

A Personal Saviour

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[0 : 00] Let's turn again to the Gospel of Luke, Luke's Gospel, and chapter 2. Now I want us to consider these verses that we read.

We've worked our way through chapter 1, and now to come to chapter 2. There had been the announcement that Mary was to conceive a child, and we saw how the power of the Most High was to overshadow her, and the Holy Spirit in such a way that she was to conceive and to bear this child.

And of course we come now to the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ. And this is really one of the, or we could almost say, the most important, most significant event in human history.

There have been many great dates. Maybe some of you here are just, have recently sat your standard grades or your highest, dealing with history. And I don't know if history is as it was when I was in school.

We used to have to learn lots of dates. And there are still some of these dates that are still etched in my mind, some very important dates regarding world history. Time, things of great significance.

[1 : 21] But there is no date and there's no event that has been so vital, so significant to human history as the arrival of the Son of God in our nature into this world.

Because Jesus came into this world to deal with what you and I cannot deal with ourselves, to deal with our sin, with our rebellion against God, to deal with our own failure to keep God's law and to honor it.

Our failure to glorify God. Because really when we look at our life in light of God's word, we have to write failure over it. And it's not something that we feel comfortable with, not something that we can be in any way proud of.

Because so often we look at life and look at its achievements and not in any way trying to devalue the great achievements of so many people in this world who have brought so much good and so much help.

But what we've got to remember is, at the end of the day, our own standing before God. And the fact is, we're all sinners. And it is because we couldn't deal with this great fundamental issue that God in his love sent his own Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, into this world.

[2 : 45] Now, from the very earliest dates, I think, people have tried to deal with sin in various ways. There are some people who just sell themselves to a life of disobedience.

There are people who just, what we may say, sell themselves to sin. That is the way they're going to go. They just catapult their life into a life of rebellion.

And there is no attempt in any shape or form to conform even to the laws of society, let alone to the law of God.

That's the way they live. That's their way of coping with life. They've just thrown away all the restraints, all the barriers, and they're going to live life exactly as they want to live it.

That's the way some people cope with it. Other people try and make out there's no God. And this is quite a comfortable thinking for some people because it means this, if there's no God, then there's no responsibility.

[3 : 53] There's no accountability. There's no guilt. And there are people trying to deal with it in that way because if you take God out of the equation, then we are no longer responsible to anybody but to ourselves.

There's a lot of people trying to deal with these issues in that way because, you see, there is the problem of guilt. And guilt is an incredible problem.

It's, I believe, part of the reason why society today is so restless. It's because of guilt. People don't realize they haven't been able to work out why.

But I believe it's one of the fundamental reasons why there is so much dissatisfaction with life that so many people are unhappy because they're carrying about this guilt in their heart.

And they don't know. They don't even know why they're guilty. But they're guilty before God. That's why. Because we are spiritual beings. And then other people, of course, they try and deal with it by maybe a way of penance, by doing something, by getting involved in some project or denying themselves some great thing or doing this or that.

[5 : 09] Other people being aware of spirituality within us. People are aware. There are many people who are aware that, in fact, I would say the vast majority of people are aware that we are more than simply matter, that we're more than just body, that people are aware that there is a spiritual side.

There are many people who try and worship gods of their own making. And there's nothing new in that. It's almost as old as this world itself, as old as humanity, where people have tried in different ways to reach a God or make a God of their own making.

But the wonderful thing is that we have the Word of God. We have the Bible. And let our familiarity with the Bible not in any way cloud from us just how wonderful it is because we could never work this out ourselves.

We could never work out how to come to God. We could never work out who God is were it not for the revelation of Scripture.

The world, the creation, reveals to us something about God. Romans tells us that, that it speaks to us about His eternal power and Godhead.

[6 : 24] The natural world reveals to us that God is, that He's an eternal God and that He's a creator God and that He's all-powerful. But the natural world doesn't speak to us about His grace, His mercy, His love.

about His redemptive purposes. The natural world doesn't, there are many things that the natural world do not reveal to us about God. And that's a great thing about having the Word of God because the Word of God tells us something about who God is.

It opens up for us more and more of who this great God is and what this great God has done for us. And so, if we were to pick out one verse here tonight that would tie everything together, I think it would be what we read in verse 11, for unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior who is Christ the Lord.

For unto you is born a Savior. See how personal that is. These are wonderful words. And supposing tonight you weren't to remember any of the other 20 verses, I would love you to remember this one verse.

For unto you is born a Savior. Isn't that wonderful? A Savior. A Savior is one of the most beautiful words because a Savior is somebody who comes to save.

- [7 : 52] And if any of you have been in any way saved at a human level in this life, and there are many people who have been saved in different ways, maybe saved through some really bad accident where somebody who came actually did something to save your life.
- Some people have been saved from drowning, they've been saved from different things which would definitely have killed them. And there might be some in here tonight who can say, yeah, I know that.
- And I'll always remember the person who saved me. I'll never forget that person because I owe my continued existence, my life, to what that person did for me.
- A Savior really is a wonderful thing. Well, that is who Jesus is. He is the Savior who comes to save, to save us from destruction, but it isn't just a saving from, which in itself is wonderful, it's a saving to.
- That's what the Lord does. He saves us from hell, He saves us from the eternal destruction which sin brings, the wages of sin is death, spiritual death and eternal death and physical death, but He also saves us to an eternity of glory, an everlasting heritage, an everlasting dominion where you will reign with Christ forever and ever.
- [9 : 36] It's a wonderful prospect and all, that's not what we're going to look at tonight, but all that is caught up in this one word, Savior. unto you a Savior.
- These are wonderful words. And if you're here tonight and you have to say to yourself, well, I'm afraid as things stand, I am still without Jesus Christ.
- I want you to, don't want you to forget all that has gone in the past because all that has gone in the past is vital to who you are tonight. And the Lord, the Lord means everything to be part and work together in a way for your life.
- But what I mean by this is that at this particular point in your life, if you have never really considered these words, I want you to tonight because unto you is born a Savior.
- Here is something very personal. It is the word of God speaking to you in a personal way. it couldn't be more personal. It couldn't be more direct. And to you, a Savior.
- [10 : 49] Jesus Christ, Christ the Lord. And that great offer of salvation is going out tonight to you.
- What are you going to do with it? We're going to pass away, we're going to pass from this and move on in this chapter. what are you going to do with these awesome, wonderful words where Jesus is offering himself to you tonight, a Savior.
- Don't turn away from it. Deal with it by calling to him, crying to him, asking him, Lord, save me. You came into this world, Lord, to save sinners.
- Well, I'm a sinner. You came into this world to deal with what I couldn't deal with myself, my sin. You came into this world, Lord, to bring eternal life. Well, give me tonight eternal life.
- Won't you ask him to do this for you? Now, this chapter opens with a decree from Caesar Augustus, the Roman emperor, that all the world should come together for registration.
- [11 : 55] And it really is quite an amazing thing because here Mary and Joseph are living away up, their home is up in Nazareth, away up in the north. But for this registration to take place, you had to go back to your roots, where you actually came from, who your people were, where I suppose the actual, people often ask that, where are you from?
- Where do your roots go to? And for Mary and Joseph, it meant them having to leave Nazareth away up in the north and to head down south to Bethlehem because that's where Joseph had to go to in order to register.
- And the wonderful thing about this is that here is this man, Caesar, this Caesar Augustus, who is the most powerful man in the world. And he's ordered this decree that everybody will come for this worldwide, as it were, registration.

little does he know that in ordering this scripture is going to be fulfilled in a most marvelous and wonderful way, because the prophecies prophesied that the Messiah was going to be born in Bethlehem.

now in order for Christ to be born in Bethlehem, Mary, who was living up in Nazareth, had to make her way all the way down south, travel miles and miles and miles, maybe about 200, I'm not sure, probably over 200 miles south to get from Nazareth down to Bethlehem.

[13 : 48] She had to make that journey. And the only reason why a woman who was just about in a very, very short time was going to give birth to a baby would ever contemplate making a journey like that was if a decree was issued by the emperor.

There is no way because they didn't have cars in these days. It was going to be a long, difficult journey, trekking mile after mile after mile. And I'm sure that mothers who have given birth to children would try and imagine just how difficult, how traumatic this journey would have been for Mary.

But this is a wonderful thing, that God is in control of everything. And in order for the fulfillment of the prophecy to be made, this heathen emperor issues this decree.

And you see really how God is in control of everything. He's in control of human history. Because when we go to the book of Micah, we read about this prophecy because the words there are given to us in Micah in chapter 5.

We read, But you, O Bethlehem, Ephrata, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose origin is from of old and is from everlasting or from ancient of days.

[15 : 33] Therefore, he shall give them up until the time when she who is in labor gives birth. Now, the thing is, and then it says, Then the rest of his brothers shall return to the people of Israel, and he shall stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the Lord.

It is very clear that the one here whose origin is from of old, from everlasting. Now, there is nobody who can fit that bill.

Nobody except the Lord Jesus Christ. Because there is nobody going to be born into this world who is also eternal, but Christ alone.

And so we see that prophesied all these hundreds of years earlier by the prophet Micah that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem.

And so we find this, it's really quite remarkable that Caesar Augustus makes this call, this registration call for everybody to come. And of course, here is this moment, the world is now ready for the birth of Jesus Christ to come.

[16 : 46] Because one of the great things, and I think we mentioned this before, one of the things the Romans were brilliant at doing was networking countries together. They were superb at building roads and bridges.

And that's what they did. They had linked up the world in a way that it had never been linked up before. There was also a common language spoken, language of trade and commerce. So from looking at it from a human point of view, the world was never in a better position for the Savior to come and the gospel to be spread.

Because the word of God could be spread amongst nations. Travel all of a sudden became easy. And people could go from one place to another. And that's exactly what happened through the spread of the gospel.

Do you remember when we're looking at the prophecy of Daniel? How Daniel had interpreted the dream, Nebuchadnezzar's dream, the head of gold, the chest, remember, of silver, and then there was the thighs of brass, and then there were the legs and feet which were part iron and part clay.

And Daniel had said there are four great world empires coming. And there was a Babylonian one first which was during the reign of Nebuchadnezzar. Then there was the Persian empire, followed by the Greek empire.

[18 : 12] And then the next great, the Roman empire. And it was during the time of this fourth one which was part iron and part clay, that that stone made without hands was taken out as it were from the mountain.

And that this stone came down and began to grow and grow and fill the whole earth. And that was speaking about Christ's kingdom. And so it was to be during the reign or the time when this empire which was part iron and part clay and what a wonderful description of the Roman empire.

Because it was as it was an empire of iron and yet it was so fragile. Feet of clay. And it in a sense disintegrated.

It broke up because of how fragile it was and yet there was a period there it just burst through the whole world. It was an empire of iron.

And it was during this time that this new kingdom was to arise that would fill the whole world. And you see the wonder of God's prophecy.

[19 : 28] There's Daniel. There's Micah. All the different men. And all the different ways. God is saying it's all going to come together. And it's wonderful when you look back at scripture and you see the way that scripture all ties in together.

And so here are Mary and Joseph. They're making their way down to Bethlehem. And we find there in verse 7 it's very straightforward, very basic really telling us about the birth of Jesus.

Nothing dramatic, nothing just very clearly tells us. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger because there was no room for them in the inn.

Now from a human point of view I would imagine the reason there was no room for them in the inn is because the population of Bethlehem would have doubled or trebled easily because there would be so many people making their way back.

And I would well imagine because the condition that Mary was in just about to give birth that they couldn't move quickly and they were probably the very last to enter Bethlehem and coming in there would be nowhere.

[20 : 39] Can you imagine how difficult it must have been for an expectant mother to be trudging around and they'd be trying to find oh if there was only a place here or a place there but there was nowhere.

it was in this outhouse just beside the inn that the Lord Jesus Christ was born into this world.

But as we've I think said before there's a spiritual picture in it as well in that there was no room for Christ in the inn. There was no room. No room for Christ in this world.

The world didn't want Christ. It's a very vivid picture isn't it of what the world's reaction to Christ is. They didn't want him born into this world. And they didn't want him living in this world.

And they couldn't wait to get rid of him from this world. Jesus Christ only exercised a three year public ministry. And nobody ever brought so much good into people's lives.

[21 : 40] Nobody ever lived in the way that Christ lived because he lived a perfect life. We've often wanted to say I wonder what it must be like to see somebody live a perfect life.

Now there are some people that we know and they are so upright and so honest and so decent and such lovely people we say to ourselves that person is almost perfect but they're not.

There's no such thing as a perfect person in this world but there was one it was Jesus. Since the fall Jesus was the only one. The only one in humanity. He walked in an absolute perfectly perfect but the world couldn't stand him couldn't bear three years of public ministry and then he was put to death.

Things haven't changed. There is still no room for Jesus. Jesus Christ is an interference in many people's lives and there are so many people even who hear the offer of the gospel and they say we will not have this man to rule over.

There's no room for Jesus. I hope there's nobody in here tonight like that who is saying in their own heart there is no room for Jesus in my heart. I accept what is said about him and that's fine for others and in fact I wouldn't mind getting things sorted out before I die but right now there is no room for Jesus because my life is full and I want to live life my way not God's way.

[23 : 17] The world we're living in is becoming more and more a world that has no room for Jesus and the nation we're living in today is a nation that more and more has no room for Jesus because you know it's an awful thing to push Christ away because a day will come and let's remember this a day will come when the Lord Jesus Christ will give every single person who has rejected him their wish eternally.

It's not a solemn thought. Christ will say to everyone who rejected him depart from me. What is Jesus doing?

he is simply giving to people what they chose in this world. They chose for Christ to depart from them and Jesus is saying what you chose in this world you now have forever and ever and ever.

It's a solemn thought but that's how it is. so we find anyway that the Lord Jesus Christ here has been born into this world and then from verse we have then the great announcement given to us there that from the angels and to you is born this day in the city of David a savior who is Christ the Lord and so on.

And then there comes this message to the shepherds out in the hillside and when the angels went away from them the shepherds said to one another let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened which the Lord has made known unto us.

[25 : 13] So from verse 8 downwards we have the great announcement given and it was to the shepherds and it's quite interesting that it's to shepherds because I think again there's something symbolic here because the shepherd was actually sermionally unclean and if there was one group of people that you wouldn't expect this message from God to come to it would be people who were sermionally unclean and it shows us the grace of God that God cuts across all the different status of life all the different barriers that the grace of God is as much for the beggar and for the down and out and the person who has nothing in life as it is for those who are in the palace and those who are at the very highest point in the land this gospel is for all and so the message was given to the shepherds and again it's interesting that it's to the shepherds because when you think in the Old

Testament two of the great men at two different stages Moses he was a shepherd David was a shepherd and one of the pictures that Jesus was so often giving of himself was that of the shepherd he says I am the good shepherd I am the good shepherd who gives his life for the sheep so Jesus himself uses that expression the angels say not to fear that they're bringing great news about the saviour and so then we have the whole heavenly host singing and praising God we have that then in verse 14 you know the angels are very interested in the whole way of salvation we're told that in the letters in the gospel letters it's which things talking about this salvation which things the angels desire to look into the angels peer into the whole scheme of salvation now it must be quite extraordinary for them because they are the ones they are created beings and they are ministering spirits to the heirs of salvation they are going between heaven and earth and they are serving God day and night before his throne and they are they have been seeing the second person of the Godhead in glory and then they have seen this incredible eventing place where the second person of the Godhead is taking to himself something he never had before he's taking another nature two natures one person but he's taking human nature to himself in order to become like us in order to live with us and in order to die for us and as far as the angels are concerned this is an extraordinary thing and it is something as it says that they desire they peer into they look into and the scripture also reveals to us that there is knowledge of salvation amongst the angels that there is rejoicing with the angels when a person is converted scripture shows us and when a person comes in repentance that the angels rejoice it's not an amazing thought have the angels rejoiced in the knowledge that you have embraced

Christ as savior or are the angels marveling and I shouldn't use the word marveling but I use it in the sense of that they are amazed in a sense of shock at your rejecting this great salvation because they know the beauty the power the majesty the glory of Christ in a way that you and I don't know and they cannot get over people rejecting and yet wonderful and although the angels are what God has done for us is even greater and you know I believe that God will take his people even closer to himself in glory than the angels and that the Lord is using these angels to minister to us in this world it really is humbling when you think of what is happening and what is going on anyway these shepherds when they were given this word they made their way as quickly as possible to find out what the angels had said and there was a the word actually as an urgency when the angels went away from them let us go over to Bethlehem said the shepherds and see this thing and they went with haste and found

Mary and Joseph they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph it's not wonderful this was and this is the way that you will find my dear friend this is how you will find that word haste carries with it the idea of an urgency and if you have an urgency in seeking the Lord you will find be absolutely persuaded of it if you have an urgency in seeking the Lord you will find him a savior there are some people say oh I'm seeking but it's not an urgent seeking the urgent seeking will always find you make sure that you're seeking urgently because you see the great and wonderful thing is that when you find him you will discover and know this peace on earth that the angel sung about because that's what Jesus has come to bring peace in people's hearts peace in communities peace peace with God and there's nothing greater that you and I could have tonight than a sense of peace there are many people in this world who would give anything absolutely anything tonight to have peace we live in a we often moan and complain but you know we live in a wonderful part of this world when you think of the freedom freedom when you think of the liberty when you think of the peace of our communities okay there might be things that are wrong here and there and we often complain about this and that but when you look at it in its entirety

I don't know if there's many better places in this world to live than where we are there are many places tonight that would give anything anything to have the peace that we have and I believe part of the reason or the main reason why we have this peace in our island here is because of gospel blessing because the gospel always brings peace and when God has been and the power of the gospel has been in a community or anywhere there is always the fruit of peace with it and that of gain is a great picture of heaven because heaven is an environment where there will be nothing but peace peace absolute peace there won't be any moment when that peace will be shattered or disrupted eternal peace and the beginning of that in a measure is experienced by God's people and if you tonight are without

[33 : 19] Jesus Christ peace however much you may be enjoying life whatever level of peace you may experience you haven't yet experienced God's peace and I pray that you will because it is a peace that transcends anything that this world has ever given or can give let us pray O Lord O God we pray to give us to know more and more of that peace in our own heart the peace of God that passes all understanding O Lord we pray to part us with thy blessing and do us good we pray that we may look to Jesus and believe in him or we pray for any soul in here tonight who is planning going out without dealing with what they may have heard we pray that there might be a prayer going up in their heart to come to know Jesus as Savior O Lord bless us and do us good have mercy on us forgive us in Jesus name we ask

God Amen