

Luke 2:6-18 (NIV)

⁶While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born,
⁷and 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.

⁸And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping
 watch over their flocks at night.

⁹An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord
 shone around them, and they were terrified.

¹⁰But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news
 of great joy that will be for all the people.

¹¹Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is
 Christ the Lord.

¹²This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and
 lying in a manger.”

¹³Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the
 angel, praising God and saying,

¹⁴”Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his
 favor rests.”

¹⁵When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds
 said to one another, “Let’s go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has
 happened, which the Lord has told us about.”

¹⁶So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who
 was lying in the manger.

¹⁷When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had
 been told them about this child,

¹⁸and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them.

42-02-01-Brand-New Babies

Christmastide, New Year, new birth, evangelism

Luke 2:6-18

God has two brand-new babies He wants us to take care of.

INTRODUCTION: (text: as Scripture reading)

–[In my OB work, I took care of thousands of newborn babies] **HOM.idea:**

These two new babies are: 1) the *brand-new Christmas Baby*, 2) the
baby New Year. Both have great *potential*, but let’s *look first* at...

- I. The Potential of the Brand-New Christmas Baby**– v.6, “*the time came for the baby to be born*”) [In 1992, after a semi-miraculous dream, I wrote a poem to try to describe how babies change the lives of mothers. It’s called “MAMA”: “Mama” is a term we hear, a title used each day. / It often is the name we first conform our lips to say: / A common, household epithet, a word that stands for her / Who runs the show at home and makes important things occur. / But “mother,” “mom,” and “mama” cannot ever be the same / When it becomes a woman’s turn to bear that lovely name. / For nothing in our history of dwelling on the earth / Compares with what can happen in the time surrounding birth. / For never did another person live in someone’s space, / So cozy soft and hugging warm: the womb’s a magic place / Where heels and knees and elbows kick reminding, “I am here!” / And dance into a woman’s dreams and plans till they appear. / There’s something God creates inside that nothing can reverse– / A call to bring into the world a special life to nurse. / And she who bears the challenge has an everlasting claim / To be a child’s “Mama,” and she’ll never be the same.]
- A. Babies change women’s lives and identities. (*It happened to Mary* [Mary Did You Know: “*This Child that you delivered will soon deliver you.*”].)
- B. Babies change everything (And we change, if Jesus is born in us!)
1. Newborns change what we do, where we go, what we buy, how we spend our free time (if we have any left!).
 2. Jesus came to us as a brand-new Baby, to give us a brand-new way of thinking and living (It’s found in His two “birth” names):
 - a. Our thinking is changed by the reality of His prophetic name, Immanuel [“*God with us*”] (What words can describe our attitude on realizing that God is “with us”? *Gratitude, generosity, hope, courage, honesty, humility, almost every virtue* you can name.)
 - b. Our lifestyle is altered by what His proper name, Jesus, means [“*Jehovah saves...heals...delivers*”] (All the unpleasant vices of life—selfishness, bitterness, dishonesty, ingratitude—begin to vanish after Jesus starts *saving, healing and delivering us.*)

TRANS: [We sing: “O holy Child of Bethlehem! / Descend to us, we pray: / Cast out our sin and enter in, / Be born in us today.”] But, when Jesus is born in us, not all virtues appear at once. And vices don’t disappear immediately. Babies must grow. [God gave women’s breasts not for enticing men, but for feeding newborns.] Potential spiritual growth in us, from the indwelling “holy Child of Bethlehem,” comes in a similar way— 1 Peter 2:2. Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation. By feeding on God’s Word, faith grows, the mind is renewed, and our life is transformed. We must take care of the newborn within, but God has another brand-new baby for us to take care of, too. Let’s look at...

II. The Potential of the Baby New Year [Many have New Year resolutions, but listen to a quote from William S. Deal (DS of this district in 1956), “The old year is a closed book. Its deeds are done, its history written, its records closed; only its influence lasts on.... ¶But before us is another book of days whose lily white pages we may fill with golden records or smudge with deeds of shame.... Few persons, unaided by the Spirit of God, can settle upon resolves which they will carry through to higher and nobler ways of life.... But God stands ever ready to help those who propose to do his will to carry through to triumph in Christ those holy resolutions born of the Spirit’s convictions.”] We can find that divine help this year, the same way the shepherds did:

- A. v.15, “Let’s go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.”— **This year:** “Let’s go” get involved in “*this thing that has happened*”—this Incarnation: God becoming flesh to dwell with us. (It was so significant, that God ordained for Christ’s birth it to divide time between B.C. and A.D., now called C.E.!)
- B. v.17, “When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child”— **This year:** let’s ask God to help us “*spread the word*” about this event “which the Lord has told us about.” (Sharing the Gospel is telling others “*the word...about this child*”).
- C. v.18, “all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said”— Only the Holy Spirit can convince people of **Who Jesus is**, not just **this year** but **every year.** (What we can do is offer them something to think about, which the Holy Spirit may use to get them “*amazed*”:
1. “*How could God communicate with us more clearly than by becoming a human and living among us? Think about it.*”
 2. “*What greater love could God show than to pardon our sins and heal our hurts by laying down His own life? Think about it.*”
 3. “*What brighter hope can God offer than Christ’s empty tomb as*

- proof of His plan to restore all that death has taken from us?”*
We must urge people to think about these questions, and ask....
4. “*Isn’t this exactly the divine hope, the divine love, the divine communication matching our highest conception of a Creator?”*
 - a. “*Wouldn’t the greatest wisdom be to put faith in such a God?”*
 - b. “*Wouldn’t the greatest foolishness be to ignore or reject Him?”*

CONCLUSION:

—**Two brand-new babies God wants us to take care of...** *How does the newborn Christ of Christmas grow to maturity in our own lives?* It’s by feeding our souls on God’s Word and learn to walk in His ways. *How can we bring this baby New Year to its full potential for God’s Kingdom?* By filling our thoughts this new year with all that took place in the *Bethlehem manger*, and on *Calvary’s cross*, and at the *empty tomb... and let’s use this new year to share those thoughts with others.* The Holy Spirit may use us, as He did the shepherds, to get people, first “amazed,” and then, maybe, to become newborn Christians themselves.

—Closing with [Tiny Brand-new Babies (12/3/1998) in my book *PBD&Life...*

Tiny Baby Jesus,
 Nursed at Mary’s breast,
 Tiny helpless Infant,
 Born as all the rest,
 Born to be a Brother
 To the human race:
 Tiny awesome Author
 Of God’s saving grace!

Tiny hopeful infant,
 Called “New Year” by most,
 Greets his worn-out brother
 Passing like a ghost,
 Hopes to use his candle
 Better as it burns
 Than his predecessors
 In their short sojourns.

Tiny newborn Christian,
 Born through Jesus’ name,
 Won when hearing Good News
 That the Savior came,
 Born to join a growing
 Family of love,
 Destined for a future
 With the Lord above.

Tiny brand-new babies!
 Give your heart and soul
 To the message in them
 For your journey’s goal.
 Pour the Savior’s purpose
 Into your new year:
 Tell the Gospel story
 Unborn babes should hear!]