

42-02-01.wpd—Brand-New Babies
 Christmas, New Year, new birth, evangelism
 Luke 2:6-18
 God has two brand-new babies He wants us to take care of.

INTRODUCTION:

–Read **text**. [my OB work: taking care of thousands of brand-new babies]

HOM.idea: Who are these two new babies? 1) the *brand-new Christmas Baby*, 2) the *baby New Year*, and both of them have great *potential*. First, let's look at...

I. The Potential of the Brand-New Christmas Baby

(v.6, "the time came for the baby to be born")

A. [in 1992, shortly after leaving ER nursing to work OB, 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 . . .]

Babies change women's lives and identities. (Jesus did this 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 free time (if there's any left!).

2. Jesus came to us as a brand-new Baby, to give us a brand-new way of thinking and living (found in His two "birth" names):

a. Our thinking is changed by the reality of His prophetic name, Immanuel ["God with us"] (What words describe the attitudes of

those who realize that God is "with us"? *Gratitude, generosity, hope, courage, honesty, humility, all the virtues* you can name.)

b. Our living is changed by the reality of His proper name, Jesus ["*Jehovah saves...heals...delivers*"] (What starts to disappear from those whom God saves, heals, and delivers? *Selfishness, bitterness, dishonesty, ingratitude, all the vices* that make life unpleasant.)

TRANS: When Christ is born in us, not all the virtues show up at once; not all vices disappear immediately. God gave women breasts for one reason: to nourish newborns. In us, the potential of the brand-new Babe of Bethlehem is reached in just the same way— 1 Peter 2:2, Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation. As we feed on God's Word, our faith grows, our minds are renewed, and our lives are transformed. Are we taking care of the newborn within? God has another brand-new baby for us to take care of. Let's look at...

II. The Potential of the New Year Baby (Any New Year resolutions?)

[William S. Deal (a 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. Whatever there has been of joy or sorrow, good, or bad, naught can change it now, and we must face it at the judgment bar of God. ¶But before us is another book of days whose lily white pages we may fill with golden records or smudge with deeds of shame, squandered opportunities, and blasted hopes. 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."] What about this year? Let's see if our text helps us...

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" (The event was the *Incarnation: God put on flesh to dwell with us*. It was so significant, it seems God planned for it to divide time and makes us start over counting years: **2011**).

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 concerning what" we've learned "about this child" (This is the heart of evangelism: spreading "the word...about this child").

C. v.18, "all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said"— This is the Holy Spirit's task, **this year and every year.** (We can convince **no one** about **Who Jesus is**—we can only offer people 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 takes away from us?*”
We must ask people to **think about these questions**, and ask...
4. “*Isn’t this exactly the **divine hope and love and communication** that matches 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 happens as we feed 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 this new year with contemplation on what happened in the *Bethlehem manger*, and on *Calvary’s Cross*, and at the *garden tomb*— by using this new year to spread that contemplation to others, with whom the Holy Spirit may use it to make them, first “amazed,” and then newborn Christians themselves.*

Luke 2:6-18 (NIV), While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, {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. {8}And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. {9}An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. {10}But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. {11}Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. {12}This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." {13}Suddenly 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." {15}When 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." {16}So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. {17}When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, {18}and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them.