

COMMUNITY GROUP STUDY GUIDE**Good News of Great Joy**

LUKE 2:1-21

OVERVIEW

Luke is the longest and most comprehensive of the four Gospels, presenting Jesus as the Perfect Man who came to save sinful men. Growing belief and growing opposition develop side by side. Those who believe his claims are challenged to count the cost of discipleship; those who oppose him will not be satisfied until the Son of Man hangs lifeless on a cross. But the resurrection insures that his ministry of seeking and saving the lost will continue through his disciples once they have been equipped with the indwelling Holy Spirit. Luke reveals that Jesus is the King, and he has come to inaugurate his Kingdom. (Adapted from *Talk Through the Bible*).

APPLY // LUKE 1:57-80

1. Read Luke 1:57-80
2. Discuss Zechariah's reaction to being able to talk again. What encourages or challenges you about his response?
3. Why do you think Zechariah is able to praise God in the past tense for something that hasn't happened? How might this same frame of heart apply to our lives?
4. Do you think of God as being filled with "tender mercy"? Why or why not? How does Jesus show us the tender mercy of God?

STUDY // LUKE 2:1-21

Study the passage of Scripture aiming to faithfully interpret and apply what you observe. Remember we study God's word not just to increase our knowledge, but to increase our trust in and treasuring of Jesus Christ.

1. Read Luke 2:1-21
2. Identify some of the historical and geographic details in the text. Why did Luke put this information in the account of Jesus' birth? Why do you think he mentions Roman emperors and governors—people of power?
3. What's the significance of Joseph traveling to Bethlehem because he was of the house of David?
4. Notice verse 6. "While they were there, the time came for her to give birth." What does this verse alone tell us about the character of God?
5. What do verses 1-7 tell us about the character of God?
6. How does the whole birth narrative fit into Mary's song about the "upside down" nature of God's Kingdom?
7. Who is the first to hear about the birth of Jesus? Why do you think God chose shepherds to be the first ones to hear the good news of the birth of Jesus?

8. What makes the angels announcement “good news of great joy”?
9. Look carefully at the three ways Jesus is described in verse 11. What are they? What do each of these mean?
10. Notice the contrast between these majestic titles for Jesus and the poor situation into which he was born in verses 6-7. Why do you think Luke emphasizes this contrast?
11. According to verse 14, how do the angels react to the news of Jesus birth?
12. What does the phrase, “on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased” mean?
13. What’s the reaction of the shepherds after they hear this news? Why do you think they reacted this way?
14. What’s Mary’s reaction? Why do you think she reacted this way?
15. What’s the significance of Jesus being circumcised on the eight day?
16. What’s the significance of Jesus’ name? (cf. Matthew 1:21)
17. There’s so much more in this passage...discuss away!

- General Bible study questions:
 - **God:** What does this passage teach me about the character of God?
 - **Humanity:** What does this passage teach me about myself and my need for God?
 - **Christ:** How does this passage teach me that God has met my needs in the person and work of Jesus Christ?
 - **Response:** How should I respond with my affections and my actions?
 - **God:** How does this passage help me hope in heaven?

ACCOUNTABILITY

Relationships developed and deepened during accountability provide regular encouragement, and when necessary admonition, to spur each other on to delight in the supremacy of Jesus Christ. Ask one another heart-probing, clarifying questions, and help each other apply the gospel to your lives.

QUESTION: What specific ways can you rejoice in the Lord’s faithfulness in your life? Are there areas where you need to trust his promises for their bearing on your life now?