

1. Vv. 1-7. Joseph is required to go to his home town to register for the census. He takes Mary his 'betrothed', Luke maybe reflecting what Matthew records (Mt. 1:25-26.) Luke describes the birth of Jesus in very simple terms '*she gave birth to her first born, a son*'. This child is born where the animals are kept at night because there is no room in the house (Inn) for him and his parents. The decree by the emperor of Rome is used by God to bring Mary to Bethlehem at the right time to fulfil the prophecy of the birth of the Christ (see Micah 5:2).

2. V. 11. The angel describes the baby Jesus as a '*Saviour*' and as '*Christ*'. He is the **anointed one** who would come to **save his people**. This title 'Saviour' is used in chapter 1 – where Mary refers to '*God my Saviour*' (vs. 47). This emphasises the divinity of Christ – **his divine origin and his divine nature**

3. V. 11. The divinity of Jesus is affirmed alongside his ordinary human birth. From the beginning of Jesus' earthly life, both his divine nature and his human nature are affirmed. How these two natures co-exist in the one person is not explained but simply affirmed. **His life, death and resurrection demonstrate his person – who he is, the divine human one (two natures in one person)**. He is also described as '*the Lord*', which, being the title used for God, further identifies Jesus' divine origin and status.

4. V. 15. From the beginning of Jesus' earthly life, it is not enough simply to recognise, at least in some measure, who he is. **What is crucial is how people respond to Jesus.**

**The Shepherds' Response.**

5. Vv. 8-11. Luke records that a **group of shepherds** (a class of people unable to keep the stick religious practices and who had a bad reputation) are among the first to be challenged to visit a newly born child who the angel describes as '*a Saviour who has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord*' (v. 11). The long-awaited Messiah had come although not how many expected. The Shepherds are invited to go and witness the arrival of their *Saviour, Christ* (the Anointed One) and *Lord*.

6. Vv. 15-16. **The shepherds' first response is to acknowledge that they have heard from God.** They recognised that '*The Lord*' has spoken to them through the angel. They show an openness to hear God's word addressed to them.

7. Vv. 15-16. **Their second response was to heed the call to be witnesses to the birth of this special baby** by going to Bethlehem. But how would they find the baby Jesus?

8. V. 17. **Their third response was to begin their life as disciples.**

These men 'spread the word' around about this little baby. They are among the first witnesses. They are not educated, powerful or influential people, rather they are ordinary men who respond to what God reveals to them. They do not draw attention to themselves, rather they tell people about the birth of the Divine Saviour, Jesus.

9. V. 20. The shepherds returned, '*glorifying and praising God*' for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told. God is always true to His word.

**Reflection/Response:** We, like the shepherds, have heard the news of the birth of the Divine Saviour Jesus. How have we responded? Have we come to know this Jesus? What changes, commitments, new directions does God want from us in 2022? How will our trusting Jesus be evident as we serve him in the world?

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