



Session 3



THE BIRTH OF JESUS

Matthew 1:24-25; Luke 2

Once again reflective of his commitment to righteousness, Joseph was obedient to the angel's message and married Mary. While Matthew's account of the birth of Jesus is limited, a slightly more detailed account awaits us in Luke 2.

Luke began his narrative of Jesus' birth with an uncharacteristically imprecise description of when these events took place—"in those days." Luke did not record the exact date, but he did identify this as having been during the time when Augustus was emperor in Rome. God, as He had done countless times before, used the pagan head of state, Caesar, to bring about God's will and desire for Jesus to be born in Bethlehem. Caesar ordered a census to be taken and everyone was to return to their "hometown" to be registered. Though Joseph was a resident of Nazareth, he was from the family of David and returned to Bethlehem, along with Mary, to be registered.

With only slightly more detail than Matthew's half a sentence which says "she gave birth to a son," Luke expanded a bit by describing the context of the child's surroundings at the time of His birth. Luke explained that the birth happened in a place reserved for livestock. We know this because once the baby was born, Mary wrapped Him in cloth and placed Him in a manger. The fact that Jesus was placed in a manger was indicative of the reality that there were no rooms available in Bethlehem, and Mary and Joseph sought out the only place of refuge for the baby to be born—a stable.

Next, Luke describes what was happening outside the place where Mary and Joseph were. The scene moved to shepherds nearby tending their flocks. The shepherds were approached by heavenly messengers announcing the birth of a Savior. Hearing the angels' message, the shepherds hurried to Bethlehem where they found the baby just as they were told. After worshiping the newborn baby, the shepherds left and returned to their fields, sharing the message of the Savior's birth.