

Luke 2:1

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[0 : 00] Good to be here this morning. I was listening today to an observation made by Judge Roy Moore. Y'all remember who Roy Moore is?

He said, we have failed to teach Americans right from wrong. They don't even know the difference. He said, a simple question.

Is it right to cheat on a test? Ninety percent of the high schoolers in Alabama said there wasn't nothing wrong with them.

We failed. We failed to teach them right from wrong. They think they can just cheat on the test and get by, and that's all there is to us.

And then when they cheat on the test, they cheat on their job, they cheat on their wife, they cheat on everything else. And we're in such a shape as we are in today.

[1 : 02] Right's right. Have you ever cheated? Well, I better get off of that.

We'll have the whole church lost here. Here's a good subject.

Let's preach this. The Gospel of St. Luke chapter 2. It's a good subject. St. Luke chapter 2. I'm glad you're here today.

I'm glad I'm saved. I'm glad God sent His Son into this world. His only begotten Son. That if I'd believe in Him, I'd not perish.

But I'd have everlasting life. Amen. All right. Luke chapter 2, verse 1. And it came to pass in those days that there went out a decree from, I started to say Obama, but we'll just say Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed.

[2 : 10] That's coming. Amen. And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria, and all went to be taxed, everyone into his own city.

And Joseph also went up from Galilee out of the city of Nazareth into Judea, and to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and the lineage of David to be taxed with Mary, his espoused wife.

And being great with child. And so it was that while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn son, wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping... Don't you like that story? That's one of my favorite Bible stories. I like the gospel of John better than I do Luke for some reason.

But this is one of my favorite stories in the whole Bible. In the same country, shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over the flock by night.

[3 : 28] Lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, the glory of the Lord shone round about them, and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not. Behold, I bring you good dietings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord. This shall be a sign unto you. You shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly hosts, praising God and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace and goodwill toward men.

Amen. Pray for my voice, coughing again. Heavenly Father, thank you today for the privilege to pray.

Lord, thank you for the Christmas story. Thank you that you cared enough to send your Son into the world. I pray, dear God, that you would help us as we go to preach.

[4 : 31] Give us grace in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. So I want to preach today about the birth of Jesus, which was a miraculous birth from any standpoint.

It was directed by the sovereignty of God. Far from being absent, God is present and works in the affairs of men.

Amen. Amen. In the 75th Psalm, the Bible said that He raises one king up, He puts another king down. He's the one that sees to it who gets elected and who doesn't get elected.

Amen. Proverbs chapter 27, verse 1, The heart of the king is in the hand of the Lord. Amen. Amen. Many years before this time is recorded in Daniel about five Gentile kings.

Because of Israel's unfaithfulness, God had delivered them over to be ruled over by Gentile kings.

[5 : 41] That ought to be a lesson to us. We seem not to hear that. Amen. But God's chosen people, He said, we're just going to turn you over. You wouldn't let God rule over you.

You wanted them to rule over you. We're going to turn you over to them. Amen. And they're under the authority of the system we call the beast. And I know you've heard that prophetically.

But there is one of those kings that is noted in the book of Daniel in the 11th chapter and the 20th verse. It talks about this final king.

And one of his attributes is he likes to raise taxes. That's what it says. Daniel 11, 20.

A raiser of taxes. Now, there's a pagan authority that's replaced God's authority in Israel. But nevertheless, Psalm 75 is still in force and God's running things.

[6 : 44] But Augustus doesn't think so. This Augustus Caesar thought the world was his. In fact, he wrote here that all the world would be taxed.

Like he knew what all the world was. He was really talking about the Roman Empire. But he considered that all the world. So he had this so-called census that all of the modern Bibles talk about a census.

But the census and the enrollment was for the purpose of taxation. That's what it was about. Augustus was the nephew of Julius Caesar.

And he was marked with the pride of the Caesar. The Caesars were all a proud people. And his assumption was that he ruled over the whole world.

And the world was his tool. Kind of like our politicians today. The assumption that we exist just to please them.

[7 : 49] He brought about this taxation. If you notice, it said it first started there in verse 2. It was first made when Serenius was the governor.

But this taxing thing, it went on for several years. In the fifth chapter of the book of Acts, we find that that taxation brought about a rebellion in the country.

Y'all remember that? Now, I don't know why they'd rebel over just being counted. But I think American enough to know why we'd rebel over being taxed. The records were kept in everybody's hometown.

And so Augustus had part in the fulfillment of prophecy. He thought he was doing what he wanted to do.

He was obeying his own will when he issued this decree about the taxation. He thought that it was his idea.

[8 : 53] Like the Sanhedrin court thought it was their idea to falsely accuse Jesus. And like the soldiers that spit on him thought it was their idea to spit in his face.

And like those that scourged him at Pilate thought it was his idea to have him scourged. And Caiaphas thought it was his idea that one man die for the sins of the people.

And the failed attempt to break his legs, they thought it was their idea. And the soldier piercing his head with a spear, they thought it was their idea. But it was God's idea.

Now, that's scary to me. That lets me know that God knows what can happen if it didn't happen. Amen. Amen. We talk about Calvinism and saying, well, everything has got a free will of man.

And it does. And if a man will repent, he can be saved. And if he don't repent, he can be lost. And it's whether he repents or not.

[10 : 00] But God knows all this. And so God knew. He didn't force. He just simply knew. But Augustus, here he is thinking, man, I'm the one that did this.

I've got this taxation. And so we think then that they had to leave Nazareth. And I have made that journey. It's not an easy journey.

It's about like traveling up Gauley Mountain from Nazareth down to Bethlehem. Now, I don't know whether they rode a donkey, camel, mule, axe, or motorcycle.

The Bible doesn't say. I mean, I know the Christmas card said. But the Bible doesn't say. Perhaps she did ride a donkey. But whenever they got to Nazareth, I know about the accommodations.

Zero. There were no accommodations. Because you see the wealthy people had already made their reservations. They had all of the rooms occupied.

[11 : 01] And so the life of our Lord Jesus Christ begins in a stable. In a manger. He was laid in a manger at his birth.

He was held on a cross and he's dead. And between those two places, he had nowhere to lay his head. The location that we have today.

And when I was over there, I got to go to Bethlehem. And the Roman Catholics runs that place. And they had this church, they called it. It was just a shrine. Just a building where they say that Jesus was born.

And so you go in there and right there is a little old star. About a 24 pointed star. Around this little spot where Jesus was born.

And I said to the guide, I said, How do they know that's where Jesus was born? Now here's the answer. Helena. They called her Saint Helena.

[12 : 00] Saint Helena, who is the mother of Constantine. The guy that actually started Roman Catholicism. Was visiting Bethlehem.

And God told her that's the place. Give her a sign, I reckon. I got to be honest with you. If we could get a hold of the real place, any place.

We would worship it. Just like we would an original manuscript. If we could get a hold of one, we would worship it. And there ain't none. That's why you can't get a hold of them.

Worship from God. Worship is not geographical. Worship is spiritual. There'll be a day, Mrs. Samaritan woman, whenever you won't worship in this mountain or Jerusalem, but God is a spirit and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

So we can have the presence of God on Witcher Creek as well as they can have the presence of God in Bethlehem. Hallelujah. God can come by our church this morning and get in the heart of a deacon and make him carry on like a hot dog right here in the church house.

[13 : 19] Amen. Amen. Amen. Much of Jesus' life is connected with animals. I think whenever he was born, the tame animals, the cows or whatever it was, gave up their manger that he might have a bed.

I think that whenever he was tempted, he was in the wilderness with the wild animals and they circled about him. I think that whenever he went to sleep, he didn't have a place even like the animals had.

Foxes had their holes and the birds had their nests, but he didn't have a place to lay his head. I think whenever he hung on the cross that the strong bulls of Bashan gathered around him and gaped on him.

I think when he needed his taxes paid, he could get it from the mouth of a feast. Though his labor was a carpenter and though he was buried in a buried tomb, I'm thinking that there was no room, verse 7, no room for him at the end.

The Bible said in the book of John, I think I preached this last week, he came to his own. His own didn't have no room for him. He came to his own. His own received him not.

[14 : 38] At his birth, there was no room for him. In his hometown, they wanted to stone him. Whenever he healed the maniac of Gadara, they sent a committee out there asking him to depart from their coast, to leave their town.

The Laodicean church has him standing outside the door. No room for Jesus. You think there's room for Jesus in Charleston? You think there's room for him, even in the nativity scene, down on our Capitol lawn?

You think we've got room today for him? It's not illegal. It's a lie they forced on the American people. It is not illegal. They say it is, and they're the ones who got the gun.

But it's not illegal to say Merry Christmas. It's not illegal to praise God. And this country was founded on the principle of praising God. Now we don't have any room for him.

They don't have room in Washington, D.C. They don't have room in Charleston. I don't know whether they've got room on Witcher Creek or not. Have you got room in your heart?

[15 : 48] You have any room for him? Or is Christmas season all occupied with Santa Claus and reindeers and, oh, getting quiet in here. No room for Christ.

Well, these shepherds, they were out there in their field and they were keeping watch over their flock. The scholars tell us that they were in control of the sheep that were used at Jerusalem for the sacrifices.

That that's the particular sheep they were looking after. That they reared those sheep. Is that the correct term? Or are you raised sheep? I don't remember. I think you reared children and raised sheep.

I'm not sure. I know that you're supposed to rear children. But you raised sheep. Lowest of society.

They were not acceptable. They were just the lowly shepherd people. They weren't the wealthy that were partying there at the inn and weren't with those that had all of the accommodations of that day.

[16 : 55] Proof that Jesus Christ didn't only come for the rich people, but He came for the poor people. He came, the Bible said, then drew near to Him publicans and sinners.

All those shepherds are there keeping watch over their flock. Suddenly. Amen. The sky. Well, wouldn't you like to have been there?

The sky literally lit up with the glory of God. That same glory cloud that Moses had followed through the wilderness that was a pillar of fire by night and a cloud by day that covered the tabernacle and covered the temple.

The glory had long since departed from Israel. And you remember that story. But now it's back. Amen. These shepherds look and the glory of God is around the place.

Amen. Oh, wouldn't that be great if the same glory that helped us to get founded as a nation, that helped George Washington to get across the Delaware on that Christmas night those years ago.

[18 : 09] That stopped that cannonball from exploding in that magazine on Fort McHenry there and blowing the whole place up to where we could get a Star Spangled Banner. That actually caused the British to leave their ladders behind when they attacked Andrew Jackson.

They said, it's circumstances. Look, I'm saying God was looking over the place. Glory to God in the highest. Western civilization that is from Rome this way celebrates Christmas on the 25th of December.

Eastern civilization that is the Greek church and going that way they celebrated 12 days later. Now I'm not going to get into you about the 6th of January or the 12 days of Christmas.

You'll see enough of that. But to be honest with you, one of them says it was this time another one says it's that time and I'm going to give you this morning the very exact time.

Are you ready? You say, preacher, you can't do it. I can do it. I'll give you the very exact time because I know it. Galatians chapter 4 verse 4 the Bible said in the fullness of time God sent forth His time.

[19 : 21] It doesn't matter what day it is it matters that this is the day that Jesus has come into the world. Four of Daniel's five kingdoms had fallen and the fifth was in the process of decay and rotting right off of the bone.

The Jewish temple had become holla and like a sounding brass or tinkling cymbal. But here the hills of Palestine are alive and aglow with the glory of God and Bethlehem's sheep are superseded by the Lamb of God that come to take away the sin of the world.

No wonder the songwriter said joy to the world the Lord is coming. Amen. You might be joyous because Jeremiah is a bullfrog but I'm joyous because the Lord is coming.

Hallelujah. Hallelujah. We have a Savior born. Matthew chapter 24 the disciples ask Him for a sign when will be the sign of your coming and the end of the world and in verse 30 He said there will be great darkness the sun will go out and the moon will refuse to give her light then shall they see the sign of the coming of the Son of Man appearing in great glory but here tonight across the field of Boaz in Bethlehem every bell in heaven is ringing every angel empties the city of gold behold and rejoice at this sight earth may be indifferent earth had no room for him hell may be vindictive Herod may be planning his murder but heaven says glad tidings of great joy man amen amen amen amen amen amen that TV camera has ruined me I have to stand still but I feel like running this morning amen amen that's right the sweetest words I ever heard was Jesus the Savior my Son amen amen amen amen amen good tidings of great joy ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands that's the way they try to try to number it in the book of

Revelation that Phil was reading all of this multitude of the heavenly hosts they came and they got three things and I'll give you these three things and I'll be finished and we can go on number one those angels declared glory to God amen amen that's what they said God has done something about man's lost his tact amen had it not been for this Christmas night you and I friend would have had no chance no chance of making it to heaven you see you can't be good enough to get to heaven you can't live a life that's pleasing to God enough to get you to heaven we're kind of like the camel man we might chew the cud but our foot's divided but thank God listen to me glory to God God has done something about God has sent the Savior unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior which is

[22 : 45] Christ the Lord glory to God and he said peace on earth number two peace on earth well you know that he came and offered peace to the world but the world rejected his peace they'll get up there I think I think even printed on the United Nations is building up there about that that scripture about beating their swords into plowshares and peace all over the earth amen no longer and I been alive man they ain't done nothing but fight I was born during World War II we hadn't no more and got over that till we went to Korea amen hadn't no more and got over that till we was in that missile crisis down there in Cuba Suez y'all remember that Suez fight they were having hadn't no more and got that started somebody talked about Indochina a little old town a little old country on the south east of China called Vietnam that we spent millions of dollars and wasted thousands of American lives for nothing for nothing you hear me and it wasn't the American soldiers fault either it was the people that had that same attitude in their heart that Augustus had in his heart get rid of that and then we got

Desert Storm and Desert Shield and Iraq and Afghanistan and whenever they get finished they'll have another one why preacher because they refused peace peace came but they didn't want peace peace came but they didn't want it but there is peace like a river to those that'll believe it to those that'll receive him he can give you peace not as the world gives give I unto you let not your heart be troubled neither let it be afraid in me you'll have peace in the world you'll have tribulation in me you'll have peace the peace of God that passes all understanding will keep your hearts and thoughts in Christ Jesus peace on earth and the last thing they said good will to men you know this might come as a shock to you but God is not against you the preacher is not even against you oh I may get up here and preach the hell out of you but it ain't because it ain't because

I don't like you it's because I do understand what I'm saying whenever I slam you until you feel like you're about that tall it's not because I just want to feel better than you but it's because I know what I'm talking about God's son was not sent into this world to judge the world but was sent to save the world he who was rich became poor that we through his poverty might be made rich 2nd Corinthians isn't it God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself the Jews require a sign okay I'll give you one he's laying there in a manger amen and those shepherds they went and they found him and what I want to say today

Jesus is find amen Jesus is not he this thing is not done in a corner he's find able if you want to find God you can find God you don't want to find God you love darkness because Jesus amen I know why the churches are half empty today people don't want to go to church especially don't want to go to no Bible believing church you get the hide skinned off of them old Dowden Thomas said I won't believe unless they see there is a construction there that indicates that people who don't see and yet believe are the people that are pleasing to God faith is what God is looking for therefore being justified by faith we have peace with

God through our Lord Jesus Christ glory to God peace on earth good will toward men let's bow for prayer