

Sermon Brief, Important Cross References and Quotes, Helpful Links, Discussion Questions, Fill in the Blank Listening Aid, "How Well was I Listening Questions"

August 1, 2021

Luke 2:1-21: "Yes, but how?"

Sermon Brief:

1. I want us to look at Luke 2.
2. This is part of Luke's introduction to his gospel.
3. So far, Luke's told us how he's writing, why he's writing and what he's writing about.
4. Basically, he wants to prove to us Jesus is the One the whole Bible has been getting us ready and that Jesus is the One who is going to change the world at every level.
5. Now the question is, how? How is God going to do that through Jesus?
6. You might say, chapter 1 is Luke's thesis. This is what I am saying about Jesus. Chapter 2 and following are his explanation.
7. **Luke begins in verses 1-7 by describing the circumstances surrounding Jesus' birth.** This is our first glimpse of how God's going to accomplish salvation through Jesus and it's pretty dark. Luke doesn't hold back. He begins with an uncaring, powerful, international leader who is claiming the very thing chapter 1 claimed about Jesus about himself. Then, Luke shows him using his power to exploit and take advantage of God's people.
8. Yet ultimately, why is this happening?
9. God is orchestrating events to accomplish His purposes. First He is making sure Jesus is born where He is supposed to be born. And second so that it will be clear he is born in exile and shame.
10. So quick recap: How is God going to do all this great world changing stuff through Jesus? First let's look at the historical circumstances surrounding Jesus' birth. Because this gives you a glimpse as to how. You've got an arrogant leader exploiting God's people but it only results in Old Testament promises being fulfilled and the king of the world being shamefully treated by the people who should have celebrated him. That's a pretty good start to understanding what's going to happen in the rest of this gospel.
11. But Luke doesn't end there. **He moves on and describes this amazing angelic announcement which gives us another glimpse into how God's accomplishing what He said He would accomplish in chapter 1.**
12. First step Caesar. Second step shepherds.
13. God reveals Himself to ordinary common men. They experience a transforming sight of God's glory and are given special revelation that affirms Jesus is the One the whole Bible is getting us ready for and the very thing we might have thought meant He wasn't becomes the sign that proves He really is.
14. And then what happens?
15. They go out and become missionaries basically.
16. And you know what, you've got to do something with that.
17. **Luke concludes this story in verses 18-20 with several responses to what God's revealed He's doing through Jesus.**
18. The first is good but not quite good enough. The crowds are amazed. But Luke wants you to move beyond interest. Mary and the shepherds show us how we should respond.

19. Mary treasures up these things and ponders all these things in her heart. In other words she meditates on the significance of what God is doing through Jesus and thinks hard about the implications for her life. And the shepherds worship.
20. How about you?
21. Jesus is the One the whole Bible is getting us ready for because Jesus is the one who is going to change the world at every level. And yet, look at how God's doing this. He's using wicked rulers doing wicked ruler things to accomplish His plan. Jesus is born in suffering and shame and yet that's good news, because it's part of God's plan for Jesus providing salvation and accomplishing the Messiah and being exalted as Lord. And how do we know that? Because God's spoken to very ordinary men who were eyewitnesses of what happened and then went out and proclaimed the significance.
22. What are you going to do with that?
23. Be amazed. But don't stop there. Think about it. Think about the implications for your life. And worship.
24. The salvation God is providing through Jesus is so big it might seem impossible. Especially when we look at the circumstances. But don't just look at the circumstances. Listen to the revelation. Everything happened just the way God said it would, and everything will happen just the way God planned. You can count on it. Believe it.

Important Cross References and Quotes:

1. "This message was carved in stone, on monuments, in inscriptions, around the known world: 'Good news! We have an emperor! Justice, peace, security and prosperity are ours forever. The Son of God has become the King of the world.'"
2. "All the cities unanimously adopt the birthday of the divine Caesar as the new beginning of the year...the birthday of the god Augustus has been for the world the beginning of good news concerning him...who being sent to us and our descendants as Savior has put an end to all things and has set all things in order, and where as having become God manifest, Caesar has fulfilled the hopes of earlier times."
3. Micah 5:1-5
4. "Shepherds were outcasts...We tend to romanticize the shepherds, especially since there are so many good shepherds in the Bible, but they did not enjoy a good reputation in Jesus' day. They were unable to keep the ceremonial law...and so they were treated as unclean. They were also regarded as liars and thieves, which is why their testimony was not even admissible in a court of law. Shepherds were despised. With the exception of lepers, they were the lowest class of men in Israel."

Helpful Links:

1. I'll keep linking to these Luke [lectures](#)
2. The History of Rome Podcasts focusing on Augustus Caesar, [1](#), [2](#), [3](#), (you get the idea...there are a few more episodes after this)
3. [The Head of Augustus](#)

Discussion Questions:

1. Read Luke 2:1-21.
2. What stands out to you from this text?
3. What is Luke doing in verses 1-7?
4. What do we learn about Caesar? What do we learn about God? What do we learn about Jesus?
5. What happens in verses 8-17? What is surprising about this text?
6. What do the angels say about Jesus and what is the significance of that? How does what they say about Jesus connect to what people were saying about Caesar? How does seeing that comparison/contrast help you understand what is happening in this passage?
7. What are the different responses that Luke describes in verses 18-21?
8. How does this passage help us understand how God is accomplishing salvation through Jesus?
9. What comfort can we find from this passage?
10. Why do you think we aren't more amazed by what God's doing through Jesus?
11. How do you think can grow or be changed as a result of what God is teaching in these verses?

PowerPoint Presentation [Link](#)
With Fill in the Blanks [Link](#)

Fill in the Blank Listening Aid:

I. Introduction

- A. I want us to look at Luke 2: _____.
- B. Luke has told us _____ he's writing, _____ he's writing, and _____ he is writing about.
- C. Luke's thesis is: Jesus is the One the whole Bible is getting us ready for because Jesus is the One who is going to _____ the world at every level.
- D. Now the question is _____? _____ is He going to do that?
 1. Chapter 1, _____.
 2. Chapter 2, _____.

II. In verses 1-7, Luke begins with the _____ surrounding Jesus' birth.

- A. As he describes the circumstances, he begins with an uncaring, powerful, _____ leader.

1. "In those days, a decree went out from _____
_____.

- a) Gaius _____ was his given name.
- b) He was the _____ Roman emperor.
- c) He was the _____ son of Julius Caesar.
- d) After finally defeating Antony and Lepides, he takes upon himself the title, _____ which means worthy of honor, majestic, or exalted one.
- e) As the emperor of Rome he accomplishes some amazing things.
- f) And also has a propaganda machine that is promoting his fame throughout the empire, using religious language.
- g) There even was a kind of _____ they were preaching about him.

B. And Luke shows him using his power to _____ and take
_____ of God's people.

C. And yet ultimately, why is all this happening? God is _____ events to accomplish His _____.

- 1. Jesus is _____ where He is supposed to be born.
- 2. And Jesus is born in such a way that it's clear He is being born into _____ and _____.

D. So how is God accomplishing salvation?

- 1. You've got an arrogant leader exploiting God's people which only results in Old Testament promises being fulfilled and the king of the world being shamefully treated by the very people who should have been celebrating Him.
- 2. That's a start to understanding how.

III. But Luke doesn't end there. Verses _____ - _____. He moves on and describes this amazing angelic _____.

- A. First step Caesar. Second step _____.
- B. What happens? They see the _____ of _____.
- C. The angel speaks and explains the _____ of what is happening with Jesus. In other words, they get divine _____.
- D. What does the angel say?
 - 1. Fear not for behold I bring you _____.
 - 2. You don't have to be _____ anymore.
 - 3. Why?
 - 4. Everything you were hoping Jesus would be is _____.
 - 5. Unto you is born this day in the city of David a _____, who is _____, the _____.
 - 6. And how do we know this?
 - 7. The angel says that the very thing we thought was a symbol of Jesus' _____ is actually now a _____ that He is exactly who the angel was saying He was.
- E. Then what next?
 - 1. We get _____ in verse 13.
 - 2. The shepherds act in response to this revelation. And they become _____ basically.

IV. And you know what, here's the thing. You've got to do something with that. It's time for some _____. Luke concludes this story in verses 18-20 with several _____ to what God's revealed He's doing through Jesus.

- A. The first is _____ but not quite _____ enough.
 - 1. All who heard it _____ at what the shepherds had told them.
- B. That's a start, but you have to go further. What does God want? Luke gives us a couple other responses. Look at _____. And look at the _____.

1. Mary _____ all these things and she ponders all these things in her _____.
2. And the shepherds _____ God and _____ for all they had heard and seen as it had been told them. In other words, they _____.

V. Conclusion

- A. How about you?
- B. Jesus is the One the whole Bible has been getting us ready for because Jesus is the One who is going to change the world at every level. He is the ultimate _____ to the fundamental _____ of the world.
- C. And yet look at how God's doing this. He's using wicked rulers to accomplish His plan. Jesus is born in _____ and _____ and yet that's good news because it's part of God's plan for Jesus providing _____, accomplishing the work of _____ and being exalted as _____.
- D. And how do we know that?
- E. Because God's spoken to very ordinary men who were _____ of what happened and then went out and proclaimed the _____.
- F. So what are you going to do with that?
- G. First of all, be _____.
- H. But don't stop there. _____ about it. And think about the _____ for your life.
- I. And go to God in worship.
- J. Do you understand what you have as a Christian? You have hope! A real hope of salvation. And, I know it is sometimes hard to hope in your hope because you hear all this and it seems impossible. But it must have seemed impossible to Mary as well. And yet, you know what? It all happened just like God said it was going to happen. You can count on it. _____ it!

How Well Was I Listening Questions

That's not a great name for this section. But, I thought you could use these questions for your children. I also realized that it might be helpful for you and not just for your children. So, here are some questions you should be able to answer after listening to the message. (If you are using this with your children, please recognize that obviously not all these questions will be suitable for every age. You might have to come up with your own that will more fit their level of understanding. I tried to include a little of both. But if you can answer these questions, then you definitely will be able to do that as well.)

1. What passage in Luke did we study today?
2. We have described Luke 1 and 2 as what in regards to Luke's gospel? In other words, what is Luke doing in these chapters?
3. What is the big thing Luke wants us to know about Jesus in chapter 1?
4. In chapter 2, Luke is giving us a glimpse into how God's accomplishing salvation through Jesus and he begins with the circumstances surrounding Jesus' birth. He starts by talking about someone named Caesar.
5. What was this Caesar's given name? Who was he the grand nephew of? What is something you learned about him in the message? What were some of the surprising ways people described Caesar?
6. Why did Caesar conduct this census?
7. But God was using Caesar! What did God use Caesar's census to accomplish that needed to happen if Jesus was going to be the Promised Messiah? Can you remember the Old Testament prophecy this fulfilled?
8. What is the way Bethlehem is described in this passage? Why is that significant?
9. Who did the angels appear to? Why was that surprising?
10. What did the angel say about Jesus? And what did he say about the swaddling cloths and the manger? Why is it surprising that was a sign Jesus was the Messiah?
11. What do the angels then say about what Jesus is going to accomplish?
12. How does this passage help us get an idea of how God is saving through Jesus?
13. What are the different ways people respond to this announcement about Jesus?
14. Have you ever been amazed by what the Bible says about Jesus? Why or why not?
15. If Jesus is the ultimate solution to the problems of the world, what difference should that make in the way you think and live your life?