

- I) V8 INTRO: Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields
We have gathered to celebrate the birth of Jesus
- II) We do not view the story of His birth as a myth, or a sentimental story
We see it as **an actual event**, passed down to us by eyewitnesses
2 Pe 1:16 We did not follow cunningly devised tales, when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but **we were eyewitnesses** of His majesty
IT IS A FULFILMENT OF GOD'S PROMISES
- III) The event of His birth was something that was prophesied in Genesis
When the Adam and Eve fell in the Garden, God made a declaration
Gen 3:15 (to the serpent) I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; **He will crush your head**, and you will strike His heel
- IV) When Adam disobeyed God, the penalty for his sin was death
He was not the only one who would die, but his sin impacted every human
Ro 5:12 through one man sin entered into the world **and death through sin**, and so death spread to all mankind, because all (in Adam) sinned
- V) In Adam all sinned, but God promised to redeem fallen humanity
He gave some to be His prophets and they proclaimed His voice to man
- VI) He also inspired writers to preserve His words and to record His promises
The most important promise He made was to send a Messiah
- VII) In the OT writings, no less than 300 prophecies about Messiah were promised
2 Sa 7:12-13 (David) When you die and are buried with your ancestors, I will raise up one of your descendants, your own offspring, and I will make His kingdom strong. He is the One who will build a house for My name, and I will secure His royal throne forever
Is 7:14 the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, **the virgin** shall conceive and bear a Son, and **shall call His name Immanuel**.
Is 9:6 For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, **Mighty God**, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace
- VIII) For many years the people waited, hoping and praying for Messiah to come
At the right time, God moved to send the promised deliverer

- I) These shepherds were performing the ordinary task of watching over sheep
They may have been guarding the sheep that were to be used as offerings

APPLICATION

- II) This then would be a picture of Jesus who was **to be** the sin offering to God
Jn 1:29 The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold! **The Lamb** of God who takes away the sin of the world!

- III) His offering would be the final offering
Heb 10:12 But this Man, after He had offered **one sacrifice** for sins **forever**, sat down at the right hand of God

AT THIS TIME

- IV) There had been **400 years of silence** since the closing of the Book of Malachi
Now, at precisely the right time **God broke His silence**
Gal 4:4 when **the set time had fully come**, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law

HE BROKE IT PROGRESSIVELY

- V) **First:** He broke His silence by sending Gabriel to speak to a priest, Zacharias
Lu 1:11 an angel of the Lord appeared to him standing on the right side of the altar of incense, promising that his prayer had been heard and he would have a son
Second: He sent Gabriel to speak to Mary
Lu 1:30-33 The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call Him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give Him the throne of **His father David**, and He will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; His kingdom will never end."

Third: He sent an angel to minister to a young man named Joseph

- VI) Imagine how Joseph must have felt when he found out Mary was pregnant
Mt 1:18-21 Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, **before they came together**, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit. Then Joseph her husband, **being a just man**, and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly. But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, **son of David**, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins."

FIRST

- VII) Zacharias was an older man, desiring that God would give him a son

- I) His son John would leave him and live in the desert, preparing to reveal Messiah
He would end his life in a violent way: beheaded

SECOND

- II) Mary was a young virgin, desiring to live a life pleasing to God
She would live her life carrying the stigma of being pregnant before marriage
Her reputation would not be restored until Jesus was resurrected

THIRD

- III) Joseph was a young man, simply desiring marriage and a family
He would have been broken hearted over Mary's pregnancy

DEVELOP

- IV) Under strict Jewish law, Mary could have suffered capital punishment
Dt 22:23-24 If a man happens to meet in a town a virgin pledged to be married
and he sleeps with her, you shall take both of them to the gate of that town and **stone them to death** --the girl because she was in a town and did not scream for help, and the man because **he violated another man's wife**. You must purge the evil from among you.

- V) Joseph was a righteous man, not a self-righteous man
He was compassionate and didn't expose her to public judgment

- VI) In his hurt and disappointment, he decided to put her away secretly
As he was deeply considering these things God moved to minister to Joseph
He sent His angel to comfort and direct the heart of Joseph
Ps 94:19 In the multitude of my anxieties within me, Your comforts delight my soul

- VII) Each desired to please God and each one was deepened in an unexpected way

- VIII) In the silence of the night, once again God broke His silence
God was about to reveal His salvation to man in the most personal way possible
He was about to take upon Himself human flesh

- IX) God would be with man in a unique way: God in human flesh would be seen
Jesus, the Word of God, would be born
Jn 1:14 The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory,
the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth

- X) V8 The shepherds were in the fields, keeping watch over the sheep
In the ordinary events of their lives, the extraordinary now occurs

- I) **APPLICATION**
God has a way of turning the ordinary into something **amazing**
He orchestrates events to fulfill His divine purpose
IN THIS CASE
- II) A Roman official was divinely moved to order a census
This required Joseph and Mary to make a journey
Joseph, being a descendant of David, went to the village of Bethlehem
- III) Nazareth was in the north, so they travelled south to Bethlehem
V7 Upon arrival they tried to get a room but there was no room for them **in the inn**
INTERESTING
- IV) This inn was an enclosure where travelers drove their animals for the night
It had water supplied, but no host, no food, and no ordinary comforts
- V) It was **not a hotel** with a stable attached **outside**: It **was a stable**
Luke is saying there was not even room for Mary **in the stable**
The stable area **was crowded**, so Mary gave birth **outside of the stable**
- VI) Mary gave birth in the open; no one to help her even to place Jesus in a manger
In her moment of **giving birth**, she was without another **woman**, nor a **midwife**
- VII) V7 **She** wrapped Him in swaddling cloths, and personally laid Him in a manger
She brought Him forth, she wrapped Him in cloths, she laid Him in the manger
Amid her pain and possible embarrassment, there was **joy**
- VIII) Something Jesus once said may have been in connection with His birth
Jn 16:21 A woman when she is in labor, has sorrow because her hour has come;
but as soon as she has given birth to the child, she no longer remembers the anguish,
for joy that a man has been born into the world.
- IX) It was there that she brought forth her **firstborn Son**
Lu 1:30-33 Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found
favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son and
shall call His name JESUS. 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. And He will reign over the
house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end

- I) V8 There were in the same country shepherds living in the fields keeping watch
Ordinary Temple shepherds are given a Heavenly Birth Announcement
- II) V9 And behold an angel of the Lord stood before them and the glory of the Lord
As they saw the glory of the Lord, their hearts trembled in fear
- III) They were well aware of stories of God's dealings with Israel
They knew of Miracles and of Angelic visitations in the past
The Book came alive: An angel was standing over them and they feared
IMMEDIATELY THEY FEARED
- IV) V10 **Do not be afraid** I bring you good tidings (gospel) of great joy which will be to
You have no reason to be afraid: I am bringing gospel joy
- V) You live in a world under oppression and lacking joy for hundreds of years
I am bringing you good news, and this news is **for all people**
Is 52:10 The LORD has made bare His holy arm in the eyes of **all the nations**; And
all the ends of the earth shall see The salvation of our God
- VI) V11 There is **born to you** this day in the city of David a Savior who is **Christ the**
You have been waiting for Messiah, and today the promise has been fulfilled
He has been born in the city of David (Bethlehem)
- VII) This was in fulfillment of a prophecy given by Micah, 700 years earlier
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**."
- VIII) **Bethlehem** is translated **house of bread**
From the **House of Bread** would come the **Bread of Life**
Jn 6:35 **I am the bread of life**. Whoever comes to Me will never hunger, and
whoever believes in Me will never thirst
Jesus, the Bread of Life, is the Only source of spiritual nourishment
- IX) Though you are little among the thousands in Judah, yet out of you shall come
From what might seem **insignificant** comes the One who is most significant
- X) Yet **out of you** shall come forth to Me the One to be Ruler in Israel

- I) Whose **goings forth** are from of old, from everlasting
This is His incarnation, taking upon Himself human flesh
HE IS IMMANUEL
- II) Notice how he says The Child is **born** which speaks of His humanity
This is because He (Jesus) is God in human flesh
Col 2:9 For in Christ the fullness of God lives in a human body
- III) Whose **goings forth** are from old, from everlasting speaks of His **divinity**
Is 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.
- IV) In this prophecy we see a crib, a cross, and a crown
The Child is born (crib) a son is given (cross) the government (crown)
- V) *He is God in the flesh*
From everlasting **to** everlasting is an interesting phrase
Ps 90:2 Before the mountains were brought forth, Or ever You had formed the
earth and the world, Even *from everlasting to everlasting*, You are God.
- VI) From the vanishing point **in the past** to the vanishing point **in the future**
He is God, always with no beginning, and no end
- VII) Later Jesus would make this clear
Jn 16:28 I **came forth** from the Father and have come into the world. Again, I
leave the world and **go to the Father**.
- VIII) Though He was born in Bethlehem, He is God, taking upon Himself human flesh
WHO IS THIS BABY
- IX) V11 He is a **Savior** who is **Christ the Lord**
Jesus is identified for the shepherds
- X) He is **a Savior** the One who will confront all the sin of the world
He is the One who will conquer, and He is the One who will rule
Col 2:15 And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public
spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.
SECOND

I) He is Christ, the Lord, the anointed One, the Messiah

Phil 2: 9-11 Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father

II) V12-14 And this will be **the sign** to you; you will find a babe wrapped in swaddling
You will find a newborn baby, not in a cradle, but in a manger

III) The contrast of His royalty with His humble bed couldn't be more incredible
The God of the universe will be found in a food trough, fit for animals

IV) You shall find this glorious person, however strange it may appear, wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a stable! It is by humility that Christ comes to reign; and this is **the only way** into his kingdom! **Pride** is the character of all the children of Adam: **humility** is the mark of the Son of God, and of all His followers. Christ came in the way of **humility** to destroy the **pride** that is the root of evil in the souls of men.

V) This is how Jesus could say this of Himself

Mt 11:29 Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and **humble in heart**, and you will find rest for your souls.

VI) Before they could react, the Choir burst out in praise
Glory to God, then peace to men

VII) In a moment of time we receive understanding that should change our entire lives
There is no peace on earth except among those with whom God is well pleased
Peace on earth and good will toward men occurs only after God is given glory

VIII) Men are in a state of hostility with Heaven and with each other.
God has provided a way of peace, through His Son Jesus Christ

IX) When men are reconciled to God, through Jesus, they love one another.
They have peace with God; peace within, and peace with their neighbors

WHAT DOES THE CHRISTMAS MESSAGE TELL US

X) It tells us that God sent His Son to planet earth to save us
Mt 1:21 tells us that Jesus will **save His people from their sins**

I) **FIRST IT TELLS US WE ARE SINNERS**

The bible makes it clear that man is fallen and in need of rescue

Eccl 7:20 Indeed, there is no one on earth who is righteous, no one who does what is right and never sins.

Ro 3:23 all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God

SECOND IT TELLS US GOD LOVES US

II) God loves us, and sent His Son to rescue us

Ro 6:23 the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord

Heb 9:27 It is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment

III) The **Christmas message** is God loves us and sent His Son to save us

THIRD IT TELLS US TO SHARE THIS WITH OTHERS

IV) V15-20 So it was when the angels had gone away from them into heaven

We come to Him, personally see this, **experience His salvation**, and tell others

V) We glorify and praise God for what we have heard and seen

2 Co 5:19-20 God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us **the word of reconciliation**. Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, **be reconciled to God**

VI) This is the message of Christmas

The greatest gift is salvation, freely given, through Jesus