

The Great Physician

Luke 2:1-24

- We saw in the last chapter that not only was Zacharias and Elizabeth having a child that God has great plans for, but also a young girl named Mary six months after their baby was to be born would be giving birth to Jesus our Lord. Upon hearing this news both Elizabeth and Mary have interesting responses, Elizabeth says **“how blessed Mary is to be the chosen carrier of the Savior into the world”** Mary in turn **“praises not herself but the Lord for giving the world this great gift and opportunity of having our sins forgiven”**. Later Zacharias would thank God for His **“information, illumination, and His instruction, that would come through “John the Baptist”**.

V1-24

- **V1-5** Luke goes into detail as to what the social climate was like when Jesus was coming into the world, Caesar Augustus formerly known as **“Gaius Octavius”** came into power about **25** yrs before Jesus was born. Now before him military generals shared in the governing of Rome, but once he came into power he declared that he alone would be the final authority in Rome and he wanted a title that befitted his new authority. They said what about **“King”** or **“Caesar the dictator”** he said no, then someone suggested **“Caesar Augustus”** exalted one, and he said perfect because he also wanted the people to not just obey him but to worship him as well.
- For decades the world Jesus is being born into was wrecked by war both civil and abroad, brutality and immorality, you see Caesar had fought General Mark Antony and General Lepidus for control of Rome and he took it by force, even when Mark Antony joined forces with Queen Cleopatra he defeated them both and thus proved to himself and the world that he was King.
- Because of the fighting much of Rome had gone into neglect, as its towns and farms had been destroyed by robbers who either stole the crops being grown or kidnapped those who owned the farms, they also made the streets and the roads to travel unsafe by grabbing travelers and selling them into slavery, all this happened because anyone able to fight was drafted into either Caesar army or Mark Antony, but now that the war is over Caesar tried to establish stability and so he’s registering everyone by asking them to go back to their homeland so he can tax them in order to rebuild all that has been torn down this caused a huge shift in the story we’re reading.
- Jesus will be forever known as **“Jesus of Nazareth”** but because Joseph ancestry was originally from Bethlehem he had to go back there to be registered with Mary his betrothed wife. This was probably a three day trip for Joseph and Mary back to their tribal home and as uncomfortable a trip as this was unbeknownst to them it was necessary in order to fulfill a **700** yr old prophecy that was given in **Mic 5:2**. Sometimes that which doesn’t make sense to us or causes us inconvenience or to be uncomfortable is actually fulfilling something that needs to happen.
- **V6-7** although Caesar was ruling God was still in charge, as He used Caesar’s edict to move Mary and Joseph some **80** miles from Nazareth to Bethlehem to fulfill His Word. This census was taken every fourteen yrs for both military and tax purposes so each Jewish male had to return to the city of their forefathers to record their names, occupation, property, and family.

- When Mary said in **Lk 1:38** “**be it unto me according to Thy Word**” it meant that from then on her life would be part of the fulfillment of divine Prophecy. Luke doesn’t record this but Mathew does how initially Joseph struggled with this notion that Mary was having the Messiah through the miraculous ministry of the Holy Spirit > **Math 1:19-25**. Mary is still called Joseph’s his espoused wife because a Jewish marriage is not official until its been consummated and that didn’t happen until after Jesus birth, which is why the Pharisees said of Jesus > **Jn 8:39-41**- in debating Jesus about their lineage they declare that Abraham is their father and then accuse Jesus of not knowing who his father was as they also were aware of His birth story.
- **V7** this verse amazes me because people have this same attitude when it comes to Jesus showing up unannounced in their lives today (there was no room for Him). Think about it, **1st in our schools** “there is no room for Him” even though we used to read the scriptures as our curriculum at one time, **2nd in our government** “there is no room for Him” even though throughout our government buildings there are scriptures on the walls that they’ve covered up and even in the court rooms they still have you swear on a bible that your telling the truth, **3rd in our families** “there is no room” even though its God who gave us one another > **Jam 1:17**.
- **V8 1st** we’ve seen a barren couple, **2nd** a pregnant teenager, and now **3rd** Shepherds are mentioned prominently in this story, and it’s in line to a reoccurring theme, how God used that which is despised, written off, and unwanted, to play important roles in the redemption story. Shepherds were considered unclean and couldn’t enter the temple themselves even though they took care of the vey animals that were used for the temple sacrifices, these are the people God chooses to speak to and use after a **400yr** silence > **1Cor 1:26-29**. **V9-10** an Angel appears
- **V10** we see the Angel telling the Shepherds “not to be afraid” **3** quick points > **1st 1:13**- The Angel said to Zacharias “do not be afraid your prayer is heard”, **2nd 1:28**- the Angel said to Mary “rejoice highly favored one he Lord is with you”, **3rd 2:10**- the Angel tells the Shepherds “do not be afraid, I bring you good news of great joy”. I don’t know about you but after getting the silent treatment the words I usually hear first are accusatory, not those of comfort and cheer.
- **V11-14** after interrupting their quiet dark night with the shining presence of an Angel and the glory of God, comes the first preacher of the gospel and its an Angel. Its interesting that God has given us the New Testament Church this honor calling us ministers, but in **Rev 2:1**- the Pastor of the church is called “**an angel**”- which means messenger, for that is what Angels do, bring forth God’s messages. When Satan decided to give his message he ceased being an angel and became a devil, for all the devil desires is to declare his will and make us follow his corrupt path.
- We see in these three verses A Savior will be born, A sign given- that He will have on swaddling cloths, burial clothes, its befitting because He came to die. You know death interrupted the teaching of Buddha, Socrates, Plato, and every philosopher or so called great thinker throughout history, but it didn’t interrupt the ministry of Jesus, but rather fulfilled it, as He was born to die.

- **V15-16** what once held the highest priority in their lives making a living by keeping the sheep, now takes a backseat to observing what God had made known to them, as they head to Bethlehem > House of bread, where we will be fed by the truths of God > **Jn 6:35**.
- **V17-20** once they've tasted the goodness of the Lord they want to share it with others so they go and spread the good news of Jesus birth. Even though people didn't understand they still recognized that something significant had happened and it got their attention. Mary's reaction is different from either the Shepherds or the people, she simply took it all in and meditated over it in her heart seeking to understand the deeper meaning of it all. She thought what brought us to Bethlehem? A command from someone who thinks they should be worshipped, but really God is working behind the scenes to bring forth Him Who deserved worship.
- **V21-24** we see three different rituals described here > **1st Circumcision**- done on the **8th** day, **2nd Purification**- after childbirth **40** days for a boy, **80** days for a girl, the parents are to bring a lamb for a burnt offering and a young pigeon for a sin offering, and if your poor then you can use two young pigeons as they were cheaper than a lamb, notice they brought pigeons instead of a lamb a sign of their poverty, **3rd present the child at the temple**- the firstborn was always given to the Lord, all of this shows the obedience of both Joseph and Mary in fulfilling the Law of God.