

CTS Sunday School Materials 2020-21

December 13, 2020

Bible story: Luke 2: 1-18 the Birth of Jesus (Luke is the only Gospel to describe Jesus' birth)

Bible verse: And the angel said to them, "Be not afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which will come to all the people; for to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. **Luke 2: 10 –11.**

Lesson:

Today's Bible passage is the familiar story of the birth of Jesus. The story begins with Caesar Augustus issuing a command that everyone had to go to their ancestral hometown to be registered and taxes collected. Joseph was a member of (King) David's family and, therefore needed to register in Bethlehem. Joseph and Mary had to walk, or sometimes ride a donkey, for about 90 miles from where they lived in Nazareth to the city of Bethlehem. Joseph and Mary were poor and unable to find a place to stay other than in a shelter with some animals. While in Bethlehem, Mary gave birth to Jesus and placed him in a manger (trough used to hold food for animals).

Shepherds were in fields caring for sheep in the area where Jesus was born. The shepherds were scared when an angel appeared, surrounded by a shining light. The angel told them not to be afraid because there was great news! Christ the Lord had been born that day in the City of David (Bethlehem). The shepherds would be able to recognize Jesus because he was wrapped in swaddling cloths (strips of cloth) and lying in a manger. The shepherds went into Bethlehem, found where Joseph, Mary and Jesus were. When they left, they told others what the angel had said.

Discussion:

Shepherds were poor and not considered important. They were the very first to hear about Jesus' birth and to see him! For centuries, the prophets and the scriptures had been telling people that the Messiah would come and save them. In **Isaiah 9: 1-6** the Bible tells that the Messiah will be a baby when he comes. In the Bible we often see the use of "shepherd" to describe how God and Jesus care for people.

- Pretend you are a shepherd. It is night and you are out in the fields taking care of your sheep. It is just a regular day, nothing special. Suddenly you see a very bright light and an angel in the sky. What do you think an angel might look like? The angel tells you that Christ the Lord, the Messiah, has been born that day and is in a stable in Bethlehem. Bethlehem is not a big, important city. Staying in a stable and using a manger as a baby bed are things that seem very strange for the Son of God. Do you believe what the angel

tells you or do you think this cannot be true? You go to a stable to see what is going on and find a new baby wearing humble clothing, sleeping in a manger, and animals are in the same building. What would you think?

- Pretend you are in Bethlehem and you hear shepherds talking about seeing an angel, the angel spoke with them, and seeing the Messiah sleeping in a manger. Do you believe them or think they are making it up? Why?
- Make a poster to illustrate the story: a) the shepherds seeing the angel or b) the shepherds visiting Joseph, Mary, and Jesus.