

# CHRISTMAS

## “INVITATION”

(The “Drawing Power” of the Birth of Jesus)

Luke 2: 1-20



### THE BIRTH OF JESUS DRAWS...

- ◆ Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem (Vs. 107)
- ◆ The Angels from Heaven (Vs. 8-14)
- ◆ The Shepherds from the Field. (V.15-20)

**“Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us.” (Luke 2:15)**

**Introduction**  
**(What is the setting of the birth of Jesus?)**

- ◆ Caesar Augustus was used of God to fulfill Bible prophecy.
- ◆ While Herod was the ruler appointed by Rome, it was the decree by Caesar Augustus that sets the stage. (Luke 2:1)
- ◆ Caesar Augustus was the grand-nephew of Julius Caesar.
- ◆ Caesar Augustus was given the name "Octavian" which means "venerable" and he ruled Rome from 27 B.C. to 14 A.D.
- ◆ Caesar Augustus came to power when Julius Caesar was assassinated.
- ◆ It was in the middle of his reign that "Octavian" ordered a census for military and tax purposes.
- ◆ This census called for every Jewish male to return to the city of his father to record four things.
  1. His name
  2. His occupation
  3. His property
  4. His family
- ◆ We see the drawing power of Christmas.
- ◆ How the Lord drew people to Himself at His birth.
- ◆ How (like a magnet) the Holy Spirit led people to the manger.
- ◆ And how this "drawing power" speaks to us all today.

**I. The Birth of Jesus Draws Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem (Vs. 1-7)**

**Question:** How did God get Mary and Joseph from Nazareth to Bethlehem (some 80 miles away)?

**Answer:** He used the decree of Augustus Caesar to fulfill the will of God.

**Question:** Why did Caesar give the decree in Luke 2:1?

**Answer:** Because Rome took a census every 14 years for military and tax purposes.

- ◆ Every Jewish male was required to return to the city of his father to record four things:
  1. His name
  2. His occupation
  3. His property
  4. His family

**Question:** Why are Mary and Joseph drawn to Bethlehem?

**Answer:** The word "Bethlehem" means "house of bread".

**(The perfect place for Jesus "the Bread of Life")**

**Remember now:**

- ◆ Bethlehem was the **birth** place of Benjamin!
- ◆ Bethlehem was the place of **death** for Rachel!
- ◆ Bethlehem was the **marriage** place of Ruth!
- ◆ Bethlehem was the place of **exploits** for David!

## (To us, Bethlehem is the same)

1. Like **Benjamin** it is our **birthplace** when we receive Jesus and are born again of the Spirit of God.
2. Like **Rachel** it is our **death place** when we die to our own will and the old selfish nature.
3. Like **Ruth** it is our **marriage place** when we make a vow and a covenant to be devoted 100% to putting Jesus first in everything.
4. Like **David** it is our **place of exploits** as we serve God and allow God to use us to bear fruit that remains.

### Like Mary and Joseph we are drawn to Bethlehem. Why?

1. To know beyond doubt we have been born again by the Spirit of God.
2. To die to our wills, selfish nature, carnal man and everything in us that is contrary to the image of Jesus.
3. To be 100% married and devoted to Jesus, asking the question "What would Jesus do?"
4. To abide in the vine (Jesus) bear fruit in Christian service and reproduce our lives into the lives of other

### #1 The birth of Jesus drew Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem.

## II. The Birth of Jesus Draws Angels from Heaven (Vs. 8-14)

**Question:** What happened next after Jesus was born in Verse 7?

- ◆ In Verse 8, there were the shepherds at work.
- ◆ In Verse 9, there was the shining of God's glory.
- ◆ In Verse 10, there was the salvation message.

### 1. The Shepherds (V. 8)

"And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night."

#### (Why Shepherds?)

**Fact:** Shepherds were outcasts in Israel.

**Fact:** Their work made them ceremonially unclean.

**Fact:** Their work kept them away from the temple for weeks at a time.

**Fact:** And the angels were drawn to the humble shepherds.

### 2. The Shining (V. 9)

"And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them."

- ◆ The angel's appearance was one of splendor.
- ◆ The angel's appearance was one of glory.

- ◆ The angel's appearance was one of purpose!

### 3. The **Salvation Message** (V. 10)

"And the angel said unto them, fear not, for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people."

**Question:** What did the angels announce?

**Answer:** A message that encourages us all.

1. "Good news" (which is the message of salvation).
2. "Great joy" (which is the result of salvation).
3. "To all people" (which is the scope of salvation).

- ◆ It is an emphasis to all people.
- ◆ It is an emphasis that includes you and me.
- ◆ It is an emphasis that reveals the heart of God.
- ◆ It is an emphasis that presents me with a choice.
- ◆ It is an emphasis that has you in mind.

#### (What is the message?)

(V. 11) "For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord."

**Question:** What is the message, the good news?

**Answer:**

- ◆ That God provides a Savior to forgive and remove my sin!
- ◆ That God provides for us what we could not earn ourselves.
- ◆ That God provides freedom from all guilt that results in a clear conscience.

**Question:** What was the response to this news?

**Answer:** (V.13 & 14)

- ◆ Suddenly heaven was interrupted.
- ◆ Suddenly the choir was increased.
- ◆ Suddenly we are provoked to worship.

"Glory to God in the highest" means: the praise of all the redeemed is due to God!!!

**#1. The birth of Jesus drew Mary and Joseph from Nazareth.**

**#2. The birth of Jesus drew angels from Heaven.**

### III. **The Birth of Jesus Draws the Shepherds from the Field (Vs.15-21)**

(V. 15) "And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us."

**Question:** What was the response of the shepherds to the announcement of the

Savior, the baby, the manger, the choir in heaven and the tidings of great joy for all people (including you)?

**Answer:** (V. 15) The shepherds turned to one another and responded without procrastination or hesitation.

**(Four Words of Provocation)**

**"Let us now go."**

**(Three words of Determination)**

**"Even unto Bethlehem." (Which means)**

- ◆ The shepherds were located a long distance away.
- ◆ But the shepherds were determined to make the trip to find this Jesus.

**(Seven words of Priority in Verse 16)**

**"And they came with haste and found."**

- ◆ The word "found" means: "found after a diligent search".
- ◆ It means "to look intensely without being detoured."

**Fact:** The shepherds speak to every one of us!

**Fact:** They talk to us from scripture!

**Fact:** The Holy Spirit is speaking to us now through the shepherds!

**What is the Lord Saying?**

**That Christmas is the time to make choices:**

1. The shepherds **received by faith the message God sent to them.** (V. 15)  
**Question:** Have you received, will you receive the message God has sent you?
2. The shepherds **responded to the message** God sent to them. (V. 16)  
**Question:** Will you respond to the message that God has sent to you?
3. The shepherds **reported the message** that God had sent to them. (V. 17)  
**Question:** Are you willing to report (proclaim and tell) the message God has given you without shame or hesitation?
4. The shepherds **rejoiced in the message** that God had given them. (V. 20)  
**Question:** Is the joy of the Lord your strength this Christmas season?  
"The Shepherds glorified and praised God for all the things that they had heard and seen."
  - ◆ Is there joy and gratitude flowing from your heart and lips?
  - ◆ Have the grumbles, murmurs and complaints crept into the corridor of your heart?

(If so, God wants to affect change inside of you.)

**(The Lord talks to us through the shepherds)**

- ◆ Do I believe the message, all the message of the Bible?
- ◆ Do I respond quickly when God speaks to me about something?
- ◆ Do I live my life to report the message to those who haven't heard?

- ◆ Do I rejoice in all that God has done, or complain about lesser things?

#### **IV. The Birth of Jesus Draws You and Me to the Manger**

(V. 7) "Mary laid Him in a manger."

**Question:** What is a manger?

**Answer:** A feeding trough for cows.

**Question:** Why was Jesus placed in a manger?

**Answer:** To draw us to Himself!

#### **(What draws us to Jesus?)**

1. The manger reveals the **humility** of Jesus:
  - ◆ No trumpets, parade or palace celebration.
  - ◆ But humility, lowliness and no intimidation.
  - ◆ It means Jesus stoops down so that we can be lifted up.
2. The manger reveals the **grace** of Jesus:  
(V. 10) "Good news shall be to all people."
  - ◆ It means whosoever will may come.
  - ◆ It means you and I can approach this Jesus.
  - ◆ It means anyone distant can come back home.
  - ◆ It means you are the reason Jesus was born.
3. The manger reveals the **rejection** of Jesus:  
**Question:** Why the manger for God's Son?  
**Answer:** (V. 7) "No room in the inn."
  - ◆ It means Jesus was turned away from the beginning.
  - ◆ It means Jesus was rejected for other guests.
4. The manger reveals the **necessity** of Jesus
  - ◆ Jesus was placed in a feeding trough for cows.
  - ◆ After Jesus was removed, the animals fed there again.
  - ◆ The only glory of the manger was the presence of Jesus.
  - ◆ When Jesus is taken away, the manger is dark and empty.

#### **(In other words)**

- ◆ Without Jesus, we are empty, in darkness and without purpose.
- ◆ Without Jesus, we only eat, sleep, breathe and exist.

#### **Conclusion**

- ◆ I'm not drawn to the mall, the tree, the store!
- ◆ I'm not drawn to Santa, a party, or debt!
- ◆ I'm not drawn to something external or temporary!

**James 4:8 "Draw near to God and God will draw near to you."**

- ◆ Mary came close,
- ◆ Angels came close,
- ◆ Shepherds came close.

**Ask:** Will you come close?

AMEN!  
Bill Kirk