

Baby Jesus is Born

(Luke 2:1-20)

Introduction

The last two weeks we have learned about two amazing birth announcements. Who can remember whose births were announced in a special miraculous way? (*John the Baptist and Jesus.*)

It's important for us to remember that John was special, but he was only a man; Jesus was unique in that He was God and Man.

God sent an angel to announce both John's and Jesus' birth. In our lesson today we will learn about the fulfillment of God's promise to send a Messiah.

Opening Prayer

Lord, You promised for 5,000 years that You would send a Savior to the people of the earth. And just as You promised, You sent Jesus, born in Bethlehem, to a virgin. Thank You that You are a good God, who keeps His promises. Help us to never doubt Your love and care for us. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins. (Matthew 1:21)

Lesson

Mary and Joseph lived in a city called Nazareth. [Point this out on the map.] Joseph worked as a carpenter. One day the Roman soldiers came into the town of Nazareth to tell all the people they had to go to the city where their families had originally come from to sign up and pay taxes. Joseph and Mary's family had come from Bethlehem.

Luke 2:1-3 [Teacher, read:]

At that time the Roman emperor, Augustus, decreed that a census should be taken throughout the Roman Empire. (2) (This was the first census taken when Quirinius was governor of Syria.) (3) All returned to their own ancestral towns to register for this census.

Bethlehem was a long way from Nazareth (70 miles). Mary rode on a donkey and Joseph walked along side of her. They had to travel for many days to get there.

Luke 2:4-5 [Teacher, read:]

And because Joseph was a descendant of King David, he had to go to Bethlehem in Judea, David's ancient home. He traveled there from the village of Nazareth in Galilee. (5) He took with him Mary, to whom he was engaged, who was now expecting a child.

Can you imagine how hard it was for Mary to ride a donkey when she was just about to have her baby? [Teacher, let the children respond.]

When they arrived, they found the town very crowded with people. They looked and looked for a place to stay, but all the hotels were full. Joseph saw a shed, a barn, or a cave where the animals were kept. And, they were probably glad to find a place to rest from their long journey. Can you picture the place where Mary and Joseph slept? What do you think it smelled like? What noises do you think they heard? (Mooing cows, braying donkeys, neighing horses, cooing doves.) Does this seem like a fitting place for God the Son to be born?

Luke 2:6-7

And while they were there, the time came for her baby to be born. (7) She gave birth to her firstborn son. She wrapped him snugly in strips of cloth and laid him in a manger, because there was no lodging available for them.

When Jesus was born, only Mary and Joseph knew that the King of kings had arrived. No trumpets sounded; there was no royal announcement. They were alone with their newborn baby, far from home and their families.

Nobody else knew that the greatest event in all history had just taken place! Jesus, the creator of the whole universe (Colossians 1:16), had left the glorious splendor of His home in Heaven and came to earth in the form of a little baby and was born in a stable.

Then, God sent some angels to tell someone else about what had happened!

Luke 2:8

That night there were shepherds staying in the fields nearby, guarding their flocks of sheep.

There was a group of shepherds outside the little town of Bethlehem minding their own business, watching their sheep.

I can imagine that the night was really dark. This was hundreds of years before electricity was used for lighting, so there would have been no glow rising from the city lights. The only light that shone that night was the soft moonlight. I bet they could clearly see all the stars in the sky.

Then, suddenly, a bright light pierced the darkness, and the shepherds saw a messenger from God.

Luke 2:9

Suddenly, an angel of the Lord appeared among them, and the radiance of the Lord's glory surrounded them. They were terrified.

The angel didn't just appear, it says, "*the glory of the Lord shone around them!*" I don't know exactly what the "glory of the Lord" looks like, but it must have been bright!

Have you ever been visited by an angel? Would you be afraid? This was unlike anything they had ever seen, and it says they were terrified.

Luke 2:10-12

but the angel reassured them. "Don't be afraid!" he said. "I bring you good news that will bring great joy to all people. The Savior—yes, the Messiah, the Lord—has been born today in Bethlehem, the city of David! And you will recognize him by this sign: You will find a baby wrapped snugly in strips of cloth, lying in a manger."

First, the angel told the shepherds not to be afraid! He wanted to reassure them that this was a good visit!

Then the angel told the shepherds that the Savior had been born! This was fantastic news! God had promised Adam and Eve that He would send a Savior—someone who would come and rescue us from the punishment for our sin. People had been waiting for Him for thousands of years. Wondering and waiting. And, here they were, the shepherds, the first to hear this good news!

Luke 2:13-14

Suddenly, the angel was joined by a vast host of others—the armies of heaven—praising God and saying, "Glory to God in highest heaven, and peace on earth to those with whom God is pleased."

First there was just one angel, then suddenly a large group of angels joined him – "*a multitude of the heavenly host*" it says. This was the armies of heaven. And they were singing praises to the Lord. The shepherds must have been amazed at the sight of the heavenly host! Then the angels left and went into heaven.

Luke 2:15

When the angels had returned to heaven, the shepherds said to each other, "Let's go to Bethlehem! Let's see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about."

The shepherds didn't waste a minute. They rushed off to Bethlehem. They knew what they were looking for. They had been told that the

Messiah had been born in Bethlehem. So, they knew that the Messiah was a newborn baby! That must have been a wonder to them. And, they knew the baby would be lying in a manger wrapped snugly in strips of cloth. So off they went to look for this new born baby boy.

Luke 2:16

They hurried to the village and found Mary and Joseph. And there was the baby, lying in the manger.

I wonder how many places they had to look before they found Him. Did animals all over Bethlehem begin to whinny and bray as the shepherds poked their heads into every stall in every stable until they came to the right one? Did they hear the cry of the newborn baby? I bet they were out of breath when they finally found Him.

Luke 2:17

After seeing him, the shepherds told everyone what had happened and what the angel had said to them about this child.

After the shepherds had seen the baby, they told everyone what happened – what the angels had said and what they saw with their own eyes. (*We were out in the field, minding our own business and all of a sudden, an angel appeared!*) They couldn't keep this good news to themselves.

Do you get excited about telling people about the great things about Jesus?

Luke 2:18

All who heard the shepherds' story were astonished.

Everyone who heard the good news was amazed!

Luke 2:19

but Mary kept all these things in her heart and thought about them often.

It says, "*Mary kept all these things in her heart...*" I'm sure she would never forget the miraculous events that had happened to her.

What do you think that Mary was thinking about? She knew that Jesus was the very Son of God. Do you suppose she was wondering how He was going to be the Savior of the whole world? How could my baby have created the whole world?

Luke 2:20

The shepherds went back to their flocks, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen. It was just as the angel had told them.

After things settled down, the shepherds had to get back to their sheep. But it says they went back to their flocks, "*glorifying and praising God*". What an incredible night they had.

What do you know about shepherds? Shepherds are people that take care of flocks of sheep. Shepherds in Bible times were not usually very well educated. Being a shepherd was a lowly job. Usually, the youngest member of the family – the least important son – got the job of tending the sheep out on the range.

Shepherds certainly didn't live in luxury; they were low-lifers. They slept on the ground and smelled like sheep. Shepherds were not "important" people like government officials.

Why do you think God chose to announce Jesus' birth to a bunch of shepherds and not to the rulers or the Jewish religious leaders?

God knew that people who thought they were "important" – like the government officials and the religious leaders – probably would not have been willing to bow down to praise even God's own Son.

God thinks that each one of us is important. He is not concerned about how much education you have or if you have money or a powerful position at your job. He loves each one of us and He wants everyone to worship Him.

Why did God, the Creator of the Universe, leave the glory of heaven and come to earth in the form of a man?

Heaven is a perfect place. God cannot have any sin come into His presence. He knew we couldn't be good enough to come into His kingdom on our own. So, because He loves us so much, He sent Jesus to come to earth so that He could take the punishment we deserve. Jesus did it willingly because he knew it was our only hope of salvation!

Jesus is 100% human and 100% God. As a baby, He got tired, hungry, and thirsty. As He grew up, He played and learned like you do. But, even though Jesus was human, He was never naughty; He never sinned! We know that He was truly human because He actually died on the cross. He was the only perfect person that ever lived or who will ever live.

But we can't forget the fact that Jesus is God (God, the Son). We know He is God because he healed the sick, made the lame to walk and the blind to see and because He rose from the dead.

He was the perfect God-Man, the only one that was perfectly qualified to take our place on the cross.

Let's bow our heads and thank God for sending Jesus to us.

Closing Prayer

Lord, praise You for coming to earth to be our Savior. I pray that each of us would stop and think for minute about what we have been saved from and to give You thanks for coming to earth to save us from the

punishment we deserve for our sins. Thank You for loving us so much. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Learning Activities

Craft Corner

Cone Angel

Items Needed:

- ½ paper plate per child
- Construction paper
- Yellow yarn
- Cotton balls
- Scissors, glitter, glue, markers, stapler

Procedure:

- Roll the ½ paper plate into a cone and staple.
- Trace the child's hands onto construction paper and cut out.
- Glue hand shape onto the cone for the angel's wings.
- Cut a face out of construction paper and glue to their cone
- Glue the yellow yarn as a halo.
- Stretch the cotton balls and glue them onto the angel
- Decorate the angels as desired.

Game Center

Relay Race Memory Verse Activities

Split children into two groups for a relay race. Cut the memory verse into 8 parts; write each part on a separate piece of paper. Have the children form two lines. The first child runs up and gets a piece of the memory verse out of a lunch sack and tapes it to the wall. He then

runs back to the front of the line and tags the next person on his team to repeat the activity until a team has all the pieces of the verse up on the wall in the correct order.

Or, use the following review questions in a game of your choice:

1. What town did Joseph and Mary live in? (Nazareth)
2. What did Joseph do for a living? (He was a carpenter)
3. Why did Joseph and Mary have to go to Bethlehem? (To pay taxes)
4. How did Joseph and Mary travel to Bethlehem? (Joseph walked and Mary rode a donkey)
5. Where did Joseph and Mary stay while they were in Bethlehem? (In a stable)
6. Why did Jesus come to earth? (To show us how God wants us to act and so that He could take the punishment for our sins)
7. How can we know that Jesus is God? (He was born of a virgin, He healed the sick, made the lame to walk and the blind to see)
8. How can we know that Jesus is man? (He got hungry, tired, thirsty, etc.)
9. Why was the birth of baby Jesus such good news?
10. Why did shepherds have to guard their flocks of sheep? (The sheep could get attacked by animals.)
11. Why do you think that God chose to announce Jesus' birth to a bunch of shepherds and not to the government officials or Jewish religious leaders?
12. Why did the shepherds run to Bethlehem? (To find Jesus)
13. What do you think Mary was thinking about when the shepherds found her and the baby Jesus?
14. After the shepherds had seen Jesus, why did they tell everyone what happened? (They were amazed at the events! The news that the Messiah had finally come was way too incredible to keep to themselves.)
15. Who did the shepherds share the good news with? (Everyone! They didn't just go home and tell their own friends and family.)
16. Why do we call Jesus our *Savior*? What has He saved us from? (Everlasting punishment in hell.)
17. What great things can you tell people about Jesus? Who will you tell the good news to?
18. What are some ways we can glorify and praise God? (Sing songs, write Him a poem or a letter of thanks for coming to earth to save us.)

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