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The Savior Who Came to Us



QUESTION 1:

When have you seen a decision by one person positively impact others?

THE POINT

Jesus came for our salvation.



THE BIBLE MEETS LIFE

Life is filled with decisions that can impact the rest of our lives, such as a job change or a move to another city. After serving one church for many years, my family and I answered God's call on our lives to plant a church in another city. We struggled leaving a place where God had blessed our lives with an incredible church family, friends, ministry, and life. Leaving all this was hard.

Even as we answered God's call, a pastor friend reached out to me. The Lord had called him years before to leave his hometown to

plant a church. He told me how he had battled with the decision to move, but then he also shared an amazing perspective. God called his entire family, not just him. Years later, all his kids had come to faith in Jesus and were serving Jesus in that same city. I, too, can now say I have also seen my kids come to faith in Christ in our new city.

Jesus made a move too. He moved from heaven to earth, coming to us as a baby. His decision impacts all of us—for eternity!

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

LUKE 2:4-7

⁴ Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family line of David, ⁵ to be registered along with Mary, who was engaged to him and was pregnant. ⁶ While they were there, the time came for her to give birth. ⁷ Then she gave birth to her firstborn son, and she wrapped him tightly in cloth and laid him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.

Anticipation of the coming Messiah had been steadily growing among the Jewish people. Living under the oppressive rule of the Romans only fueled that expectation. God had promised King David that “your house and kingdom will endure before me forever, and your throne will be established forever” (2 Sam. 7:16). Luke would later show how Jesus was in the lineage of David (Luke 3:23-38). God fulfilled His promise to David when Jesus was born in Bethlehem, although it was not the royal event most people would have expected, and few people knew of His birth.

Joseph’s connection to David led Mary and him to travel to Bethlehem. A Roman decree required Joseph to return to the town of his ancestors to be registered (Luke 2:1-2). David was closely connected to the city of Jerusalem since he established it as the capital and religious center for Israel, but

David was born and raised in the small village of Bethlehem (1 Sam. 16:1-13).

For such an earth-changing event, we’re given few details about this momentous birth. While we might wish for more details, Luke was inspired to tell us exactly what we need to know: “She gave birth to her firstborn son, and she wrapped him tightly in cloth and laid him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them” (v. 7). Jesus was physically born, and He was born in humble circumstances.

QUESTION 2:

What details about Jesus’ birth story are different than what you would have expected for a king?

Mary and Joseph knew this was a miraculous birth because of the angels' words to them (Matt. 1:20-21; Luke 1:26-37). We might wonder how Mary and Joseph felt about such a humble setting for the birth of God's Son. We should recognize the powerful picture of humility that surrounded the birth of God's Son. However, even if Jesus had been born in grand fashion in a palace with

birth announcements going throughout the countryside, it still would have been a humbling thing for God to leave the majesty and glory of heaven to become like one of us. Yet in coming to earth, Jesus came through an incredibly humble set of circumstances. Jesus was of royal lineage, but he came for all people—the least to the greatest.

LUKE 2:8-12

⁸ In the same region, shepherds were staying out in the fields and keeping watch at night over their flock. ⁹ Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰ But the angel said to them, “Don’t be afraid, for look, I proclaim to you good news of great joy that will be for all the people: ¹¹ Today in the city of David a Savior was born for you, who is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹² This will be the sign for you: You will find a baby wrapped tightly in cloth and lying in a manger.”

Although the world might have missed the significance of the birth of Jesus, the angels in heaven certainly didn't—and they made sure a small group of shepherds didn't miss it either. An angel of the Lord appeared and told the shepherds, “Today in the city of David a Savior was born for you, who is the Messiah, the Lord” (v. 11). As he made this announcement, the angel was joined by more angels: “a multitude of the heavenly host” (v. 13). What an incredible experience for these shepherds to see and hear the skies filled with the praise of angels.



A few things stand out about this angelic announcement:

- ▶ **The announcement was terrifying.** As the angel spoke “and the glory of the Lord shone around them,” Luke described them as “terrified.” The word literally means they feared a great fear! We surely can understand that anyone would be afraid if an angel suddenly appeared, but the angel’s first words to the panicked shepherds were, “Don’t be afraid.” Although their fear was likely paralyzing, it turned into the kind of fear that leads to wonder and amazement. The first people who were told of the Messiah’s birth were lowly shepherds, not kings or religious leaders.
- ▶ **The announcement was comforting.** Comfort would come in the angel’s opening call not to be afraid. The shepherds would receive even greater comfort as they heard “good news of great joy that will be for all the people.” These shepherds surely carried in their hearts the same longing and hope for God’s deliverance that all the people had been yearning for, and now that longing in their hearts was fulfilled: “Today in the city of David a Savior was born for you, who is the Messiah, the Lord.”
- ▶ **The announcement was inspiring.** What started with one angel now multiplied to “a multitude of the heavenly host.” In his vision of God’s throne, Daniel said, “Thousands upon thousands served him; ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him” (Dan. 7:10). God’s army of angels was now declaring the glory of God and peace on earth. If the shepherds had any doubts before this moment as to the significance of the angel’s announcement, all those doubts now had to be gone.

The angelic announcement was both amazing and terrifying . . . so simple yet so comforting . . . so powerful yet so inspiring.

QUESTION 3:

What does it mean that Jesus’ birth would be good news of great joy for all the people?



LUKE 2:16-20

¹⁶ They hurried off and found both Mary and Joseph, and the baby who was lying in the manger. ¹⁷ After seeing them, they reported the message they were told about this child, ¹⁸ and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. ¹⁹ But Mary was treasuring up all these things in her heart and meditating on them. ²⁰ The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had seen and heard, which were just as they had been told.

QUESTION 4:

How has Jesus' birth been good news in your life?

After such a once-in-a-lifetime experience, no wonder the shepherds exclaimed, "Let's go straight to Bethlehem and see what has happened, which the Lord has made known to us" (Luke 2:15b). It's also no surprise that "they hurried off" to see the very thing the angel proclaimed.

The shepherds found all things just as the angel had told them. As if the events surrounding Jesus' birth weren't exciting enough for Joseph and Mary, here came a group of shepherds bursting with excitement. The shepherds "reported the message they were told about this," adding to the wonder of all the events since Gabriel first appeared to Mary (1:26-38).

After they told Joseph and Mary of the angelic announcement, the shepherds unashamedly shared what they had witnessed and heard from the angel, and "all who heard it were

amazed at what the shepherds said to them" (v. 18). It would not be hard to connect the birth of this baby with the angels' declaration of "peace on earth to people he favors!" (v. 14). This child, Jesus, would bring to us that which we could never give ourselves: peace.

This peace is peace with God, and though the people then did not know the full details of that peace, years later that peace would come through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Therein lies our hope.

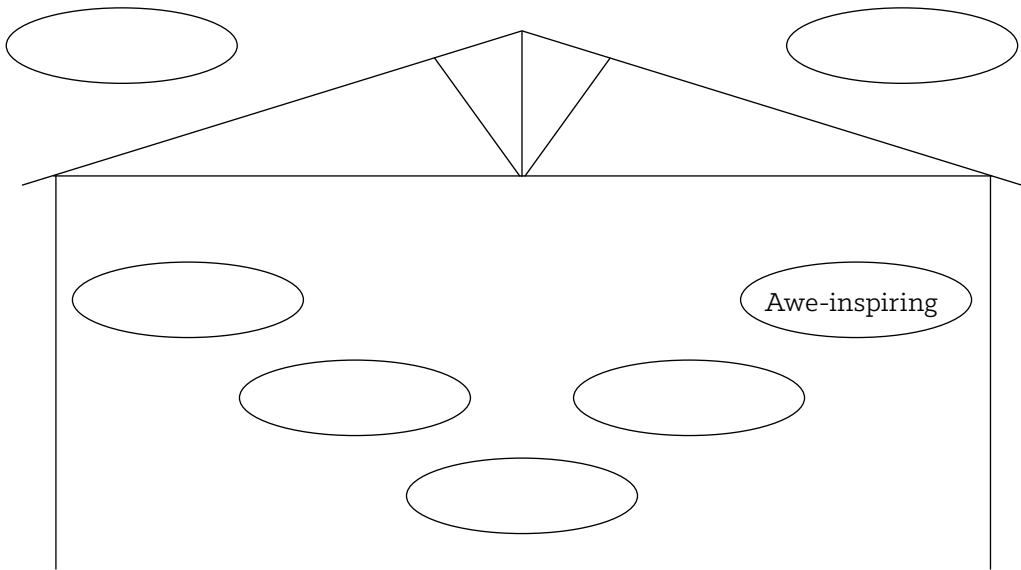
Peace grounded in faith. The only way to receive this peace is by grace, through faith, in Christ alone. This peace cannot be earned (Eph. 2:8-9). Instead, we receive this peace as we trust in the death and resurrection of Christ. His work of salvation for us was the reason He came to earth as a baby!

QUESTION 5:

What are some ways we can help others know that the gospel message is true?

A NATIVITY OF PRAISE

Create a kind of nativity set by writing words that describe that first Christmas night. One bubble has been filled in for you as an example. Then write a prayer thanking God for our first Christmas present: Jesus.



*“And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding,
will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.”*

PHILIPPIANS 4:7

LIVE IT OUT

Jesus came for our salvation. Choose one of the following applications:

- ▶ **Surrender your life.** Now is the time to put your faith and trust in Christ. If you haven't already, make this the best Christmas ever; speak with a Christian friend or leader about your decision. [Refer to page 2 in this book for help.]
- ▶ **Seek God's plan.** God has a wonderful plan for your life. If you are placing your dreams above His plans, turn these expectations over to Him. Invite Him to make clear His path for your life.
- ▶ **Rest in your salvation.** Trust Jesus to cover your past, protect your present, and secure your eternity. If you are struggling to accept peace in one of these areas, pray about it and speak to a trusted Christian friend.

Moving places is not easy for any of us. Surely it mustn't have been for the Lord Jesus. Yet, He was willing to step from heaven to earth because of His great love for us. Let's share that with everyone we know!