

**JESUS CHANGES EVERYTHING****Jesus Saves**

Luke 2:4-20

**THE POINT:**  
*Jesus was born  
to bring us into  
a relationship  
with God.***THE BIBLE MEETS LIFE**

The story of Christmas—the birth of Jesus—is a familiar one to so many. Familiarity may cause many people to lose sight of what God accomplished with that event and the reason Jesus came. Unfortunately many people leave Jesus in the manger, and fail to look beyond His birth to discover that God came to earth to bring us to Himself.

► **What would you love to add to your Christmas celebrations?**

**INTRO**

Hawaiians who contracted Hansen's disease were sent to the island of Molokai to be quarantined. But one Catholic priest named Damien still saw beauty on this island because he saw the beauty in the forgotten people. Father Damien made Molokai his home for sixteen years, choosing to live among the lepers, preach the gospel, and serve them. In fact, he lived so closely with these people that he eventually contracted the dreaded disease himself. He continued to minister and love them, but now he said, "We lepers." God did the same with us: He came to earth to live among us and say, "We humans." Jesus became one of us. That is what Christmas is about. A God who loved us enough to put on our flesh and die our death so we might live forever with Him.

**LUKE 2:4-7**

When Caesar Augustus called for a census of his empire, though Mary and Joseph were living in Nazareth, they had to travel 90 miles to Joseph's hometown, Bethlehem—the same town David was from. This may not be a terribly difficult trip for us today, but for them, it was tough, to say the least:

- Mary was pregnant and they weren't married yet!
- Because they were engaged, Mary was required to make the trip.
- Bethlehem was packed and there was no place to stay.

If we were to plan the arrival of the Messiah, we'd likely arrange things far differently. Our plans often go wrong, but God's plans are always perfect! This is why it's essential that we learn to trust Him and not ourselves.

► **When have you experienced God's perfect timing?**

**LUKE 2:8-14**

Shepherds were once prominent in Israel.

- They possessed a variety of skills to care for and protect their flocks.
- They watched over many sheep, which represented substantial wealth.
- Prominent Jewish people such as Abraham, Moses, and David were shepherds.

However, in Jesus' day, shepherds were considered among the lowest of the low. Their social standing was so low they weren't even allowed to testify in court—they were considered uneducated and immoral. We'd think that when God chose to reveal the coming of the Messiah, He'd have angels announce the news to priests and kings. However, God did something surprising. He sent a multitude of angels to the lowly shepherds announcing the Savior is born! Today, let's remember, no matter where we are on the social ladder, peace is available to all. Accept it! Share it!

► **What do these verses teach us about the purpose of Jesus' birth?**

**LUKE 2:15-20**

The shepherds' response was to immediately hurry to Bethlehem to see the newborn baby. After they'd made their visit, they left exhilarated and couldn't contain their excitement. They told anyone who would listen about the baby. Mary, on the other hand, treasured these truths in her heart and pondered how these events fit into the chain of what she'd already experienced (Luke 1:26-45). God has uniquely created every person. We go through different life seasons and have unique experiences. No matter who we are, there's a time for silent meditation and a time for joyfully shouting. One way or the other, this year let's make sure to celebrate Jesus' birth.

► **What steps can we take to glorify God during the Christmas season?**



# LIVE IT OUT

## ▶ CHRIST

When the shepherds heard that the Savior was in Bethlehem, they went straight to Bethlehem to see Him. What they found caused such excitement, they couldn't help but share with the world. Today, Jesus is among us—He can be found in His Word, in prayer, and in your church.

- ▶ **What would God have you do this week to follow the straight-to-Bethlehem approach of the shepherds?**
  
- ▶ **How will you, like the shepherds, tell the message of Jesus?**

## ▶ COMMUNITY

There are times to privately ponder the beauties of Jesus. Then there are times when God calls us to pursue Him, celebrate Him, and talk about Him. During this season, how will you pursue Jesus as a matter of fellowship with other believers?

## ▶ CULTURE

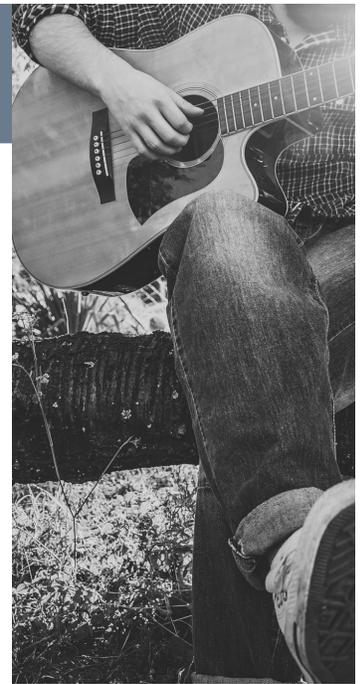
Christmas is a national holiday that's been celebrated as a federal holiday in America since 1870, and around the world for 2000 years.

**How does our culture celebrate Christmas?**

**What do you think they are celebrating?**

--	--

**How should we, as followers of Jesus called to be lights in the darkness, celebrate Christmas?**



## BIBLE READING PLAN



**DAY 1**  
LUKE 1:1-25

**DAY 2**  
LUKE 1:26-38

**DAY 3**  
LUKE 1:39-56

**DAY 4**  
LUKE 1:57-80

**DAY 5**  
LUKE 2:1-20

**DAY 6**  
LUKE 2:21-35

**DAY 7**  
LUKE 2:36-52