

Our goal in studying the Bible is two-fold. One part of the goal as we read is to engage with our **mind**, to grow in our knowledge of who God is as he has revealed himself in his word. The other part of our goal is to engage with our **heart**, by responding to God as we read with our love, praise, gratitude, confession, needs, questions, and desires.

Engaging with our mind *and* heart as we seek the help of the Holy Spirit helps us grow in an intimate relationship with God through Jesus our Savior as we see him more clearly, know him better and love him more.

Day 1- Read Luke 2

- How is God revealed in this chapter? What is he like? Who is Jesus shown to be? What is he like?

Pray: Spend time in adoration and thanksgiving.

- What is human nature shown to be like in this chapter? Is this true of you in your life right now?

Pray: Spend time in confession and repentance.

- What does this passage of Scripture show that you need from God? How does your heart need to move to align with what you see in Scripture? Is there something you need to believe? Is there action you need to take?

Pray: Spend time asking God for what you need to live for him.

Meditation: Luke 2:10-11 *“And the angel said to them, “Fear not for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.”*

Day 2- Luke 2:1-7

Digging Deeper: Read the following verse:

Micah 5:2 “But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, 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.”

-What is the significance of this prophecy?

1. What means did God use to fulfill the prophecy in Micah 5:2 according to verses 1-5?

-What does this tell us about the sovereignty of God?

2. It is approximately 70-80 miles from Nazareth to Bethlehem. What do you imagine might have been some of the thoughts and feelings of Mary and Joseph on the journey to Bethlehem?
3. Mary and Joseph knew they were especially chosen by God to usher the Messiah, the King of Kings into the world. They knew they were following God's will and yet things were not working out free from obstacles. What can we learn from the difficult circumstances of Jesus' birth about the way God works and his calling on our life?

Picture and Ponder: "The Son of God was born into the world not as a prince but as a pauper. We must never forget that this is where Christianity began, and where it always begins- with a sense of need, a graced sense of one's insufficiency. Christ himself setting the example, comes to the needy. He is born only in those who are "poor in spirit." ¹



John says in his gospel, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God... And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us..." This is the miracle of Jesus' birth. God the Son took on flesh, not just for the 33 years he lived on this earth, but forever. It was God's audacious, scandalous plan to rescue us.

Fully God and fully human, he is everything we need. Hebrews 4:15 tells us, "we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses". Jesus saves and he sympathizes! He can relate to us. He experientially understands our humanness. He shared in our weakness, our struggles, our loneliness, our pain, and our temptations. He knows what it is to be a human

being on this earth, how hard it is. When we suffer it resonates with him. And he willingly left heaven and stepped into our mess, to be our substitute so that we could be with him forever.

J.I. Packer advises us, "The New Testament does not encourage us to puzzle our heads over the physical and psychological problems that [the incarnation] raises, but to worship God for the love that was shown in it".

- ❖ Meditate on the following scriptures and worship God for the love he showed us in taking on flesh.

2 Corinthians 8:9 "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich."

Philippians 2:6-8 "who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross."

Hebrews 4:15-16 "For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need."

1 Timothy 3:16 "Great indeed, we confess, is the mystery of godliness: He was manifested in the flesh, vindicated by the Spirit, seen by angels, proclaimed among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory."

John 14:9 "Jesus said to him, 'Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'?"

Romans 8:3 (NLT) "The law of Moses was unable to save us because of the weakness of our sinful nature. So God did what the law could not do. He sent his own Son in a body like the bodies we sinners have. And in that body God declared an end to sin's control over us by giving his Son as a sacrifice for our sins."

Day 3- Luke 2:8-20

4. Besides the angel, what else appeared to the shepherds to commemorate this glorious announcement according to verse 9?

Digging Deeper: Read the following Scripture:

Exodus 40:34, 36-38 "Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle...Throughout all their journeys, whenever the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle, the people of Israel would set out. But if the cloud was not taken up, then they did not set out till the day that it was taken up. For the cloud of the LORD was on the tabernacle by day, and fire was in it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel throughout all their journeys."

-What did God's glory signify in this passage? What do you think God's glory signifies on the night of Jesus' birth?

Digging Deeper: Read the following Scripture:

1 Corinthians 1:27-29 " But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, so that no human being might boast in the presence of God."

-Why do you think it was part of God's wise and gracious plan that Jesus be born in the poorest of circumstances, to insignificant peasants who had no earthly resources or credentials, and proclaimed first to shepherds, who in their society were considered untrustworthy, ceremonially unclean and only one step above lepers?

5. How did the angel alleviate the shepherds' fear in verse 10?

6. In verse 11, how does the angel describe Jesus and the reason he came in to the world?

Scholar's Note: The name [Christ] and its Old Testament counterpart, Messiah, both mean "anointed one;" one placed in a high office and worthy of exaltation and honor.²

7. Once the angel had announced the news, what was the sudden response from heaven in verse 13?

8. In verse 14 the angel army sang of two great purposes of the joyful news. What are they?

Picture and Ponder: “There is hardly a better way to sum up what God was about when he created the world, or when he came to reclaim the world in Jesus Christ — his glory, our peace. His greatness, our joy. His beauty, our pleasure. The point of creation and redemption is that God is glorious and means to be known and praised for his glory by a peace-filled new humanity.”³

Day 4- Luke 2:21-40

Scholar’s Note: “Jesus is the Greek rendering of the Hebrew word *Joshua*. Joshua or Jesus not only means ‘Jehovah is salvation’ but suggests deliverance. It carries the idea of our being delivered by heroic action from the bondage of sin. The name *Jesus* shouts to the world the heroics of the incarnation and the cross.”⁴

9. According to verse 25 (ESV), what was Simeon waiting for?

-Look up the definition for consolation:

10. Simeon says Jesus *is* salvation. How is that different than bringing or providing salvation?
11. Why do you think Simeon’s warning to Mary in verses 34-35 was important for her to hear?
12. What effect did the joyful good news of Jesus have in the lives of Anna and the shepherds according to verses 17-18, 20 and 38? Do you see these effects in your own life?



Mary pondered, Simeon waited, Anna prayed. Each one of these people was ready to hear and see and believe when God put his marvelous plan of redemption into action. Pondering, waiting and praying are hard for us. They seem passive and slow. We like to be active and fast. But it is significant that pondering, waiting and praying help form the deep, mature and devout people that God shows his amazing wonders to.

- ❖ The Greek word Luke used for *waiting* means to await with confidence or patience. What does waiting for something really good, with confidence and patience, do for us in the here and now? (How does it affect your heart, mind and actions? What does it do in your mind to the object of your anticipation? How does it affect your perspective?)

- ❖ How can you incorporate time into your spiritual life for pondering (meditating, reflecting, thinking deeply) on God's word and the truths related to it?

- ❖ How could pondering and praying help you begin to consistently wait confidently and expectantly for Jesus' second coming?

Day 5- Luke 2:39-52

13. How much wisdom did Jesus have as a 12 year old boy according to verse 40?

14. According to verse 47, what did all the eminent teachers who would have been in Jerusalem, at the temple for Passover, think of Jesus?

15. Who was Jesus' first priority to, according to verse 49?

Picture and Ponder: "Jesus' staying behind was not an act of disobedience to His parents, nor was it irresponsibility on their part. They had never before known Him to do anything other than what they had expected Him to do. He was responsible, obedient, sensitive, thoughtful; in

every way sinlessly perfect. This act, however, marked a transition. Jesus was moving from responsibility to His earthly parents to responsibility to God.”⁵

Digging Deeper: Read the following verse:

John 5:18 “This was why the Jews were seeking all the more to kill him, because not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God.”

-What was the Jew’s view of calling God your own personal Father?

-Knowing this, how does it explain why Mary and Joseph in verse 50 did not understand what Jesus was saying?

One Thing: Look back over this week’s study. Pick one thing that God impressed on you, convicted you about, or something new that you learned and write it here.

How will knowing this impact the way you think and act?

¹Hughes R. Kent. *Luke, That You May Know the Truth, Preaching the Word series*, (Crossway, Wheaton Ill. 2015), p. 86

² MacArthur, John F. (2011-02-21). *Luke 1-24 MacArthur New Testament Commentary Set (MacArthur New Testament Commentary Series)* (Kindle Locations 3095-3096). Moody Publishers. Kindle Edition. MacArthur, John F. (2011-02-21). *Luke 1-24 MacArthur New Testament Commentary Set (MacArthur New Testament Commentary Series)* (Kindle Locations 3094-3095). Moody Publishers. Kindle Edition.

³ John Piper sermon- A Savior is Born! Glory to God, Peace to Man. December 24, 2011

⁴ Hughes R Kent

⁵ MacArthur, John F.

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