people.

Most of you know before stepping into the pastorate I was a VP at a fortune 500 company. I was at a meeting several years ago with the top executives, there were only about 80 of us in attendance. The CEO was there, the COO was there, it was a big strategy planning meeting held every year for the executive leadership.

Well, word had spread a little bit that I had done some mission trips to Haiti. The 2nd in command of this fortune 500 company, who's normally a bit stand-off ish you could say, actually sought me out at the meeting during a break.

He came up to me and said 'I just heard that you spent some time in Haiti, that's wild, I think that's great.'

I'm thinking awesome bro!

He then said 'I think that's such a great cause, perhaps the company can donate \$10k or something to the organization you work with down there, I'm sure they could use it.'

\$10k can do a lot of amazing things in Haiti.

Now as I'm talking to this very important and powerful business man, I had a choice. I could have left it there, said yes, the organization really could use \$10k, explained how that would help drill wells for fresh water, help feed the poor in tent cities, all those things. And that was my urge.

But as he was speaking to me, so was the Lord. God made it clear to me that I needed to explain the REAL reason we've gone to Haiti. Sure we go there to work, to serve, to teach, whatever. But the ultimate reason we went to Haiti is to share Jesus and make disciples.

So after he said we should give the \$10k to the organization, I said 'yes the organization is Cross to Light ministries, and their goal is to not only help those in need, but to make disciples by training up pastors and planting churches because the nation needs Jesus.'

Well as I told him this, his face started to contort a little bit. He did a good job of catching himself, but he quickly ended the conversation and walked away from me like a skunk was standing near me.

Needless to say that was the last I ever heard about a company donation, and it was the last time the business leader spoke to me individually.

Jesus is offensive because He demands a choice. Jesus Himself even said as much. **Matthew 12:30 "He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters abroad."**

There's no middle ground, no gray area, no straddling the fence. You're either with Jesus, or you're an enemy of Jesus. It's that simple. The angel Gabriel continues to describe Jesus to Mary.

32 He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David.

33 And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end.” This reminds us of the prophecy written 700 years before this announcement to Mary, it’s in

Isaiah 9:6 For unto us a Child is born,

Unto us a Son is given;

And the government will be upon His shoulder.

And His name will be called

Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God,

Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Just as we see hundreds and hundreds of prophecies in the bible literally fulfilled, that makes us even more excited for the prophecies that have yet to be fulfilled regarding Jesus coming back.

34 Then Mary said to the angel, “How can this be, since I do not know a man?” Mary is perplexed and she asks a logical question - how can she be pregnant since she’s a virgin?

35 And the angel answered and said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God. This is a fulfillment of the prophecy that God gave the nation of Israel in Isaiah 7:14 “Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel. Immanuel means God with us.

36-37

36 Now indeed, Elizabeth your relative has also conceived a son in her old age; and this is now the sixth month for her who was called barren. 37 For with God nothing will be impossible.” With

such an amazing promise, the angel Gabriel also brings evidence. Mary's cousin Elizabeth, who was past child bearing years and barren, is now pregnant. If God can allow Elizabeth to become pregnant, He can do what He promised for the young virgin named Mary.

38 Then Mary said, "Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.

Here's a young teenage girl engaged to be married. Like most girls her age her hopes and dreams were all mapped out. She's betrothed, and she and her Prince Charming named Joseph would live happily ever after.

That's when the angel Gabriel appeared and delivered news to Mary that disrupts all her plans.

Mary could've questioned God's will - or simply refused to obey—but Mary does neither of these.

As soon as God's will is revealed to her - she gives everything up - lays it all down. Mary surrenders her little girl hopes, and dreams, and plans, and ambitions to the will of God.

Here's where each of us can learn incredible lessons from Mary. Are we as ready and willing to let God reverse our course, or upset our plans? It really comes down to dedication—are we dedicated to God's will or our own?

Now turn in your bibles to Luke chapter 2 please. We're going to look at the 1st 7 verses.

1-3

1 And it came to pass in those days that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. 2 This census first took place while Quirinius was governing Syria. 3 So all went to be registered, everyone to his own city. The registration

and census described wasn't for simple record-keeping or statistics. It was to efficiently and effectively tax everyone in the Roman Empire. Little did Caesar know he was fulfilling the prophecy of **Micah 5:2 But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah,**

Though you are little among the thousands of Judah,

Yet out of you shall come forth to Me

The One to be Ruler in Israel,

Whose goings forth are from of old,

From everlasting." Because of the census, Jesus would now be born in Bethlehem, just as the OT predicted more than 500 years beforehand.

4 Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into 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 wife,[fn] who was with child

The trip from Nazareth to Bethlehem, which is just outside of Jerusalem, is about 80 miles. Bethlehem was called the city of David because it was David's birthplace.

This wasn't a short distance in those days. 80 miles is a pretty significant undertaking for a pregnant gal.

Ladies, imagine you're pregnant, either walking or riding a donkey, over rocky terrain, for 72 hours. I wonder just how many restroom stops did Joseph have to make for Mary on this trip?

6-7

6 So it was, that while they were there, the days were completed for her to be delivered. 7 And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. So much is left

unsaid in these verses. We don't know anything about the innkeeper, or the inn. There was no vacancy, the census from verse 1 evidently turned quiet little Bethlehem into a booming metropolis.

Surely the town wasn't used to this much noise, this much traffic, probably turning the streets into the 275 during rush hour. The innkeeper had filled every room, every bed filled and every cot occupied.

But couldn't the innkeeper find 1 more space? Mary wasn't just a little pregnant, she was about to give birth!

I bet everyone here would find a bed somehow, someway for a mom to be. Why would the innkeeper say no?

Maybe the knock on the door was at midnight and it disturbed the innkeeper. Perhaps the innkeeper saw Mary having contractions and didn't want the hassle or the noise. Babies can be noisy and restless, let alone the screams of mom during the delivery.

Had someone thought Mary and Joseph were royalty, or leaders of the roman empire surely someone would have found room for them.

But Mary and Joseph were just common folks! No trumpets roared at their entrance, no courier announced their arrival, they simply knocked on the door. And the innkeeper missed the opportunity to be there with Jesus.

Put yourselves in the sandals of Mary for a moment. This specific night described here had to be a brutally difficult night for her. This wasn't how giving birth to the Savior was supposed to go!

Like any ancient mom-to be, Mary probably envisioned giving birth at home, her mom holding one hand, maybe an aunt holding the other.

In those days it would be affectionate relatives, Joseph, and a crowd of neighbors all outside the door. But none of that happened.

So, amongst the sounds and the stench of barnyard animals, Mary and Joseph bring baby Jesus into the world.

And you bible students know a manger is not a cute little bassinet, a manger is a feeding trough for animals.

Do you ever wonder why a feeding trough? There is no more appropriate sign for Jesus than to be laid in an area where others feed. **John 6:35 And Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.**

If God was willing to come into the flesh, enter a birth canal, and be nailed to a cross, you know He's willing to do whatever it takes to draw us near to Him.

Titus 3:4-8 4 But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, 5 not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, 6 whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, 7 that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life. Praise God for Jesus!