
RELATED SCRIPTURES

Isaiah 9:6–7 | Luke 24:6–7 | Colossians 3:1–4

STUDY FOR SERMON FROM 12.22.24

SUMMARY

Luke begins his account of Jesus' birth by mentioning two kings: Caesar Augustus—Augustus meaning “the supreme or majestic one”—and Jesus, the King of kings. There's an immediate and apparent contrast between the two. Caesar issues a decree for a census to tax his people—a decree of fear and oppression—and Jesus, the vulnerable baby, brought forth in humility. Jesus' father, Joseph, who was of the house of David, returned to Bethlehem, his birthplace, to take the census with Jesus' mother, Mary, accompanying him. During their journey, Mary gave birth to Jesus in the meager setting of a manger—a setting not fit for any child, let alone a King. At the same time, an angel appeared to some shepherds whose response was fear—a natural response of sinful humans when exposed to something holy of the Lord. Yet the angel tells the shepherds, “Fear not,” as the angel delivers “good news.” The angel speaks of “Christ the Lord,” which, in the original language, the shepherds would have understood this term to mean “Messiah” or “anointed one”—the long-awaited Savior had come into the world. The angel gives a sign to the shepherds, once again speaking of the baby's humble conditions, foreshadowing the cornerstone of Christ's mission on earth—a King who would humble himself for the sake of his people. Yet with the sign of humility, a heavenly host—the angels of heaven—break out in a glorious chorus (v. 14). While Jesus' ministry would be marked by humility, his mission is rooted in the glory of heaven; this is Jesus, the Son of God and the Son of man. After this, the shepherds show us that when the glory of God is made apparent, the heart that is changed by God's glory cannot remain still and silent—it must take action. Therefore, the shepherds resolved to find the baby and then tell Mary—and everyone else they encountered—that the Savior is here. The Savior is born!

GROUP QUESTIONS

Share something that surprises, encourages, or troubles you from the sermon or your direct reading of Luke 2:1–20.

The birth of Jesus displays the marks of both humility and glory. How is this similar to the Christian life? In what ways do Christians know both humility and glory? (Consider Luke 24:6–7 and Colossians 3:1–4.)

The shepherds saw the sign, received the good news of the Savior's birth, and were compelled to act upon it. How has the reality of the Savior's birth changed you? How is your life different because of Jesus' birth?

If there's one thing Jesus would want you to walk away believing and receiving as a result of this portion of Scripture, what is that thing?

CLOSE IN PRAYER

As you pray, be sure to include today's themes in what you bring before God.