

Luke 1:26-27,2:1-5, Matthew 2:1-6,13-14,19-23

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[0:00] The reason we have Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John is not so that we can get a clearer picture of Christ. It's so that we can get a four-dimensional view of Christ. We get the fullness of what is going on.

So quite often in the life of Christ, we have to see how they reconcile with one another and see the whole story because God is moving individuals, writing to different persons and including different events, in particular with the birth narrative of Christ.

So we will be in Luke chapter 1, primarily Luke chapter 2, and then we will be in Matthew chapter 2. You can put a mark in Matthew 2. We'll end up over there.

We're going to read. It's not a number of verses. It's several. Not as many as we read last week together, but we will be going back and forth. And you're going to think it's kind of odd, the verses that we read. But again, I want you to stay with me because they're there.

I'm going to tell you this. You're going to say, well, keep reading, Pastor. We want to hear the rest of the story. We want to get to the good part. Every part of Scripture is the good part, right? And so that's what we're focusing on this morning is the place, I promise you, because I know us as mankind, and I include me in that.

[1:07] When I stop short in Luke 2, and I don't get to the birth, and I don't get to all those things, you're going to say, I want to hear the rest of the story. We will. We'll come back to that. That will be next week. But I don't want to bypass the amazing things that we see this week.

So if you're physically able and desire to do so, will you join with me as we stand together? We're going to start in Luke chapter 1, just two verses there, 26 and 27. I know we read them last week. And then we're going to go to the second chapter of Luke and read the first five verses of Luke chapter 2.

And then we'll go over to Matthew. I'll tell you where when we turn there, okay? So we're in Luke chapter 1, verses 26 and 27. I want you just to pay particular attention to the repetitiveness of Scripture.

Now in the sixth month, that is the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, you remember. Now in the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city in Galilee called Nazareth to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph of the descendants of David, and the virgin's name was Mary.

Okay, turn over to Luke chapter 2, verses 1 through 5. Now in those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that a census be taken of all the inhabited earth. This was the first census taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria.

[2:20] And everyone was on his way to register for the census, each to his own city. 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, in order to register along with Mary, who was engaged to him and was with child.

Okay, go with me over to the gospel of Matthew. Matthew chapter 2. See, I told you, some of you are going, read the rest of it, but it's okay. Matthew chapter 2. Matthew chapter 2, verses 1 through 6, and then verses 13 through 15 and 19 through 23.

Okay? Pastor, you're jumping around a lot. Stay with me. 1 through 6. Now, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of Herod the king, Magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, saying, Where is he who has been born king of the Jews?

For we saw his star in the east and have come to worship him. When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all of Jerusalem with him. Gathering together all the chief priests and the scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born.

And they said to him, In Bethlehem of Judea, for this is what has been written by the prophet. Look at verse 6. And you, Bethlehem, land of Judah, are by no means least among the leaders of Judah,

for out of you shall come forth a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.

[3 : 41] Look at verse 13. Now when they had gone, that's the Magi. We'll come back to those. Okay? We'll get them. Now when they had gone, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to destroy him.

So Joseph got up and took the child and his mother while it was still night and left for Egypt. He remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what has been spoken by the Lord through the prophet out of Egypt, I called my son.

Go down to verse 19. But when Herod died, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, Get up, take the child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel. For those who sought the child's life are dead. So Joseph got up, took the child and his mother, and came into the land of Israel. But when he had heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there.

Then after being warned by God in a dream, he left for the region of Galilee. And he came and lived in a city called Nazareth. This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophets. He shall be called a Nazarene.

[4 : 53] Let's pray. Lord, we thank you for this day. God, we thank you for the opportunity we have to come and to worship and to adore you. Lord, the opportunity we have to come and to read your word with one another.

Lord, we pray that we would see it with sincerity and truth. Lord, that we would come to a full understanding of it. And that, Lord, that understanding would have a direct impact upon our lives. We ask it all in Christ's name.

Amen. You may be seated. This morning, we're looking at the unbelievable places, plural, of his appearing. Because this is one of the amazing things of Christmas.

Too often, I think, that we bypass these matters and we read them because the story is so good. And it's a wonderful story. And we're so familiar with it. And we want to see about the child being born and laid in the manger.

We want to see the wise men from the east coming and bringing their gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And we want to see all of these events. And sometimes, in our haste to see what happens there, we forget where there is.

[5 : 50] But we notice here, these are some amazing things. We are introduced to three places of his appearances. We are introduced to Nazareth, we are introduced to Bethlehem, and we are introduced to Egypt.

And each of them, if you notice, according to Scripture, are God-ordained and dictated. That is, the Lord God himself directed Mary and Joseph to these places.

Some preceding the birth of Christ, some during the birth of Christ, others after the birth of Christ. Nazareth is mentioned twice, we know that, before and then after. We see that later on.

As a matter of fact, the confines of his childhood are wrapped up in these three astounding places. It is not until he begins his public ministry, after John the Baptist is in prison, we see it in Matthew chapter 4, that he leaves Nazareth and moves to what would later become the center of his public ministry, Capernaum, which is by the sea, which by the way is another fulfillment of Scripture in Isaiah chapter 9.

It's a wonderful passage that hopefully we'll see a little bit of here in just a moment. But it's astounding when we really just stop and consider exactly where God was doing, what he was doing, during this season we call Christmas.

[6 : 59] Because each of these places represent a different facet of our Savior. And each of these places give us hope and anticipation of exactly what this child who is born is going to accomplish for mankind.

We see, according to Scripture, that when God is announcing the coming of the Savior, he announces this coming first to Zechariah in the temple as he is there burning incense.

You remember the story he tells him that his barren wife, Elizabeth, is going to be with child. This is the coming of John the Baptist. John the Baptist who would later declare, I'm not he, I'm not the one you're looking for, I'm not even fit to untie the tongs of his sandals.

I can't do that. He says, I'm not the one there's another one greater than me. Well with this another one, this greater one, the declaration of his birth, we're introduced there in Luke chapter 1 verses 26

and 27 that the same angel who stood in the temple now all of a sudden goes into the region of Galilee, goes to a city called Nazareth and he appears to a virgin and says you're going to have a child.

The first thing that we notice in the places of his appearing is that this demonstrates the rejection and shame he bore. The rejection and shame he would bear and he did bear for our sake.

[8 : 18] You say, why pastor? Well stay with me. The most unlikely of places that we would expect Gabriel to show up would be Nazareth and the most unlikely of places for Gabriel to show up and declare this message had to be Nazareth.

First of all because Nazareth is never mentioned in the Old Testament. There's no Old Testament mentioning of the city of Nazareth whatsoever and in your mind you should be going wait a minute Matthew said this would fulfill what was said by the prophets.

Stay with me we'll get to there in just a moment but there's no mentioning of it. The city is obscure in all of Old Testament history and the very first time that we're ever introduced to it in the New Testament is it coincides with the announcement and the birth of Christ.

It is here that he spends the majority of his childhood days. It is here that he lives until he is as we find in scripture about 30 years of age and he begins his public ministry after going into the wilderness and he moves to the region of Capernaum by the sea.

But this city of Nazareth is the place that we would never be looking for Gabriel to make this declaration. But yet it is in this region that he shows up. It is in this city that God leads Joseph to go back to when he comes back from Egypt.

[9 : 28] It is here that he spends the majority of his days and it is this very city in which we could search all of the Old Testament and find nothing about. And we ask ourselves why?

As a matter of fact when we read a little bit further in the Gospel of Matthew or actually when we go into the Gospel of John and we read in the first chapter of John Jesus is manifesting himself to what would later become his apostles and you remember that Nathanael was told we have found he who is the Savior and it is Christ from Nazareth Nathanael made this declaration can any good thing come out of Nazareth?

That's what people thought of the city of that day. Can any good thing come out of Nazareth? You read a little bit further in the Gospel of John and you get to the seventh chapter as many of that I love it when God puts things together by the way and if you're reading the yearly plan that many of you are reading you read it today and you read it in the seventh chapter it really precedes the eighth chapter when the woman is brought to him right?

And so they're in the temple and they're trying to arrest Jesus and they want to carry him away and then he who came to Jesus by night makes this declaration that we don't judge a man until we see what he does and he is told by the priest search the scripture and see no prophet arises out of Galilee Nazareth is in Galilee by the way the religious leaders had it wrong there were two prophets in the Old Testament that came from the region of Galilee by the way so they need to go back and search their scriptures as well but they said search and see and make sure that you know that no prophet comes out of Galilee one of the accusations in that seventh chapter of John about Jesus being the Messiah was the fact that he was from Nazareth and it didn't make sense that this man from Nazareth would be the long anticipated Messiah yet Matthew tells us this was to fulfill what was spoken by the did you notice it prophets with an S he shall be called a Nazarene what does that mean Nazarene during the time of Christ during the time of Matthew was synonymous with one who was despised forsaken rejected and neglected if you were to call someone that is not to call him a Nazarite one who is dedicated to God they were calling him a Nazarene it literally means to be one from

Nazareth the city of Nazareth was so despised so filthy so looked down upon that one way to ridicule and mock people was to call them a Nazarene they were from the other side of the track so to say it was the ghetto of Nazarene and it was mockery to call someone that what Matthew is telling us is that our Savior chose a city that was sure to bring him mockery why because the prophets plural said that he would be a man who was despised and neglected he would be a man with no stately form or comely character he would be a man that nobody would look upon him and go oh look there there he is he would be one that people would turn themselves away from and Isaiah says that they would shun him and they would want nothing to do with him he would be one that they would ridicule that they would mock he would be a Nazarene he would be one that nobody else wanted to be around yet he was the one that everybody needed why because too often in our

lives we are those

[12 : 52] Nazarenes we are those people who deserve that mocking that ridicule that beating we deserve that because if we're honest with who we are to the very core of our being while we may paint it up and we may look pretty good on the outside too often we are the people that if everybody knew us as we really are if everybody saw us for who we truly were then they would turn their faces from us and say I want nothing to do with that person because they don't look that good but the true honest answer is that none of us really look that good we just happen to be from the right place Jesus willingly chose the wrong place so that he could relate to you and I to the very core of our being see this city represents his rejection and shame we serve a rejected savior John says it this way he came to his own and his own received him not when nothing to do with him why because he was a Nazarene that doesn't make sense we find ourselves too often in our humanity trying to paint a good picture not really wanting anyone to fully know us

I read I'm reading a biography I'm not going to tell you who it's an old biography one of the most instrumental men of the faith of our own country and really the known world and one of the earliest awakenings that swept the world and he made this obscure comment somewhere near the end of his life looking back at a place that is there that he entered into sin that he wrestled with the rest of his life historians and bible scholars and bible critics have spent decades and decades and decades and decades wanting to pinpoint what his problem was why because we all want to know where he messed up he didn't say it he never declared it he never openly admitted it it was in his personal diaries that he wrote it down but everybody wants to see his failures and so often we understand that and we know that if people see us for what we really are then there's enough people out there that will mock us and reject us and shame us and ridicule us and they want nothing to do with us the beautiful thing is that's where the savior is at that's where he chose to live the majority of his life from the region that nobody wanted anything to do with that's amazing to me because that's where we don't expect to find him but yet this is one of the unbelievable places he appeared number two we see not only the rejection and shame he bore we see that he's also a ruler accessible to all mankind he is a ruler accessible to all mankind it tells us that God worked wondrously and we'll get to the people next week by the way we'll get to the purposes of God last week we'll get to the places of his appearing this week we get to the people that he works through next week and then next Sunday night we'll get to the praise that came his way

I'm excited about it by the way so we'll get to the people next week but God uses an astounding amount of people and he does them in an amazing way the most unlikely of people he uses one of them is Quirinius and he issues a decree and because of this decree everybody's got to go back so Joseph now he's got to leave Nazareth right he can't be in Nazareth he's got to go back and since they're already engaged they're betrothed that engagement by the way matters it has to be engagement because engagement meant you're bound with me now we have to go be counted for the census if they had not been engaged if Joseph had put her off quietly then Mary would have stayed in Nazareth because that's where her dad was from but since Joseph was led in a dream to take her on and continue that engagement now she has to go with Joseph to the city of Bethlehem and they go to Bethlehem it's quite a journey to go from Nazareth and Galilee to Bethlehem and Judea they go really up to Bethlehem because you have to go up near Jerusalem and really one of the suburbs of Jerusalem now this is a place that shouldn't shock us as a matter of fact scholars throughout the ages have acquainted and still

Jewish scholars still acquaint Bethlehem with the appearance of the Messiah it is Bethlehem that Micah 5 2 tells us that out of you oh Bethlehem will come forth a ruler who will shepherd my people Matthew tells us this but you need to read it in its entirety because it said whose goings forth are from long ago so it is not only this reality that is there in that one location Jewish scholars today who are not Messianic Jews but Jewish scholars today who are still living according to the law and looking for the coming of the Messiah they have yet to understand that Jesus is the Messiah are still looking to that region because the word is very clear it is from this place that the Messiah would come but the declaration in Micah is that this Messiah that would come would be a ruler whose goings forth are from long ago and so the anticipation is that you would have this ruler the wording there in Micah is that this would be a ruler who has lived from eternity past don't miss that by the way because what is to show up in Bethlehem is a ruler who has ruled from eternity past and then all of a sudden will manifest himself in history in a place called

Bethlehem that's what Micah is saying this isn't the beginning of his ministry this is the continuation of his ministry this isn't where it all starts this is where the manifestation starts because his goings forth that's hard for me to say by the way I won't say going but the right word grammatically has got an S on in it so his goings forth are from long ages ago the wording is very peculiar and it means that he has existed from eternity past and the scholars are looking for this one place and this one place is Bethlehem and it is here now that Joseph has to move so now we say well he's in the right place he is there he's in the right city he's in the right locale and the anticipation of the Messiah should be there yet what we find is even though they're in the right location the right city it's in the most unlikely of manners because you're looking for a ruler who's going forth or from ages ago and you find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloth lying in a manger and you're astounded because this isn't what you're looking for when the

[19:14] Magi from the east came we understand that they came being led by the star numbers 24 17 which by the way was a false prophet from the east declaring this wording upon when he was called in to curse the nation of Israel he called this blessing you remember that right and we see his his blessing here I see him but not yet out of Judah or out of Jerusalem shall arise a star who will rule the people and the scepter shall never depart from his hands numbers 24 17 I can't wait to talk about the Magi because it's a wonderful thing how it all happens just side note here for those of you who have been with me all seven years first of all Lord bless you and Lord keep you for that your patience and your enduring with me there is one thing when we started Genesis 1 1 7 years ago 7 plus years ago nearly 8 that anytime someone moves away from

God in the Old Testament they move towards the east right remember that when man fell God put them out of the garden towards the east when Cain killed his brother Abel he moved towards the east and we just continue to see this repeated theme they're moving towards the east they're moving towards the east moving towards the east and the further away from God you go and then we get this all of a sudden these people are coming from the east where they're coming to the Lord God that's amazing isn't it they're coming from the east to worship him and they're coming to adore him and they're anticipating this king because the prophetic word says it's a king right and the scepter shall never depart from his hand numbers 24 but yet what we find is this prophecy in Micah and they're led Max Lucado said it right signs and wonders can get you close but it's the word that only brings you to worship because they show up in Jerusalem which is where the sign and wonder should bring you so they end up in Jerusalem and they're there and even the wise men of Herod knew he asked the scholars of his day and they knew it is in Bethlehem because it says so so they went to Bethlehem and it was the word of God that led them to worship and yet if you read it in Matthew it says the star led them the way after they heard the word and it stopped over the house where he was at I know that's not the picture we like to have but he's no is that the ruler that is to come whose goings forth are from long ages ago is the ruler who is all of a sudden accessible to all mankind everyone can come he's in Bethlehem of the right places and it is in Bethlehem that we find shepherds and we find wise men why because all can come from the upper echelon of society to the lowest most degrading person in society find their place in Bethlehem why because the ruler to come the ruler who has come has made himself wondrously accessible to all mankind how do we know it because he was in Bethlehem in a manger welcoming all who would come isn't that a wonderful thing isn't that amazing that Christ came at the right place but he came in the most unlikely of manners and that unlikely manner ensured that every one of us would have an opportunity to come before him that every one of us would be welcomed into his presence that sure he's the king of kings and lord of lords he's a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek but he humbled himself the Bible says he laid so that all mankind may have a place before the savior who has come what an amazing thing the rejection and shame he bore the ruler accessible to all mankind what about

Egypt third and finally we see that it is the redemptive hope of the enslaved he is the redemptive hope of the enslaved Matthew tells us that when the wise men left they went back another way and Herod becomes enraged when they're enraged the angel of the Lord appears to Joseph in a dream and tells him Herod is going to try to kill the child which is a fulfillment of scripture and he gives him very clear instructions he says take my child and go to Egypt now to me that all of a sudden is astounding because Old Testament scripture tells us that no king of God's people should ever go back to Egypt looking for help but God makes this declaration take the child and his mother and go to Egypt so Joseph gets up while it is still dark in the middle of the night and he takes him and goes

to Egypt and Matthew tells us that was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet singular again out of

[24 : 28] Egypt I have called my son now if you were to look at your read in Hosea chapter 11 that out of Egypt I called my son but if you were to read Hosea chapter 11 verse 1 in its proper context you would know that the prophet Hosea was looking back not looking forward and he was encouraging the people of God with the reality that God had called them out of Egypt and they were his children and Hosea is speaking with great implications to be his children and then you read verses 2 3 4 and I believe verse 5 and he begins to say that even though he called you out of Egypt you neglected him and he's not going to send you back to Egypt but he's going to send you into Babylon he's going to punish you a different way that you have rejected him even though he's done it and where is

Matthew reading is Matthew twisting scripture no friend listen to me the best commentary on scripture is scripture right and if Matthew says this was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet and that's the only time it's there then it's coming upon us to read into that and see exactly what he's talking because then it declares to us at the end of Hosea chapter 11 somewhere around verse 6 7 and 8 God says but yet I will not always forsake you for my love for you is too great now this is Billy Joe's phrase you have to read it my love for you is so great that I will not lead you to ruin there will be a day when I call you back to myself because my love for you is so great Matthew rightly understood when he be a prophet according to the order of Moses who would shepherd his people that he had sent Moses in there to deliver them and in the past he had done that but God's love for his people is so good that he would not leave them enslaved and Hosea was telling them he's sending you into captivity but he's not going to leave you there he's not going to send! God is consistent and that is a glory hallelujah thing right there God always does it the same way and he sent the redeemer back into Egypt so that out of Egypt he could call his son singular by the way his seed because that's the redeemer we're looking for for the enslavement we're living in the redeemer who went into Egypt the first time took a particular people out of a particular place because they were enslaved in Egypt the redeemer who comes out the second time is the one who takes all people out of all enslavement because my friend just like the Israelites were all born into slavery we didn't choose it it chose us we are born into this slavery called sin and we need a redeemer out of Egypt who will call us forth and he has come and what we find is that he went to

Egypt to fulfill the word that the redeemer comes out of Egypt to shepherd God's people to take them out so that he may bring them in friend if he had not come from Egypt he cannot be the redeemer see he bore our ridicule our shame our neglect he came in a way in a manner in which all could come to him and he came to be the redeemer he is the redemptive hope of all the enslaved and that is us we live in enslavement we can't break the chain but there's a son who was caught out of Egypt who will go into our mess and lead us out of it for his glory he will meet us where we're at and he will lead us out but he brings us out read the book of Exodus that he may take us in and he takes us not into the promised land of Israel but into the promised land of glory that we may be with the father forever see it is unbelievable the places that he appeared but we needed him to be at every one of them we needed him to be there we needed a savior from

Nazareth we one born in Bethlehem and we needed one who would come out of Egypt why because we need one who can do it all and we find him in this Christmas season as Jesus Christ our Emmanuel what a wonderful amazing reality let's pray Lord we thank you I thank you for this day I thank you for these people God we thank you that you work all things out in wondrous accord to your plans and purposes Lord we stand amazed at all that you've done and accomplished not because it's so good just to look back but because when we see what you've done in the past we can see what you're able to do today so we thank you for being the perfect savior for being my perfect savior for being the wonderful perfect savior of all who call upon you that are in this place but Lord we know you're the savior for all mankind needing to be declared to all who would hear so Lord may we be bold and faithful in that message be with us now as we continue to worship you in this time of invitation

[30 : 12] Lord search our hearts and minds may we know where we stand with you moving forward and we ask it all in Christ's name Amen so Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.