

Luke 2:1-20 Christmas Eve 2025

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[0 : 0 0] It is a text that I have preached from more than any other text in all of the scripture. It is a text that many of you probably could recite by memory, for you have heard it said over and over again.

It is found in Luke chapter 2, verses 1 through 20. It is a text that we approach with so much familiarity, and at times we hear it in a child's voice because that is how we've heard it read and we've heard it said more times than not.

But it is a text that brings us to a fitting conclusion to our Christmas series that we've been looking at. How after so many years of silence, that which God has spoken from the beginning, found in the book of Genesis, and now he has begun declaring for the last couple of years, found in the early pages of the New Testament, now the event has come.

It is the coming of Emmanuel. Emmanuel, we have seen that through the ages there was a covenant promise of God. The covenant that there would be a seed, and we could trace that seed throughout the entirety of the Old Testament, but in particular we see it in the covenants, the unconditional covenants.

Those covenants that rest upon the faithfulness of the Lord God Almighty, not the faithfulness of man. And then we have seen that even though these covenants remained, that for over 400 years God was silent.

[1 : 2 1] Not a word was declared, no new prophecy, no new word from the Lord, no new revelation. And yet in the beginning of the New Testament we find Zechariah fulfilling his obligation that once in a lifetime, a burning incense, and all of a sudden heaven could not be silent.

The angel Gabriel announced to Zechariah later, six months later, would announce to Mary. In a dream, would also announce to Joseph, all of heaven has been declaring this wonderful truth that now we see come about.

At the end of the first chapter of Luke, we see man's response. We have a tendency to run over it, but we see that those involved, namely Mary and Elizabeth and Zechariah, are all praising the Lord God Almighty for his faithfulness and for the soon coming deliverance.

As a matter of fact, Zechariah, when he can first speak after being silent for so long, does not declare the worthiness of his son, but really begins his prophetic word with praise to the Savior who is to come and speaks of deliverance as it has already been a pastime event.

And he praises the Savior before he ever declares the purpose for his newborn son. And then we go to the second chapter and we find that which is so familiar to us.

[2 : 4 6] So if you are physically able and desire to do so, I'm going to ask if you'll join with me as we stand together and we read the word of God found in Luke chapter 2, starting in verse 1.

And may we hear it afresh. 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. 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.

And while they were there, the days were completed for her to give birth. 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.

In the same region there were some shepherds staying out in the fields and keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord suddenly stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terribly frightened.

[3 : 56] 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. For today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.

This will be a sign for you. You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger. And suddenly there appeared with the angel a multitude of the heavenly hosts, praising God and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men with whom he is pleased.

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.

So they came in a hurry and found their way to Mary and Joseph and the baby as they lay in the manger. And when they had seen this, they made known the statement which had been told them about this child.

And all who heard it wondered at the things which were told them by the shepherds. But Mary treasured all these things, pondering them in her heart. And the shepherds went back glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, just as had been told them.

[5 : 02] Let's pray. Father, thank you again for this night. May you bless your word, and may we be benefited from it. We ask it all in Christ's name.

Amen. You may be seated. Here in just a few moments, we will take the Lord's Supper together. It is probably one of the most powerful things that we can do, is to consider his coming, and then also consider his dying.

And it is a joy to be able to do so on the same night. But if we do not consider first that Christmas event, for without his coming, there would be no sacrifice, no death, no remission for the sins of man.

There would be nothing else if it had not been for that event. Just want you to see a few things tonight as it pertains to that, and we'll be very brief. First, we notice that this event is a sovereignly determined event.

I love the legacy standard translation of this chapter, because it has this phrase that is repeated. It is a phrase that if you are with us on Wednesday nights or Sunday nights, we also have found in the book of Nehemiah, and it is a phrase that simply says this, and it happened, and it happened, and it happened.

[6 : 26] It says in the New American Standard that in those days, just literally means, and it happened at that time. The reason I love that phrase is because when it is declared, and it happened, implies that something happened apart from anyone's activity.

It was something that happened, not something that was brought to be. It happened in those days that there was a census. Now, we know the census is when Quirinius was governor.

It was the first census taking place, and we can say that man ordered and ordained this census, but we realize that the sovereign leading of our heavenly Father brought it about, as Paul would say later, in the fullness of time.

It was a determined event filled with intentional actions, and it happened at that time that there was a census, and it just so happened to be one in which all had to return back to their place of origin, and it happened that David was of the house and lineage, that Joseph was of the house and lineage of David.

Now, for our purposes, that does not mean much, for we know that Christ is not a descendant of Joseph, for if he had been a descendant of Joseph, and we trace that lineage in the book of Matthew, which brings us to Joseph, we would find one in that lineage named Conaniah or Jeconiah in the Old Testament, and we know that that individual has a curse placed on him in the Old Testament, saying that no descendant of his would ever set up on the throne of David, but that's Joseph's lineage, and Christ is not of the seed of Joseph.

[8 : 04] He is the seed of a woman, as found in Genesis 3, and that is a descendant of Mary. Mary also is of the house of David. We find her lineage in the Gospel of Luke.

But if Joseph had not been, then it would not have happened that they had to go back to Bethlehem, for Mary's ancestry does not matter, but his does.

And it just happened that when they were there, the days were completed for her to give birth. And it just so happens that the prophets in the Old Testament declare that he would be from Bethlehem, for out of you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah, a light will shine.

You too little to be counted among the mighty, a light will radiate from you. Malachi chapter 5, or Micah chapter 5. We see this reality over and over again, that it just happens.

And may we never be astounded at the sovereignly guiding hand of the Lord God Almighty that brought it to be that it might happen.

[9 : 07] Because this event is not some well-planned and organized matter that takes place because man puts all of their effort into it.

We try to make everything this night seamless. As we plan and we prepare, my wife and I do, we don't ask anyone else in the church to do anything because we want it to be a night where the church can come and just worship.

But I can promise you, every year, something happens that isn't exactly right. Like at 5 o'clock tonight, it happened that I realized we didn't have grape juice.

It happened. Because when I plan it, it doesn't happen perfect. But it just so happened to be that Dollar General is down the road, so they had it, okay?

So we got it. But that's what happens when man determines it. But notice, in this Christmas event, there's no hiccups.

[10 : 07] There's no mistakes. There's no failure. Because of the divine hand of the Lord God Almighty that's leading and it happened. Friend, not because we made it work, not because man had any doing in it, it just happened.

And we are the beneficiaries of it. And not only is it a determined event, it is a heavenly declared event.

For in that same region, there were some shepherds out in the field. Have you ever considered this? That if the shepherds standing in the field had never had an angel stand before them, no one would have taken notice of what has just happened.

No one would have paid any attention for Bethlehem is crowded. We know it's crowded for there's no room for them in the inn. We'll get to that in just a moment. And there's no room for them there. So they're in the stable.

And it just so happens that no one would have paid attention to any of that. For, by the way, these people are from Nazareth. You know, the place where nothing good comes out of Nazareth.

[11 : 17] No one would have paid any particular attention to this man and this woman who happens to have a child. They might have considered it odd, but it would have been no spectacle, no scene, no notice, no second glance given.

But heaven wouldn't let it happen that way because as the shepherds were in the field and angels stood before them and declares all throughout this event, heaven continues to declare and resound the worthiness of the one who has come.

Which tells us a lot about mankind because if it had not been for God's initiative, we would have never noticed. Because God is not a God who hides matters from his people, but rather in his love and in his grace and in his mercy.

This is one of the things that are so astounding in scripture. Our God is a God of revelation. He makes matters known. He longs for men to come to him and they come by being drawn.

Jesus says, no one comes to the Father lest by me and no one has come unless they are drawn. And it is the Father who initiates the drawing and the leading and the guiding. It is the Father who initiates the revelation.

[12 : 22] It is the Father who initiates the reality that these shepherds in the field need to know what is happening in the city. Even your own salvation.

If you know Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, it is not because you decided at some moment you were going to go find out who this Savior was. It's because at some moment in your life, the Lord God Almighty wanted to reveal to you how much he loves you and he drew you to find out who the Savior was.

Our salvation for those of us that know it are completely initiated our Heavenly Father. For if he did not love us enough to draw us and did not love us enough to stand before us and reveal our desperate need to us, then we would just keep tending our sheep and never pay attention to what's going on over there.

This is a declared event and we stand amazed because heaven could not be silent even to the least of these.

Heaven could not be silent. But what's probably so astounding someone once said the gospel is only good news if people hear about it because if they never hear about it then it's not good news.

[13 : 45] But what God has declared now he puts it on display. So this is an openly displayed event.

If God had said today for you there has been born a Savior who is Christ the Lord and left it at that then the shepherds would have said well that's good but how do we know where to find him?

But that's not where the angelic message stops right? Because we know the angels can only declare what the Lord God Almighty has told them to say for this will be a sign for you. Not only is this good news but we'll tell you how to find it.

You will find a baby wrapped in cloth lying in a manger and how odd is that? A crowded city but yet the one they need to find is probably the only one in that condition.

They didn't have to look very far because they knew exactly what they were looking for because God not only brought the Savior not only brought Christ the Lord God not only became flesh but he became flesh in such a way that he put himself on display.

[14 : 59] What does it say in the Gospel of John? He came to his own and his own received him not but he came to his own and he revealed himself and he put himself on display all throughout his life.

The great charge that Christ gives at the end I have not done anything in secret but everything that I have done openly for what good deed do you stone me?

God does not do his bidding in the dark nor does he hide himself so that man cannot find. He comes in such a manner that he wants us to know and he positions himself in such a way that he may be seen.

what a glorious reality that happened on that event. Openly displayed so that anyone could come anyone's welcome beside this child who's laying in a manger.

What an event. What an event. God and as he came he positioned himself to be our substitute and our sacrifice.

[16 : 14] He came not just that he may be seen he came that he may fulfill the rest of that covenant promise that he may crush the head of the serpent that he may atone for the sin of the world that he may die a substitutionary death in our place and that we may have an open invitation to come and find him again but we praise him for this Christmas event.

Let's pray. Father we do stand amazed at the wonder of Christmas something that is spoken of so often but is equally astounding every time we consider it.

Matters that were ordained and orchestrated in a way that no individual ever could that you brought it about for your glory for our redemption so would you help us to search our minds search our hearts to know where we stand before you this Christmas season and may we not neglect the one who has come for us and we ask it all in Christ's name amen.

Here in just a moment we're going to take communion. Miss Lynn is going to come she will play in a minute in a in a in a in a!