

# A NEW WAY TO BE HUMAN

SESSION SNAPSHOT



## HOW CAN LIFE ON EARTH LOOK DIFFERENT?

### STUDY THEME

A Missional God

### FOCAL PASSAGES

Luke 2:8-12,16-18,25-32

### BACKGROUND PASSAGES

Luke 2:1-35

### SESSION OVERVIEW

If you never saw the documentary “Born Into Brothels,” you really should. And if you haven’t seen it in a long time, maybe it’s time to watch it again—with a new perspective. Photographer Zana Briski went to Calcutta’s red light district to document the lives of the prostitutes there. Recognizing that she needed to earn the women’s trust, she lived among them, befriending a group of kids and teaching them photography. As she was with them, she showed them that life could be different.

Luke 2 tells the story of Christmas—the story of God, who announced the good news that life can be different. It tells us the story of a Person who showed us a new way to be human. And it was because Jesus came to live among us. That story didn’t stop on a night in Bethlehem two thousand years ago, though. It continues today. Only, we are now called to go out and live among people, to show them the hope of a new way to live.

- 1 Becoming Fully Human (Luke 2:8-12)
- 2 Seeing Is Believing (Luke 2:16-18)
- 3 And One for All (Luke 2:25-32)

### PREPARATION

Use PACK ITEM 3, “Weekly Preparation Reminder,” as a preparation tool this week. Adjust the schedule to meet the needs of your class.

Check out the *LifeMatters Blog* at [www.threadsmedia.com/lifematters](http://www.threadsmedia.com/lifematters) for additional thoughts on the lesson.

Make copies of PACK ITEM 4, “Weekly Prayer Journal,” to distribute to the class.

## SESSION OPENER

In theater terminology, there's something known as "the fourth wall." It refers to the invisible barrier between the audience and the actors. It allows the audience to become partakers of the events on stage. Imagine how strange it would be to cross that line. You're enjoying the story unfolding in front of you, and suddenly you hear, "Hey, you, the guy in the third row. Can you get me a glass of water?" This would be called "breaking the fourth wall," a time when the actor becomes aware of the audience and purposely engages them (think *Ferris Bueller's Day Off*).

And God did just that, except from the opposite direction. If Shakespeare was right, and all the world's a stage, then God is the director. But He crossed the fourth wall, and became not only the director, but also the principle actor. The divine became human. The mystery became understandable. The Word became flesh.

This week, just a few days before we celebrate Christmas, let's read the story of a miraculous birth with a new perspective. Let's consider how this story forever changed the course of history and personally changed our story.

## BECOMING FULLY HUMAN { LUKE 2:8-12 }

<sup>8</sup>In the same region, shepherds were staying out in the fields and keeping watch at night over their flock. <sup>9</sup>Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. <sup>10</sup>But the angel said to them, "Don't be afraid, for look, I proclaim to you good news of great joy that will be for all the people: <sup>11</sup>today a Savior, who is Messiah the Lord, was born for you in the city of David. <sup>12</sup>This will be the sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped snugly in cloth and lying in a feeding trough."

This is the message of Christmas: God came down. It's easy to gloss over the miracle, what with the lights and twinkle and foil-wrapped gifts and all; but it's also easy to miss the mundane in the miraculous. There's hay and a manger . . . and a baby. It's easy to see the child like the Christmas cards portray Him—with lighted halo and a smile of perfect contentment. But this baby is wrapped snugly in everyday life. The child is fully God and fully human. God . . . came . . . down. That's the miracle.

- *Why was it necessary for God to come down here? (Come on, dig deeper. Go beyond the Sunday School answers.)\**
- *Is it difficult for you to think of Jesus as fully human? fully God?*
- *What has kept you distracted from the miraculous this Christmas season?*

Nativity sets are nice. Mary and Joseph and the Christ child gather serenely with the donkey, cow, sheep, shepherd, and three wise men. Nevermind that the shepherd(s) had long since split by the time the kings arrived on the scene. (Let alone the fact that the holy family was already back in Bethlehem by the time the stragglers showed up.) The idea that a shepherd (or group of shepherds) would have been there at all should not be easily overlooked. (See the sidebar on "Shepherds.") Redemption is not just for holy angels but for all people. It's good news even for dirty, smelly, gruff humanity.



### During the Session

Display PACK ITEM 9, "A New Way to Be Human Session Poster."

Distribute copies of PACK ITEM 4, "Weekly Prayer Journal," so the learners can write down prayer needs of the class and remember them in prayer during the week.

*\*Additional discussion question that does not appear in the learner guide.*

# NOTES ↓



## Shepherds

*In that time period, shepherds were outcasts for a number of reasons. One, they were considered unclean by Jewish law because of their dealings with livestock. Two, they smelled. They weren't just camping out for a few nights in the fields—they lived there. There were no showers or indoor plumbing, and these guys were dirty. Three, the shepherds were rough and tumble. They had to sleep outside during all kinds of weather to protect their flocks. They were definitely more like con man Sawyer than Dr. Jack Shepherd (note: shameless "Lost" reference).*

- *What would be an equivalent example to the shepherds in our culture?\**
- *Why send such an important message to a group of outcasts?\**
- *Do you relate more to a "shiny" version of Christmas or the "gritty" version? Why?*
- *In what ways is God taking your brokenness and making you whole?*
- *Are there people that you have trouble seeing as redeemable?*

This is also the message of Christmas: Reconciliation is possible. To pull it off, Jesus was sent to live among people—to live out God's presence and to reflect God's character. He asks us to do the same thing today. The word for this is *incarnational*. John 1:14 defines the word this way: "The Word became flesh and took up residence among us."

- *Do you feel connected to Christ this Christmas season?*
- *Who are you living among?*
- *Is it difficult to reflect God's character in real-life relationships?*

This is the message of Christmas: Jesus became fully human, and through Him we, too, can become more fully human—the people God intended us to be, the people we can become.

- *In what ways are you still "becoming"?*
- *Who do you think God intended us/you to be?*

## SEEING IS BELIEVING { LUKE 2:16-18 }

<sup>16</sup>They hurried off and found both Mary and Joseph, and the baby who was lying in the feeding trough. <sup>17</sup>After seeing them, they reported the message they were told about this child, <sup>18</sup>and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them.

The shepherds hurried off on a hopeful search. They seemed to be motivated by genuine faith, but don't miss the fact that they also responded by wanting to see for themselves. We can relate, right? In a world of plastic, aren't we all looking for something genuine?

- *What kind of proof are you looking for?*
- *Is that quest for proof a legitimate search for faith, or is it a cop-out?\**
- *What experience have you had that made you believe?*

Still, maybe there's something we can learn from the shepherds. After seeing, they believed . . . and that changed them. They couldn't keep this news to themselves and immediately went off to tell people. They told their story to anyone willing to listen.

- *What's your own story of seeing Jesus in your life?*
- *When was the last time you were excited about sharing your story?*

Some hear truth, and that's the end of it. But some go a step further to where belief takes hold and changes a person. It's a glimpse at a new way of living. The shepherds

went back to their “old” lives, but they were transformed. And they were filled with possibility and hope and worship.

- *What would it look like for you to live as a new person in your current situation?*
- *What transformation are you experiencing, if any?*

*Amazed* seems to be one of Luke’s favorite words. (See the sidebar word study.) It’s not a word we use very often. We’re sort of jaded, truth be told, and we’re not easily amazed. Life is filled with amazing stuff—miraculous stuff—yet we often miss it. Like the presence of the Divine in the every day. Haven’t seen that lately? Keep looking. God is with us, and that’s no less amazing today than it was two thousand years ago.

- *When was the last time you were actually amazed?*
- *What’s amazing about your everyday life?*
- *Do you believe in the miraculous? (Really?)*

## AND ONE FOR ALL { LUKE 2:25-32 }

<sup>25</sup>There was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon. This man was righteous and devout, looking forward to Israel’s consolation, and the Holy Spirit was on him. <sup>26</sup>It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he saw the Lord’s Messiah. <sup>27</sup>Guided by the Spirit, he entered the temple complex. When the parents brought in the child Jesus to perform for Him what was customary under the law, <sup>28</sup>Simeon took Him up in his arms, praised God, and said: <sup>29</sup>Now, Master, You can dismiss Your slave in peace, according to Your word. <sup>30</sup>For my eyes have seen Your salvation. <sup>31</sup>You have prepared it in the presence of all peoples— <sup>32</sup>a light for revelation to the Gentiles and glory to Your people Israel.

Simeon was called “righteous and devout.” He had been waiting a long time, but that waiting implied a hopeful anticipation. He was actively waiting; his life wasn’t on hold. He believed, and that changed both the how and the why of his life. He lived in hope of Israel’s redemption and God’s kingdom on earth. He held on to that promise.

- *What is the longest that you’ve had to wait for something?*
- *Is there anything that you’re hopefully waiting for right now?*
- *How does belief change the how and why of your life?*

Simeon saw Jesus for who He was and for who He would become. He saw Jesus as salvation, not as a prophet announcing salvation or as a way to salvation.

- *What’s the difference between viewing Jesus as the way to salvation and Jesus as salvation?*

Simeon also rightly saw God’s salvation as inclusive of all people, which made this old man remarkably progressive for his day. Flash forward to Luke 4:14-30 when Jesus announced to a group gathered on a hillside that He was the Messiah God had



### Amazed

From the Greek *thaumazo*. Luke used it 13 times in his Gospel narrative. In 2:33, Mary and Joseph “were amazed at what was being said about” their Son. In 5:9, Peter was “amazed” at the pile of fish that appeared after Jesus told him to throw in his net. In 8:25, the disciples were “amazed” after Jesus calmed a scary storm. In 24:12, Peter was “amazed” when he ran to find an empty tomb.



**Conclude the Lesson**

Wrap up the class discussion by addressing the personal application questions listed in the AND FINALLY . . . section. If your class is too large to actively interact with these questions, split them into smaller groups. Make sure to allow enough time to process the lesson and application.

You can decide to include discussion of the CONNECT section during the session or direct the class to read and discuss it in their small groups.



**Spend a few minutes in prayer with your group:**

Philippians 2:5-11 was probably an early Christian hymn. To close in prayer, read these words as a confession to Christ. Then pray that your attitude will be like His this season.

promised. Those words went over well, and people were even amazed—until He said the Gentiles were included too.

- *How is the Christmas narrative a narrative of God's mission in the world?\**
- *Does a message of salvation for all people change the way you view Christmas?*

**AND FINALLY . . .**

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When we talk about the Christmas narrative, it's easy to focus on the joy and the hope. And while it is joyful and it is hopeful, it's not some warm-fuzzy encounter that we get to comfortably hold onto while we sit back and watch God do His thing around us. It's a raw reality that changes the how and the why of life. Jesus came to reveal God to humanity. He asks us to do the same in this world.

Jesus, who was fully God, made a choice to also become fully human and live among us. He engaged in terrestrial, everyday living, but He lived differently among us. As followers of Jesus, with God's Spirit in us, we are called to practice incarnational living, to live as Jesus did in our world. To live with others and identify with others. To live every day differently. We must live on purpose: to reveal God through Jesus.

- *How can you focus your attention on telling your "story"?*
- *Has your perception of the Christmas story changed any this week?*
- *Does your life resemble a life on purpose or a life trying to survive?*
- *How can your "why" of life change the way you live?*

**LEAD YOUR CLASS TO CONNECT . . .**

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Direct learners to page 29 of the learner guide. Go over "Connect with Yourself" with the class as a whole and discuss ways to connect to the world at large. Refer to pages 144-145 and read about *Shaohannah's Hope* (also on page 29 of the learner guide). Consider donating to this organization as a class.

**CONNECT WITH YOUR YOURSELF**

It's easy to think about serving people during the holidays, but what about after that? Spend an evening reflecting on what it might mean to live incarnationally in your world in the coming new year. Watch "Born Into Brothels" and reflect on the way one person can make a difference in the lives of others. Then consider how you might live as Jesus did among others in your community. Maybe it's serving at a homeless shelter. Maybe it's taking a community-ed class (like cooking or photography) as a way to meet some people outside your regular circle. Maybe it's being more purposeful in getting to know and spending time with your neighbors. Whatever it is, put it on your calendar and follow through.

**CONNECT AS A COUPLE**

Direct couples to read through their section together this week and remain on the lookout for ways they can strengthen their relationship with each other and with God.

# A NEW WAY TO BE HUMAN

## BECOMING FULLY HUMAN

*Luke 2:8-12*

The message at the core of missions is about salvation through Jesus Christ. It's a message about what Jesus did to provide God's gift of salvation to people everywhere. Christians affirm that the news we share isn't merely beliefs and practices associated with certain religious perspectives. Quite the contrary, the message we broadcast centers exclusively in the Person of Jesus, God's Son and our Savior. The proclamation of His life, death, and resurrection is our message. For that reason, Jesus' birth has particular significance for believers who have a heart for missions.

Luke began the account of Jesus' birth started in the manger in Bethlehem with Mary and Joseph and the newborn baby. However, the scene shifted to the fields not far away from the little town, a region in which shepherds were "keeping watch at night over their flock." There in the night, they found themselves in the center of God's plan to share the message of Christ's birth. Playing such a pivotal role was somewhat unusual for shepherds since people then rarely thought of shepherds as spiritual leaders. In fact, shepherds didn't have a very good reputation among the religious leaders at that time. But God decided to have the good news of His Son's birth brought to

their attention before Israel's religious leaders knew of it.

The proclamation of Jesus' birth showed how much the Lord wanted knowledge of Him to be shared. An "angel" appearing before the shepherds signaled God's desire for them to know about the arrival of the "Messiah." The angel's appearance and the "glory" shining "around" the shepherds "terrified" them. Of course, they probably never expected to see an angel standing right before their eyes in the glow of God's glory. The shepherds probably assumed that an angel delivering an important message from God would have appeared to a priest or a king, not to ordinary people like them.

The angel's appearance to the shepherds signified the reality that God's message about Jesus has no limits. Christians have a message all people everywhere need to hear. In fact, the worldwide reach of the message about Christ was in the angel's announcement. The angel said the message was "for all the people," not just for the shepherds he visited that night. (See this lesson's sidebar "Jesus: Savior for all People.")

The shepherds were "afraid" not only because they suddenly saw the "glory of the Lord," but because they likely assumed the angel's message concerned God's judgment of them. But the angel calmed the shepherds' fears when he proclaimed that his announcement



Read the article "Mary, All We Know" in the Winter 2008-2009 issue of Biblical Illustrator or on the Winter 2008-2009 Biblical Illustrator Plus (CD-ROM).

Two previous Biblical Illustrator articles "Simeon and Jesus" (Winter 2002) and "The Consolation of Israel" (Fall 1990) relate to this lesson and can be found on the Winter 2008-2009 Biblical Illustrator Plus (CD-ROM).



▣ Compare and contrast the poor shepherds in Luke 2:8-12 with the wealthy wise men in Matthew 2:1-12. Identify their differences and write your answers in the appropriate column. How do these differences affirm to you that Jesus came for all people?

was “good news” and one of “great joy.” The words “good news” are from the Greek word that means “evangelize.” Literally the angel said to the shepherds, “I evangelize you with great joy.” The Greek word does not occur in the other three Gospels except in a quotation in Matthew 11:15. Luke used the word 10 times in his Gospel, and it occurs in the New Testament more than 50 times. The word evangelize means “to preach the gospel, to bring good news,” which was the message about the birth of God’s Son and first spoken by God’s angel to tell the most glorious news possible to tell. The long-awaited Messiah had arrived! For centuries, the Israelites waited for God to fulfill His promise to send His Messiah who would be their Savior as well as their Lord. Baby Jesus was the promised Redeemer, God in flesh!

The angel spelled out to the shepherds yet more details related to the Messiah’s arrival. They could find Him in the little

way, Jesus faced the same stresses and strains all people face. In that way, He can identify with us completely. Furthermore, the angel said to the shepherds that the Messiah was “for you.” Jesus’ arrival showed His investment in the shepherds and everyone else who hears the good news about His birth.

Other details about Jesus’ birth also reflected His identification with people. The angel gave the shepherds a clear sign to direct them to the Messiah. They would find a newborn baby who was “lying in a feeding trough” of a common stable instead of a luxurious cradle in a throne room. Jesus was not clothed in royal garments but “wrapped” in everyday “cloth.” The angel’s description not only served as a sign to help the shepherds identify the baby Jesus, it also disclosed the way the Messiah would relate to His people. He is the humble Savior who came to give His life for sinners and who saves anyone who comes to Him.

## THE ANGEL DIDN’T RELATE AN AMBIGUOUS MESSAGE AROUND A RELIGIOUS THEME, BUT PROCLAIMED CLEARLY THE GOOD NEWS THAT GOD’S MESSIAH HAD ARRIVED.

town of Bethlehem, which everyone called the “city of David,” because the revered Old Testament king had been born there. The prophet Micah also identified Bethlehem with the coming of the Messiah (Micah 5:2).

The angel added that the Messiah “was born.” He didn’t appear out of thin air like the angel had. Rather, Jesus came into the world in the way all others come—by birth. He was born as a baby and grew toward adulthood. Along the

The angel’s proclamation of Jesus’ birth continues to serve as the model for the message about Him that Christians share today. The angel didn’t relate an ambiguous message around a religious theme, but proclaimed clearly the good news that God’s Messiah had arrived. Jesus is the central focus of the church’s missions message. The good news of the gospel—our news to share—is Jesus. Our message is not merely a system of beliefs and practices; it is a Person—Jesus Christ.

When we share the good news about Jesus Christ, we follow the example given to us by the angel who announced His birth to the shepherds.

## SEEING IS BELIEVING

*Luke 2:16-18*

The angel's message about Jesus' birth frightened the shepherds at first, but then it had another effect on them. A heavenly host filling the night sky and praising God accompanied the angelic message about the arrival of the Messiah. The shepherds responded to what they saw by deciding to go into Bethlehem to see for themselves the newborn Messiah. Baby Jesus was the subject of the angel's announcement. Soon He became the center of the shepherds' search. In due time, He became the central focus of their message too.

The shepherds wasted no time once the angel left them. "They hurried off" to Bethlehem. The impact of the angelic announcement set the pace for the shepherds as they made their way into town. By saying the shepherds found the newborn Messiah, Luke gave the impression they had to go through the town in search of Him. The shepherds looked for "the sign" (v. 12) the angel gave them. At last they "found both Mary and Joseph, and the baby" where they had placed Him in the "feeding trough," just as the angel said.

In the presence of the baby Jesus, the shepherds began to share with Mary and Joseph the "message they were told about this child" while they were attending to their flock of sheep out in the fields. They didn't embellish what they saw and heard, but the shepherds likely "reported" it in an excited manner.

Notice the connection between their personal experience and the shepherds' eagerness to share it with others. They

had encountered the angel and his message that centered on Jesus Christ. In turn, they shared what they experienced with Mary and Joseph. Christians today do well to follow the shepherds' example. One natural result of a personal experience with Jesus is sharing about Him with others. We should be willing to share the good news of Christ with anyone who has not heard about Him.

In our world today, millions of people still do not know Jesus. The International Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention points out the staggering number of people who have not heard the good news of Jesus Christ. An estimated 1.7 billion individuals around the world, which the IMB calls "Last Frontier" peoples, have no access to the gospel at all.

We can count on the message of Christ to have an impact on people who hear it. The shepherds saw for themselves the penetrating effect their message about Jesus' birth had on others. In addition to telling Joseph and Mary, the shepherds reported in Bethlehem what the angel had told them about Baby Jesus, and the effect on those "who heard it" was striking. What the shepherds said about Jesus amazed the townspeople.

The word "amazed" deserves special attention. It's one of Luke's favorite words. He used it 13 times in his Gospel. For instance, Luke used amazed to describe the effect of Jesus' miracles on the crowds (11:14). In the accounts associated with John the Baptist's birth and Jesus' birth, Luke used the word 4 times. In addition to portraying everyone's reaction to the shepherds' message, amazed describes the response of the people to Zechariah (1:21,63). Luke also chose it to depict the reaction of Mary and Joseph to what Simeon said about Jesus when they brought Him to the temple (2:33).

The word amazed implies a reaction characterized by pondering. Granted, the



☒ *Identify a personal experience when you realized how amazing God is. Have you shared that experience with others? How?*

☒ *Where will you go this year for Christmas? Even if you're staying home for Christmas, you most likely will not follow your usual routine. Think about all the stops from point A to B. Think about the different people you will encounter as you travel from one place to another. How will you share the good news of Jesus with those you meet? Map out a plan to take advantage of opportunities to share Jesus.*

people responded in amazement to the shepherds' message, implying an intense emotional reaction to what they heard.

The message struck an emotional chord with them, but it did something else. It made the people begin to direct their thoughts toward Jesus Christ. In particular, they started to wonder about the impact of Jesus' birth on God's purpose to redeem His people. Consequently, their thoughts turned toward the theological implications as well as the emotional issues related to the news the shepherds told them. That's what Luke had in mind when he said the people were amazed when they heard about the angel's appearance to the shepherds and his message to them about the Savior's birth.

Being amazed set the people on the path of thinking about a personal relationship with God. However, we should not confuse amazement with faith. Being amazed at God's message about Jesus is a preliminary step toward faith. For some of the people who heard the shepherds talk about their experience, it was probably the last step. As far as we know, the crowds in verse 18 were initially amazed but did nothing more. Mary went on to ponder "all these things in her heart" (v. 19).

For millions of people, the message of Jesus continues to be a source of amazement. It still has the same potent impact on individuals around the world who hear it. They receive it gladly, and many go on to receive Jesus Christ.

However, many people in the world still have not heard the good news. As stated previously, 1.7 billion of them don't have access to the gospel message. No wonder the International Mission Board has referred to this large and growing group as "The Last Frontier." Christians need to be on mission so all people can hear the amazing message of God's gift of salvation in Jesus Christ.

## AND ONE FOR ALL

Luke 2:25-32

The shepherds shared the message they heard about Jesus' birth, and people responded with amazement. The news gripped many in Bethlehem who heard it. In Jerusalem, about five miles north of Bethlehem, lived a man who also received from God the news about Jesus. He was a relatively unknown gentleman who met Joseph and Mary as they made their way into the temple in Jerusalem. At the appropriate time in Jesus' infancy, they brought Him to the temple to fulfill the Old Testament law regarding His dedication (see Exodus 13:1-2).

A man named Simeon greeted Joseph and Mary. An obscure person in the story of Jesus' birth, little is known about Simeon. Luke said he was not a pagan, but a man who was "righteous and devout" in his walk with God. Simeon was looking forward to the arrival of the Messiah, which would lead to "Israel's consolation," meaning the coming of the Messiah with His salvation for the nation. The Holy Spirit had promised Simeon he would see the "Lord's Messiah" before he died. Simeon trusted the Spirit to fulfill that promise. Luke also said the Holy Spirit played an important role in Simeon's life. That the Holy Spirit was "on him" added credibility to what he said about the Messiah. Therefore, Simeon's testimony regarding Jesus is reliable.

"Guided by the Spirit" into the "temple complex" one day, Simeon entered at the same time Mary and Joseph came with the "child Jesus." At the moment Simeon saw Jesus, he also saw the fulfillment of the promise the Spirit had made to him. Then he spoke about Christ with others listening to his proclamation.

Overcome with joy when he saw Jesus, Simeon "praised God" as he held the Messiah "in his arms." Seeing Jesus

prompted him to become yet another messenger in the growing number of messengers who announced Christ's birth. Simeon's proclamation took the form of a prayer of thanksgiving to God for allowing him to see the Messiah. He began by saying that now he was ready to die in peace. God had allowed Simeon to lay his eyes on the Savior who would bring about Israel's salvation.

But Simeon said something else in his prayer that also strikes at the heart of Christians' missions message. He declared that God had "prepared [His] salvation [so] all peoples" could know it. The word "Gentiles" in verse 32 comes from the Greek word *ethnos*, which is translated literally as "nations." It's the same word Jesus used in the Great Commission when He commanded the disciples to "make disciples of all nations" (Matthew 28:19).

With his declaration, Simeon showed that God didn't intend to limit His salvation to the Jewish nation. Instead, he said the good news about Jesus is for Gentiles as well. As Simeon continued to praise God, he became more explicit

generations. They lived in the anticipation that God's Messiah would arrive to redeem Israel.

Simeon's prayer serves as an excellent example for us as we take seriously both the message and the task of proclaiming Jesus Christ around the world. Being engaged in missions prompts us to praise the Lord for the privilege of sharing the good news of Jesus Christ with all people, no matter where they live or how far we must go to reach them. We have a tremendous opportunity to share the message about Christ with the world. Serving Jesus by proclaiming His message is our greatest privilege.

Along with praising God for the opportunity to share Christ around the world, each Christian and each church should determine how they will extend their reach with the gospel. The shepherds left the fields and made their way to Bethlehem to share the message the angel announced to them. Likewise, Simeon proclaimed the good news of Christ in the temple complex in the presence of others. Where will you go this year to proclaim the same gospel

## PRAISE GOD FOR THE PRIVILEGE OF SERVING CHRIST BY PROCLAIMING THE GOSPEL EVERYWHERE. YOUR DOING SO IS WHAT IT MEANS TO HAVE A HEART FOR MISSIONS.

about the baby Jesus he held in his arms. Jesus was (and is) the "light for revelation to the Gentiles." They live in spiritual darkness and need the light of Jesus to shine for them the way of salvation. Also, Simeon said Jesus was the "glory" for which the people of Israel had waited for

message? How will you participate in the proclamation of the message so all people everywhere can hear it? Praise God for the privilege of serving Christ by proclaiming the gospel everywhere. Your doing so is what it means to have a heart for missions.



**Jesus: Savior for All People**  
*Luke wrote about Jesus in a way that showed His salvation is not limited to Israel. Of course, the gospel has its origin in the Old Testament, and Luke pointed out that the Person and work of Jesus is connected with Old Testament patriarchs such as Abraham, Moses, and the prophets. However, the message about Jesus, Luke said, is also for Gentiles. By including Gentiles in God's salvation plan, Luke demonstrated that God's gift of salvation through Jesus Christ is for all people (see Luke 2:32; 7:1-10; 13:18-21; 14:15-24; 20:9-17; 23:39-43,47; 24:46-47).*