



Christmas

GOD PROVIDES A SAVIOR

God sent His Son to be a Savior for all people.

LUKE 2:8-20

⁸That night, some shepherds were in the fields nearby watching their sheep. ⁹Then an angel of the Lord stood before them. The glory of the Lord was shining around them, and they became very frightened.

¹⁰The angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I am bringing you good

news that will be a great joy to all the people. ¹¹ “Today, your Savior was born in the town of David. He is Christ, the Lord. ¹² “This is how you will know him: You will find a baby wrapped in pieces of cloth and lying in a feeding box.” ¹³ Then a very large group of angels from heaven joined the first angel, praising God and saying: ¹⁴ “Give glory to God in heaven, and on earth let there be peace among the people who please God.” ¹⁵ When the angels left them and went back 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.” ¹⁶ So the shepherds went quickly and found Mary and Joseph and the baby, who was lying in a feeding trough. ¹⁷ When they had seen Him, they told what the angels had said about this child. ¹⁸ Everyone was amazed at what the shepherds said to them. ¹⁹ But Mary treasured these things and continued to think about them. ²⁰ Then the shepherds went back to their sheep, praising God and thanking Him for everything they had seen and heard. It had been just as the angel had told them.

FIRST THOUGHTS

The gospel message still amazes people today. People who have accepted the truth of the gospel message confess they do not know why God is so good to them. We do not understand why God would send His only Son to save us. We are very thankful God loves us so much.

We believe the shepherds’ story. Why? We have proof that Jesus was the Messiah. Old Testament prophecies told where He would be born and about His family line. They told about His life and the kind of man He would be.

In today’s lesson we learn Jesus came to bring salvation to all people.



UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT

Mary's ancestor was King David. Old Testament prophets said Jesus would be born into the family of David.

Jewish young women prayed for the honor of being the mother of the Messiah. They tried to live pure lives. God looked on the life of Mary. He was pleased with her. Luke describes how the angel told Mary she would be the mother of the Messiah.

Jesus did not have an earthly father. He was God's son. God told Mary to name Him Jesus. Jesus means "the Lord is salvation."

The Roman Emperor gave an order for everyone to register (like a census). The head of each family must go to the city of his **ancestors** to register. Joseph's **ancestors** were from Bethlehem. Bethlehem was called the city of David. Jesus was born while Mary and Joseph were in Bethlehem.

The first seven verses of chapter 2 describe the birth of Jesus.

EXPLORE THE TEXT (LUKE 2:8-20)

1. Angels Announced the Birth of the Savior (Luke 2:8-14)

VERSE 8

Shepherds had important jobs, but no one thought of them as "important" people. They usually were not rich men or able to read and write. The people in towns did not show them great respect. They stayed in the fields to protect their sheep. Night was the time when thieves or animals came to kill or steal the sheep.

VERSE 9

It was very dark out in the fields. Shepherds often built fires. The fire was the only light for them. This night, they were probably sitting or standing near their fire, as usual. Suddenly, a very bright light replaced the darkness. They were surprised and afraid.

VERSE 10

In the middle of the bright light, an angel appeared and told them not to be afraid. He told them he was giving them some great news. The things he told them would bring joy to all people.

It is wonderful how God gave the good news to poor, humble men first. The angel did not appear to the king or to rich or famous people. He did not appear to the religious leaders. He appeared to people the world thought were not important.

VERSE 11

What was the good news? The Savior was born in Bethlehem. That is where the Old Testament prophets said He would be born.

BIBLE SKILL: *Prophecy about Jesus*

Read these prophecies about Jesus' birth and when it happened: Isaiah 7:14 / Matthew 1:18-23; Micah 5:2 / Luke 2:1-7.

In this verse, can you find three important things about the baby who was born in Bethlehem? First, He is a Savior. Before Jesus was born, the angel told Mary to name her child Jesus, meaning "The Lord is Salvation" (Luke 1:30-33). These verses tell why she must name Him Jesus: because He is the Savior, the Son of God.

Second, the angel called Him Christ. The words *Christ* (a Greek word) and *Messiah* (a Hebrew word) mean the same as our English word, *Savior*. The Jewish people waited hundreds of years for the Messiah to free them from their enemies. Christ came to free people from their sins.

Third, the angel called Him the Lord. The Lord is ruler over everything. Jesus is the Lord. He is God.

VERSE 12

The angel told the shepherds where to find Jesus. They said to look for a baby wrapped in strips of **cloth**. New-born babies were often wrapped in wide strips of cloth when they were born.



The angel told the shepherds they would find the baby in a box used to put food for animals (a manger). The shepherds were truly shocked to learn the Savior of the world would be in a feeding box!

VERSES 13-14

Suddenly, a very large group of angels joined the first angel and sang praises about God's glory. The life of Jesus gave glory to God.

The angel's song said the people who please God will have peace. Who are the people who please God? They are the people who love Jesus and follow Him. What is the peace they will have? It is the peace that is in the heart of the believer who knows and loves Jesus.

Do these verses suggest to you that Jesus was born like a rich king or a poor common person? _____

Do you think the shepherds were surprised to know God chose them to be among the first people to know the Messiah was born?

2. Shepherds Found the Savior (Luke 2:15-16)

VERSE 15

After the angels finished singing, they went away. The light from the angels was gone and it was dark again. The shepherds believed what the angels said. They hurried to Bethlehem to find the new born baby. They wanted to see the things the angel told them about.

VERSE 16

The shepherds hurried to Bethlehem. They found Mary and Joseph with the baby Jesus. Everything the angels told them was true. The baby was wrapped in strips of cloth and lying in a manger. The manger was in a stable (barn). It was probably in one of the many caves near Bethlehem. The stable was the only place in town Mary and Joseph could find to stay for the night.

The shepherds traveled to Bethlehem because the angel told them about Jesus. They believed the things the angel told them. People today can find Jesus if they look for Him. We can read God's Word and know it is true.



God's Word tells us how to find Jesus and invite Him into our lives. Have you invited Jesus into your heart? YES ___ NO ___ Not yet ___

If you cannot say yes, ask your pastor or teacher to help you find Jesus.

3. Shepherds Told About the Birth of the Savior (Luke 2:17-20)

VERSES 17-18

Many people were probably staying near the place Jesus was born. People were amazed when they heard the shepherds tell about the bright lights and the angel's words. They told the people about the song all the angels sang. They told about how they knew where to find the baby Jesus.

VERSE 19

Mary kept all these things in her heart. The Greek word means she thought for a long time about these things. The American Sign Language sign means to continue to think. It means to think about something all the time. Mary continued to think about the things the shepherds told her.

Mary treasured the things she heard. To treasure something means to feel it is very important. People guard and protect their treasures.

VERSE 20

Finally, the shepherds went back to their sheep. They praised God as they traveled back to their fields because the angels told them the truth.

Do you praise God for letting you know the truth about Jesus?

Do you know how to explain about the Messiah?

Ask your pastor or teacher to help you.



IN MY CONTEXT

The verses in today's lesson explain the story of the shepherds. Read the Bible verses again and then write the story in your own words.

Have you ever told someone the true gospel story?

Describe your experience:

Think about how today's lesson is connected to your life and answer these questions:

- 1. Do I truly know how to explain about my faith in Jesus?**
 - 2. This week, how can I use the things I learned in this lesson?**
-

3. Who can I share this lesson with?

4. How can I prepare better for worship next week?

The next two lessons will be from the small Book of Ezra. Plan to read all of the Book of Ezra before next Sunday.

MEMORY VERSE

"Today your Savior was born in the town of David." —Luke 2:11

GOD PROVIDES A SAVIOR

God sent His Son to be a Savior for all people.

PLAN AHEAD

Suggested teaching method: Skit. Ask three or four pupils to prepare a skit. They are the shepherds. They talk with the angel, then talk together, then with Mary and Joseph, and finally with people from the village.

Suggested hymn: "Oh, Little Town of Bethlehem."

EXPLORE THE TEXT (LUKE 2:8-20)

1. Angels Announced the Birth of the Savior (Luke 2:8-14)

Verses 8-14. Ask someone to sign Philippians 2:6-11. This is Paul's summary of the gospel.

It is not enough to believe the good news of Jesus' birth; we must also believe the greater news of His death and resurrection.

DIG DEEPER: *Bethlehem* (Luke 2:11-15)

The name Bethlehem means house of bread. It is about six miles from Jerusalem. Joseph and Mary traveled for three days from Nazareth to Bethlehem. God planned for the Messiah (Christ, Savior) to be born in Bethlehem. About seven hundred years earlier, the prophet Micah said, "But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are too small to be among the army groups from Judah, from you will come one who will rule Israel for me" (Micah 5:2).

When you get great news, whom do you tell first?"

Ask two or three to tell about the time they first heard the gospel, or when they responded to it and accepted Jesus as Savior.

2. Shepherds Found the Savior (Luke 2:15-16)

Verses 15-16. Note the prompt response of the shepherds, "they went quickly and found Mary and Joseph and the baby."

Do people today really search for Christ?

Do you try to help unreached people find Jesus?

SCRIPTURE SEARCH: *Titles for Jesus (Luke 2:11)*

The angel identified Jesus as Christ, the Savior, and the Lord. The Bible has many "titles" for Jesus. In John 1:1, He is the Living Word. Later, John calls Him the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end (Revelation 1:8, 22:13). He is God's Son (Matthew 3:16-17), the Bread of life (John 6:32), the Chief Shepherd (1 Peter 5:4), and the Great High Priest (Hebrews 4:14). Some of the more colorful picture words for Jesus are the Morning Star (Revelation 22:16), the Lamb (Revelation 13:8), and the Light of the world (John 8:12). The Roman soldier at the cross called Him the Son of God (Matthew 27:54).

3. Shepherds Told About the Birth of the Savior (Luke 2:17-20)

Verses 17-20. Ask if anyone has seen photos of a car or a house "before" and "after" it was rebuilt? Usually these photos show a dramatic change. Compare how the shepherds felt in verse 9 with verse 20. What a difference Jesus made!

