THE ANNOUNCEMENT TO THE SHEPHERDS

Luke 2:11 “Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord.”

Review

The angel Gabriel has told Zechariah his wife will have a son who will prepare people for the Lord. The angel Gabriel has told Mary that she is to be the virgin mother of the Son of God. An angel has told Joseph in a dream to take Mary home as his wife and that the child within her was conceived by the Holy Spirit and Joseph has done what the angel told him to do.

Getting Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem

Matthew 2:4-6 When he had called together all the people’s chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Messiah was to be born. “In Bethlehem in Judea,” they replied, “for this is what the prophet has written: ‘But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you will come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.’”

Luke 2:1-3 In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) And everyone went to their own town to register.

The decree was probably issued in Rome about two years earlier, then sent to Damascus in Syria where it was translated into Greek, then sent to Jerusalem where it was translated into Aramaic, first century Hebrew, then sent to the individual cities and towns in King Herod’s realm. He just HAPPENED to get it organized and published at the exact time to get Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem in order for Jesus to be born there.

Luke 2:4&5 So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child.

The journey probably took at least three days.

The Baby Born

Luke 2:6&7 While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.

“While they were there.” Jesus was not necessarily born the night they arrived, but either that night or probably fairly soon after.

“Wrapped him in cloths.” This was the normal procedure at that time. The same Greek word is used in the Greek Septuagint of Ezekiel 16:4

“Manger” is a feeding trough for animals.

“Guest room” translates a Greek word that means “lodging place,” either an inn or a guest room in a house. The word is used both ways in the New Testament. Neither was available in Bethlehem.

The Announcement to the Shepherds

Luke 2:8&9 And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified.

The idea that the shepherds would not be out in the fields in December is answered by Edersheim: “There is no adequate reason for questioning the historical accuracy of this date.” The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah, Book 1, Chapter 6, footnote 3.

Luke 2:10-12 But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.”

“Bring good news” is the Greek word often translated “preach the Gospel.”

“Cause great joy for all the people.” Jesus was hated by the chief priests and rulers of the people, but the Triumphal Entry shows the attitude of the average Jewish person. Luke 24:20 “The chief priests and our rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him;”

Luke 19:47&48 Every day Jesus was teaching at the temple. But the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the leaders among the people were trying to kill him. But they could not find any way to do it, because the people hung on his words.

Matthew 27:18 (ESV) For he knew that it was out of envy that they had delivered him up.

“The town of David” is Bethlehem.

“A savior has been born to you.” Matthew 1:21 “She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.”

“He is the Messiah.” The word means “anointed one,” “christos” in Greek. Jesus is

His name, Christ and Lord are titles.

“The Lord.” The Greek word *“kurios”* means one having authority, such as a king or owner. It was also the word used in the Greek Septuagint to translate the personal name for God *“Yahweh.”* Jesus is God incarnate who has absolute authority over everything.

The Angelic Choir

Luke 2:13&14 Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.”

The Shepherds Response

Luke 2:15 When the angels had left them and gone into heaven,, the shepherds said to one another, “Let’s go to Bethlehem an see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.”

Luke 2:16-18 So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them.

Luke 2:19 But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart.

Luke 2:20 The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

Things to Remember

God is in control. He allows things to happen that He disapproves of, but when He wants something to happen, like Jesus being born in Bethlehem, He makes it happen, even planning out things years in advance.

Jesus was born exactly where the Scripture said He would be born.

The first to be told of His birth were a group of shepherds.

The birth of the Messiah would “cause great joy for all the people,” except the chief priests and rulers of the people who envied and hated Him.

The full name with titles is the Lord Jesus Christ. He is Lord, God incarnate with absolute authority, the Messiah, the promised Anointed One, and Jesus, who came to save us from our sins.

The Shepherds’ visit continues to affirm to Joseph and especially Mary that what God had told them was real.