

Luke 1-2: the Savior is Born

Member Guide- 12/13/09



Small Group Study – Each week our small groups team works alongside Pastor J.D. to create a small group study which corresponds to his sermon that week. The study examines a related passage of scripture to the text he preaches through with the goal of challenging small groups to grow both in their confidence in studying the bible and in their application of the truths brought out in the sermon.

Context: In Luke 1-2, the name “David” is mentioned 5 times (1:32, 69, 2:4, 4, 11). In Luke 3, David’s line is prominent in Jesus’ genealogy. David’s name had long been associated with the expected king and savior known as the Messiah (Hebrew for “anointed one,” which also was David’s title). Here are some of the key texts from the Old Testament that link David with the future Messiah:

Genesis 49:10 The scepter will not depart from Judah- which is the line that David and Jesus come from.
2 Samuel 7:5-16 God promises that David’s kingdom will continue forever.
Psalm 2, 110 Songs of David describe another King of Zion.
Isaiah 9:7 **The Prince of Peace will reign on David’s throne in righteousness.**
Jeremiah 23:5-6 God will raise up “to David” a King who will reign wisely and save Judah.
Ezekiel 34:23-24 God will bring David to shepherd the people after bad shepherds have neglected them.

The use of David’s name in association with the birth of this child called to mind the greatest hopes and expectations that the oppressed Israelites had. The Jews in the 1st century were under the rule of a) governments that taxed them heavily and b) Jewish religious leaders who were excluding many from worship. A return to David’s reign harkened back to Israel’s golden age: freedom, joyful corporate worship, no fear of enemies, and just leadership. On the level of calling John Wall or Harrison Barnes the next Michael Jordan, claiming Jesus to be the next David would have been laughed at heartily had there not been real substance behind the claim.

Luke 1-2 is brimming with other Old Testament references, particularly in the songs of Mary and Zechariah. Most notably, Luke makes reference (In chaps. 1-2 and elsewhere) to Malachi 4, Zechariah 9, and Isaiah 42 and 59. These texts vividly describe the OT expectation that the Messiah would establish peace, righteousness, justice, and healing (physical, social, and spiritual) for Israel and all nations.

Theme: The tone of Mary and Zechariah’s songs is one of hope for people who describe themselves as “living in darkness” and in a “humble state.” These are praises lifted up from a desperate people. The angels’ announcement provides real hope that their circumstances will change. Jesus’ miraculous birth was proof that when no one else seemed concerned about their plight, God acted on their behalf. Mary and Zechariah expect that Jesus will redeem, save, forgive sins, establish righteousness, guide to peace, and raise up the humble.

As we have seen in our series on chapter 18, Luke gives particular attention to the gospel being an advantage to the poor and the humble. Luke 19:10 states the purpose of Jesus coming: “the Son of Man came to seek and save the lost.” Jesus eats with the sinners, tax-collectors, and prostitutes while instructing others to invite only those who can’t pay you back to your banquets (the lame, the crippled, the poor, the blind).

In contrast to the people’s humble state, the name for God that is repeated throughout Luke 1-2 is “Most High.” In 2:14, the angels saw fit to announce the birth of this baby by declaring “Glory to God in the Highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests.” Of all the times and circumstances that the Most High God could have chosen to incarnate Himself, to be born of an unwed teenager in 1st century Bethlehem, lying in an animal’s food trough, to the poorest parents of an oppressed nation is indeed an unimaginable contrast. Nevertheless, this is the wonder that Luke and the 1st Century Christians had about the incarnation of Jesus Christ. The great Salvation that this King would bring about was nothing short of bringing hope and light from *within* the darkest circumstances that man can endure.

Aim: To be transformed by the hope that the Righteous King’s incarnation brings.

Prayer: -Pray that great hope would be spread to those in most need during the Christmas season.
-Pray that our church would model Jesus' teaching and example to reach out and be present among the poor and humble.
-Read Isaiah 42:1-9 and pray that we would resemble this servant in our personal ministry.
-Give praise to Jesus for the incredible miracle of the incarnation. Use Philippians 2:4-10.

Study Questions:

What part of this weekend's sermon had the most impact on you?

[1:26-33] Why is it important that Jesus' parents be in the line of David?

What expectation did the Jewish people have concerning the Messiah who would rule on David's throne?

In what ways was Jesus' ministry different from Jewish expectations?

[1:46-55] What did Mary realize about God through this experience?

[1:67-79] What does Zechariah prophesy that Jesus will do?

Describe the darkness that Zechariah's people are living in?

[2:1-14] From what you know of Caesar Augustus, compare Jesus as king with Caesar.

Why will Jesus birth mean peace for people on earth?

How does Jesus' life and ministry fulfill the expectations of the OT and the songs of Mary and Zechariah?

What does the Incarnation teach us about God's character?

What is meant by the phrase "incarnational ministry"?

Where and how can the people of Summit bring the light of Jesus into RDU?

When has God brought unexpected hope into your life?