

### CELEBRATING LIKE IT'S THE FIRST CHRISTMAS

*About that time Caesar Augustus ordered a census to be taken throughout the Empire. <sup>2</sup>This was the first census when Quirinius was governor of Syria. <sup>3</sup>Everyone had to travel to his own ancestral hometown to be accounted for. <sup>4</sup>So Joseph went from the Galilean town of Nazareth up to Bethlehem in Judah, David's town, for the census. As a descendant of David, he had to go there. <sup>5</sup>He went with Mary, his fiancée, who was pregnant. <sup>6</sup>While they were there, the time came for her to give birth. <sup>7</sup>She gave birth to a son, her firstborn. She wrapped him in birthing cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no room in the inn. <sup>8</sup>There were shepherds in the surrounding fields. They had set night watches over their sheep. <sup>9</sup>Suddenly, God's angel stood among them and God's glory blazed around them. They were terrified. <sup>10</sup>The angel said, "Don't be afraid. I'm here to announce a great and joyful event that is meant for everybody, worldwide: <sup>11</sup>A Savior has just been born in David's town, a Savior who is Messiah and Master. <sup>12</sup>This is what you're looking for: a baby wrapped in birthing cloths and lying in a manger." <sup>13</sup>At once the angel was joined by a huge angelic choir singing God's praises: <sup>14</sup>"Glory to God in the heavenly heights, Peace to all men and women on earth who please him." <sup>15</sup>As the angel choir withdrew into heaven, the shepherds talked it over. "Let's go down to Bethlehem as fast as we can and see for ourselves what God has revealed to us." <sup>16</sup>They left, running, and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in the manger. <sup>17</sup>Seeing was believing. They told everyone they met what the angels had said about this child. <sup>18</sup>All who heard the shepherds were impressed. <sup>19</sup>Mary kept all these things to herself, holding them dear, deep within herself. <sup>20</sup>The shepherds returned and let loose, glorifying and praising God for everything they had heard and seen. It turned out exactly the way they'd been told!*

Luke 2:1-20 (MSG)

❖ At Just the Right Time:

*About that time Caesar Augustus ordered a census to be taken throughout the Empire.*

Luke 2:1 (MSG)

1. At just the right time He APPEARED in HISTORY.

*This is what the Lord says: "At just the right time, I will respond to you. On the day of salvation, I will help you."*

Isaiah 49:8 (NLT)

2. At just the right time He GAVE His LIFE for us.

*"When we were utterly helpless, Christ came at just the right time and died for us sinners."*

Romans 5:6 (NLT)

3. At just the right time you can INVITE Jesus into your HEART.

*"For God says, 'At just the right time, I heard you. On the day of salvation, I helped you.' Indeed, God is ready to help you right now. Today is the day of salvation."*

2 Corinthians 6:2 (NLT)

❖ Everyone is Accounted For:

*Everyone had to travel to his own ancestral hometown to be accounted for.*

Luke 2:3 (MSG)

1. God keeps an ACCOUNT of all His CREATION.

*"Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? Yet not one of them is forgotten by God.*

Luke 12:6 (NIV)

2. We will all have to GIVE an ACCOUNT to God one day.

*Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.*

Hebrews 4:13 (NIV)

❖ This is What You are Looking For:

*"A Savior has just been born in David's town, a Savior who is Messiah and Master. This is what you're to look for: a baby wrapped in birthing cloths and lying in a manger."*

Luke 2:11-12 (MSG)

1. Some are looking for POWER and POSITION.

*Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the Lord our God.*

Psalms 20:7 (NIV)

2. Others are looking for PLEASURE and POSSESSIONS.

*"In the last days there will be scoffers whose purpose in life is to enjoy themselves in every evil way imaginable."*

Jude 1:18 (NLT)

3. We are looking for LIFE that has REAL PURPOSE.

*Tell those rich in this world's wealth to quit being so full of themselves and so obsessed with money, which is here today and gone tomorrow. <sup>18</sup>Tell them to go after God, who piles on all the riches we could ever manage; to do good, to be rich in helping others, to be extravagantly generous. <sup>19</sup>If they do that, they'll build a treasury that will last, gaining life that is truly life.*

1 Timothy 6:17-19 (MSG)

❖ For Seeing is Believing:

*They left, running, and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in the manger. Seeing was believing... They told everyone they met what the angels had said about this child. All who heard the shepherds were impressed... The shepherds returned and let loose, glorifying and praising God for everything they had heard and seen. It turned out exactly the way they'd been told!*

Luke 2:16-20 (MSG)

1. They saw the PROMISE of a Savior just as the angels said.

*"Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; He is Christ the Lord."*

Luke 2:11 (NIV)

2. They saw the PRIORITY to tell others about Jesus.

*“Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.”*

1 Peter 3:15 (NIV)

3. They saw the POWER of worship and praise.

*Shout to the Lord, all the earth; break out in praise and sing for joy!*

Psalm 98:4 (NLT)