

January 15, 2023 AM- Pastor Kevin Olivier

Luke 2:1-20 – “The Good News of Christ”

A. What is the gospel?

1. It is good for you to be able to give an answer to this basic question that is central to your Christian faith.
2. Today’s text gives one of the NT’s 1st gospel proclamations. The gospel or good news of the the coming Messiah or Christ was given in the OT through Moses, David, & the prophets.

B. As Zacharias was filled with the Holy Spirit after the miraculous birth of his son, he prophesied that his son John would **“go on before the Lord to prepare His ways; to give to His people *the* knowledge of salvation by the forgiveness of their sins” (Lu 1:76-77).**

God offers you eternal life if you receive the good news of Christ.	I. <u>GOD’S PERFECT TIMING</u> II. <u>THE GOSPEL PROCLAIMED BY ANGELS</u>
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I. GOD’S PERFECT TIMING →**vv1-5**

A. What is so perfect about this timing?

1. It was not convenient for Mary to travel while being **“with child.”**
 - a. The fact that Mary delivered her baby while on this trip meant that she was far along in her pregnancy.
 - b. Practically speaking, having to ride a donkey for days while large with child isn’t the best timing.
 - 1) The roundabout way from Nazareth to Bethlehem was 90 miles.
 - 2) In her condition, a donkey would have to take a slower pace. The trip would have taken 4-5 days.

B. Although difficult timing for Mary & Joseph, according to His perfect timing, God used Caesar’s decree for a census for His sovereign purpose to fulfill Holy Scripture. →**Micah 5:1-5a**

1. God chose Bethlehem, David’s city, as the place of birth for the Lord Jesus Christ— the Son of David according to the revelation given to Micah.
2. If not for this very inconvenient decree, Jesus would have been born in Nazareth.
3. Notice what **Mic 5** says concerning this ruler to be born in Bethlehem:
 - a. **v2 “His goings forth are from long ago, from the days of eternity.”**
 - b. **v4 “He will arise & shepherd *His* flock.”** Jesus called Himself the good shepherd.
 - c. **v5 “This One will be our peace.”** He is the Prince of Peace.¹

C. Shortly after arriving in Bethlehem, Mary gave birth to the Son of God. →**vv6-7**

1. A manger is what we would call a feeding trough for goats, sheep, or large cattle.
2. This section of Scripture is a commentary upon the beginning of WSC 27 which asks: **“Wherein did Christ’s humiliation consist?”**
Answer: **“Christ’s humiliation consisted in His being born, & that in a low condition,...”**

¹ Isa 9:6

II. THE GOSPEL PROCLAIMED BY ANGELS

A. Notice 1st the glorious angel & his glorious message→ **vv8-14**

1. The shepherds became **“terribly frightened”** because of the glorious heavenly angel & because of **“the glory of the Lord shone around them” (v9)**.
 - a. In the Bible, almost every time a human saw an angel, he or she became afraid.
 - b. The angel sought to calm their fears, telling them not to be afraid (**v10**).
2. In **v10**, when the angel said **“I bring you good news of great joy which will be for all the people,”** it could be translated, **“I bring you a gospel of great joy.”**
 - a. The Greek word is **“euangelizo”** which means **“gospel”** or **“good news.”**
 - b. From this word we derived the word to **“evangelize”** to bring the good news.
 - c. This angel was an evangelist proclaiming the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

B. The angel told them a sign in the city of David— in Bethlehem— to identify the newly born **“Savior, who is Christ the Lord.”** In **v12** he said, **“This will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths & lying in a manger.”**

1. It isn't normal for babies to be found **“lying in a manger.”** Babies are usually found in cribs or cradles.
2. One would not expect to find the long-awaited Jewish Messiah, whose **“goings forth are from long ago, from the days of eternity”** to be laid in a meager feeding trough for animals.

C. A single angel shouldn't have the privilege to proclaim the gospel alone; a whole multitude joined in. →**vv13-14**

1. Some artwork of this scene depicts 3-4 angels. Other pictures I have seen show about 15 angels in the heavens. The audio Bible I listen to has it wrong as well.
2. The text describes a **“multitude of the heavenly host;”** the Greek word for **“host”** here can be translated as **“army.”** Before covid19, a presential inauguration could have at least 500,000 in attendance. Imagine a group that size in unison saying, **“Glory to God in the highest, & on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased.”**
3. The heavenly evangelists proclaimed a message of **“on earth peace among men with whom He [God] is pleased.”**
 - a. Jesus is the only One through whom we may obtain peace with God the Father.
 - b. It is only through the perfect life & sacrifice of Christ you can have peace with God to be pleasing in His sight.
 - c. WCF 33, sec 2 says of those who have received Christ as Lord & Savior by faith: **“For then shall the righteous go into everlasting life, & receive that fullness of joy & refreshing, which shall come from the presence of the Lord; ...”** It goes on to say those who reject the gospel will be rejected: **“...but the wicked who know not God, & obey not the gospel of Jesus Christ, shall be cast into eternal torments, & be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, & from the glory of His power.”**

Review, further application, & conclusion: