

He is Here

Luke 2:1-7 Sunday AM, July 21, 2024

Prelude – Scripture: Luke 2:1-7 (NASB95) Now in those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus, that a census be taken of all the inhabited earth. 2 This was the first census taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. 3 And everyone was on his way to register for the census, each to his own city. 4 Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the city of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David, 5 in order to register along with Mary, who was engaged to him, and was with child. 6 While they were there, the days were completed for her to give birth. 7 And she gave birth to her firstborn son; and she wrapped Him in cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

As we move deeper into this treatise to Theophilus concerning the exact truth of the gospel he had been taught, we've been introduced to God's work through Gabriel's visits predicting two impossible babies. We've seen differing responses from Mary, Zacharias, and Elizabeth, but all lived in the fear of the Lord. This fear resulted not in terror but in praise to God. They lived under God, faithful to God's intent of stewarding the people and parts of creation God had entrusted to them according to His word. And inside this faithful fear of God, God's word fulfilling His promise of a supernatural birth came to pass. Elizabeth gave birth to John! Zacharias' Benedictus, His words of praise to God last week focused not merely on the blessing of John for themselves, but he saw and praised the goodness of God in fulfilling His promise to bring salvation to His people from the house of David. This happening confirmed the words spoken by God's prophets and was in line with His promises to Abraham. When Zacharias can see God's word confirmed again and again through thousands of years, how can he not publicly praise the trustworthiness of God's word and the goodness of God! **He has visited us and accomplished redemption for His people . . . AS HE spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from of old . . . Because of the tender mercy of our God, with which the Sunrise from on high will visit us, 79 TO SHINE UPON THOSE WHO SIT IN DARKNESS AND THE SHADOW OF DEATH, To guide our feet into the way of peace."** John would prepare the way for God's salvation in a special way, but we who have our eyes opened by the Holy Spirit to see God's goodness to provide an undeserved way for us to be reconciled to Him must also publicly proclaim the glory of God. Church, praise the Lord!

*Hymn (Powerpoint): Rejoice

One baby born according to the word of the LORD through Gabriel to accomplish His plan of redemption to show us the glory of God. Today, the next one born, according to God's word. Not just a word for Mary and Joseph, but for all the people of God, even to the place of this birth. Sing amazed at the power of God to bring deliverance in line with age-old prophecies.

*Hymn #141: O Little Town of Bethlehem *Pastoral Prayer: Pastor Jahn Scripture: Isaiah 10:20–11:10

(NASB95) Now in that day the remnant of Israel, and those of the house of Jacob who have escaped, will never again rely on the one who struck them, but will truly rely on the LORD, the Holy One of Israel. 21 A remnant will return, the remnant of Jacob, to the mighty God. 22 For though your people, O Israel, may be like the sand of the sea, Only a remnant within them will return; A destruction is determined, overflowing with righteousness. 23 For a complete destruction, one that is decreed, the Lord GOD of hosts will execute in the midst of the whole land. 24 Therefore thus says the Lord GOD of hosts, "O My people who dwell in Zion, do not fear the Assyrian who strikes you with the rod and lifts up his staff against you, the way Egypt did. 25 "For in a very little while My indignation against you will be spent and My anger will be directed to their destruction." 26 The LORD of hosts will arouse a scourge against him like the slaughter of Midian at the rock of Oreb; and His staff will be over the sea and He will lift it up the way He did in Egypt. 27 So it will be in that day, that his burden will be removed from your shoulders and his yoke from your neck, and the yoke will be broken because of fatness. 28 He has come against Aiath, He has passed through Migron; At Michmash he deposited his baggage. 29 They have gone through the pass, saying, "Geba will be our lodging place." Ramah is terrified, and Gibeah of Saul has fled away. 30 Cry aloud with your voice, O daughter of Gallim! Pay attention, Laishah and wretched Anathoth! 31 Madmenah has fled. The inhabitants of Gebim have sought refuge. 32 Yet today he will halt at Nob; He shakes his fist at the mountain of the daughter of Zion, the hill of Jerusalem. 33 Behold, the Lord, the GOD of hosts, will lop off the boughs with a terrible crash; Those also who are tall in stature will be cut down And those who are lofty will be abased. 34 He will cut down the thickets of the forest with an iron axe, And Lebanon will fall by the Mighty One. 1 Then a shoot will spring from the stem of Jesse, And a branch from his roots will bear fruit. 2 The Spirit of the LORD will rest on Him, The spirit of wisdom and understanding, The spirit of counsel and strength, The spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD. 3 And He will delight in the fear of the LORD, And He will not judge by what His eyes see, Nor make a decision by what His ears hear; 4 But with righteousness He will judge the poor, And decide with fairness for the afflicted of the earth; And He will strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, And with the breath of His lips He will slay the wicked. 5 Also righteousness will be the belt about His loins, And faithfulness the belt about His waist. 6 And the wolf will dwell with the lamb, And the leopard will lie down with the young goat, And the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; And a little boy will lead them. 7 Also the cow and the bear will graze, Their young will lie down together, And the lion will eat straw like the ox. 8 The nursing child will play by the hole of the cobra, And the weaned child will put his hand on the viper's den. 9 They will not hurt or destroy in all My holy mountain, For the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD As the waters cover the sea. 10 Then in that day The nations will resort to the root of Jesse, Who will stand as a signal for the peoples; And His resting place will be glorious.

Offering: *Doxology:

And where does God's miraculous word take place? Right in the middle of struggling world powers. In the middle of conquering and oppression—government and order which includes taxes and a census. Joseph and Mary had claim to a royal heritage, but presently, there was nothing to distinguish them as royalty. They had nothing but the pledge to be married and a job as a carpenter. But they also had something precious and life-giving—trust in God's word! This created more problems for them—how to explain a baby before they were married, but it also provided God's protection and provision and opportunities for them to see the glory of God—for their faith to grow! Isaiah? It speaks of a remnant—those who have escaped. Whom? Assyria—ruthless before Chaldean ruthlessness. And what would those who believe God's word have? Judgment according to God's word because of their disobedience to His word. But then, **"My indignation against you will be spent and My anger will be directed to their destruction."** The Assyrian burden would be removed from their shoulders. God would deliver them from those who seemed unstoppable. But this promise of deliverance was pregnant with deliverance long in the future. **Then a shoot will spring from the stem of Jesse, and a branch from his roots will bear fruit. The Spirit of the LORD will rest on Him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding.** What a powerful passage of hope in God's Word. He truly is the holy One—the One above us in every way. Worship His holiness!

*Hymn #262: Holy, Holy, Holy

You may be seated. So what are your circumstances? Do you look for and tremble at His word right now, where you ARE? We are NOT to have God's vantage point where all is clear and righteous (See bulletin insert and the one from last week). From our vantage point, life seems shrouded in uncertainty, even questions of unrighteousness like we've seen from Habakkuk. Feel the emotion that comes from uncertainty and injustice, but when you do it under God's holiness, you can also see His hand. Look, in the darkness/time of pain, fog, brokenness, judgment, there comes a light. Grow to say with the psalmist, **Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I keep Your word** Ps. 119:67. Therefore, Ps. 119:37-38, **"Turn away my eyes from looking at vanity, and revive me in Your ways. Establish Your word to Your servant as that which produces reverence for You."** Think on the mysterious ways of God's work as Pastor preaches.

*Hymn (Powerpoint): God Moves

Message: "He is Here" Luke 2:1-7 *Hymn #328: Have You Any Room for Jesus? *Prayer