



Chapter 1

The Glorious and “Shameful” Birth of Jesus

Reflections to Journal and Share

- What did you learn about God in Luke’s second chapter?
- Does the “shame” motif enhance or hinder the glory and wonder of the birth of Jesus for you?
- Have you ever had to live with the reality of shame? What did that do to you? What might that still be doing to you?
- Themes of pondering and silence are an integral part of the birth setting of Jesus. What do these two themes mean in your life? How have they worked themselves out?
- • Have you ever been misunderstood and realized there was nothing you could do about it? Does that help you to identify with Mary?
- • Perhaps the most well known of Bible narratives is not so well known after all. What does that suggest for your own study of God’s Word?

A Point to Ponder

You may be wondering ...if this katalumabasement-shame motif is indeed more contextually correct, why don’t more of our Bibles reflect it in that way? A significant number of translators and commentators through the years have documented that “inn” is an inappropriate contextual translation for kataluma in Luke 2:7. So why doesn’t that word treatment get changed?

Consider your own way of thinking. Would you want to buy a Bible that presents this shamein-the-cellar contextual reality of the birth of Jesus? For over a millennium, this Westernized got-to-town-too-late-no-vacancy-birth-in-astable- with-a-wooden-elevated-manger tradition has been espoused. That is a very long time and has made this traditional version of Jesus’ birth more believable than the profound reality of that first Silent Night. As a result, for many this tradition has become the truth. In fact, tradition has such a grip on our understanding of the birth motif of Jesus that most people would dismiss the contextual reality of His birth as full of obvious error. Such is the paradox of Christmas!