

# **Good Tidings of Great Joy**

*Studies in the Gospel of Luke*

## **The Birth of Jesus**

**Luke 2**  
**Lesson 3**

*Trinity Bible Church Sunday School*  
*January 18, 2015*

# Gospel of Luke – Outline

1. Prologue (1:1-4)
2. The Preparation for Jesus' Ministry (1:5-4:13)
3. The Ministry in Galilee (4:14-9:50)
4. The Judean/Perean Ministry (9:51-19:27)
5. The Ministry in Jerusalem (19:28-21:38)
6. The Consummation of His Work (22:1-24:53)

# Introduction and Preparation for Christ (1:5-80)

- ▶ The exact truth: eyewitnesses
- ▶ Pagan domination of Israel – Herod
- ▶ A godly remnant – Zacharias, Elizabeth, Mary
  - Counted righteous
  - Faithful in the Temple worship
  - Seemingly forgotten by the Lord – waiting and barren
- ▶ Ready for Malachi 3:1

# The Word from the presence of God (1:19)

- ▶ The forerunner – message to Zacharias
  - Filled with the Holy Spirit
  - Mal 3:1; Isa 40:3
  - A ministry of revival (Mal 4:6 – Luke 1:16-17)
- ▶ The coming King – message to Mary
  - Son of the Most High
  - King on the throne of his father David
  - Work of the Holy Spirit

# The witness of the saints

## ▶ Elizabeth

- Mary's baby is her Lord (1:43)
- Blessing by faith

## ▶ Mary

- “God my Savior”
- Mercy for the humble and help for Israel
- Fulfillment of the Promise to Abraham

## ▶ Zacharias

- Fulfillment of the Promise to Abraham
- Horn of salvation
  - forgiveness of sins
  - Serve without fear in holiness and righteousness all our days
- The Sunrise from on high

# The Birth of Jesus – Luke 2

- ▶ Birth of Jesus (2:1-20)
- ▶ Born under the Law (2:21-40)
  - Circumcision (2:21)
  - Purification (2:22-24)
  - Simeon (2:25-35)
  - Anna (2:36-38)
  - Nazareth (2:39-40)
- ▶ In the Temple (2:41-52)

# The decree from Caesar Augustus

- ▶ “In the fulness of time (Galatians 4:4)
- ▶ Proverbs 21:1 – “The king’s heart is like the channels of water in the hand of the LORD; He turns it wherever He wishes.”

The heart of a believer should take comfort in the recollection of God's providential government of the world. A true Christian should never be greatly moved or disquieted by the conduct of the rulers of the earth. He should see with the eye of faith a hand overruling all that they do to the praise and glory of God. He should regard every king and potentate,—an Augustus, a Cyrenius, a Darius, a Cyrus, a Sennacherib,—as a creature who, with all his power, can do nothing but what God allows, and nothing which is not carrying out God's will. And when the rulers of this world "set themselves against the Lord," he should take comfort in the words of Solomon, "There be higher than they." (Eccles. 5:8.)

J. C. RYLE



# The decree from Caesar Augustus

- ▶ A royal decision made for the benefit of the emperor
- ▶ Micah 5:2 – a decision to get Mary to Bethlehem
- ▶ Manger – a stall (Luke 13:15)
- ▶ Not protected from the outward effects of the curse (Hebrews 4:15 and 5:8)
- ▶ Ruler of rulers – did not order a place of comfort for His Son
- ▶ Two works in the incarnation
  - The work of redemption – by His death
  - The life of faith – by His suffering (1 Peter 2:20-24)

# Announcement to the shepherds (2:9-14)

- ▶ Good news of great joy for all the people
- ▶ Savior, Christ the Lord – in a stall in Bethlehem
- ▶ The wisdom of God v. the wisdom of man
- ▶ A call to faith
  - “Jesus loves me this I know, for the Bible tells me so.”
  - Luke 10:21 – hidden from the wise and revealed to infants

# The twofold significance of His birth

- ▶ 1. Glory to God in the highest
- ▶ The Glory of God is His Attributes
- ▶ Exodus 33:18 to 34:7
- ▶ Psalm 113 – the “stoopingness” of God

Now is come the highest degree of glory to God, by the appearing of His Son Jesus Christ in the world. He by His life and death on the cross will glorify God's attributes,—justice, holiness, mercy, and wisdom,—as they never were glorified before. Creation glorified God, but not so much as redemption. ■

J.C. Ryle

# The twofold significance of His birth

- ▶ 2. Peace to men with whom He is well pleased
- ▶ J.C. Ryle: “His power was seen in creation. His justice was seen in the flood. But His mercy remained to be fully revealed by the appearing and atonement of Jesus Christ.”
- ▶ Glory to God in the Highest by peace with His people

# Under the Law (2:21-40)

## ▶ Circumcision (2:21)

- Commandment given to Abraham (Gen 17:10-14)
- Codified in the Law of Moses (Lev 12:3)
  - This the only text in the Law re: the rite of physical circumcision
  - Two references prior to the Law re: Passover:
    - Ex 12:44, 48 – slave or stranger at Passover
- Deut 10:16; 30:6 – circumcise your heart

## ▶ Jesus is named (1:31; 2:21)

# Under the Law (2:21-40)

- ▶ Lev 12 – Law of purification
- ▶ False view: Laws of Public Health
- ▶ Mother unclean by childbirth and to remain unclean:
  - 7 days + 33 days for male child = 40 days
  - 14 days + 66 days for female child = 80 days
- ▶ Purification from sin
  - Burnt offering – whole commitment to God – dedication
  - Sin offering – atonement for sin which was not willful
  - Sacrifice of poor family – a pair of turtledoves or 2 young pigeons

# Simeon (2:25-35)

- ▶ Righteous and devout man – man of faith
- ▶ Holy Spirit on him
- ▶ Looking for “consolation of Israel” (comfort – Isa 40:1)
- ▶ Thanksgiving – personal promise to see the Christ
- ▶ Praise for “Your salvation”
  - A light of revelation to the Gentiles – a universal salvation
  - The glory of your people Israel – “In the LORD all the offspring of Israel Will be justified and will glory.” (Isaiah 45:25)



# Simeon (2:25-35)

## ► A prophecy

- Believers did not seem to understand Isaiah 53
  - Peter did not like the idea of Christ's death (Matt 16:21-23)
  - Except John the Baptist: “Behold the Lamb of God . . .” (John 1:29)
- The Child's work
  - Fall and rise of many in Israel – salvation and wrath
  - A sign to be opposed – focal point of hostility to God
  - Death – pictured by sword piercing Mary's soul
  - Expose the hearts of men – “We preach Christ crucified” (1 Cor 1:23)

# Anna (2:36-38)

- ▶ Prophetess – tribe of Asher
- ▶ Widow (married 7 years), age 84
- ▶ Thanksgiving and witness – redemption of Jerusalem

# In the Temple (2:41-52)

- ▶ Teachers amazed at his understanding and answers
- ▶ Had to be in Father's house – affairs or business
- ▶ Return to Nazareth
  - Submission to parents
  - Further ministry delayed for 18 years!
  - Mary treasured – kept carefully — these things (words)
- ▶ Jesus grew in wisdom, stature, favor with God and man (2:40, 52)

# The Birth of Jesus

- ▶ His Person and Work presented
- ▶ His connection to the Old Testament Promises
- ▶ Next Lesson: Introduction by John, Baptism, Genealogy, Temptation
- ▶ Ministry begins in Luke 4:14