

Luke 2:1-20 – The Birth Of Jesus

True Christianity is all about Jesus Christ. Human religions are all about doing good, and avoiding evil – to earn favour from God. That is not Christianity. Christianity is all about Jesus – crucified and risen for our sins. Without him, there is no Christianity. He is not only our teacher and example. He is the source of our life. He is the atoning sacrifice and the risen Lord, and the final judge. He is our fountain, shepherd, Saviour, strength and friend. Is this your religion? In this passage, we learn about his coming into the world.

1. He came to Bethlehem

We read that Mary and Joseph travelled to Bethlehem (v4), to be taxed. Why? Because Israel was ruled by the Romans, and their emperor Caesar (v1). But, hundreds of years before, God had told a prophet that the Christ would be born in that very town (Micah 5:2, Matthew 2:1-6). Bethlehem was the city of David, the great king of Israel (v4). God had said that the Saviour would be a son of David (Jeremiah 33:15-16). God does all that he has announced, and we can trust him. Salvation is planned, from before the world began. But how did it happen? Caesar was not a believer, and his desire was not to serve God but to raise taxes. Yet through him, God achieved his purposes. God rules over kings and causes them to do his will (Proverbs 21:1, Daniel 4:35, Isaiah 46:10). They are his servants, even if they do not know it. They cannot stop God's plans. We should not fear any men, but only God.

2. He came as a humble servant

The time came, and Jesus was born, born of a virgin (v6). Though he is God, he also gained a true human body and a true human soul. As a true human being, he could represent us, and pay the price for our sins. The condition he was born into was very humble and lowly (v7). There was no place to stay at the inn, so he was born in a stable and placed in the animals' feeding trough. There was no great celebration, no kings and prime ministers to welcome him. He came unnoticed. He came to be ignored, hated and rejected by men. He came to be a humble servant, and do his Father's will. He came to be low – to serve us for our salvation, even by going to the death of the cross to be punished for our evil deeds. Everyone who would follow Jesus must also humble themselves. We must humble ourselves and repent. We must also take up the cross to follow him. There can be no easy glory now that sin has come into the world. The path back is a path of humility, and of faith in Christ alone.

3. He came to be worshipped

There were shepherds in the fields, v8, doing their ordinary work. An angel appeared to them. They were afraid because they remembered they were sinners. But the angel had good news for sinners so said, “do not be afraid”. The good news was of a Saviour – of the Messiah, the Lord, who had been born. The best thing the angel said was that the good news was *for them*. God had passed by the rich and powerful, and visited these humble servants. That is God's normal way (1 Corinthians 1:26); he shows his own power and the weakness of man. Then, a great choir of angels appeared to praise God. The gospel gives us peace with God and leads us to glorify him. The shepherds believed and went. When they saw Jesus, they did not disbelieve when they saw his lowness, but they believed and went away praising God. Have you been to Jesus, and left praising? Have you believed? He is God the Saviour, Christ the Lord!