

## The Birth of the King Luke 2:1-7

### Context:

Last week we looked at the account of the birth of Christ in Matthew and this week we are looking at the birth of Christ back in Luke as a part of our continuing series in the book of Luke. Before this we see the Holy Spirit-breathed expression of three individuals in the house of Zachariah the priest: Elizabeth testifies of who Christ is as yet unborn in her womb, Mary praises the Lord for His faithfulness to His people, as does Zachariah.

**Luke 2:1-7** “1 In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. 2 This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. 3 And all went to be registered, each to his own town. 4 And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, 5 to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. 6 And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. 7 And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.”

1. V 1-3 “1 In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. 2 This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. 3 And all went to be registered, each to his own town.”
  - a. REGISTERED. What does that mean? This is the word apographo – meaning to enroll and it has a specific meaning to record men, their property, and their income.
  - b. Many translations have the word as “taxed” but that is not really what it means, but that was likely the purpose. You can’t tax effectively if you don’t know who there is living in the land.
  - c. There is comparatively little direct historical evidence of this census – some point to a census in 6 AD, in Syria, but that would have been much too late, since we know this was during the reign of Herod the great, who died about nine years earlier. This has been used to disprove the Bible, but it is an argument from silence. In other words, since we have no historical record of a registration requiring someone to return to their homeland, then it must not have happened, and the Bible is therefore wrong.

d. I find it interesting that this requirement is so inconvenient. This is not turbo tax or H&R Block. This is certainly taxation without representation. This is intrusive, there is inequality, there is exploitation, and oppression going on. Taxes in the Roman Empire were not so much decided by a sense of fairness and shared responsibility, but rather in a capricious, kind of random bidding process that could be very inconsistent, unjust, and prone to fraud.

i. Yet we find Mary and Joseph submitting to the government that was over them, which was requiring them to travel 90 miles at their own expense to register for taxes.

ii. **Romans 13:1** “Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God.”

iii. **Mark 12:17** “Jesus said to them, “Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's.” And they marveled at him.”

iv. I know people who are barely willing to access a website when the government asks them to, but we don't see those sentiments in the Bible at all. No rebellion from believers, starting a revolution, no Boston Tea Party, or refusal to pay taxes.

2. V4-5 “4 And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judah, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, 5 to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child.”

a. Mary and Joseph's family are from the town of Bethlehem. We don't know why they are from Bethlehem and yet they are living in Nazareth, but it is a full 90 miles away. That doesn't sound far, but the method of travel is normally depicted as donkey. Have you ever ridden a donkey? Would you like to have traveled to church this morning on a donkey? Pregnant? Would you travel to Ft Myers or Crystal River on a donkey? Most of us wouldn't have even made it to church this morning, on a donkey.

b. This is a tough situation. I feel like any pregnancy is a tough situation when it comes time to give birth. It just feels like a desperate time where all focus is on getting that baby born safely – with both mother and baby safe.

c. Here they have a tough time because not only is Mary 9 months pregnant, but she has to travel 90 miles.

3. V6-7 “6 And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. 7 And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.”
- a. It came time to give birth. Here again... timing. God’s timing. Why did the baby have to come now? While they were away from home? When there was no room at the Inn? When the only place to lay the child was in a feeding trough?
  - b. Remember the bad timing of her initial finding pregnancy? Mary was found with child after becoming betrothed, but couldn’t that have happened before the betrothal ...
  - c. This is all coming together to what would seem the worst possible timing, but how then could they fulfill the prophecy? Mary had to be there in Bethlehem to fulfil the prophecy.
  - d. **Micah 5:2-3** “But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days. 3 Therefore he shall give them up until the time when she who is in labor has given birth; then the rest of his brothers shall return to the people of Israel.”
    - i. This was the town that God had promised would be the birthplace of the Messiah.
    - ii. This was the town where David had been a shepherd and then was anointed King, the one who God promised to have a descendent reign forever.
    - iii. This is where the shepherds would see the angels and come to see the baby.
    - iv. Much later this is where the magi from the east would come to give gifts to Jesus.
  - e. Why couldn’t Mary in Joseph just have been living in the town of David? But then how would they have a connection to Nazareth? That is prophesied as well.
    - i. He shall be called a Nazarene – **Matt 2:23**. “And he went and lived in a city called Nazareth, so that what was spoken by the prophets might be fulfilled, that he would be called a Nazarene.”
    - ii. **Matt 4:15-16a** ““The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles—16 the people

dwelling in darkness have seen a great light...". This is a quote from Isaiah 9.

- iii. But I think there is another reason why it had to happen this way, and I'll get to that in the application.

### **Application:**

1. We all want it easy, I know I do. I want the most air-conditioned space to preach. Some may prefer that we have no more outside preaching and no more outside pregnancies and births and so on. But that is not always how God's work really gets done. Jesus could have come into the world born of someone rich, but He wanted to come without privileges because he wanted to relate to the least of these.
  - a. Are you willing to have your life NOT be easy? Are you willing to have the timing of God work against you over and over again, at least in the short term, so that your life might count for something? Job, Joseph, Daniel, Mordecai, and many others have been victimized by the bad timing and bad circumstances beyond their control only to have God do something in their lives that they would never have dreamed.
  - b. I would encourage you as Paul encouraged Timothy in **2 Tim 2:3** "Endure suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus." We must resist the temptation to faithlessly wince and complain and doubt God and His purposes as the Children of Israel did at every turn and rather trust Him, commit ourselves to Him, and even praise Him in the storm.
  - c. We are so privileged to have the opportunity to suffer for Christ when we stand up for the Gospel, to actually join the war of righteousness and we do so by simple obedience.
2. The worse the timing and the worse the circumstances, the more glory God gets when we trust Him and the more glory He gets when he shows the victory.
  - a. When things get tight financially, when people demand more of you than you can give, when the things you need to get done, just can't get done with the energy that you have been given, what do you do? Do you worry, do you complain, do you stay up late at night thinking about things because you just can't get peace, we have all been there, but there is a better way.

- b. I exhort you to look to God with excitement for the provision that He will bring. **1 Peter 5:7** “casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.”
- c. The Lord is looking for a people who will trust Him in the dark times. 2 Chronicles has a story of king Asa, who began his reign trusting the Lord against incredible odds. Toward the end of his reign, he, out of fear, took all the Lord’s money in the Temple and got Ben-hadad to Attach the Northern Kingdom of Israel, because he was afraid.
- d. Look at what the Lord said, **2 Chronicles 16:7-9** “7 At that time Hanani the seer came to Asa king of Judah and said to him, “Because you relied on the king of Syria, and did not rely on the Lord your God, the army of the king of Syria has escaped you. 8 Were not the Ethiopians and the Libyans a huge army with very many chariots and horsemen? Yet because you relied on the Lord, he gave them into your hand. 9 For the eyes of the Lord run to and for throughout the whole earth, to give strong support to those whose heart is blameless[b] toward him. You have done foolishly in this, for from now on you will have wars.”

### 3. We can trust God. But how?

- a. How did Mary trust God? She remembered the words of the angel and trusted God. She knew that things had to work out because the angel had said, **Luke 1:35** “He shall be called Holy, the Son of God.” Who could be against her? We are going to see that even Herod the Great was not able to catch her. She had the promise of God on her side, and she was hanging onto them for dear life, but we have even BETTER PROMISES.
- b. **John 14:1-3** “Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. 2 In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also.”
- c. **Mathew 28:20** “...and lo I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”
- d. **Romans 8:28** “And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.”
- e. We need to be looking at HIM and not the circumstances that we find ourselves in. You know that the mind responds to and obsesses over whatever you choose to focus on. It's the promises found in the Word of

God that releases this kind of sustaining faith through the power of God.  
**Romans 10:17** “Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God.”