

CHRISTMAS 2018

Message 2

December 25

Words: 6291

INTRO: We began to look at the Christmas story last Sunday and I am going through the Christmas story in a chronological fashion. We saw in the last message the long, 4,000 year wait until the Messiah finally came. Adam lived for almost a thousand years and still no Messiah, then the flood came and then the time of Abraham. We are now 2,000 years after creation and still no Messiah. Then king Saul and David came along and we are now some 3,000 years from creation and still no Messiah. Then the prophets wrote and they too fell silent, about 3,600 years after creation and then God's voice was stilled for 400 years and still no Messiah.

Yet the Jews kept up their temple rituals. And then one year, the lot to burn incense in the temple fell on a priest by name of Zachariah. Zachariah and his wife were elderly by this time and they had no child. But that year, as he did his duties in the temple, the angel Gabriel paid him a visit and he promised that they would now have a child.

Then, some six months later the Lord sent the angel Gabriel with a message to a young woman in Nazareth in Galilee of the Gentiles and he told her that she had found favor with God and would be the bearer of the Messiah. She agreed to this. And we wondered, what did she tell her parents? How did they let her go the long distance to Ein Karem where Elizabeth, the wife of Zachariah, a relative of theirs lived. But she went there. She stayed with her for several months.

But when Elizabeth and Mary met some miraculous things happened and we were in the middle of what is called the Magnificat, or the song of Mary. We find this in Luke 2:46-55. Let me read as far as we got beginning in verse 39:

39 Now Mary arose in those days and went into the hill country with haste, to a city of Judah,

40 and entered the house of Zacharias and greeted Elizabeth.

41 And it happened, when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, that the babe leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.

42 Then she spoke out with a loud voice and said, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb!

43 "But why is this granted to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?

44 "For indeed, as soon as the voice of your greeting sounded in my ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy.

45 "Blessed is she who believed, for there will be a fulfillment of those things which were told her from the Lord."

46 And Mary said: "My soul magnifies the Lord,

47 And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior.

48 For He has regarded the lowly state of His maidservant; For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed.

We saw here how precious to God humility is. God had looked down and His eyes had fixed on a young woman of lowly state, a young woman who had become a willing slave to God in northern Israel, in Nazareth. And when He saw her, He sent the angel Gabriel to her with the message that He had chosen her to be the bearer of the Messiah. And when Mary met Elizabeth Mary broke out in the words of our text this morning, in Luke 1:46-56.

III. THE VISIT TO ELIZABETH Cont'd

So we continue now where we left off in the last message in verse 48. These words were spoken to Elizabeth, Mary's relative. In verse 48 Mary said of the Lord, "For He has regarded the lowly state of His maidservant; For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed." We are considering the humility in the Christmas story. Turn to Isaiah 66 for a moment. Mary had acknowledged herself to be the Lord's maidslave. She had allowed him to pierce her ear, in the words of the OT, signifying that she was His willing slave. She chose her enslavement to Him. And I want to proceed a little further with this thought of humility.

We go to Philippians 2 once more. I mentioned that according to the Online Bible program, *tapainos* means lowly, of low degree, to be brought low with grief, depressed, lowly in spirit, or humble. The second word the word *tapainophrosunee* comes from is phreen, the thinking part of the mind. And in our text, *tapainosis* speaks of a person of low standing.

Now humility is not thinking highly of oneself. Everything about Christmas speaks of humility. We saw this in Philippians 2:5-8. Verse 5 says:

5 Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus,

The word translated 'mind' is a noun. In the original it is a verb and comes from the phreen part of the mind, the thinking part. I would translate it as, "Let this thinking be in you which was also in Christ Jesus." In the Christmas story it is humility of thinking on the part of Christ. We note this humility further in verse 6:

6 who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God,

In His glory He was in the form of God. It is glory beyond glory. But He did not consider it something He could not lay aside. Here is humility in action. Verse 7:

7 but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men.

Now notice the humility here. He was God, but He made Himself of no reputation. Oh how we try to make ourselves of reputation or seek to hang onto our reputation. But He made Himself of no reputation. This is something like queen Elizabeth dressing in the common dress of our people and coming to live on a farm in our community while no one recognizes not her for who she is. But in reality, it is far beyond that. What humility.

But it is more humbling than that. He took on Him the form of a slave. A slave has no rights of His or her own. He just does what His master says. And that is exactly what Jesus did. When He was the Creator of the universe, He came in the likeness of men. hen He was in fact God, He came in

the form of a slave! All of this to serve us, the creature! The Creator slave to the created! Christmas is a story of humility. Verse 8:

8 And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.

I can never get over this. Jesus is in Gethsemene. Judas and the Jewish priests and the Roman soldiers come and they grab His hands and tie Him up and lead Him about like a criminal. When Jesus said, "Whom are you looking for?" They said, "Jesus." He said, "I am He." In Hebrew it would be to say Jehovah. I am. And when He said that, they all fell over backwards. And in their blind, drunken, stupor of sin they did not catch on. They dusted themselves off, tied Him up and led Him away to be judged by man. You talk about humility.

But that is not all. They spit on Him. They mocked Him. They slapped Him in the face. They pulled hair out of His beard. They whipped Him until His back was hanging in ribbons of flesh. They made Him carry His cross. They nailed big square spikes through His hands and feet and they hung Him up and let Him hang so people could go by and mock Him too. He became obedient to the point of death, but not just any death. It was the most despised death man could die, the death on the cross. The humility Christ began before birth, actually before creation! He emptied Himself of His glory before Creation. And then He lived it out in His life and His death.

But we are looking at Jesus birth. His mother is from Nazareth, Galilee of the Gentiles. His step-dad is a carpenter. I was asked about this after the last message. Matthew 13:55 indicates His step-dad a carpenter and Mark 6:33 indicates that Jesus a carpenter. And when He was born, His parents, who had been married prematurely, also frowned upon, had to go to Bethlehem. And because of the census every place to stay was filled up. And He ended up being born in a sheep barn. A barn, where I believe the Passover lambs were born and cared for. Think of this this Christmas day. The Creator of the universe came into this world in a

sheep barn. All of Christmas is about humility. It is the thing that is the hardest for us of all things.

Turn to Isaiah 66 for an interesting passage.

Verse 1 says:

1 Thus says the LORD: "Heaven is My throne, And earth is My footstool. Where is the house that you will build Me? And where is the place of My rest?"

Jehovah God, that is what the capital letter word, LORD means, says, "Where are you going to build a place for Me to live? Everything you build and every place you build is already mine. I made them all. So where shall I dwell? Where will I find a resting place?" Now consider this: God wants a place where He can dwell. He wants a place where He can rest. Now let me ask you, where do you rest the best? Where can you relax the most? Is it not at home? God wants such a resting place.

But man cannot build any place for Him to rest and He tells us why in verse 2:

2 For all those things My hand has made, And all those things exist," Says the LORD.

God wants to rest, but there is no place on earth where He can rest. But there is one place where God can rest. It is most amazing that there is such a place, and just where that place is. It is a place each one of us can make for Him. We find out where this place we can make is in verse 2 which says:

"But on this one will I look: On him who is poor and of a contrite spirit, And who trembles at My word."

When God finds a human being is is poor in spirit, and of a contrite or crushed spirit, one who trembles at His Word, He has found a place where He can relax and rest. Now this deserves a whole message. In the humble person God finds a resting place. A.W. Tozer wrote a book he called, "Man, The Dwelling Place Of God." Well, it is not just any man or every man. It is in the humble man or woman, the

contrite, that God finds a place to rest. May I ask you, are you such a place?

Consider this now, God finds no resting place in the proud. And when God looked down and observed all the Israelite women He found a resting place in this young virgin who did not doubt the angel when the angel said she would bear the Messiah. He found this humble lady in a humble country in a humble town in a humble home. So Mary says in verse 48, *For He has regarded the lowly state of His maidservant. For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed.*

And so Mary's relative, Elizabeth said, "Blessed is she who believed..." And now Mary has just been informed of something that would be hard to believe. She will bear the Messiah and she has no husband, but the angel told her how it would happen, and she believed it to such an extent that she said all generations would call her blessed from that time onward. Little did Mary know that a sword would pierce through her own soul because of this great privilege. That is how it is with privileges. The Jews are God's chosen people, but with that privilege came great sorrow because of failure to live up to the privilege. Many a Jew, no doubt, has wished he was not part of the chosen people. Many a Jew has hidden his or her identity, even among our own people so that we do not know who among us is Jewish and who is not.

Now note she says that the Lord has regarded the lowly state of His maidslave. As I mentioned, word translated lowly is *tapianosis*. Consider Philipians 2 once more. We begin in verse 3. Paul said:

3 *Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself.*

Note the words 'lowliness of mind'. It is *tapainophrosunee*. The root word is the same as the one Mary used when she said the Lord had looked upon her 'lowly' state. The word *tapainophrosunee* is lowliness of thinking. Humble thinking. Verse 7 then says of Jesus:

7 *but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men.*

Now the word 'bondservant' in this verse is the masculine of the word Mary used as 'maidservant'. The root of both is to be, not a servant but a slave. Verse 8:

8 *And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.*

Now the word 'humbled' here is *tapeinow*. It means to humble. It comes from the same root as the words we considered already. The Lord looked upon Mary's humble state. We can never truly go anywhere with the Lord apart from true humility. When God sees a humble person, He sits up to take notice. It is there He can safely rest. It is there He can safely do great things.

Mary goes on like this in verse 49:

49 *For He who is mighty (that is the LORD) has done great things for me, And holy is His name.*

As was the custom among the Jews, Mary does not pronounce the name of the One who is holy. She calls Him, "He who is mighty." The word she chose for 'mighty' is *dunatos*. He is dynamic. He is dynamite. Or He is able. He has the ability. He is *dunatos*. He is able to cause a young woman to bear a child, even if she has not known a man. Such was the faith of this young woman.

Now notice that she chooses and points out one major attribute of God, the attribute of holiness, and that His name is holy. Though many names for God are given in Scripture, I think it is without doubt that she is referring to the name above all names, the name we know as Jehovah or Jaweh. When God asked Moses to go deliver the children of Israel, Moses said, "When they ask me who this God is that sent me, what shall I say?" And God said, "You tell them 'I am who I am' sent you." That is the name, "I AM". We have spoken of that here numerous times.

Then look further at Mary's great insight, an insight that so many struggle with today. The Calvinist and the secular

predeterminists do not understand what Mary understood. We go to verse 50. Mary said:

50 And His mercy is on those who fear Him From generation to generation.

One of the most misunderstood passages in the Church, I believe, is Romans 9. You might turn there. Mary, in this passage sheds great light on a few verses in Romans 9. Paul's subject is Israel, and why they are in the state they are. And in a passage that is easily misconstrued as teaching that God does arbitrarily whatever He has planned and predetermined to happen and man has no choice about it. Look at verses 15 and 18:

15 For He says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whomever I will have compassion."

Verse 18:

18 Therefore He has mercy on whom He wills, and whom He wills He hardens.

This whole passage, has the ring of predeterminism. God predetermined everything. He made some to be wicked, and they can't help it because God chose not to have mercy on them, He hardened them simply because that is what He wanted or willed, and who is man to argue with God? If you are interested in that subject check our messages on the doctrines of election and predestination on sermonaudio.com. No conclusion could be further from the truth, in my estimation, than that God has predetermined all that will happen and you and I can't do anything about it. Most were chosen to go to hell and they have no say in the matter, so says the very common teaching of many Christians. God has mercy on whom He wills and on whom He doesn't will to have mercy He doesn't.

Is it true that God has mercy on whom He wills and He hardens whomever He wills? Yes. It is very true. But is it an arbitrary decision, or are there factors that decide on whom He wills to have mercy, and on whom He wills to harden? Well, it is not arbitrary. There are factors

involved. So we ask, on whom does He will to have mercy? So listen now to Mary's clear and insightful answer, *...His mercy is on those who fear Him From generation to generation.* That teaching runs throughout Scripture. God opens like a flower to those who are humble and those who fear Him. You find this throughout Scripture. He finds a resting place in those on whom He wills to have mercy.

And whom does He choose to harden? The proud! Pharaoh's pride reached beyond the clouds. Someone has said that the same sun that hardens the clay softens the ice. The same circumstances that hardened Pharaoh could have softened him. He was an ungodly, wicked, and hard man. So God raised him up that He might show His power and to declare His name throughout all the earth, which is exactly what we have in Romans 9.

So why did God raise up Pharaoh? Here was a man with pride so high, he would not humble himself no matter what happened. If Pharaoh had humbled himself God would have had mercy on him. This theme runs right through the Bible. And why did God choose Pharaoh to demonstrate these great truths? Because He knew just how proud Pharaoh was!

Look now at how Mary further addresses this. Verse 51:

51 He has shown strength with His arm; He has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.

Whom does God choose to harden? The proud! Whom does He scatter in the imagination of their hearts or their minds? The proud! Now, if humility is lowliness of thinking, is pride then high thinking of oneself? Well, in the original language we get a different picture. The word for *proud* here is *huperphanos*. It does not speak of high thinking of oneself, though that is there, but it speaks of the outcome of high thinking of oneself. It comes from the word *huper*, above, and *phaino*, to appear. When one has high thinking of oneself one makes oneself to 'appear' to be above others.

Now the word 'appear' does not speak of reality. It speaks of what something looks like when in fact it may not be what it appears to be. Oh pride is a deadly thing. It is the

plague of us all. And the amazing thing about humility is this: We have to humble ourselves. God will not humble us. Others cannot humble us. We must do it. That is why it is we who make this place where God can rest.

But there are at least two major problems. The first is we have to recognize our pride before we will ever consider humbling ourselves. This is extremely difficult. Second, when we find we are proud, we must now humble ourselves. Humility is a choice. And our hearts are so deceptive that what we think is humility has all kinds of false faces. As I prepared these messages a theme that kept recurring was that Christmas is about humility.

Now our verse says God has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. I have spoken to you of various aspects of the mind, which the Bible calls the heart. Now notice the word 'imagination' in this verse. What word is it? It is the word 'dianoia'. Is that familiar to you. Do you remember that Matthew 22:37 Jesus said, "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind." The word translated 'mind' in this verse is the same one translated 'imagination' in Luke 1:51. Where does God scatter them? In all their 'thinking through'. The ponderings of their hearts gets scattered. So they become, what we call 'scatter brained.'

In 1 Peter 5:5 the Apostle Peter says God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble. Mary then goes on in verse 52:

52 He has put down the mighty from their thrones, And exalted the lowly.

I think that verses 52-54 are prophetic though they are written in the past tense. One of the mighty who was sitting on the throne right then was Herod the great. Turn to Matthew 2. He was a wildly wicked man. He was indescribably evil. He is the one who will have all the young boys around Bethlehem killed in order to try to kill the Christ. We begin in verse 1:

1 Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of
Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to
Jerusalem,

2 saying, "Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For
we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship
Him."

3 When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all
Jerusalem with him.

4 And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of
the people together, he inquired of them where the Christ
was to be born.

5 So they said to him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it is
written by the prophet:

6 'But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, Are not the least
among the rulers of Judah; For out of you shall come a
Ruler Who will shepherd My people Israel.'"

7 Then Herod, when he had secretly called the wise men,
determined from them what time the star appeared.

8 And he sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search
carefully for the young Child, and when you have found
Him, bring back word to me, that I may come and worship
Him also."

9 When they heard the king, they departed; and behold, the star
which they had seen in the East went before them, till it
came and stood over where the young Child was.

10 When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceedingly great
joy.

11 And when they had come into the house, they saw the young
Child with Mary His mother, and fell down and worshiped
Him. And when they had opened their treasures, they
presented gifts to Him: gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

Now it is here that God stepped in. The Magi were now ready to
make the long journey home, and no doubt they would have
gone through Jerusalem and stopped and informed Herod

where the new king was. But something happened and we go to verse 12:

12 *Then, being divinely warned in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed for their own country another way.*

Then something else happened and we find this in verses 13-15:

13 *Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, "Arise, take the young Child and His mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I bring you word; for Herod will seek the young Child to destroy Him."*

14 *When he arose, he took the young Child and His mother by night and departed for Egypt,*

15 *and was there until the death of Herod, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, "Out of Egypt I called My Son."*

But back in Israel something else now happened and we go to verses 16-18.

16 *Then Herod, when he saw that he was deceived by the wise men, was exceedingly angry; and he sent forth and put to death all the male children who were in Bethlehem and in all its districts, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had determined from the wise men.*

17 *Then was fulfilled what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying:*

18 *"A voice was heard in Ramah, Lamentation, weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, Refusing to be comforted, Because they are no more."*

19 *But when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt,*

I have read in years past the account of Herod's death for you. He died a horrible death. He knew he was so bad nobody would mourn when he died so he captured some of the prominent Jews and commanded that they be put to death when he died. He did that so there would be mourning in

Israel, even though it was not because of his own death. However, after he died, that command was not carried out. Once again he was scattered in the imaginations of his heart.

So Mary said in her song:

51 *He has shown strength with His arm; He has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.*

Not only had God done that in the past, He did it right here in the Christmas story. Herod spoke ever so nicely to the Magi, requesting that they tell him where the new king was so that he might come and worship Him too. But the imaginations of his heart were to kill this new king. But God scattered him in the imaginations of his thoughts.

Further Mary said:

53 *He has filled the hungry with good things, And the rich He has sent away empty.*

Again, I think at least to a degree this is prophetic of what would happen through the life of Christ. We could think here of a time 8 days after the birth of Christ. Joseph and Mary took Him to Jerusalem for circumcision and to name Him. And there were at least a few hungry people in Israel, that is hungry for spiritual truth. We go to Luke 2. We begin in verse 22:

22 *Now when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were completed, they brought Him to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord*

23 *(as it is written in the law of the Lord, "Every male who opens the womb shall be called holy to the LORD"),*

24 *and to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the law of the Lord, "A pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons."*

25 *And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon, and this man was just and devout, waiting for the Consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him.*

26 *And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he
would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ.*

27 *So he came by the Spirit into the temple. And when the
parents brought in the Child Jesus, to do for Him
according to the custom of the law,*

28 *he took Him up in his arms and blessed God and said:*

29 *"Lord, now You are letting Your servant depart in peace,
According to Your word;*

30 *For my eyes have seen Your salvation*

31 *Which You have prepared before the face of all peoples,*

32 *A light to bring revelation to the Gentiles, And the glory
of Your people Israel."*

There were some hungry people left in Israel, but very few. Such a man was Simeon. Now let me remind you what kind of time he lived in. It was a time not unlike our own. Most of those who were called God's people were far from God. The first promise of the Messiah was now around 4,000 years old, and things looked very grim and yet Simeon believed. Here was a man hungry for spiritual truth. So verse 25 says:

25 *And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was
Simeon, and this man was just and devout, waiting for the
Consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him.*

We go to verse 33:

33 *And Joseph and His mother marveled at those things which
were spoken of Him.*

Have you ever wondered, did Mary and Joseph ever wonder if their child would truly be the Christ? Have you ever wondered what people said about them when Mary was expecting before they were married? What consolation must Simeon's words have been to them! Verse 34:

34 *Then Simeon blessed them, and said to Mary His mother,
"Behold, this Child is destined for the fall and rising of*

many in Israel, and for a sign which will be spoken against

35 *"(yes, a sword will pierce through your own soul also), that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed."*

Very few have great privileges in God's kingdom, if any, that don't have a sword pierce their own soul. But this price brings great benefits to others. Verse 36:

36 *Now there was one, Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, and had lived with a husband seven years from her virginity;*

37 *and this woman was a widow of about eighty-four years, who did not depart from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day.*

38 *And coming in that instant she gave thanks to the Lord, and spoke of Him to all those who looked for redemption in Jerusalem.*

39 *So when they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own city, Nazareth.*

40 *And the Child grew and became strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him.*

But Simeon and Anna were not the only hungry ones who would be filled. Thirty years later when Jesus gave His first extended message He said this:

3 *"Blessed are the poor in spirit, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

4 *Blessed are those who mourn, For they shall be comforted.*

5 *Blessed are the meek, For they shall inherit the earth.*

6 *Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, For they shall be filled.*

It all begins with humility. We have said that humility is a theme in Christmas. And when we become poor in spirit, it is because we have realized how sinful we are. And when we

realize that, we begin to mourn. It seems to me many professing Christians have never reached this point. And if that is so, nor are they truly Christians. And mourning leads to meekness; true meekness. You will have forgotten but when we went through the Sermon On The Mount we said meekness is not weakness, but controlled power. This speaks of the humble.

But then comes the fourth beatitude, "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled." Mary said He has filled the hungry with good things. He still does that today. As a matter of fact only after one has become poor in spirit and one has mourned his own sinfulness and one has repented and believed in Christ can one truly be filled with good things.

So we go to verses 54-55:

54 *He has helped His servant Israel, In remembrance of His mercy,*

55 *As He spoke to our fathers, To Abraham and to his seed forever."*

Now the word translated 'servant' here is not the word for slave. It is *pais* and can be used of a child, boy or girl. Or of a servant as an attendant. And by the news Gabriel brought to Mary and as she spoke to Elizabeth now she said, "God has called Israel back to mind. He has remembered Israel. And He did it in His mercy." God had compassion on Israel, now at the long last. Verse 56:

56 *And Mary remained with her about three months, and returned to her house.*

Now one wonders how Mary explained her state to her parents? Little doubt she would have told them about her visit to Elizabeth and all that took place. And it would appear that they accepted her story.

Now let me add something here. We go back to Matthew 1. We'll read verses 18-25:

- 18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit.
- 19 Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly.
- 20 But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit.
- 21 "And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins."
- 22 So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying:
- 23 "Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel," which is translated, "God with us."
- 24 Then Joseph, being aroused from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took to him his wife,
- 25 and did not know her till she had brought forth her firstborn Son. And he called His name JESUS.

Joseph has just found out that Mary is expecting. We do not know how long before Jesus birth this was, but it was at least some time before. And we are not told what happened but let me do some speculating. I expect that Mary's parents sat down with Mary and talked things over. By this time the parents have believed Mary's story. You can imagine what any parent in this predicament would think. But somehow Mary has been able to bring them to believe that she had not lived in sin.

And so they sat down and talked over what to do. You see, Joseph, Mary's betrothed must be told. But then the angel of the Lord had already appeared to Joseph and told him what had happened. So no doubt Joseph will have no difficulty believing Mary or her parents when they told

him. And so together they decided what to do. So they decided that they would get married as soon as possible.

Now how do you suppose Joseph and Mary's parents explained this to the people? Again, we do not know. But look now at Matthew 1:24. It says:

24 Then Joseph, being aroused from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took to him his wife,

So they married while Mary was in that condition.

CONCL: So we conclude. Four thousand years ago God had given the first promise of a Messiah. And when our story takes place, the time had finally arrived. It is amazing, in a sense, that there were any left who still believed God's promise. We are in such a state today with regard to Christ's return. Yet even today there is a minority that believes Christ is returning soon.

We have considered God's promise to Zachariah, His promise to Mary, and Mary's visit to Elizabeth. And in it all, the theme of humility rides through it all. Christ laid aside His glory before God created the universe. Then when He was to be conceived God chose a couple in Galilee and in Nazareth, that small place in this despised area. And the man who was to become the husband of the woman who would bear the Messiah was a carpenter.

And after conception, when the Messiah was to be born He was born, not in Jerusalem, but in Bethlehem. And there He was born, I believe, in a sheep barn because there was no room for them elsewhere. It is a most amazing account. And now, 2,000 years later, all over the world His birth is remembered whether people want to remember it or not.

And if the Lord should give us time in 2019, may we learn what true humility is.

III. THE BIRTH OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

Well, in the chronology of events we come now to the birth of John the Baptist. **8

57 Now Elizabeth's full time came for her to be delivered, and she brought forth a son.

58 When her neighbors and relatives heard how the Lord had shown great mercy to her, they rejoiced with her.

59 So it was, on the eighth day, that they came to circumcise the child; and they would have called him by the name of his father, Zacharias.

60 His mother answered and said, "No; he shall be called John."

61 But they said to her, "There is no one among your relatives who is called by this name."

62 So they made signs to his father—what he would have him called.

63 And he asked for a writing tablet, and wrote, saying, "His name is John." So they all marveled.

64 Immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue loosed, and he spoke, praising God.

65 Then fear came on all who dwelt around them; and all these sayings were discussed throughout all the hill country of Judea.

66 And all those who heard them kept them in their hearts, saying, "What kind of child will this be?" And the hand of the Lord was with him.

67 Now his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Spirit, and prophesied, saying:

68 "Blessed is the Lord God of Israel, For He has visited and redeemed His people,

69 And has raised up a horn of salvation for us In the house of His servant David,

70 As He spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets, Who have been
since the world began,
71 That we should be saved from our enemies And from the hand
of all who hate us,
72 To perform the mercy promised to our fathers And to remember
His holy covenant,
73 The oath which He swore to our father Abraham:
74 To grant us that we, Being delivered from the hand of our
enemies, Might serve Him without fear,
75 In holiness and righteousness before Him all the days of our
life.
76 "And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Highest;
For you will go before the face of the Lord to prepare His
ways,
77 To give knowledge of salvation to His people By the
remission of their sins,
78 Through the tender mercy of our God, With which the
Dayspring from on high has visited us;
79 To give light to those who sit in darkness and the shadow of
death, To guide our feet into the way of peace."
80 So the child grew and became strong in spirit, and was in
the deserts till the day of his manifestation to Israel.

IV. THE BIRTH OF JESUS

Matthew 1:1-25:

A. His Genealogy

- 1 ¶ The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of
David, the Son of Abraham:
- 2 Abraham begot Isaac, Isaac begot Jacob, and Jacob begot Judah
and his brothers.
- 3 Judah begot Perez and Zerah by Tamar, Perez begot Hezron, and
Hezron begot Ram.

4 Ram begot Amminadab, Amminadab begot Nahshon, and Nahshon
begot Salmon.

5 Salmon begot Boaz by Rahab, Boaz begot Obed by Ruth, Obed
begot Jesse,

6 and Jesse begot David the king. David the king begot Solomon
by her who had been the wife of Uriah.

7 Solomon begot Rehoboam, Rehoboam begot Abijah, and Abijah
begot Asa.

8 Asa begot Jehoshaphat, Jehoshaphat begot Joram, and Joram
begot Uzziah.

9 Uzziah begot Jotham, Jotham begot Ahaz, and Ahaz begot
Hezekiah.

10 Hezekiah begot Manasseh, Manasseh begot Amon, and Amon begot
Josiah.

11 Josiah begot Jeconiah and his brothers about the time they
were carried away to Babylon.

12 And after they were brought to Babylon, Jeconiah begot
Shealtiel, and Shealtiel begot Zerubbabel.

13 Zerubbabel begot Abiud, Abiud begot Eliakim, and Eliakim
begot Azor.

14 Azor begot Zadok, Zadok begot Achim, and Achim begot Eliud.

15 Eliud begot Eleazar, Eleazar begot Matthan, and Matthan
begot Jacob.

16 And Jacob begot Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born
Jesus who is called Christ.

17 So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen
generations, from David until the captivity in Babylon
are fourteen generations, and from the captivity in
Babylon until the Christ are fourteen generations.

B. The Record Of His Birth

1. The angel's announcement to Joseph

18 ¶ Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His
mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they

came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit.

19 Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly.

20 But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit.

21 "And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins."

22 So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying:

23 "Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel," which is translated, "God with us."

24 Then Joseph, being aroused from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took to him his wife,

25 and did not know her till she had brought forth her firstborn Son. And he called His name JESUS.

2. Why He Was Born In Bethlehem

Luke 2:1-

1 ¶ And it came to pass in those days that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered.

2 This census first took place while Quirinius was governing Syria.

3 So all went to be registered, everyone to his own city.

4 Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David,

5 to be registered with Mary, his betrothed wife, who was with
child.

3. His birth

6 So it was, that while they were there, the days were
completed for her to be delivered.

7 And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in
swaddling cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because
there was no room for them in the inn.

4. Announcement to the Shepherds

8 ¶ Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in
the fields, keeping watch over their flock by
night.

9 And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the
glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were
greatly afraid.

10 Then the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for behold,
I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be
to all people.

11 "For there is born to you this day in the city of David a
Savior, who is Christ the Lord.

12 "And this will be the sign to you: You will find a Babe
wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger."

5. Visit of the angelic host

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, goodwill
toward men!"

15 So it was, when the angels had gone away from them into
heaven, that the shepherds said to one another,
"Let us now go to Bethlehem and see this thing that
has come to pass, which the Lord has made known to
us."

6. The shepherd's visit to Bethlehem

16 And they came with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the Babe lying in a manger.

17 Now when they had seen Him, they made widely known the saying which was told them concerning this Child.

18 And all those who heard it marveled at those things which were told them by the shepherds.

19 But Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart.

20 Then the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told them.

7. Jesus' first visit to Jerusalem

a. The Jewish rite of circumcision

21 ¶ And when eight days were completed for the circumcision of the Child, His name was called JESUS, the name given by the angel before He was conceived in the womb.

22 Now when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were completed, they brought Him to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord

23 (as it is written in the law of the Lord, "Every male who opens the womb shall be called holy to the LORD"),

24 and to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the law of the Lord, "A pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons."

b. Simeon

25 ¶ And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon, and this man was just and devout, waiting for the Consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him.

26 And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ.

27 So he came by the Spirit into the temple. And when the
parents brought in the Child Jesus, to do for
Him according to the custom of the law,
28 he took Him up in his arms and blessed God and said:
29 "Lord, now You are letting Your servant depart in peace,
According to Your word;
30 For my eyes have seen Your salvation
31 Which You have prepared before the face of all peoples,
32 A light to bring revelation to the Gentiles, And the glory
of Your people Israel."
33 And Joseph and His mother marveled at those things which
were spoken of Him.
34 Then Simeon blessed them, and said to Mary His mother,
"Behold, this Child is destined for the fall
and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign
which will be spoken against
35 "(yes, a sword will pierce through your own soul also), that
the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed."

c. Anna

36 Now there was one, Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of
Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a
great age, and had lived with a husband seven
years from her virginity;
37 and this woman was a widow of about eighty-four years, who
did not depart from the temple, but served God
with fastings and prayers night and day.
38 And coming in that instant she gave thanks to the Lord, and
spoke of Him to all those who looked for
redemption in Jerusalem.

C. Visit Of The Magi

Matthew 2:1-22

1 ¶ Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days
of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East
came to Jerusalem,

2 saying, "Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For
we have seen His star in the East and have come to
worship Him."

3 When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all
Jerusalem with him.

4 And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of
the people together, he inquired of them where the
Christ was to be born.

5 So they said to him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it is
written by the prophet:

6 'But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, Are not the least
among the rulers of Judah; For out of you shall
come a Ruler Who will shepherd My people Israel.'"

7 Then Herod, when he had secretly called the wise men,
determined from them what time the star appeared.

8 And he sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search
carefully for the young Child, and when you have
found Him, bring back word to me, that I may come
and worship Him also."

9 ¶ When they heard the king, they departed; and behold, the
star which they had seen in the East went before
them, till it came and stood over where the young
Child was.

10 When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceedingly great
joy.

11 And when they had come into the house, they saw the young
Child with Mary His mother, and fell down and
worshiped Him. And when they had opened their
treasures, they presented gifts to Him: gold,
frankincense, and myrrh.

12 Then, being divinely warned in a dream that they should not
return to Herod, they departed for their own
country another way.

13 ¶ Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord
appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, "Arise,
take the young Child and His mother, flee to
Egypt, and stay there until I bring you word; for
Herod will seek the young Child to destroy Him."

14 When he arose, he took the young Child and His mother by
night and departed for Egypt,

15 and was there until the death of Herod, that it might be
fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the
prophet, saying, "Out of Egypt I called My Son."

16 ¶ Then Herod, when he saw that he was deceived by the wise
men, was exceedingly angry; and he sent forth and
put to death all the male children who were in
Bethlehem and in all its districts, from two years
old and under, according to the time which he had
determined from the wise men.

17 Then was fulfilled what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet,
saying:

18 "A voice was heard in Ramah, Lamentation, weeping, and great
mourning, Rachel weeping for her children,
Refusing to be comforted, Because they are no
more."

19 ¶ But when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord
appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt,

20 saying, "Arise, take the young Child and His mother, and go
to the land of Israel, for those who sought the
young Child's life are dead."

21 Then he arose, took the young Child and His mother, and came
into the land of Israel.

22 But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judea
instead of his father Herod, he was afraid to go

there. And being warned by God in a dream, he turned aside into the region of Galilee.

23 And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, "He shall be called a Nazarene."

C. Return To Nazareth

Luke 2:

39 So when they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own city, Nazareth.

40 And the Child grew and became strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him.

41 ¶ His parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover.

42 And when He was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem according to the custom of the feast.

43 When they had finished the days, as they returned, the Boy Jesus lingered behind in Jerusalem. And Joseph and His mother did not know it;

44 but supposing Him to have been in the company, they went a day's journey, and sought Him among their relatives and acquaintances.

45 So when they did not find Him, they returned to Jerusalem, seeking Him.

46 Now so it was that after three days they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both listening to them and asking them questions.

47 And all who heard Him were astonished at His understanding and answers.

48 So when they saw Him, they were amazed; and His mother said to Him, "Son, why have You done this to us? Look, Your father and I have sought You anxiously."

49 And He said to them, "Why did you seek Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?"

50 But they did not understand the statement which He spoke to them.

51 Then He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them, but His mother kept all these things in her heart.

52 And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.