

Main Idea: When we look at the account of the birth of Jesus in Luke 2:1-7, what at first seems to be a birth ignored ends up giving us three vital insights into Jesus the Savior.

- I. The might of Jesus (1-3)
 - A. Caesar Augustus was in control.
 1. He issued a decree.
 2. Everyone obeyed him.
 - B. Caesar Augustus wasn't really in control.
 1. The Lord is in charge of history.
 2. The Lord is in charge of your life.
- II. The majesty of Jesus (4-5)
 - A. He was born into obscurity.
 - B. He was born into royalty.
 1. Do you believe Jesus is the king?
 2. Is Jesus your king?
- III. The meekness of Jesus (6-7)
 - A. The Lord humbled himself in His birth.
 1. Mary delivered him.
 2. Mary wrapped him.
 3. Mary laid him in a manger.
 - B. The Lord expects us to humble ourselves.
 1. You must humble yourself to be saved.
 2. You must humble yourself to live the Christian life.
 3. You must humble yourself to appreciate the significance of Christmas.

To help us prepare for Christmas this year we'll be turning our attention to Luke 2 for three messages in a series called, "The Birth of the Savior."

Scripture Reading: Luke 1:1-4; 2:1-7

The humility of God. That's what we're going to see today as we give our attention to Luke 2. When we look at the incarnation, we see God humbling Himself. The One whom angel hosts adore left His heavenly throne and entered into the world He created as a tiny and weak baby, and beyond that, a baby whose first bed was a feed trough.

The whole account speaks of humility. Scan Luke 2 and you see a peasant couple, a feed trough, third shift shepherds, a pair of doves for the purification offering, an old man named Simeon, a widow by the name of Anna. It's all so...common, unspectacular, so...humble.

The birth story reveals the humility of the Almighty to us, and so much more. Who is this person who was born in Bethlehem, and why was He born, and why does it matter for us?

Friends, there's a problem, and we need to talk about it. Many people don't know truth about the birth of Jesus, and to complicate things many who *think* they know *don't*. Christmas today is a mixture of biblical truth, church tradition, folk custom, and commercialism, with emphasis on the latter.

A little boy and girl were singing their favorite Christmas carol in church the Sunday before Christmas. The boy concluded "Silent Night" with the words, "Sleep in heavenly beans." "No," his sister corrected, "It's not beans. It's peas."²

The little story is humorous, but the reality we're facing is no laughing matter, for the One who was born in that manger later made the claim to be the only way to heaven (John 14:6).

*** Note: This is an unedited manuscript of a message preached at Wheelersburg Baptist Church. It is provided to prompt your continued reflection on the practical truths of the Word of God.

¹ For a previous look at this passage, see the message preached at WBC in 2002.

² [Michael P. Green, *Illustrations for Biblical Preaching*, Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993, p. 57.](#)

These days we're told that truth doesn't matter. So if you believe some strange story that Jesus was born of a virgin, that's fine, if it works for you. But if you believe he entered the world as the result of an illicit relationship between Mary and some soldier in Galilee, that's fine too. And if you want to believe that Jesus is merely the spirit-brother of Lucifer, as Mormon doctrine teaches, one god in a pantheon of gods, born through physical incest between Mary and God the Father, that's okay, too.

This is the thinking of the day. As long as you feel good about Christmas, why get hung up on the particulars? The important thing is that we have a holiday that warms our souls.

But the truth matters. That's why we're beginning a series today entitled, "**The Birth of the Savior,**" an exposition of Luke 2. The Bible says that if we want to have our sins forgiven and spend eternity with God, we must know and believe the truth about Jesus. Certainty is linked to truth.

This week: "A Birth Ignored" (2:1-7)

Next week: "A Birth Applauded" (2:8-14)

December 22: "A Birth That Changes Everything" (2:15-20)

I'm convinced that we need to take a close look at the *truth about the birth of Jesus*, and that Luke can help us do just that.

Dr. Luke wrote the gospel of Luke. According to his introduction (1:1-4) he dedicated it to a special friend named Theophilus. It's not clear whether Theophilus was a believer. Undoubtedly he had heard about Jesus. But apparently he had doubts. Maybe he couldn't buy the part he heard about Jesus being born of a virgin. Or maybe he had questions about Jesus' resurrection. Maybe it all sounded far-fetched to him.

This much we know. Luke was burdened for his friend. He wanted Theophilus to come to know personally the security that comes to a person who comes to know the historical Jesus. So Luke set out on an investigation. He researched. He interviewed people who were eyewitnesses of Jesus. And finally he wrote a biography of Jesus Christ.

Why? He tells us in 1:4, "So that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught." What did Luke want his friend to find? *Certainty*. That involves intellectual conviction, yes, but it's more than that. It has to do with security. True security, true assurance is available only to those who believe in Jesus Christ.

Luke didn't write this biography to entertain us. Luke never intended his treatise to be reduced to children's bedtime stories. Luke wants to help us to get to know the real Jesus. And once we do, we'll gladly place our complete confidence and trust in Him and have *certainty*.

The passage before us this morning is very familiar. Many of us learned to quote it as children. Some of you read it every year as part of your family Christmas tradition. "And she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn (Luke 2:7)."

But here's the problem. The words sound familiar, but the meaning is foreign. For many people, the story of Jesus' birth is practically all they know of Christianity. But think about something. How many verses did Luke devote to the story of the birth of Jesus? There are *seven*. Do you know how many verses are in his entire gospel? Over 1000! Here's the dilemma. We don't see the connection between the Christ of Christmas and the rest of our lives. We don't know the *whole truth* about the One who was born in Bethlehem.

In terms of its structure Luke 2:1-7 includes three scenes surrounding the birth of Jesus. We see the decree (1-3), the destination (4-5), and the delivery (6-7). It's a simple

story. But it's also more than a simple story for each scene teaches us something very important about the Christ who was born at Christmas.

When we look carefully at the account of the birth of Jesus in Luke 2:1-7, what at first seems to be a birth ignored ends up giving us three vital insights into Jesus the Savior.

I. The might of Jesus (1-3)

Verse 1 begins, "In those days." Immediately we must ask, "In what days?" Luke just told us which days he had in mind back in chapter 1. The event we're about to consider occurred in the days of Herod the Great (1:5), who was king of Judea from 37 B.C. to 4 B.C.

Furthermore, it took place in the days of a priest named Zechariah (1:5b). Those were dark days religiously. God had not spoken to His people for 400 years since Malachi was prophet in Israel. Judaism had turned into an joy-robbing, legalistic machine. But that was about to change now that "those days" had arrived.

Something else had just happened that set the stage in "those days." Just prior to Luke 2:1 angels made two magnificent announcements. One message was given to Zechariah which said, "You're going to have a son, and you are to name him John (1:13)." The second angelic message was for Mary, "You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus (1:31)." The first birth took place as predicted, as John the Baptist entered the home of Zechariah and Elizabeth. That paved the way for the second birth.

In "those days" something happened. What was it? Verse 1 says, "In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world." To appreciate the birth of Jesus we need to know two things about Caesar Augustus.

A. Caesar Augustus was in control. Caesar Augustus was the top man in the world at that time. His real name was Caius Octavius. He was a great nephew of Julius Caesar. The term Augustus is significant, for when Caius Octavius became ruler of Rome, he didn't want to be called dictator or king. Those titles weren't good enough. So he consulted with the Roman senate and created a new word. *Augustus*. It was a title with religious connotations which eventually became a claim to deity.

Augustus Caesar was the most powerful man in the world. What he said went. So not surprisingly, Luke tells us that...

1. *He issued a decree.* He gave this order around the year 8 B.C. What was it? He wanted a census taken. He required "that all the world should be registered," as the KJV puts it.

In the Roman Empire, a census was taken every 14 years. The purpose was twofold. One, the census served for tax purposes. And two, the census served to discover the names of people who were liable for compulsory military service. Since the Jews were exempt from serving in the Roman military, the census in Israel was primarily for tax purposes.

By the way, in the past some scholars have objected that Luke 2:1 is not historically accurate. But archaeologists have actually discovered census documents in dust heaps of Egyptian towns.

Dr. Luke, being the analytical investigator that he was, was a stickler for details. Look at verse 2, "This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria." Why this detail? Remember Luke's goal of *certainty*. This isn't a make-believe fable. This is real history. Luke records real names. There were real rulers in

real places. Jesus was a *real person*. In fact, know this. Jesus lived in the *real world* we call home. He was no fictitious character made up by His deluded followers.

You say, “Why does the historicity of this account matter anyway?” It matters because our sinful world needed a substitute. We needed someone who could walk in our shoes and reverse the curse of our sinful choices. That’s what Jesus did. Of that we can be *certain*.

What was the result of this decree by Caesar Augustus? Verse 3 says...

2. *Everyone obeyed him.* “And everyone went to his own town to register.”

Someone has said that this was the darkest hour the world has ever seen. On the throne in Rome sat a man . He ruled with totalitarian authority. No man or woman dared object to his order. When he commanded "all" the world to be registered, it was so. No exceptions, not even a pregnant woman. Caesar Augustus ruled with absolute sovereign power. He was in control.

But was he really? That’s an important question for us to consider when we see powerful people pushing their weight around in Washington DC these days, and Moscow, and Tehran, and throughout the world. Who’s really in control?

The truth is...

B. Caesar Augustus wasn’t really in control. Oh, he thought he was, sure. He thought he ruled. He thought he alone made the decree that caused his subjects to participate in a census, including a Jewish girl named Mary. But little did he know that he was merely a subject doing the bidding of the sovereign King of the universe. Caesar Augustus was oblivious to the fact that his edict was predicted 650 years before he uttered it.

Listen to the prophecy of Micah 5:2, “But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times.”

There’s scene #1 of the birth narrative, the decree. What characteristic of Jesus do we see in it? We see His *might*. Behold the sovereignty of the Christ, my friend! We can be sure of two things.

1. *The Lord is in charge of history.* When you read Luke 2 it sounds like Caesar Augustus is in control. He barks and everyone jumps. When you read today’s news you may wonder who is in control. What’s going on in this world? The Lord knows. The Lord is in charge of history and is preparing things for His second coming just like He did for His first.

Did you realize that the baby Mary carried in her womb simultaneously was holding the universe in His hands? That’s what Colossians 1:15-19 indicates. Did you realize that Jesus Christ is sovereign over the affairs of this world today? He is. He is sovereign over the decisions of today’s powerful rulers too.

And closer to home, did you realize that Jesus Christ is sovereign over the details of your life right now? He is.

2. *The Lord is in charge of your life.* You are here today by His decree. He has something in store for *you*. Amazing.

On Thursday morning I prayed and asked the Lord to give me the opportunity to share Christ with someone that day. About three hours later I received a phone call from someone I hadn’t talked to in awhile, who told me his life was in turmoil, and he wanted to change but couldn’t, and wanted my help. And so I talked with him about the One who could change his life, but not merely so his life could be what he wanted it to be, but what HE wanted it to be. Jesus Christ the Savior is *Lord*.

So first of all, in the birth account we see the *might* of Jesus. There’s more.

II. The majesty of Jesus (4-5)

The second scene focuses on the destination. “So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child (4-5).”

The decree of Caesar Augustus obviously applied to Joseph too. He headed to his ancestors’ stomping grounds for the registration. The trip from Nazareth to Bethlehem was 80 miles. Means of travel for a peasant carpenter like Joseph were primitive. But Bethlehem was the city of his ancestors, so to Bethlehem he must go.

Notice a few geographical terms used by Luke. First he says Joseph “went up.” Though heading south, he went up in elevation. He left “Galilee” and headed for “Judea,” both terms refer to regions in Israel. He left “Nazareth” and ended up in “Bethlehem,” again these are the names of real places in the first century world.

So that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught.

However, though Luke gives us accurate history, his intent isn’t merely to give us history. He wants to introduce us to a real person, namely Jesus the Messiah. In this second scene Luke informs us of two aspects of Jesus’ birth.

A. He was born into obscurity. The Son of God could have picked any home on the planet, but He chose this home, the home of Joseph.

Luke introduces us to Joseph back in 1:27. We actually know very little about this man of God. Matthew informs us that he was a just man (Matt 1:19), a kind man, that he wasn’t willing to see Mary endure public disgrace. Yet for the most part he was a behind the scenes kind of man.

Just think of it. We don’t know how far along Mary was in her pregnancy when Joseph left Nazareth. But undoubtedly the townspeople knew she was with child. And the rumors and gossip must have been vicious. The embarrassment would continue when this betrothed couple reached Bethlehem. When Joseph filled out the registration papers and next to him stood his nine month pregnant, espoused wife, what could he say? “It’s not what you think?” No explanation would make sense to carnal minds.

In fact, you may recall that later in Jesus’ ministry He was called a “glutton” and a “drunkard” (Matt 11:19). If you investigate the Jewish background of these terms, you’ll discover that these terms were flung at a person whose birth was illegitimate.

When Jesus entered the world, He was born into obscurity. But there’s a second aspect to His birth, and Luke emphasizes it as well.

B. He was born into royalty. Notice this detail about Joseph in verse 4, “He belonged to the house and line of David.”

Why does Luke want us to know that Joseph was a descendent of David? It’s because Joseph was Jesus’ legal guardian, and Joseph belonged to the royal line. So did Mary, for that matter (see the Luke 3 genealogy).

Notice something else. What does Luke tell us about Bethlehem in verse 4? He calls it the “town of David.” So twice Luke mentions David in verse 4.

Why is that important? Never before or since had Israel known a king like David. He was a man of God, a true shepherd over God’s flock, Israel. And he was a man to whom God gave this promise in 2 Samuel 8:

Verse 8, “Now then, tell my servant David, ‘This is what the LORD Almighty says: I took you from the pasture and from following the flock *to be ruler* over my people Israel.’”

Verse 12-16, “When your days are over and you rest with your fathers, I will raise up *your offspring* to succeed you, who will come from your own body, and I will establish his kingdom. ¹³ He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and *I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.* ¹⁴ I will be his father, and he will be my son. When he does wrong, I will punish him with the rod of men, with floggings inflicted by men. ¹⁵ But my love will never be taken away from him, as I took it away from Saul, whom I removed from before you. ¹⁶ *Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever.*”

By Joseph's day, it had been centuries since a son of David had ruled in Israel. Anticipation for the Messiah was at fever pitch as the Jews awaited the promised Deliverer. And Luke says, “He’s come.”

When you look at the birth account you discover that Jesus was born both into obscurity and royalty. In scene 2 we see His *majestic royalty*. He is the son of David. Thus He has the necessary credentials to rule the world. He also has the necessary credentials to rule your life.

That being the case, let me ask you a couple of questions.

1. *Do you believe Jesus is the king?* Do you agree with the biblical record that the One who was born in Bethlehem is the Promised King of kings who will rule the universe for ever and ever? Do you believe that He will indeed come again and rule the world? He will. He said He would.

You say, “It sure doesn’t look like Jesus is the king, not when you look at what’s happening in the world. Why doesn’t King Jesus do something now?”

Psalm 2 says He is doing something now. Laughing.

Why do the nations rage

and the peoples plot in vain?

² *The kings of the earth set themselves,*

and the rulers take counsel together,

against the Lord and against his Anointed, saying,

³ *“Let us burst their bonds apart*

and cast away their cords from us.”

⁴ *He who sits in the heavens laughs;*

the Lord holds them in derision.

⁵ *Then he will speak to them in his wrath,*

and terrify them in his fury, saying,

⁶ *“As for me, I have set my King*

on Zion, my holy hill.”

⁷ *I will tell of the decree:*

The Lord said to me, “You are my Son;

today I have begotten you.

⁸ *Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage,*

and the ends of the earth your possession.

⁹ *You shall break them with a rod of iron*

and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.”

¹⁰ *Now therefore, O kings, be wise;*

be warned, O rulers of the earth.

¹¹ *Serve the Lord with fear,*

and rejoice with trembling.

¹² *Kiss the Son,*

lest he be angry, and you perish in the way,

*for his wrath is quickly kindled.
Blessed are all who take refuge in him.*

So, do you believe Jesus is the king, is a critical question. When people do *not*, He laughs, not because it's funny but so tragic.

A more personal question would be this.

2. *Is Jesus your king?* Have you submitted your life to His rule? "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved," says the evangelist in Romans 10:9.

Bethlehem means "house of bread." How fitting that the Bread of Life would enter the world there. You need to know this about King Jesus, my friend. He is unlike any other king. He rules, yes, but He meets the deepest needs of His subjects. That's why He came to earth.

He came to do for us what we couldn't do for ourselves. Thirty-three years after the event we're considering, Jesus sacrificed His spotless life on a Roman cross. Not because He failed, but because He did exactly what He came to do the first time, to provide an atonement, a covering for the sins of hell-bound sinners. The King of kings literally died for His people, then on the third day He rose again, and one day He will return to this world and rule in righteousness, His people at His side.

So the question is, is He your king? Are you living your life under His Lordship? Are you raising your kids for Him, working your job for His honor, doing your school work so you can advance His kingdom?

But there's more. When you take a close look at the birth narrative, you learn three things about Jesus. We've seen the might of Jesus and the majesty of Jesus. In verses 6-7 we see...

III. The meekness of Jesus (6-7)

The next two verses are breathtaking in their simplicity. Luke calmly relays the greatest news ever told, that God entered human history. He records the event so quietly, so very matter of factly. There's no gender reveal party, no baby shower, no grandparents in the next room, no balloons in the corner. Just this...

Verse 6—"While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born." How long were Joseph and Mary in Bethlehem prior to the birth? We don't know. A lot of living for God involves just...living...and *waiting*, for God so often gives His people just enough light for the next step, then the next, then the next.

Finally the day came, the day of the virgin's delivery. Verse 7—"And she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn."

See the meekness of Jesus in this, my friend. In the way he tells the story, Luke makes it very clear that...

A. The Lord humbled himself in His birth. There never was a greater demonstration of humility than the incarnation. Keep in mind we are talking about the God who created heaven and earth, and Luke tells us that He subjected Himself to three actions accomplished by Mary. First of all, the delivery.

1. *Mary delivered him.* She "brought forth her firstborn son." As in any birth, this baby is completely dependent on his mother. He has no say in this matter. He is vulnerable. He waits for his mother's contractions to move him from the seclusion of her womb into the hostile world outside. When the Son of God entered the world He subjected Himself to the birth experience. Mary brought forth her son.

Luke is very specific. This was "her" son, not Joseph's. And this was her "firstborn" son. He was firstborn in two senses. He was first in TIME, since others would come

later. He was also firstborn in another sense. The word means first in IMPORTANCE. The New Testament refers to Jesus as the “firstborn of creation (Col 1:15),” the “firstborn from the dead (Col 1:18),” and “the firstborn among many brethren (Rom 8:29).”

2. *Mary wrapped him.* She “wrapped Him in cloths,” in “swaddling clothes.”

Luke again is very graphic. Mary wrapped the child. Mary herself did it. There was no one to do it for her. Think of the loneliness of the occasion, the humility of it all, for Mary, and even more so for the Creator who became a created baby.

I can't help but wonder what Joseph and Mary were thinking as they beheld the birth of this child. Joseph had heard the angel say to him, “That which is conceived of her is of the Holy Spirit. . . He will save His people from their sins (Matt 1:20-21).” And Mary heard the angel announce, “Behold, you will conceive and bring forth a son. . . He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest. . . (Luke 1:31-32).” They both knew this was God's anointed Deliverer, the long awaited Messiah.

Yet when He was born, there was no fanfare, only poverty and obscurity and rejection. They must have thought, “He deserves better than this. Why did He choose us?”

Then notice the third action of Mary recorded by Luke.

3. *Mary laid him in a manger.* She “placed him in a manger.” Again, the baby has no say in where he goes. *She* placed him. He is in her hands, and He submits to her decision as to where to lay Him.

So when the Son of God entered the world, He did not come to the household of Caesar, or Herod, or the High Priest. Instead, He chose a poor teenage girl that everyone thought was immoral. You will carry Me. You will deliver Me. You will place me.

And she did. She placed him in a space reserved for animals. His first stop was a “manger.” The same word is translated “stall” in Luke 13:15. It can mean either a feeding trough or an enclosure for animals. Some scholars feel Jesus was born in a cave where animals were sheltered. Others feel Jesus was born in a peasant home. It was common in such homes for the animals to live under the same roof as the people (for two reasons: added heat, and to keep them from being stolen). Still others suggest that Jesus was born in the open air, under the stars, in some roofless cattle pen.

Regardless of which view may be right, of this we can be sure. The Lord humbled Himself in His birth. He whom angel hosts had been adoring and worshipping and serving, had now subjected Himself to the lowest experience of the very image-bearers He had created.

But there's more to see. Why was Jesus placed in a manger? Luke tells us, “Because there was no room for them in the inn.” How sad! No room. The only place available for the Deliverer who had come to save His people was one usually occupied by animals.

J. R. H. Moorman made a fitting observation, “When Christ first came among us we pushed Him into an outhouse; and we have done our best to keep him there ever since.”

So Luke ends the third scene, the delivery, in which we see the humility, the meekness of Jesus. Everything associated with His birth speaks of His humility. His peasant parents, the donkey trip, the feed trough cradle, the absence of a nurse to help Mary. What a humble birth! What a humble Savior!

And we are His people, beloved. There's a powerful lesson here for us, is there not? As with our Savior, so it is to be with us. That's what Philippians 2:5 tells us, “Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus.” And verses 6-8 show us what His attitude was: “Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped,⁷ but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant,

being made in human likeness.⁸ And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross!”

Yes, brothers and sisters. Our Lord humbled Himself, and...

B. The Lord expects us to humble ourselves. “God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble (James 4:6). “Humble yourself therefore under God’s mighty hand, that He may lift you up in due time (1 Peter 5:6).”

What pleases God? Look at Jesus and you see it. Humility.

This is our problem, of course. By nature, we are not humble. We go our own way. We want to be made much of. We are enslaved to our self-first, self-most mentality.

Humble yourselves, says the Lord to us. My friend, if you want to please God you and I must humble ourselves in three specific ways.

1. *You must humble yourself to be saved.* It's humbling to admit, “I'm lost. I'm a sinner. I'm helpless. I can't save myself. I need someone to do it for me.” That's humbling, but it's essential, for there's no other way to be saved.

A rich man came to see Jesus once, to gain eternal life, he said. But he left as lost as when he came. Why? Because he refused to humble himself.

Dear friend, perhaps you are here today and to this point in your life you have refused to humble yourself before God. I exhort you to look at the manger scene. If the Lord of heaven would humble Himself in such fashion to provide salvation for you, how can you proudly refuse to humble yourself and receive His gracious offer? Confess your pride to Him right now. Agree with His assessment, that you are a hopeless, helpless, unworthy sinner, and receive Him as the worthy Savior that He is, and He will save you.

There's a second way. First, you must humble yourself to be saved.

2. *You must humble yourself to live the Christian life.* Why do we get so hung up on our rights? Every day we need to see ourselves as Jesus did. See our Savior as He lowers Himself into this world. He came to serve, not be served. This is our calling.

We all know people who aren't in church today because someone slighted them once. It could happen to us, too. But it won't happen, not if we humble ourselves as did our Savior.

Maybe you're struggling with your lot in life right now. You feel you deserve better—better health, a better family, a better job, better whatever. If so, I urge you to think this thought...

There was no room for Jesus in the inn. Throughout his life, there was no room for Jesus, except one place. Do you know where that was?

On the cross. And He went there willingly. For me. For you. He humbled Himself.

Dear friend, to be saved, you must humble yourself. To live the Christian life, you must humble yourself.

Something strikes me as ironic when I read Luke 2. Christmas for Jesus was humbling. Did you ever stop to think of all the things we do at Christmas that bring attention to ourselves? We receive new clothes and wear them to church and want everybody to notice. We give gifts, sometimes in order to get a gift in return. We decorate our houses with lights, often again to make an impression. Granted, we can do these things for the right motive, but it's a battle, isn't it?

For us Christmas is showy, almost sensational. For the Lord it was humbling. No fancy lights, no elaborate decorations. Just a stable. No audience but a few animals. In fact, His first visitor as we'll see next time was not Caesar, nor Herod, nor the High Priest, but some lower-class, unclean shepherds.

Know this. Just like you must humble yourself to be saved and then to live the Christian life, you must do the same in a third area.

3. *You must humble yourself to appreciate the significance of Christmas.* I challenge you as I do myself. Let's humble ourselves today and then we'll begin to appreciate the real significance of Christmas.