

The Birth of The Messiah
Matthew 1:18-25, Luke 2:1-39

Introduction

Today is traditionally known as Palm Sunday in recognition of the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem to the acclaim of the people who were laying branches from Palm trees before him and shouting, "*Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel.*" This was the culmination of several ancient Hebrew prophecies concerning the Messiah being presented to the nation as its rightful king. Only a few days later many in that same crowd would be shouting, "*Away with Him! Crucify Him!*" and other ancient Hebrew prophecies would be fulfilled as the Messiah became the sin sacrifice that would atone for man's sin. Three days later, even more ancient Hebrew prophecies would be fulfilled as the Messiah triumphed over the grave and gave mankind hope of redemption by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

This morning we are going to go back to an earlier time and the ancient Hebrew prophecies that were fulfilled when the eternal Word took on human flesh and the king of the Universe became a man (See: John 1). Last week I pointed out from Luke 1:5-80 that the fulfillment of both the ancient Hebrew prophecies and those given to Zacharias, Elizabeth and Mary are all proof that Jesus is the Son of God, the promised Messiah. John the Baptist would be the Messiah's herald. Jesus would be born of a virgin by the power of the Holy Spirit, and He was Lord even while in Mary's womb. This morning we are going to look at Jesus' birth as recorded in Matthew 1:18-25 and Luke 2:1-39.

Joseph's Dilemma - Matthew 1:18-25

¹⁸ *Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: when His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit.*

As I pointed out last week, after the angel Gabriel had visited Mary and told her she would be with child by the power of the Holy Spirit, Mary went to stay for three months with her relative, Elizabeth, until John the Baptist was born. When she returns to Nazareth and Joseph finds out she is pregnant, he has a great dilemma on his hands.

Now in order to understand Joseph's situation, you need to understand something about betrothal in ancient Judaism. It is not the same thing as an engagement in our society. There are promises exchanged in an engagement, but there is really nothing very binding about it for either party can break the engagement for any reason at anytime. Certainly a broken engagement hurts and many tears are shed for there is a feeling of rejection and friends and family are sad for us. If the girl breaks the engagement, she will have to return the ring, and the man will lose the ring if he breaks it, but that is about it. Broken engagements are hard, but as I tell couples when I do pre-marital counseling, a broken engagement is better than a bad marriage.

Joseph was betrothed to Mary which meant that not only were there promises made, but there was also a legal relationship. In order for a betrothal to end, Joseph would have to legally divorce Mary. There were also greater ramifications and consequences if either of them were unfaithful during the betrothal period. In our society, even the shame of a girl getting pregnant first and then married has been diminished, but for Joseph and Mary there could be very serious consequences to her being pregnant.

The betrothal period usually lasted about a year in which the couple would prepare for married life. The man would be busy building a house and the woman would be preparing to make it a home. They followed the plan of wait and prepare and then enjoy rather than the mindset of our society which is to

enjoy now and pay later. Joseph had great anticipation for the day that Mary would be his to have and to hold as his own, and he was busy preparing for their lives together.

Now consider what you would have done in his situation. Your betrothed had been away for three months with little or no communication since there were no phones, internet or even a postal service then. There would be much to talk about and much you would want to show her in your preparations for your life together. She finally arrives and you rush to greet her and give her a hug and then it is *"uhh, honey, you, uhh, look like you were, uhh, well taken care of down there at Zechariah's and Elizabeth's. You've gotten kind of pudgy around the middle."* How would you respond when she says she is pregnant by the Holy Spirit? Would you believe her or think she has gone off the religious deep end with such an excuse, perhaps caused by spending so much time with Zacharias and Elizabeth who have always been a little extreme with religion anyway?

What would you do? Your dreams are shattered. Mary had been unfaithful. There is hurt, anguish and the feelings of personal rejection. What do you tell your family and friends? How can you hold your head up in the community again? Verse 19 tells us, *"And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man and not wanting to disgrace her, planned to put her away secretly."*

Joseph was honorable and even in the midst of his own pain he wanted to spare Mary as much as possible. The Mosaic Law provided that a woman in Mary's predicament - apparently unfaithful to her betrothed, could be stoned to death. The Roman authorities would not allow that, so divorce was the next option. Joseph would quietly divorce her. The same word (ἀπολύω / απολυω) can also mean to send away. I think we are on safe grounds with both meanings being in view. Joseph would take the legal actions needed to separate himself from her, but not wanting to disgrace her publically, it appears to me that he also wanted to send her away so she could have the child some place else. You can think of this in terms of a home for unwed mothers. Many people in the community would then not even know what happened.

However, this was not God's plan. Matthew 1:20-25 tells us the story of His intervention and Joseph's response. ²⁰ *But when he had considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for the Child who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit."* ²¹ *"She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins."* ²² *Now all this took place to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet:* ²³ *"BEHOLD, THE VIRGIN SHALL BE WITH CHILD AND SHALL BEAR A SON, AND THEY SHALL CALL HIS NAME IMMANUEL,"* which translated means, *"GOD WITH US."* ²⁴ *And Joseph awoke from his sleep and did as the angel of the Lord commanded him, and took Mary as his wife,* ²⁵ *but kept her a virgin until she gave birth to a Son; and he called His name Jesus.*

Joseph now believed and took responsibility for Mary and the coming child. He would be their provider and protector. Any shame others might want to place upon her, he would take upon himself. This was not the way he had intended to have a family, but Joseph was committed to doing God's will regardless of the personal sacrifice involved. Do you share that commitment? Joseph would also pass to this child who was not his son, but rather the Son of God, his legal heirship to the throne of David.

Jesus' Birth - Luke 2:1-7

We now turn to Luke 2:1-7 to pick up the story. ¹ *Now in those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus, that a census be taken of all the inhabited earth.* ² *This was the first census taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria.* ³ *And everyone was on his way to register for the census, each to his own city.* ⁴ *Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the city of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David,* ⁵ *in order to register along with Mary, who was engaged to him, and was with child.* ⁶ *While they were there, the days were completed for her to give birth.* ⁷ *And she gave birth to her firstborn son; and she wrapped Him in cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.*

The ancient prophecy of Micah 5:2 demanded that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem Ephrathah in Judea. God used the pagan Roman ruler Ceasar Augustus to make this happen. His decree to have a census taken required that everyone return to their own city for it. Luke notes in verse 2 that the time this took place was during the “*first census taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria.*” Matthew 2:2 notes this was during the days of King Herod the Great, so historians put this about 4 B.C. (Quirinius is the Greek for the Latin, Cyrenius).

Since Joseph was a descendant of David, he had to travel about 70 miles south from Nazareth to Bethlehem. Seventy miles is not far to us today with modern cars and highways, but it was a long journey in that time and required many days travel by foot or riding on the back of an animal. People often traveled in caravans to lessen the danger from robbers and wild animals, but they were still exposed to the weather. It can be very hot there in Israel in the Summer and rainy in the Fall and Winter. In addition, Mary was pregnant, possibly even toward the end of it, so this was not a trip they would have wanted to make. God used the pagan Roman government to force the issue so that the Messiah would be born in the proper place according to the prophecies.

When they arrive, Bethlehem is crowded and they could not find a room in any “inn” (κατάλυμα / kataluma). Do not think of this as a inn such as a hotel in our own time. This is a guestchamber in a house such as was used by Jesus and the disciples to celebrate Passover (Luke 22:11). Hospitality was important to the Jews of that time, this was especially true of those in Jerusalem and the towns nearby (Bethlehem is only 5 miles from Jerusalem), and so would often build a room on their home where guests could stay. Joseph finally secures a stable, but do not think of this like a barn like we have here. This could have been cave dug into the side of one of the limestone hills, or a room attached to the home where the animals were kept. We do not know any more about it than that, though I am sure they would have cleaned it out the best they could. In that humble place, Mary gave birth to Jesus, and not having a cradle, she placed her newborn son in a feeding trough.

There is nothing romantic about this scene. It is one of privation and hardship. Yet it is the God directed place for Jesus to be born as a demonstration of His son's humility. Philippians 2:6-8 tells us that though Jesus “*existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.*” Jesus' birth in a stable was in keeping with his humble nature.

The Testimony of the Angels and Shepherds - Luke 2:8-20

The Testimony of the Angels - Luke 2:8-14

Jesus was born in a humble place, but God had the birth announced in a dramatic way. Luke 2:8–14, ⁸ *In the same region there were some shepherds staying out in the fields and keeping watch over their flock by night. 9 And an angel of the Lord suddenly stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them; and they were terribly frightened. 10 But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which will be for all the people; 11 for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. 12 “This will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.” 13 And suddenly there appeared with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, 14 “Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased.”*

Once again we see that fear is the normal reaction of men when they see an angel. This scene begins with one angel telling them about the good news of Jesus' birth. He specifically points out the location, identity and a sign of recognition. The place is the “*city of David*” which is Bethlehem. His identity is “*Savior, who is Christ the Lord.*” Remember that “*Christ*” is simply the Greek term for the Hebrew, “*Messiah*,” meaning “*the anointed one.*” The title, “*Savior*” matches what the angel told Joseph that he was to call “*His name Jesus, for it would be He who would save His people from their sins*” (Matthew

1:21). This baby is the one promised throughout the Hebrew Scriptures that would come to save them, but not only them, for it was “*good news of great joy which will be all the people*” because the Messiah would also bring hope of redemption to the Gentiles (Isaiah 11:10, Matthew 12:21; Romans 15:12-13).

The angel was then joined by a multitude of the “heavenly host” These would be a large group of angels of different ranks. They gave praise to God saying, “*Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased.*” The child promised in Isaiah 9:6-7 was born. The Righteous Branch of David had arrived. Mankind was given a hope for the future.

The Testimony of the Shepherds - Luke 2:15-20

The reaction of the shepherds is also testimony to what had happened. Luke 2:15–20, ¹⁵ *When the angels had gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds began saying to one another, “Let us go straight to Bethlehem then, and see this thing that has happened which the Lord has made known to us.”* ¹⁶ *So they came in a hurry and found their way to Mary and Joseph, and the baby as He lay in the manger.* ¹⁷ *When they had seen this, they made known the statement which had been told them about this Child.* ¹⁸ *And all who heard it wondered at the things which were told them by the shepherds.* ¹⁹ *But Mary treasured all these things, pondering them in her heart.* ²⁰ *The shepherds went back, glorifying and praising God for all that they had heard and seen, just as had been told them.*

As soon as the angels left, the shepherds went to see what the angels had been talking about and everything was just as they had said. They find Jesus in Bethlehem according to the sign the angel had told him. He was wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger. They told Joseph and Mary about what they had experienced. This caused everyone who heard about it to be amazed, but it was especially meaningful to Mary who kept what they said in mind and considering all the implications of what had been revealed.

The Testimony of Simeon and Anna - Luke 2:21-38

Fulfilling the Law - Luke 2:21-24

Joseph and Mary were careful to follow the various commands God had given to them and their ancestors including the covenant of circumcision recorded in Genesis 17:12 which God had made with Abraham. Luke 2:21 tells us, “*And when eight days had passed, before His circumcision, His name was then called Jesus, the name given by the angel before He was conceived in the womb.*”

Luke 2:22-23 tells us about the next event that took place in accordance with the laws of God given through Moses. ²² *And when the days for their purification according to the law of Moses were completed, they brought Him up to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord* ²³ *(as it is written in the Law of the Lord, “EVERY firstborn MALE THAT OPENS THE WOMB SHALL BE CALLED HOLY TO THE LORD”),* ²⁴ *and to offer a sacrifice according to what was said in the Law of the Lord, “A PAIR OF TURTLEDOVES OR TWO YOUNG PIGEONS.”*

The time of purification for the birth of a male child was a total of 41 days (Leviticus 12:1-4). After this time had passed, Joseph took Mary and Jesus and traveled the 5 or 6 miles to Jerusalem in order to offer the required sacrifices. Mary was to bring two offerings, one for a burnt offering and one for a sin offering. Because Joseph and Mary were poor, she offered either two turtledoves or two young pigeons instead of a one year old lamb and one pigeon or one turtledove (Leviticus 12:6-8). Because Jesus was Mary’s first child, he was “*holy to the LORD*” and Exodus 13:11-15 and Numbers 18:15-16 required a redemption price of five shekels in silver to be paid.

The Testimony of Simeon - Luke 2:25-35.

When Joseph and Mary arrive at the temple, they meet a man named Simeon. Luke 2:25–26, ²⁵ *And there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; and this man was righteous and devout, looking for the consolation of Israel; and the Holy Spirit was upon him.* ²⁶ *And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Christ.*

This description is similar to so many of the Old Testament saints we find in the pages of the Bible. Simeon was serious about seeking after and doing the Lord's will. Like King David of old, he would have loved the Law of the Lord because it was perfect and restored his soul, it was sure and made him wise, it was right and made his heart rejoice, it was pure and enlightened his eyes (Psalm 19). As a student of the Scriptures, Simeon knew the promises made to Israel and was looking forward with eagerness to their fulfillment. The "*consolation of Israel*" was the promise of Israel's future redemption when the Messiah would come and comfort his people as described in Isaiah 40:1-5, "*Comfort, O comfort My people,*" says your God. "*Speak kindly to Jerusalem; And call out to her, that her warfare has ended, That her iniquity has been removed, That she has received of the Lord's hand Double for all her sins.*" A voice is calling, "*Clear the way for the Lord in the wilderness; Make smooth in the desert a highway for our God. Let every valley be lifted up, And every mountain and hill be made low; And let the rough ground become a plain, And the rugged terrain a broad valley; Then the glory of the Lord will be revealed, And all flesh will see [it] together; For the mouth of the Lord has spoken.*"

The scriptures were available to everyone and all of Jerusalem could have been seeking after the Lord as Simeon, but they were not. Simeon was one as described in Jeremiah 29:13 in which God says, '*And you will seek Me and find [Me,] when you search for Me with all your heart. 14 And I will be found by you . . .*' Simeon sought the Lord and the Holy Spirit was upon him revealing to him that "*he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Messiah.*"

Though we do not know how old Simeon was, he was old enough to be looking forward to death, as we shall see by his statement in verse 29. One last thing he was looking forward too before death was the fulfillment of this revelation that he would see the Lord's Messiah.

God led Simeon to go the Temple the day that Joseph and Mary brought Jesus there to be dedicated. Luke 2:27-28, "*And he came in the Spirit into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to carry out for Him the custom of the Law, then he took Him into his arms . . .*"

The Holy Spirit led Simeon directly to Joseph and Mary and the infant Christ. There would have been nothing spectacular about this young family to attract Simeon's eye. They did not come in splendor of any kind, but as a simple carpenter's family. They would have appeared like any other devout Jewish family coming to the temple to fulfill the Mosaic law and offer a redemption sacrifice for their first born son. It was the Holy Spirit that led Simeon to the young family. And when he met them he took Jesus into his arms.

We do not know what it was about Simeon that would have allowed this new mother to so freely let a stranger hold her baby. Some have speculated that he was a priest of some sort, possibly even one of very high office that would have been quickly recognized by anyone in the Temple, but in our text, verse 25 simply describes Simeon as "*a man in Jerusalem.*" There is no indication that he had any such office. My own thought is that it was the Holy Spirit that comforted Mary and Joseph and allowed them to so freely let Simeon take the baby into his arms.

While holding Jesus, Simeon ". . . *blessed God, and said, 'Now Lord, Thou dost let Thy bondservant depart In peace, according to Thy word; For my eyes have seen Thy salvation, Which Thou hast prepared in the presence of all peoples, A LIGHT OF REVELATION TO THE GENTILES, and the glory of Thy people Israel*" (Luke 2:28-32).

This amazed Joseph and Mary (Luke 2:33). Simeon was now ready for death. The promised revelation had been fulfilled and he was now not just seeing, but holding the Lord's Messiah, the glory of Israel, the one that would bring salvation to all peoples - Jew and Gentile alike.

Luke records the rest of what Simeon said in verses 34- 35, "*And Simeon blessed them, and said to Mary His mother, 'Behold, this child is appointed for the fall and rise of many in Israel, and for a sign to be opposed -- and a sword will pierce even your own soul - to the end that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed.'*"

Jesus is the one who will fulfill God's promise to bring peace to men, but that would not happen quickly. Jesus' coming would result in a change in the order of things with some falling and others rising in Israel, but there would continue to be hatred between men and toward God, His Christ and His followers. Even Mary's own soul would be pierced, a prophetic reference to the anguish she herself would feel when she would watch Jesus die on the cross and bear man's sin in Himself. Up to this time, Joseph and Mary had only been told about the glorious part of Jesus' work. Now they hear the painful part too. Jesus had come to cause a division between those that would believe and follow and those that would reject Him. His coming would reveal the hearts of men.

The Testimony of Anna - Luke 2:36-38

Also present in the Temple's outer court was another of God's servants. Luke 2: 36-38 tells us about Anna. *"And there was a prophetess, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was advanced in years, having lived with a husband seven years after her marriage, 37 and then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. And she never left the temple, serving night and day with fastings and prayers. 38 And at that very moment she came up and [began] giving thanks to God, and continued to speak of Him to all those who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem."*

Anna the prophetess came up to them just as Simeon was finishing. Anna also had a godly character like Simeon. She was now quite elderly being 84 years old, but she was still completely devoted to serving the Lord in the Temple. She was apparently also sensitive to the Holy Spirit and began to give thanks to God when she came up to Joseph, Mary and Jesus. She did not stop there, for she continued to speak of Him to all those who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem. She rejoiced over the birth of Jesus.

Conclusions

The birth of Jesus was full of fulfilled prophecy both ancient and contemporary. Jesus was of the required lineage being conceived by the Holy Spirit so that He is the Son of God. Joseph believed the angel and accepted Mary so that Jesus was born into his family and so had the right to David's royal throne. Mary was also a descendant of David so Jesus was also of the blood line of David. God used pagan Roman rulers to ensure that Jesus was born in the required location of Bethlehem Ephrathah, the city of David.

The angel proclaimed Jesus to be the *"Savior, who is Christ the Lord."* The shepherds found Jesus to be exactly where the angel had said and identified by the sign the angel had given and so confirming his earlier declaration about Him.

By the Holy Spirit, Simeon recognized Jesus as the promised Messiah who is the salvation sent by God to all peoples including the Gentiles. The prophetess Anna joined in giving praise to God and speaking of Jesus to all who would listen.

Following Jesus is not easy. It was not for Mary or Joseph either in the days before His birth or at His birth. Simeon revealed it would not be easy in the days that were to come. Following Jesus can be hard, but it is worth it because it is true and the only way to a peaceful eternity.

If you are not a Christian, it is time to believe the truth and turn from your sin to faith in the Savior so that you might follow Him.

If you are a Christian, keep your eyes focused on Him and following the truth so that you are not discouraged and do not turn aside even when life gets hard. There is no better life for either eternity or the present, for the yoke of Jesus is easy and His load is light. He is gentle and humble in heart; and in Him you will find rest for your soul (Matt. 11:29-30).

Sermon Notes - 3/24/2013
The Birth of The Messiah - Matthew 1:18-25, Luke 2:1-39

Introduction

Jesus is the Eternal _____ that became human flesh (John 1)

The fulfillment of the prophecies in Luke 1:5-80 demonstrate that Jesus is “the _____”

Joseph’s Dilemma - Matthew 1:18-25

Mary is about _____ pregnant when Joseph finds out she is with child

A betrothal meant there was also a _____ relationship between Joseph and Mary

During the betrothal period the man would _____ a house and the woman would prepare it to be a home

What would you have done if you were in Joseph’s shoes?

Joseph is _____ and seeks to quietly divorce Mary, yet also try to keep her from being disgraced

Matthew 1:20-25. God _____ to reveal the truth to Joseph who then takes Mary as his wife

Joseph was committed to doing God’s will even at personal _____

Jesus’ Birth - Luke 2:1-7

God uses the pagan ruler, Ceasar Augustus, to fulfill _____ - Jesus is born in Bethlehem (4 B.C.)

Joseph travels the _____ from Nazareth to Bethlehem on foot while Mary is pregnant

When they arrive, they cannot room in any “inn” - _____ (κατάλυμα / kataluma)

They find room to stay in a stable - cave or attached room in which _____ were kept

Jesus is born in a _____ place and is placed in a feeding trough for a cradle

God directs Jesus to be born in a humble place in keeping with His _____ in coming - Phil 2:5-8

The Testimony of the Angels and Shepherds - Luke 2:8-20

The Testimony of the Angels - Luke 2:8-14

People are _____ by angels

Place of birth: *city of David* - _____ of Judea

Identity: *Savior, who is Christ the Lord* (Christ = Messiah = anointed) who _____ from sin (Mt. 1:21)

Message: “*good news of great joy which will be all the people*” - including _____

A large group of angels of various _____ join in giving praise to God

The Testimony of the Shepherds - Luke 2:15-20

They find Jesus according to the _____ the angel had given them

Everyone is _____ at their story - and Mary treasures it and considers its implications

The Testimony of Simeon and Anna - Luke 2:21-38

Fulfilling the Law - Luke 2:21-24

Jesus is circumcised on the eighth day as required by _____ 17:12 (Luke 2:21)

Forty one days after birth, Joseph takes Mary and Jesus to the _____ to fulfill the required sacrifices

Purification required a burnt _____ and sin sacrifice of two turtledoves or two pigeons (Lev. 12:1-4)

As the first born, Exodus 13:11-15 & Numbers 18:15-16 required a _____ price of 5 shekels

The Testimony of Simeon - Luke 2:25-35.

Simeon is devout, with a _____ character, and is looking for “the consolation of Israel” - Isaiah 40:1-5

Simeon sought God (Jere. 29:13) and was given revelation by the _____ that he would see Christ

Luke 2:27-28. Simeon was _____ by the Holy Spirit to meet Joseph, Mary and Jesus in the Temple

Luke 2:28-33. They let Simeon _____ Jesus and he blessed God amazing Joseph and Mary

Luke 2:34-35. Jesus will eventually bring peace, but there will be _____ and hatred until then

The Testimony of Anna - Luke 2:36-38

Anna was an elderly prophetess of godly character who gave _____ for Jesus and spoke of Him to all

Conclusions

Jesus’ birth fulfilled both ancient and contemporary prophecy

Conceived by the Holy Spirit - so He is the Son of _____

Accepted into Joseph’s family - so He had a legal right to David’s royal throne

Mary was a descendant of David - so His _____ line was also Davidic

Born in Bethlehem Ephrathah

Proclaimed by the angel to be “*Savior, who is Christ the Lord.*”

Found by the shepherds according to the sign given by the _____

Recognized by Simeon as the Lord’s Christ - the Lord’s promised Salvation

Following Jesus is not easy, but it is the only way _____ in the present & a peaceful life in eternity

KIDS CORNER

Parents, you are responsible to apply God’s Word to your children’s lives. Here is some help.

Young Children - draw a picture about something you hear during the sermon. Explain your picture(s) to your parents at lunch. **Older Children** - Do one or more of the following: 1) Write down all the verses mentioned in the sermon and look them up later. 2) Count how many times the word “Jesus” is mentioned. Talk with your parents about how Joseph, Mary, the Shepherds, Simeon and Anna responded to His birth.

THINK ABOUT IT!

Questions to consider in discussing the sermon with others. What is the importance of Jesus being the eternal Word who became human flesh (John 1)? How do the prophecies in Luke 1:5-80 demonstrate that Jesus is the Son of God? What were the dangers Mary faced in being pregnant without a husband? How is a

betrothal different from a marriage engagement? What was Joseph's dilemma? What would you have done if you were in his situation? Why was it important that Joseph accept Jesus into his family? How did God ensure that would be done? Why was it important for Jesus to be born in Bethlehem? How did God use a pagan ruler to ensure that would happen? Where did Joseph & Mary stay when they arrived in Bethlehem? Why was it fitting for Jesus to be born in a stable? What was the reaction of the shepherds to seeing the angel? Why was his announcement good news for all the people? Why the title "Savior" significant? Why is the title, "Christ the Lord," significant? What sign did the angel give the shepherds to find Jesus? Who are the heavenly host and how did they give praise to God? What was the reaction of the shepherds to what they had experienced? How did people respond to their story? Why was Jesus circumcised on the eighth day? What did the Mosaic Law require of Mary for purification? What did the Mosaic Law require for the birth of a first child? What was the basis of that requirement? Who was Simeon and what was the nature of his character. What was he looking for? What did the Holy Spirit reveal to him? How was he able to identify Jesus and His parents? Why did Simeon's pronouncement amaze Joseph and Mary? What was the nature of his prophecy concerning the future because of Jesus? Who was Anna and why was what she said / did important? If the angels declared "*And on earth peace among men,*" why is there still so much turmoil among men? What is your conclusion regarding the ancient and contemporary prophecies referred to in Matthew 1 and Luke 2? If it is not easy to follow Jesus, why should you do it?