

## Luke Lesson 6 Handout

### Matthew 1:18-19 (AMP)

**<sup>18</sup>Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place under these circumstances: When His mother Mary had been promised in marriage to Joseph, before they came together, she was found to be pregnant [through the power] of the Holy Spirit.**

**<sup>19</sup>And her [promised] husband Joseph, being a just and upright man and not willing to expose her publicly and to shame and disgrace her, decided to repudiate and dismiss (divorce) her quietly and secretly.**

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**John Ortberg:**

**Joseph did not eat unclean food. He didn't mix with the wrong kinds of people. He didn't keep his carpentry shop open on the Sabbath to make a few extra drachmas. Everybody knew this about him. Nobody invited Joseph over to have ham sandwiches with tax collectors and prostitutes. He was what people wanted to be. Like a businessman in our day wants to be a CEO, or like an athlete wants to be an all-star, an Israelite wanted to be a *righteous*. Becoming one meant you were admired and looked up to. Then you were somebody. And that was Joseph.**

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**Matthew 1:20** But as he was thinking this over, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, Joseph, descendant of David, do not be afraid to take Mary [as] your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of (from, out of) the Holy Spirit.

**John Ortberg:**

**That's what happens here. The angel says, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife." Why would Joseph be afraid to wed Mary? Of course Joseph would be afraid of offending God and violating the Torah, but it's not just that. Joseph would be afraid of losing his reputation. He would be afraid of what everybody would think about him. Joseph knew about his own doubts when Mary told him about the angel. There's no way people in his town were going to believe an angel came to a poor couple in an obscure village and caused the conception of a child in the body of a virgin teenage girl. He knew that if he married her, his friends would never accept his account of what happened. He would not be invited to their homes, he would not be given their business, and he would never again be admired and respected as a lover of the Torah. If he committed himself to this baby—to the one who would be known as Jesus—he would do so at enormous sacrifice. His whole reputation, the work of a lifetime, would be trashed.**

**Matt: 1:21 She will bear a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus [the Greek form of the Hebrew Joshua, which means Savior], for He will save His people from their sins [that is, prevent them from failing and missing the true end and scope of life, which is God].**

**<sup>22</sup>All this took place that it might be fulfilled which the Lord had spoken through the prophet,**

**<sup>23</sup>Behold, the virgin shall become pregnant and give birth to a Son, and they shall call His name Emmanuel—which, when translated, means, God with us.**

**<sup>24</sup>Then Joseph, being aroused from his sleep, did as the angel of the Lord had commanded him: he took [her to his side as] his wife.**

**<sup>25</sup>But he had no union with her as her husband until she had borne her firstborn Son; and he called His name Jesus.**

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### **Luke 2:1 (AMP)**

**<sup>1</sup>IN THOSE days it occurred that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that the whole Roman empire should be registered.**

**<sup>2</sup>This was the first enrollment, and it was made when Quirinius was governor of Syria.**

**<sup>3</sup>And all the people were going to be registered, each to his own city or town.**

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### **Micah 5:2 (AMP)**

**<sup>2</sup>But you, Bethlehem Ephratah, you are little to be among the clans of Judah; [yet] out of you shall One come forth for Me Who is to be Ruler in Israel, Whose goings forth have been from of old, from ancient days (eternity).**

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**Luke 2:4 And Joseph also went up from Galilee from the town of Nazareth to Judea, to the town of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David,**

**<sup>5</sup>To be enrolled with Mary, his espoused (married) wife, who was about to become a mother.**

**Mark Driscoll:**

**In that day it was common for stables to be in caves, and we don't know for certain, but shortly after Jesus was born, the locals in Bethlehem began to flock toward one spot where it was reported that Jesus had been born. In the days when Christianity was legalized under the Roman Emperor Constantine, his mother oversaw the construction of a church at that site so that today there is still a church that meets and has been meeting on that site for over a millennium and a half. This is a very amazing thing—that Christians have been worshiping there since about 300 or 400 A.D. The church was at one point damaged. A larger church was built over it. Multiple denominations meet in that building. And what is curious is that at one point the Persians came and they destroyed all the Christian churches in that region, but when they got to this particular church that was built over the alleged birthplace of Jesus, they saw markings and drawings out front of the three wise men and they thought, "Oh, it must be a pagan temple. We won't destroy it." And so it still remains to this day. And it is a cave and it is under the church, and that is, by all accounts, in as much as we are able to ascertain, likely the place that Jesus was born.**

**Luke 2:6<sup>6</sup>And while they were there, the time came for her delivery,**

**<sup>7</sup>And she gave birth to her Son, her Firstborn; and she wrapped Him in swaddling clothes and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room or place for them in the inn.**

**<sup>8</sup>And in that vicinity there were shepherds living [out under the open sky] in the field, watching [in shifts] over their flock by night.**

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**Psalm 23 (AMP)**

**<sup>1</sup>A Psalm of David. THE LORD is my Shepherd [to feed, guide, and shield me], I shall not lack.**

**<sup>2</sup>He makes me lie down in [fresh, tender] green pastures; He leads me beside the still and restful waters.**

**<sup>3</sup>He refreshes and restores my life (my self); He leads me in the paths of righteousness [uprightness and right standing with Him—not for my earning it, but] for His name’s sake.**

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**Psalm 46:10 (ESV)**

**<sup>10</sup>Be still, and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth**

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**Luke 2:9** And behold, an angel of the Lord stood by them, and the glory of the Lord flashed and shone all about them, and they were terribly frightened.

**<sup>10</sup>But the angel said to them, Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy which will come to all the people.**

**<sup>11</sup>For to you is born this day in the town of David a Savior, Who is Christ (the Messiah) the Lord!**

**<sup>12</sup>And this will be a sign for you [by which you will recognize Him]: you will find [after searching] a Baby wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger.**

**<sup>13</sup>Then suddenly there appeared with the angel an army of the troops of heaven (a heavenly knighthood), praising God and saying,**

**<sup>14</sup>Glory to God in the highest [heaven], and on earth peace among men with whom He is well pleased [men of goodwill, of His favor].**

**<sup>15</sup>When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing (saying) that has come to pass, which the Lord has made known to us.**

**<sup>16</sup>So they went with haste and [by searching] found Mary and Joseph, and the Baby lying in a manger.**

**<sup>17</sup>And when they saw it, they made known what had been told them concerning this Child,**

**<sup>18</sup>And all who heard it were astounded and marveled at what the shepherds told them.**

**<sup>19</sup>But Mary was keeping within herself all these things (sayings), weighing and pondering them in her heart.**

**<sup>20</sup>And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, just as it had been told them.**

**<sup>21</sup>And at the end of eight days, when [the Baby] was to be circumcised, He was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before He was conceived in the womb.**

**This next section was written by *Bryan Wilkerson - senior pastor of Grace Chapel in Lexington, Massachusetts.***

**I remember what happened once. It was my turn to deliver the sheep to the temple. You see, these sheep we watch, they're for the temple. They use them for offering sacrifices. That's why we have to take such good care of them, make sure they stay healthy, no cuts or bruises. It**

**was my turn to deliver the sheep, and I don't like going to town too much, but I was kind of looking forward to going**

**to the temple. I hadn't been there since I was a boy. I kind of wanted to see what was inside there. But one of the priests, he met me outside the temple. He didn't even really look at me and didn't say a word to me, just counted up the sheep, checked them all over, made sure they were okay, and then gave me a pouch with some money and turned to go. I said, "Pardon me, sir. Would it be all right if I accompanied those sheep into the temple?" Then he turned and looked at me. I'll never forget. Up and down, my clothes and my hands, this look of disgust on his face. He didn't say anything, just shook his head and walked away. See, I wasn't good enough. I wasn't acceptable to him. My animals could go into the temple, but I wasn't welcome.**

**"Hey, what about David?" I said to him. "He was a shepherd, you know." That's what we always say when people make fun of us or insult us. "Remember David. He was a shepherd." Of course, he didn't stay a shepherd. He became king, the man after God's own heart.**

**Maybe they're right. Maybe I am unclean. Maybe shepherds have no business being in God's house. Aw, who cares. I mean, this is the life for me, out here in the open. Me and the stars, me and the boys, me and the sheep. I like it.**

**My favorite time is in the evening. We find a little hollow among the hills. We get the sheep all settled down for the night. Then we build a fire and roast some game. Then we pass the wineskin around, and the boys start telling stories. Shepherds, they know how to tell a story. Then the stars come out. We stretch out on our backs and just watch them. Just so much to see up there. Sometimes they seem so close it feels like you could grab one and put it in your sack. Then one of the boys, he takes out a flute and he starts to play it, and that music just echoes down the hills.**

**But townsfolk, they don't know nothing about that kind of life. You know, I feel closer to God out here in the open than I ever do down in Jerusalem. I mean, who needs a temple when you got this? I'd like to get a few of those priests and have them out here for a few days. They'd stop worrying about how dirty their hands were and what everyone was wearing. Maybe they'd look up in the sky and think about God. You can't help but think about God out here**

**You know what Isaiah says? He says God numbers the stars and calls each one by name. Think about that. God knows how many stars there are, and he's got a name for every one of them. That kind of makes me wonder. If God could care that much about all those stars, could God care about us like that? Could it be that God knows my name? I always wondered about that kind of stuff, especially since that night, that amazing night a couple of months ago...**

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**Eventually, out on the edge of town we found a little stall. It was kind of a cave cut into the rock, straw on the ground, and some animals off in the shadows. Sure enough, there was a man and a woman and a little baby**

**wrapped up in cloths. They had laid him in a feed trough because they had no bed for him. I just stopped and wondered. Was this the right place? God's Messiah born in a place like this? Where was everybody? Where were the angels and the priests?**

**We told the couple our story, and it sounded kind of crazy as I was telling it, but they believed it, almost as if they took comfort in our story. And then the father, he invited us to come on in and see the child for ourselves. He told us the child's name. He said, "His name is Jesus, Jeshua, the one who saves." That's what the angel had said: "a Savior who is Messiah God."**

**Now, I don't know much about babies. All I know is he looked like an ordinary child to me. But kneeling down next to that manger, I felt closer to God than I've ever felt before, even out here under the stars. You see, when I'm out here, I know God is out there somewhere. But by the manger it was like God was near, like God was with us, like God was in that child.**

**We didn't stay long. We figured that couple needed some time to themselves, and we needed to get these sheep out of town and back up to the hills. But on our way out of town we tried to tell everybody all the stuff we had seen and heard. They were all pretty amazed about it, but I don't think any of them went to see for themselves. Like I said, people, they don't think too highly of shepherds.**

**Walking back up into the hills we were singing and talking and carrying on. One of the guys said, "I bet those priests in the temple were never visited by angels." I said, "Yeah, if they were, they wouldn't let the angels in 'cause they wasn't dressed properly." Man, we laughed. That was some wonderful night.**

**Like I said, that was a couple of months ago. The census is over. Everybody's gone home. We're chasing these sheep around again, and it's like everything is back the way it was, but not exactly, at least not with me. What happened that night makes me wonder. Like, why when that baby was born we were the first ones to know about it, except his parents, of course? God sent angels to us, a bunch of shepherds, to announce that Messiah had come. It seems like maybe God doesn't care what you're wearing or if you smell kind of funny, if you're willing to listen and believe.**

**There's something else, too, something the angels said. "Unto you is born a Savior." Unto you. I know he meant it for everybody, for all of Israel, but somehow it seemed as though he meant it for me, as if he could see that I needed a Savior. Sometimes I feel like that. Sometimes I feel like a lost an ornery one, like I need someone to watch over me, someone to save me from the evil all around me and even inside of me, someone to show me how to live and where to go.**

**I wonder. David said that the Lord was his Shepherd. God, would you be my shepherd? Would you save me? And would you lead me? If you do, I'll follow you. I will.**

**Like I said, David, he wrote all kinds of songs. One of them I used to sing when I was a kid. I really loved it. As I got older, I got to wonder if it was really true. Now I know it is.**

**O Lord, you have searched me, and you know me.**

**You know when I sit and when I rise.**

**You perceive my thoughts from afar.**

**You discern my going out and my lying down.**

**You are familiar with all my ways.**

**Before a word is on my tongue you know it completely, O God.**

**You hem me in behind and before.**

**Your hand is always upon me.**

**Such knowledge is too wonderful for me,**

**Too lofty to attain.**

**For you created me in the inmost place.**

**You knit me together in my mother's womb.**

**I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made.**

**Your works are wonderful, God.**

**I know that full well.**

**My frame was not hidden from you**

**When I was formed in the secret place.**

**All the days ordained for me were written in your book  
before one of them came to be.**

**How precious to me are your thoughts, O God.**

**How vast is the sum of them.**

**Were I to count them,**

**They would outnumber the grains of sand.**

**They would outnumber even the stars in the sky [I bet].**

**And that's why I will never get tired of looking at the night  
sky, because every time I do, when I look up into the sky**

**and think about God, I'll know that he's up there in heaven thinking about me. And I'll always remember that night when God, who made the stars, came down to visit me.**

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**Church sits over the site of a cave where tradition holds that Jesus was born in.**

