Now the birth of Jesus was on this wise...“  
Matthew 1:18

God wants us to notice the details of how Christ came into the world. Our verse uses the words, “on this wise”. They translate one original word. That original word is also found in John 3:16 – “For God so loved the world”. Just as we are to take note of how God loves sinners, we are to take note of how Jesus was born.

Being sixty years of age in that era pretty much made you an antique. You know about antiques. They are delightful for looking at and for remembering, but they do not tend to be used any more. God, though, was still using Zachariah and Elisabeth. Being older is not an excuse for not serving Christ.

Zachariah and Elisabeth were too old to be used. God bluntly says they were “well stricken in years” (Luke 1:7). In The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah by Edersheim, an interesting insight is given. The words describing the couple’s age were used of those at least sixty years old. The fact that Elisabeth was barren added an extra note of disdain to her life.

Joseph was too self-conscious to be used. He was self-conscious about what people would think about him. Oh, yes, he was gentle to the feelings of Mary but he worried over his own reputation. Yet, he abandoned his need to be esteemed so that he could be useful in God’s plan of redemption.

Mary was too young to serve God. No one can accurately tell Mary’s age. We do know she was godly. God describes her as “highly favored”. But, how old was she?

Most scholars believe Mary was a teenager.
The Wise Men were too educated to be used.
The elite of our day do not want to be included among the band of Bible believers. These magi believed in the literal interpretation of scripture. They believed God was in control of the natural world including the stars of heaven. They believed God was active not passive in the affairs of men.

Never let your education stop you from owning a role in God’s salvation story. Bring your education to the crossroads of ideas and tell others that you have seen His star (God’s deliberate involvement) shining in the affairs of men.

The Shepherds were too scandalous to be used. A night shepherd was one guy you never wanted your daughter to bring home. Their low morals and absence of fleshly restraint were well known. Still, here they are smack in the middle of God’s Christmas pageant.

What happened to these shepherds? Angels happened! A lot of angels. Only once before had angels spoken so forcefully to a mere man. That was in Isaiah 6 where their repetitive chord cried out just one word - “holy!” God’s grace makes room for scoundrels, dear saint, even you. Your past sins are not an excuse for not serving Christ.

A baby is too helpless and weak to be used. Please, let these words ring in your soul. “Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings Thou hast ordained strength because of Thine enemies” (Ps. 8:2).

On the base of the Statue of Liberty we read this plea – “Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to be free. The wretched refuse of your teeming shore. Send these, the homeless, tempest tossed to me.”

Out of such a weak sampling of the world’s nations our country grew to be the most powerful nation on earth. If our nation can turn weakness to strength then our Heavenly Father can do even more! He can make His saints to be a powerful, holy nation of kings and priests unto God for His gospel story.

This Christmas God has a gift for you. It’s the gift of usefulness. If all these people weren’t “too” something to be excluded from God’s salvation story, then you are not “too” something to be excluded today. Only God can save sinners. Yet His story of salvation is conveyed to men through the hands of other men. All of which are “too” something to play a role. But God, through this method, gets the glory and we get the joy of being used by Him.

“Joy to the world, the Lord has come!” He used unfit people to tell His story. He is still using unfit people to repeat His story today. Open God’s gift of usefulness and be a part of the gospel story this Christmas.
Secrets of Thankfulness

“Be ye thankful” (Col. 3:15). These words are too simple for us to wiggle out of them. We cannot alter them by scrutinizing the Greek words behind them. But are you aware of the secrets of thankfulness? Knowing these secret accomplishments will strengthen our hearts as soul winners.

- Thankfulness glorifies God (Ps. 96:8).
- Thankfulness builds one’s soul (Col. 2:7).
- Thankfulness is one tool to conquer the flesh (Eph. 5:3,4).
- Thankfulness makes one’s faith flourish (Col. 3:16).
- Thankfulness in song drowns out the refrains of sadness and despair.
- Thankfulness slays the giant of envy (Ps. 37:1,4). In rehearsing God’s goodness we cannot begrudge His goodness to our neighbors.

Dear friend of sinners let us remind you of Psalm 103:10. “He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.” Let’s be grateful enough for God’s grace to us that we extend that grace to someone else. If God can make our sinning hearts to be thankful then He can do it to our neighbor as well.

Bible Tracts Is Thankful

We are thankful to the people of Fosterburg Baptist Church of Bethalto, IL, for not only providing us with new windows for our lower floors but also sending us a group of workers.

They planted, painted, pitched and helped in whatever was needed.

They did it with a happy heart and a joyful spirit.

Thank You
A Tract Act

Placing the tract in a restroom on an interstate highway was an act of faith and obedience. The retiree had faith in the power of the gospel in written form. He also had faith that God would honor his efforts.

A business man from a city two hours away found that tract. It stayed, unread, in his wallet for two years. While transferring the contents of his wallet into a new one, he re-discovered the tract. Now, though, his life, business and marriage were all broken.

With his broken life now ready for help he read the tract. Within a month he, his wife, and two adult sons had all come to Christ. How did these folk get saved? It came because of a “Tract Act”.

In Memory of:

Mrs. Eleanor Ostlund
Mary Smith
Mary Smith
Lil Martin
Duey Anderson
Thomas Pariseau
Thomas Pariseau
Allen Cory
Aunt Opal Zesch
Marge Harre
Curt Loney
Elizabeth Walbaum
Eugene Pippin
Mark Sayre
Margaret (Peg) Reysen
Dr. Paul Levin
Mary Smith
Tyler Huff
Velma Moore
Maxine Sewell

In the season of gift giving don’t forget to share the gift of eternal life. Include this tract in your Christmas cards.

Honorariums.

Mr. & Mrs. Warren Kauffmann
Cindy Hapanowicz

Mr. & Mrs. W. Steward Lyman & Sarah
Rosemarie Romano

Given by:

Pastor & Mrs. George Abbas, Sr
Mrs. Joyce Tharp
Mr. & Mrs. Steward Lyman & Sarah
Mr. & Mrs. Steward Lyman & Sarah
Pastor & Mrs. George Abbas, Sr
Mr. & Mrs. Dwaine Peterson
Mrs. Clarice Olson
Mrs. Marla Grossman
Mrs. Marla Grossman
Mrs. Marla Grossman
Mrs. Marla Grossman
Mrs. Marla Grossman
Mrs. Marla Grossman
Mrs. Marla Grossman
Chuck & Dottie Mattoon
Mrs. Charles Parker
Pastor Ralph & Sydney Wingate
Mr. & Mrs. Terry Huff
Mr. & Mrs. Terry Huff
Mr. & Mrs. Terry Huff

God has a time plan. He had one for Jesus’ birth and his death. He has one for the life of teenagers. Challenge teens to receive Christ today.