

## **Bible Study for Luke 2:1-20 and Matthew 2:1-18**

*You will get more out of this Bible Study if you discuss it with others. Jesus says where two or three are gathered in his name, he is there in the midst of them. If your friends don't have this handout, get them to sign up for our newsletter at [LaJollaLutheranChurch.com](http://LaJollaLutheranChurch.com). They'll get a great Bible Study each Monday about 2 p.m.*

### **Monday** Luke 2:1-7 (NRSV)

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

*What are some of the emotions that Mary and Joseph may have felt:*

*traveling 80 miles when 9 months pregnant to pay a tax to a foreign government  
going on a road trip with cousins and relatives, pregnant and not yet married  
staying in a shelter with cows because the hotels were all full  
placing your baby in the cows' feeding trough because you didn't have anyplace else*

### **Tuesday** Luke 2:8-15 (NRSV)

In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!"

*What are some of the emotions you would have felt if you were one of the shepherds:*

*watching over a flock at night in the winter  
seeing the angel and the glory of the Lord  
hearing that the Messiah was born that day  
hearing that the Messiah was lying in a cows' feeding trough  
realizing it was possible that you were one of the people God favored*

### **Wednesday** Luke 2:16-20 (NRSV)

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us." So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

*What do you like best about the Christmas story? What is one of your favorite Christmas memories?*

### **Thursday** Matthew 2:1-12 (NRSV)

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, "Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his

star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage."

When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet: 'And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel.'"

Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage." When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

*Matthew reports on the journey of the wise men, who traveled to the palace where they expected to find the new king. Instead they met a ruthless and jealous ruler who concealed his true motives. When the wise men finally met up with Mary and Joseph, they found the baby born to be king was staying in a much simpler accommodation than Herod was.*

*Joseph heard from God in a dream. What are some ways you hear from God?*

#### **Friday**      Matthew 2:13-18 (NRSV)

Now after they had left, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him." Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt, and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet, "Out of Egypt I have called my son."

When Herod saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, he was infuriated, and he sent and killed all the children in and around Bethlehem who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had learned from the wise men. Then was fulfilled what had been spoken through the prophet Jeremiah: "A voice was heard in Ramah, wailing and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be consoled, because they are no more."

*People often don't remember what the first Christmas was really like. As a result, they get confused when they encounter evil. But when Jesus was born, not only were there angels singing and shepherds rejoicing and wise men bowing, there was the cold discomfort of a cow's stable and the imminent danger of a ruthless, murderous king. If you encounter more than one thing going on in your life at a time, it's not that unusual.*

*What good events are you experiencing? What bad events are you having to deal with?*

#### **Saturday**

*What are you doing this week because of the birth of Jesus? What would you like help with?*

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