

Luke 2 | The Christmas Gospel!

¹In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. ²(This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) ³And everyone went to his own town to register. ⁴So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. ⁵He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. ⁶While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, ⁷and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. ⁸And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. ⁹An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. ¹¹Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. ¹²This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.” ¹³Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, ¹⁴“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests.” ¹⁵When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let’s go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.” ¹⁶So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. ¹⁷When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, ¹⁸and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. ¹⁹But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. ²⁰The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told. ²¹On the eighth day, when it was time to circumcise him, he was named Jesus, the name the angel had given him before he had been conceived.

1. Saint Paul wrote, *When the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons* (Galatians 4:4,5).

Explain the phrase: *When the time had fully come.*

2. What specific fulfillment of Old Testament Messianic prophecy do you see in this account?
3. Why were the shepherds terrified by the appearance of the angel? What significance do you see in the fact that the Savior’s birth was announced first to these people?
4. Which words of the angel speak directly to your heart?

5. What thoughts do the following passages add to this lesson?

- *You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich (2 Corinthians 8:9).*
- *To us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6).*
- *The LORD said to Moses, “Say to the Israelites: ‘A woman who becomes pregnant and gives birth to a son will be ceremonially unclean for seven days, just as she is unclean during her monthly period. On the eighth day the boy is to be circumcised’” (Leviticus 12:1-3).*

6. How does Mary serve as an example for us? How do the shepherds serve as examples?

Closing Prayer:

Ah, dearest Jesus, holy Child,
Prepare a bed, soft, undefiled
Within my heart, made clean and new,
A quiet chamber kept for you. Amen. (CW 38:13)

Merry Christmas!
God’s Blessings to You in the New Year!

Helps: (1) Answers will vary. God had so arranged world affairs that everything was “just right” for the coming of the Savior. Under Roman rule the world was at peace, spoke a common language, enjoyed a wellconstructed system of roads—all of which would help the messengers of the gospel as they shared the news of a Savior with a darkened and dying world. (2) Answers will vary. Jesus was born of a virgin (Isaiah 7:14), in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2), of the line of David (Jeremiah 33:15,16), in humility and poverty (Isaiah 53:2,3). (3) The shepherds were terrified because they understood that they, sinful through and through, were in the presence of God’s holy angels. The announcement to these men shows that God extends his grace to all people, even the most lowly and humble. (4) Answers will vary. Focus on the words “you,” “all the people,” and “peace to men on whom his favor rests.” (5) Second Corinthians 8:9— Jesus put aside the glory and power that were his as the almighty God in order to save us. Isaiah 9:6—In fulfillment of prophecy, Jesus, the promised Savior, entered our world as a human child; yet he remains Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God. He is the God-man. Leviticus 12:1-3—As our substitute, Jesus came to fulfill the law perfectly in our place; in obedience to the Old Testament law, Jesus was circumcised. (6) Mary believed, treasured up, and meditated on God’s Word and revelation. The shepherds too believed the message of salvation that came to them; they acted on it and then shared it with others.