

The Humble and Heavenly Eyewitnesses of His Glory, Part II

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The Humility of the Incarnation / Nativity of Christ; Birth of Jesus / Luke 2:8-20

In Luke 2:8-20, Dr. Luke gives us a multitude of witnesses of the birth of Messiah Jesus.

Pre-Sermon Comments

Passage

[Luke 1:1-12](#) (LSB) ¹ Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us, ² just as those, who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word, handed *them* down to us, ³ it seemed fitting for me as well, having investigated everything carefully from the beginning, to write *it* out for you in orderly sequence, most excellent Theophilus, ⁴ so that you may know the certainty about the things you have been taught. ⁵ In the days of Herod, king of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah, of the division of Abijah, and he had a wife from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. ⁶ And they were both righteous in the sight of God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and righteous requirements of the Lord. ⁷ But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and they were both advanced in years. ⁸ Now it happened that while he was performing his priestly service before God in the order of his division, ⁹ according to the custom of the priestly office, he was chosen by lot to enter the sanctuary of the Lord and burn incense. ¹⁰ And the whole multitude of the people were praying outside at the hour of the incense offering. ¹¹ And an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing to the right of the altar of incense. ¹² And Zechariah was troubled when he saw *the angel*, and fear fell upon him.

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.” ¹⁵ And it happened that when the

angels had gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds *began* saying to one another, “Let us go to Bethlehem then, and see this thing that has happened which the Lord has made known to us.”¹⁶ So they went in a hurry and found their way to Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in the manger.¹⁷ And when they had seen this, they made known the statement which had been told them about this Child.¹⁸ And all who heard it marveled at the things which were told them by the shepherds.¹⁹ But Mary was treasuring all these things, pondering them in her heart.²⁰ And the shepherds went back, glorifying and praising God for all that they had heard and seen, just as was told them.

Introduction:

Let's be real, collections of snow globes and nutcrackers have nothing on skeleton arms reaching out of the garden bed and black cauldrons filled with ornaments and remote-controlled fairy lights to look like potion bubbling over. There's no contest here. ~ Ashley Zeigler (Scary Mommy)

Discussion Questions:

Review

[Luke 2:1-7](#) (LSB)¹ Now it happened that in those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus for a census to be taken of all the inhabited earth.² This was the first census taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria.³ And everyone was going to be registered for the census, each to his own city.⁴ And 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 betrothed to him, *and* was with child.⁶ Now it happened that while they were there, the days were fulfilled 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 place for them in the guest room.

The Account of the Humble Shepherds ([Luke 2:8-20](#))

[Luke 2:8](#) (LSB) ⁸ In the same region there were *some* shepherds staying out in the fields and keeping watch over their flock by night.

The Account of the Heavenly Angel ([Luke 2:9-12](#))

[Luke 2:9-12](#) (LSB) ⁹ And an angel of the Lord 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 “And this *will be* the sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.”

The Account of the Heavenly Host ([Luke 2:13-14](#))

[Luke 2:13](#) (LSB) ¹³ And suddenly there appeared with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying,

The Heavenly Choir

[Luke 2:18](#) (LSB) ¹⁸ And all who heard it marveled at the things which were told them by the shepherds.

[Luke 2:20](#) (LSB) ²⁰ And the shepherds went back, glorifying and praising God for all that they had heard and seen, just as was told them.

The Heavenly Communique ([Luke 2:14](#))

[Luke 2:14](#) (LSB) ¹⁴ “Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased.”

[Isaiah 6:2-3](#) (LSB) ² Seraphim stood above Him, each having six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. ³ And one called out to another and said, “Holy, Holy, Holy, is Yahweh of hosts; The whole earth is full of His glory.”

[Revelation 4:8](#) (LSB) ⁸ And the four living creatures, each one of them having six wings, are full of eyes around and within, and day and night they do not cease to say, “HOLY, HOLY, HOLY IS THE LORD GOD, THE ALMIGHTY, WHO WAS AND WHO IS AND WHO IS TO COME.”

[Luke 2:14](#) (LSB) ¹⁴ “Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased.”

[Luke 2:14](#) (ESV) ¹⁴ “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!”

[Luke 2:14](#) (KJV 1900) ¹⁴ Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, Good will toward men.

Peace with God is a corollary of justification ~ John MacArthur

[Romans 5:1](#) (LSB) ¹ Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,

When you hear the bells ringing out at Christmas, think of the reason why Jesus was born. Dream not that He came to load your tables and fill your cups, but in your mirth look higher than all earth-born things. When you hear that in certain churches there are pompous celebrations and ecclesiastical displays, think not for this purpose was Jesus born. No, but look within your hearts, and say, for this purpose was He born: that He might be a King, that He might rule through the truth in the souls of a people who are by grace made to love the truth of God. ~ Charles Spurgeon.

The Account of the Humble Mary and Joseph ([Luke 2:15-19](#))

The Shepherds' Response

[Luke 2:15](#) (LSB) ¹⁵ And it happened that when the angels had gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds *began* saying to one another, “Let us go to Bethlehem then, and see this thing that has happened which the Lord has made known to us.”

They were all embroiled in the fact that they had to get out of that place and get to Bethlehem. And there was spontaneity at this point. Nobody needed to lead them. Nobody needed to sort of get them to comply. Everybody had exactly the same response. ~ John MacArthur

[Luke 2:16](#) (LSB) ¹⁶ So they went in a hurry and found their way to Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in the manger.

[Luke 19:5-6](#) (LSB) ⁵ And when Jesus came to the place, He looked up and said to him, “Zaccheus, hurry and come down, for today I must stay at your house.”
⁶ And he hurried and came down and received Him gladly.

[Romans 10:17](#) (LSB) ¹⁷ So faith *comes* from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.

[Luke 2:16](#) (LSB) ¹⁶ So they went in a hurry and found their way to Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in the manger.

Joseph and Mary

[Luke 2:4-5](#) (LSB) ⁴ And 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 betrothed to him, *and* was with child.

[Luke 2:17](#) (LSB) ¹⁷ And when they had seen this, they made known the statement which had been told them about this Child.

[Matthew 1:20](#) (LSB) 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 One who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit.”

[Matthew 1:21](#) (LSB) ²¹ “And she will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.”

[Luke 1:30-33](#) (LSB) ³⁰ And the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹ “And behold, you will conceive in *your* womb and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus.”

³² “He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David,³³ and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and there will be no end of His kingdom.”

[Luke 2:18](#) (LSB) ¹⁸ And all who heard it marveled at the things which were told them by the shepherds.

[Luke 2:24](#) (LSB) 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.”

[Luke 2:25-26](#) (LSB) ²⁵ And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon, and this man was righteous and devout, waiting for the comfort 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.

[Luke 2:36-38](#) (LSB) ³⁶ And there was a prophetess, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was advanced in years having lived with *her* husband seven years from *when she was* a virgin,³⁷ and then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. 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 waiting for the redemption of Jerusalem.

Mary pondered all these things

[Luke 2:19](#) (LSB) ¹⁹ But Mary was treasuring all these things, pondering them in her heart.

[Isaiah 53:3-5](#) (LSB) ³ He was despised and forsaken of men, A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; And like one from whom men hide their face He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.

⁴ Surely our griefs He Himself bore, And our sorrows He carried; Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, Smitten of God, and afflicted. ⁵ But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; The chastening for our peace *fell* upon Him, And by His wounds we are healed.

[Luke 2:34-35](#) (LSB) ³⁴ 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— ³⁵ and a sword will pierce through your own soul as well— that the thoughts from many hearts may be revealed.”

[John 19:25](#) (LSB) ²⁵ Therefore the soldiers did these things. **But** standing by the cross of Jesus were His mother, and His mother’s sister, Mary the *wife* of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene.

[John 19:34](#) (LSB) ³⁴ But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out.

The incarnation is the second greatest truth in the Bible. The greatest is that this God who became man could also love us enough to go to the cross and die for us personally. ~ **James Montgomery Boice**

[Luke 2:20](#) (LSB) ²⁰ And the shepherds went back, glorifying and praising God for all that they had heard and seen, just as was told them.

[2 Peter 1:19-21](#) (LSB) ¹⁹ And we have as more sure the prophetic word, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts. ²⁰ Know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes by one’s own interpretation. ²¹ For no prophecy was ever made by the will of man, but men being moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.

Conclusion:

As Jesus Christ is a child in His human nature, He is born, begotten of the Holy Ghost, born of the virgin Mary. He is as truly born, as certainly a child, as any other man that ever lived upon the face of the earth. He is thus in his humanity a child born. But as Jesus Christ is God’s Son, He is not born, but given, begotten of his Father from before all worlds, begotten—not made, being of the same substance with the Father ~ Charles Spurgeon

Our divine Savior really took human nature upon Him, in order to save sinners. He really became a man like ourselves in all things, sin only excepted. Like

ourselves, he was born of a woman, though born in a miraculous manner. Like ourselves, He grew from infancy to boyhood, and from boyhood to man's estate, both in wisdom and in stature. Like ourselves, he hungered, thirsted, ate, drank, slept, was wearied, felt pain, wept, rejoiced, marveled, was moved to anger and compassion. Having become flesh, and taken a body, He prayed, read the Scriptures, suffered being tempted, and submitted His human will to the will of God the Father. And finally, in the same body, He really suffered and shed His blood, really died, was really buried, really rose again, and really ascended up into heaven. And yet all this time He was God as well as man! ~ J.C. Ryle

The glory of the incarnation is that it presents to our adoring gaze not a humanized God or a deified man, but a true God-man—one who is all that God is and at the same time all that man is: one on whose almighty arm we can rest, and to whose human sympathy we can appeal. ~ **Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield**

John 1:14 NASB95

¹⁴ And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Additional Quotes about the Incarnation:

The one thoroughly laid down and safe way to avoid all going wide of the truth is the doctrine of the Incarnation—that one and the same person is God and man; as God, the end of our going; as man, the way we are to go. ~ **Saint Augustine of Hippo**

The cross is the centre of the world's history. The incarnation of Christ and the crucifixion of our Lord are the pivot round which all the events of the ages revolve. ~ **Alexander Maclaren (Preacher and Expositor)**

On the seventh day was the consummation of nature, in Christ's incarnation the consummation of grace, and at the end of the world will be the consummation of glory. ~ **Saint Thomas Aquinas**

The ultimate manifestation of special revelation is the incarnation of the Son. ~ **John F. MacArthur; Richard Mayhue**

Through union with Christ all that is his by incarnation becomes ours through faith. ~ **Sinclair Buchanan Ferguson**

The suggestion that the incarnation of God in Jesus is paralleled in the teachings of other religions cannot be sustained. ~ **Millard J. Erickson**

The Incarnation required no compromise of deity. When the “Word was made flesh,” His deity did not suffer. Before His Incarnation, Christ was absolute deity; after His Incarnation, He was just as much deity as before. His deity suffered nothing when He became flesh. ~ **A. W. Tozer**

There never has been a man who could understand the doctrine of the incarnation. I think of the incarnation and I take up my stand on the side of the Apostle Paul who said, ‘Great is the mystery of godliness’ ([1 Tim. 3:16](#)). My mind is too small to understand it, my intellect cannot span the infinities and the immensities and the eternities. My little pigmy reason and logic are not big enough to see or to take in such a conception as the self-emptying and the humiliation of the Son of God. I do not claim to understand it; who could understand an idea like that of the virgin birth? It is beyond understanding, it is beyond reason. Who can understand the doctrine of the two natures, unmixed, remaining separate, unmingled and yet both there, but still only one person? I cannot understand the doctrine of the Trinity, Father Son and Holy Spirit. I cannot and we should never try to do so. ~ **David Martyn Lloyd-Jones (Welsh Preacher and Writer)**

When God manifested His power in the works of His hands, the morning stars sang together, and the sons of God shouted for joy; but when God manifests *Himself*, what music shall suffice for the grand psalm of adoring wonder? When wisdom and power are seen, these are but attributes; but in the incarnation it is the divine person which is revealed wrapped in a veil of our inferior clay. ~ **Charles Spurgeon**

If, for the first time, you had heard of the visit of the incarnate God to this world, you would be struck with a wonder which would last throughout all

eternity, that God Himself should really condescend to such a deed as this. This is the heart of the gospel, the incomparable fact of the incarnation of the Son of God, His dwelling upon the earth, and His presentation of Himself as a sacrifice unto God. ~ **Charles Spurgeon**

In his incarnation, Christ voluntarily yielded the independent exercise of his divine attributes to the will of his heavenly Father. ~ **John F. MacArthur;**
Richard Mayhue

The achievements of the Savior through His incarnation are so astounding and so numerous that any one wishing to describe them in detail would be like one who gazes at the expanse of the sea and attempts to count its waves. ~
Anonymous