

December 24, 2022  
Christmas Eve  
St. Timothy Lutheran Church – Huber Heights, OH  
Pastor Joel Sutton

Luke 2:1-20

A SAVIOR IS BORN FOR YOU!

In the ✠ Name of Jesus. Amen.

First time parents and grandparents make a big deal about the pregnancy and birth of a baby into their family. Everything is a big deal from the ultrasounds to the nursery. Preparations must be made. Everything is new: fresh paint and wallpaper, curtains, clothes, and especially a new bassinet or crib. Nothing but the best. In the old days we used to mail out birth announcements but today news of the birth is made Facebook official with the obligatory social media post.

How much greater should the preparations for the Savior of the world have been. You would have thought that the birth of Jesus – the King of Kings and Lord of Lords – would have been a big deal too. Preparations should have been made. He is greater than ending world hunger and climate change. He is the One who came to defeat sin, death, and the devil, winning forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation for all who believe. Roll out the red carpet! Strike up the band!

In those days a newborn king would have been delivered in a palace surrounded by mid-wives and servants that would have dried his little body with the finest linens. They would have immediately clothed Him in the most expensive robe of splendor and royalty. Then, they would have placed him in a newly commissioned bassinet or crib that no other child had yet laid. Once the rich and powerful were made aware of the birth, then the news was spread out to the whole nation.

Well, not so much for baby Jesus. There were no advance preparations. Just a cold journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem for Joseph and Mary. Okay, likely no other human had ever laid in Jesus' crib – His not so royally commissioned goat feeder – but that is where the similarities end: no servants or midwives, no fine linens to dry His little body or royal garments to clothe the newborn King. No trumpets and fanfare. Just the bleat (maa) of the sheep and goats, and the belling moos from the cattle.

Jesus birth was not first announced to the rich and powerful but to lowly stinking shepherds out in the field. It was by special revelation that they knew who was born and where they should go to find the Child. St Luke records that:

***“... the angel said to them, ‘Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. <sup>11</sup> For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.’”*** (Luke 2:9–11)

But due to the census, the town would be packed with travelers. How do they know which baby? Should they worship the first baby they find? What if other babies had been born? How would they know if they had the right baby? Luke goes on to explain that the angel said:

***“... this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.”*** (Luke 2:12)

Do not look for any ceremony of grandeur. No fancy crib or basinet. No royal garments. Nope. Look for a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger. Your babies were clothed in finer gowns. There was not anything new or fancy about Jesus’ birthing clothes. He was wrapped in strips of common fabric woven on a Hebrew loom by humble people.

Jesus was in the beginning with God and all things were made through Him. (cf: John 1:1-3) Yet even though He was rich, in humility He took on poverty and swaddling cloths. St Paul writes:

***“For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich.”*** (2 Corinthians 8:9)

It would not be long until Jesus outgrew His swaddling cloths and grew into a position in His stepfather’s trade. (cf: Mark 6:3) But, even at the early age of twelve, He knew that He needed to be about His true Father’s business. (cf: Luke 2:49) There was work to be done to accomplish sinful mankind’s salvation. Even though tonight we follow shepherds to Bethlehem to behold the newborn King in swaddling cloths, our focus is not on the babe in the manger but on the Savior on the cross.

Like lowly shepherds, we follow the Good Shepherd, the same Jesus who was born of the virgin Mary. Immanuel, God with us, who outgrew those swaddling cloths so He could carry the burden of your sin to the cross of Calvary. He suffered unspeakable things and was put to death so that you would never to die. (cf: John 11:25-26)

Once they took His battered and bruised lifeless body off the cross, He was wrapped in cloths and was lain where no one had laid before. St Matthew tells us that man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who had become a disciple of Jesus:

***“... took [Jesus’ dead] body and wrapped it in a clean linen shroud<sup>60</sup> and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had cut in the rock.”*** (Matthew 27:59–60)

Just as His swaddling cloths did not hold Him in the manger, after three days in the tomb, Jesus threw off His burial cloths and proclaimed victory over death and the grave. Salvation was accomplished for you. The Son of God had atoned and completely paid the wages of sin for the whole world.

Back to that night outside of Bethlehem, the angel said:

***“... I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people.”*** (Luke 2:10)

Jesus was not born as another ruthless Caesar to rule over shepherds, the people of Judea, and the Roman Empire alone. No.

***"<sup>11</sup> For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord."*** (Luke 2:11)

Born for you and for all mankind. A Savior is born for all people to rescue you from sin, death, and the power of the devil. You can join with the angel and the heavenly host:

***"... praising God and saying, <sup>14</sup> 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!'"*** (Luke 2:13–14)

Christ Jesus has won peace for you, reconciling you with the Father in heaven, so that when your earthly life comes to an end, you will pass through death into eternal life. (cf: John 5:24)

In the ✠ Name of Jesus. Amen.