

Luke's Gospel – An Inclusive Savior

Lesson Two

Introduction – Luke 1:46-79. There are two songs in this section, each speaking of the great acts God “has” performed. Mary’s Magnificat speaks of the coming Jesus in past tense. Mary’s song models what God will do for the poor, the powerless, and the oppressed of the world. At John’s birth, Zechariah’s speech returns. His song speaks to his son’s purpose.

[Luke 1:80].....One Down, One to Go

vs. 80 This serves as a bridge between vs. 80 and Luke 3 - so we don't forget about John
 The wilderness John grew up in has not been established, but many believe it was
 Qumran(12 miles West of Jerusalem by the Dead Sea)
 Luke uses this verse to separate the stories of the two births, but also as a "to be
 continued" for John the Baptist
 1st of two miraculous births

[Luke 2:1-7].....Birth of the Christ

vs.1-3 Rome was the political power and military strength of the world
 Luke, like Matthew, uses this story to show how Jesus of Nazareth was actually
 born in Bethlehem - city of King David
 Luke also shows how the political leaders were included(and used) in God's plan
 vs.4 Joseph was of David's biological line - the reason for them going to Bethlehem
 vs.7 Jesus is born and is Mary's *firstborn*!
 They wrapped babies in cloth immediately to ensure proper growth and keep the
 body straight

NOTE: This is one of the poorest births recorded in history. Even during the period of the New Testament church, not many could identify with this type of birth. John the Baptist's birth has a miracle - Zechariah receives his speech, is filled with the Holy Spirit and starts singing. Jesus' birth (to this point) is much more lowly: parents are too poor to afford decent lodging; born in a stable or cave; and placed in a feeding trough for a manger. Luke keeps it simple.

[Luke 2:8-20].....The Least Hear It First!

NOTE: It was common for poets and orators to speak good things of the birth of a Roman child who would become emperor someday in front of governors, senators, and potentates. Luke uses angels and a heavenly chorus to proclaim this blessing to...a group of shepherds?????? What's up with that????

vs.8-9 Subtle use of light and dark.

vs.10-12 Prophecy of Isaiah 61:1 is fulfilled - the poor and lowly have received the good
 news *first*

vs. 11 when we see Jesus referred to as *Savior*, not Messiah

vs. 12 Was Jesus the only baby born in Bethlehem that night?

vs.16-18 Apparently, Joseph and Mary had temporarily forgotten about who their baby
 really was - distracted by delivering a baby in the worst of circumstances

The shepherds have to tell them (and any others present) about Jesus being the Savior.

vs.19

Mary was able to re-live the joy she had when Gabriel told her of this day

-Three Keys to this Passage-

- 1.The Angel sums up Luke's Christology(Same as the Apostles in Acts)
- 2.The Angelic Choir sings of Peace
- 3.The True Reason for the Shepherds

-Why We Celebrate Christmas on December 25th- (Developments of the 4th Century)

Due to the time and the circumstances that surround Jesus' birth, and actual birth date is not known. But there are certain factors that have caused us to celebrate his birthday on Dec. 25th.

(1.)There is a document from A.D. 354 which introduces a new feast for the Christian church listing December 25th as *natus Christus in Betleem Iudaeae*(Christ born in Bethlehem of Judea).

(2.)As Christianity evolved into the established religion of the Roman Empire, Christmas served as the substitute for the existing pagan Festival of the Unconquered Sun which had marked the winter solstice(beginning of Winter).

(3.)It was calculated that the Annunciation in Luke 1:26-38 happened nine months before Christmas - March 25th and Elizabeth was six months pregnant at that time. Three months after the Annunciation would be June 24th - calculated to be John the Baptist's birthdate and makes Mary three months pregnant. Six months later would be December 25th.

Resource used - The New Handbook of the Christian Year by Hickman, Saliers, Stookey, & White