

Title: Glory to God in the Highest
Text: Luke 2: 1-20
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God is Absolutely Sovereign. We see this in the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Luke 2: 1: And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed. 2: ([And] this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.) 3: And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city. 4: And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:) 5: To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child.

Into Judea because the Spirit of God said

Genesis 49: 10: The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.

In Bethlehem because the Spirit of God said

Micah 5: 2: But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, [though] thou be little among the thousands of Judah, [yet] out of thee shall he come forth unto me [that is] to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth [have been] from of old, from everlasting.

Joseph and Mary both being of the house and lineage of David because the Spirit of God said

Jeremiah 23:5: Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth.

Application: This is a display of God's absolute power to bring to pass all things in providence. What God purposed in eternity, he promises to his children. He brings to pass all things that he might receive all the glory in the salvation of his children.

Let not our hearts be troubled: not by the rulers of this world, not even if our nearest loved ones oppose us. Remember that all things come to pass and are overruled for the glory of God—even devils and evil men and erring brethren alike.

Ecclesiastes 5: 8: If thou seest the oppression of the poor, and violent perverting of judgment and justice in a province, marvel not at the matter: for [he that is] higher than the highest regardeth; and [there be] higher than they.

Luke 2: 6: And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. 7 And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn. Luke 2: 8: And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. 9 And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid.

God's Way is Opposite to Man's Way

First, here is the Son of God *given*—the Second Person in the Holy Trinity, the Only Begotten Son of God—made the Son of David, born the Seed of Abraham. He is the King of kings, and Lord of lords yet he chose to come into the earth—not through royalty-but through a poor virgin, whose husband was a carpenter. He is God the King, God the High Priest yet he chose not to be born in a palace or a temple but in a manger. He came to robe his children in the pristine, garments of his glorious righteousness, yet he chose to be wrapped in swaddling clothes. He said, “I go to prepare a place for you, that where I am, there ye may be also”—yet there was no room for them in the inn.

Application: This is a diametric contradiction to our pride-filled, sin-filled natures. GOD—MADE HIMSELF OF NO REPUTATION—TOOK THE FORM OF A SERVANT TO SAVE THOSE WHO COULD NOT SAVE THEMSELVES.

"Behold, thy King cometh unto thee lowly," (Zec 9:9).

Secondly, the very first announcement of Christ's birth was not given to any of the religious rulers and scribes but to “shepherds abiding in a field keeping watch over a flock.”

Luke 2: 8: And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. 9 And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid.

These were not exactly the most influential folks in the world. These were the first to receive the good news. They were keeping nightwatches—working the graveyard shift.

God is no respecter of persons.

- Moses stuttered
- Noah was despised and mocked by everyone in his generation
- Abraham was an idolator who wasn't even seeking God
- Jacob was a deceiver
- David was the last son Jesse thought God would have chosen to be king
- Rahab was a harlot
- Ruth a Moabitess
- Matthew was a thieving tax collector
- Paul had a thorn in the flesh—they said, “his bodily presence is weak and contemptible”

Application: God is not impressed with our achievements—if we had a righteousness to present to him we would boast in it; if we had a will to seek after him we would poke out our chest, if we could perfect holiness by our flesh we would oppress and look down our noses on everyone who does not meet our requirements.

Do we have such a reputation so high that you too full of pride to come down off our throne? Is our life so important that we can not lay it down to serve the Lord of glory? Oh, don't wait till you have finished living your life to lay it down. You never will. Lay

down your life now, make yourself of no reputation and cast all your care on the Lord Jesus Christ.

Isaiah 55: 7: Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. 8: For my thoughts *are* not your thoughts, neither *are* your ways my ways, saith the LORD. 9: For *as* the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

1 Corinthians 1: 5: Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men....“no flesh shall glory in God’s presence”.

THE MESSAGE

Luke 2: 9 And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid.

The “shining of the glory of the Lord” is “Light”. Where the Lord is there is Light. This is what happens in the heart. God was present.

Luke 2: 10 And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

Fear not: I BRING YOU—Salvation is always BROUGHT TO THE RECEIPT. Good Tidings—Good News—of Great Joy— Which Shall Be to All People

Illustration: Evening News is done. It is History. If you believe, your believing did not make it happen. If you do not believe, your unbelief does not undo it. It is News—IT IS DONE! We have but one message to all people—salvation is of the Lord.

Salvation is accomplished by the grace of God in Christ Jesus. You add nothing and subtract nothing. All glory is God’s. The Good News is of the Faith and Fidelity of God satisfying all he requires of his people in his Son. Those who believe—receive freely, by grace, that which God has wrought for them himself!

What about those who do not believe? It does not change the good news—nor make the blood of Christ of no effect—the unbeliever merely manifests that Christ did nothing for him.

Romans 3: 3: For what if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect? 4: God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged.

But this good news of great joy shall be revealed EFFECTUALLY in each and every one for whom Christ died.

Matthew 1: 21: His name is Jesus: for he shall save HIS PEOPLE from their sins.

Has the glory of God made you to see the impossibility of any righteousness or holiness of yourself, the utter ignorance of your so-called wisdom, the utter inability of to free yourselves from sin? It is good news of great joy when God teaches you in the heart that salvation is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that shewth mercy?

The good news is personal.

Luke 2: 11: For unto you...

You--who like these shepherds--are working in the darkness with no contentment that the work is finished, no rest for your weary souls, and no light until the Light of God shines round about you saying Fear not—Good News!

Luke 2: 11:...is born this day in the city of David

That is, exactly according to God's Promise, according to the scriptures, according to God's Word. When he makes us to know his Word is as sure as God, this written word becomes the word of the Living Word--we find great rest and peace for our souls in all that is written!

Luke 2: 11: a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

A Savior saving those who can not save themselves. **The Christ.** – God's anointed! The Lord our God; The Lord our Righteousness; The Lord of All.

Application: Our Judge (who has satisfied his own righteous demands on our behalf). Our Lawgiver--the one who writes his Word of Peace in our Hearts, turning even the wicked for our good. And he is our King--the one who is the King ruling all—he is our Savior—he shall save us!

Luke 2: 12: And this [shall be] a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

THE SIGN—IS CHRIST HIMSELF—THE SON GIVEN THE CHILD BORN. Isaiah 49:8: Thus saith the LORD, In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee: and I will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages;

Luke 2: 13: And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, 14: Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

ALL AT ONCE—SUDDENLY--The Angels and the Heavenly Host Join in Song in Praising and Giving Glory TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST. The glory of: his Wisdom and prudence in purposing and bringing salvation to pass; of his Love, grace, and, mercy toward sinners though we were "enemies in our minds by wicked works, children of wrath even as others."; of his holiness--manifest in the GodMan Christ Jesus—the Holy One; of His justice--God satisfied God by death of Christ Jesus for all his children; of His power: power of regenerating grace, power to keep his children, power of his resurrection; of His

faithfulness in fulfilling his covenant and oath—all that is written--yea and amen in Christ Jesus. But why were they singing of God's glory in connection with the birth of Christ? Because the..."And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth" (John 1: 14).

CHRIST JESUS IS PEACE

Outside of Christ there is no peace. Outside of Christ, Christ himself is the very point of division. "Think not that I came to send peace, but a sword"

- Herod was seeking to kill him—because Christ is King and Herod wanted to be king
- The religious host sought to kill him—Christ is the only one in whom sinners are accepted of God—yet the naturally, religious man wants that glory to be his.

BUT IN CHRIST JESUS—CHRIST JESUS, THE PERSON, IS HIMSELF OUR PEACE.

He is the reconciliation--by which God reconciled us to himself. Christ is the Peace which bruises the serpents head of enmity enmity we had against God. He is the Peace destroys the enmity between brethren—Jew or Gentile, male or female, bond or free, rich or poor, educated or uneducated—he has taken away the middle wall of partition and made us one!

Amos 3: 3: Can two walk together except they be agreed?

CHRIST IS OUR "AGREEMENT"—THE TIE THAT BINDS—GOD AND HIS SAINTS ARE ONE IN CHRIST OUR PEACE.

GOOD WILL TOWARD MEN—NOTICE THE DIRECTION OF "GOOD WILL" NOT FROM MAN TOWARD GOD—BUT FROM GOD TOWARD MEN.

John 6: 35 And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst. 36 But I said unto you, That ye also have seen me, and believe not. 37 All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. 38 For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. 39 And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. 40 And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day....44 No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. 45: It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.

OBEDIENCE OF FAITH

Luke 2: 15 And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us *now go* even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us. 16 And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. 17 And when they had seen [it], they

made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child. 18 And all they that heard [it] wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds. 19 But Mary kept all these things, and pondered [them] in her heart.

THEY CAME

- They did not confer with flesh and blood—they were not talking each other into going—they were of one mind and said to one another, “Let us NOW GO AND SEE!—they came with HASTE”.
- They made no excuse—yoke of oxen to try, wife to provide for, father to bury—
- Who will tend to the sheep?—THE SHEPHERD—THE Lord who made himself known unto them.
- God gave his Son, shall he not freely give us all things—seek ye first the kingdom of God—God will take care of the flock of sheep.

Many use "responsibility" to excuse earthly cares—God makes his child responsible when he makes us to know our responsibility is to worship his Son. He provides for us in all lesser responsibilities.

THEY SAW

- *They* saw a babe
- *Zaccheus* saw a man walking with a crowd around him
- *The thief on the cross* saw a man marred beyond recognition
- *But all*--every believer born of the Spirit of God sees the same thing—Luke 2: 28-33

THEY RETURNED

Luke 2: 20 And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.

Note: And the shepherds returned...as it was told them. Just as the Father drew them to Christ—no man can except the Father draw him—so now they were told to return. God **MADE WITNESSES** of them--the returned doing what witnesses do--“glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen,”

The Lord said to Peter and the other fishermen--“COME, I will make you fisher’s of men.” Here it is: come, I will make you shepherds of men, of my sheep, of true sheep

Amen!