

What If Bethlehem Had Smartphones?

I wonder if more people would believe in Jesus if His birth had been a trending topic on Twitter.

Matthew and Luke are the only Gospel writers who wrote about Jesus' birth, and we aren't sure who provided them with firsthand reports. Jesus' mother was among the earliest Christian disciples, so we assume she shared her story with them. All details were passed down orally, without the aid of technology. There were no radios, televisions, tape recorders, iPads, walkie-talkies, cameras, cellphones or fax machines in first century Israel. The only form of "instant messaging" required a guy to run from one king to another over a period of days.

I wonder: What if the key players in the Christmas story had access to wireless devices? Pardon my literary license as I imagine the script:

Facebook update, 01/15/02 B.C., posted 4 hours ago

Elizabeth > Mary

So glad you can visit us! Zacharias is still not talking (so weird!), but his eyes brightened when I told him you were on your way. We are still in awe of God's goodness to us. I feel so old to be a mom.  Zach says he knows the baby is a boy. We plan to name him John even though our relatives disapprove!

"Of course there was no access to Facebook, Twitter

or iPhones when Jesus was born. Yet the story of his birth immediately went viral, and the message the angels told the shepherds is still spreading globally.”

Text sent 01/21/02 B.C., 5:28 p.m.

Mary > Joseph

Arrived safely at Elizabeth’s. She is such a blessing. Still can’t believe what is happening. It’s like a dream. Luv you!

Text sent 03/21/02 B.C., 9:02 a.m.

Zacharias > Uncle Levi

The baby’s name is John! No more discussion!

Tweet sent 11/30/01 B.C., 2:49 p.m.

nazareth_carpenter

Joseph, Son of Jacob

Just got bad news. Must go to Bethlehem 4 census. My wife is not in any shape to travel. Why did Caesar have to pick THIS TIME 2 tax us all?

Facebook update, 12/20/01 B.C., posted 30 minutes ago

Mary > Elizabeth

Looks like it will be a three-day trip to Bethlehem. The roads are bumpy and my back is so sore. I’m glad you had your baby before me—you give me courage! And you are NOT old! So glad to hear Zach got his voice back. Pray for us!

Text sent 12/22/01 B.C., 7:36 p.m.

Joseph > Uncle Melchi

Just arrived in Bethlehem. This town is crazy. Can you put us up in your place? Sorry for the inconvenience.

We'll stay
anywhere—inside or outside.

Text sent 12/22/01 B.C., 7:41 p.m.

Uncle Melchi > Joseph

Just come on. We've got room. I will move the
animals inside if it gets cold.

Tweet sent 12/25/01 B.C., 3:04 a.m.

nazareth_carpenter

Joseph, Son of Jacob

It's a boy! And he doesn't look anything like me! (I wonder
why? LOL)

Tweet sent 12/25/01 B.C., 3:32 a.m.

JustAShepherd Simeon, Son of Gershom

Whoa! A bunch of angels just showed up here on the
hillside! Shimon took photos but he was so scared! Will try to
post later.

Gotta run!

Facebook update, 12/27/01 B.C., posted 2 hours ago

Mary > Elizabeth

So much to tell you. Jesus is fine, Joseph
is exhausted and now I am the one who feels old! You won't
believe what we had
to use for a crib. Oh, and we had some really interesting
visitors the morning
after the baby was born. Shepherds! As if we needed more sheep
around here!

Tweet sent 12/28/01 B.C., posted 30 minutes ago

JustAShepherd Simeon, Son of Gershom

The photos Shimon took of the angels didn't turn
out. Too blurry. I wonder if anyone will believe our story
now.

Sheep_Keeper, FlockMaster and 45 others retweeted
JustAShepherd

2 hours ago

Tweet sent 12/30/01 B.C., posted 1 hour ago

Flockmaster Shimon, Son
of Hezron

Photos or no photos, it's true! A king was born here
last week! Angels don't just show up here everyday.
#whathappenedinbethlehem

Facebook update, 12/31/01 B.C., posted 3 hours ago

Caleb, Son of Geshan > Simeon, Son of Gershom

Bro, I haven't had much sleep since that night. What
does all this mean? Why did that angel come to us? It's not
like we're anybody
special.

Facebook reply, 12/31/01 B.C., posted 2 hours ago

Simeon, Son of Gershom > Caleb, Son of Geshan

I know! I can't stop talking about it and my wife
thinks I'm crazy. I can't get those haunting words out of my
head: "Glory to
God in the highest heaven, and peace on earth to those with
whom He is
pleased!" One day I'm going to write a song about what we saw.

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Of course there was no access to Facebook, Twitter
or iPhones when Jesus was born. Yet the story of his birth
immediately went
viral, and the message the angels told the shepherds is still
spreading
globally. I encourage you to use every form of technology
available to let
others know that the baby born in Bethlehem is the Savior of
the world.

J. Lee Grady *is the former editor of Charisma. You can follow him on Twitter at leeegrady. His most recent book is 10 Lies Men Believe (Charisma House).*