

Christmas Luke 2

12/20/15

Sunday Morning

**\*One of the most amazing things for me concerning the Christmas story is how God freely gave up the prerogatives of Deity & became a man**

**Luke 2:1** Now in those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus, that a census be taken of all the inhabited earth.

V.2 This was the first census taken *while Quirinius was governor of Syria.*

- 1) "while Quirinius was governor of Syria"
  - a) Apparently he was governor of Syria twice: from 4 b.c. to a.d. 1, when this census was taken, and again in a.d. 6-10
  - b) This census, every 14 years, was to sign up for military draft & taxes (Jews were not drafted)

V.3 And everyone was on his way to register for the census, each to his own city.

V.4 Joseph also went up from Galilee, *from the city of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David which is called Bethlehem*, because he was of the house and family of David,

- 1) "from the city of Nazareth, to...the city of David which is called Bethlehem"
  - a) It is about 70 miles from Nazareth to Bethlehem
    - i) Not an easy travel for Mary – but necessary
  - b) It was necessary for them to go to Bethlehem b/c God had already said they would go there

**Micah 5:2** "But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, Too little to be among the clans of Judah, From you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel. His goings forth are from long ago, From the days of eternity."

- c) Isn't it interesting that Caesar Augustus thought he was in charge of things – he was a puppet in God's hands

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V.4 x Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the city of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David,

V.5 in order to register along with Mary, who was engaged to him, and was with child.

V.6 While they were there, *the days were completed for her to give birth.*

- 1) "the days were completed for her to give birth"
    - a) Did you ever wonder why Christ was born when He was born?
      - i) We only know the timing was perfect – b/c God is always perfect
- Gal.4:4** But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law,

V.7 And she gave birth to her firstborn son; and she wrapped Him in cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

- 1) "laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn"
  - a) The town would have been full of relatives who had to register
    - i) People often "kept" strangers for a short term
    - ii) Relatives stayed w/ relatives
    - iii) Bethlehem was a very small community of few hundred people
    - iv) The "inn" would probably have been a larger house someone had & they were accustomed to keeping visitors
  - b) Because the town was small – having a baby born there was probably a big deal
    - i) Residents of the town probably made a place for Mary & Joseph

V.8 In the same region there were some shepherds staying out in the fields and keeping watch over their flock by night.

V.9 And an angel of the Lord suddenly stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them; and they were terribly frightened.

V.10 But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid,"<sup>(stop being afraid)</sup> for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which will be for all the people;

V.11 for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.

- 1) "there were some shepherds staying out in the fields" (**V.8**)
  - a) The lowest class of people in society were shepherds
  - b) Their testimony wasn't allowed in court
    - i) They were outcast b/c living w/ sheep they couldn't keep all the rules & regulations of the rabbis
  - c) Christ came in a very humble setting –
    - i) With humble human parents
    - ii) The message of His coming was given to the most humble of people
- 2) "in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior" (**V.11**)
  - a) "Savior" = Deliverer – Preserver
    - i) Same title used in O.T. for God
 

**Isa.43:3** "For I am the LORD your God, The Holy One of Israel, your **Savior**; I have given Egypt as your ransom, Cush and Seba in your place.

**V.11** "I, even I, am the LORD, And there is no **savior** besides Me.
- 3) "who is Christ the Lord" (**V.11**)
  - a) "Christ" = anointed One – the Messiah
  - b) "Lord" – Master

V.12 "This will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."

1) "you will find a baby wrapped in cloths"

a) There in a manger was the One spoken of in **Isa.40**

**Isa.40:12** Who has measured the waters in the hollow of His hand, And marked off the heavens by the span, And calculated the dust of the earth by the measure, And weighed the mountains in a balance And the hills in a pair of scales? *(that little baby)*

<sup>13</sup> Who has directed the Spirit of the LORD, Or as His counselor has informed Him?

<sup>14</sup> With whom did He consult and *who* gave Him understanding? And *who* taught Him in the path of justice and taught Him knowledge And informed Him of the way of understanding?

<sup>15</sup> Behold, the nations are like a drop from a bucket, And are regarded as a speck of dust on the scales; Behold, He lifts up the islands like fine dust.

**V.17** All the nations are as nothing before Him, *(that little baby)* They are regarded by Him as less than nothing and meaningless.

**V.21** Do you not know? Have you not heard? Has it not been declared to you from the beginning? Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth?

<sup>22</sup> It is He *(that little baby)* who sits above the circle of the earth, And its inhabitants are like grasshoppers, Who stretches out the heavens like a curtain And spreads them out like a tent to dwell in.

<sup>23</sup> He *(that little baby)* *it is* who reduces rulers to nothing, Who makes the judges of the earth meaningless.

<sup>24</sup> Scarcely have they been planted, Scarcely have they been sown, Scarcely has their stock taken root in the earth, But He merely blows on them, and they wither, And the storm carries them away like stubble.

<sup>25</sup> "To whom then will you liken Me That I would be *his* equal?" says the Holy One.

b) That was the helpless, little baby lying in a manger

c) Now maybe understanding **Phil.2** will be a little easier

**Phil.2:6** who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped,

<sup>7</sup>but emptied(<sup>ἐκένωσεν</sup>) Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, *and* being made in the likeness of men.

<sup>8</sup>Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself

by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

- d) That little baby couldn't even feed Himself – yet He was God! (in human form)

**e) That Christ relinquished His power is the most amazing thing**

V.13 And suddenly there appeared with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying,

V.14 “Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased.”

V.15 When the angels had gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds began saying to one another, “Let us go straight to Bethlehem then, and see this thing that has happened which the Lord has made known to us.”

V.16 So they came in a hurry and found their way to Mary and Joseph, and the baby as He lay in the manger.

\* I am taken aback by Christ's willingness to humble Himself so completely

**\*I'm taken aback by man's indifference to what God did**

V.17 When they had seen this, they<sup>(the shepherds)</sup> made known the statement which had been told them about this Child.

V.18 And all who heard it wondered at the things which were told them by the shepherds.

1) “**all** who heard it wondered at the things which were told them”

- a) This must have caused a stir among the people
  - i) People weren't too busy to know about gossip
  - ii) They didn't live in cocoons as we do today
- b) Bethlehem was only 6 miles from Jerusalem
- c) The word of this great event had to reach Jerusalem
- d) It had no impact on Jerusalem

**Mat.2:1** Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, saying,

<sup>2</sup>“Where is He who has been **born** King of the Jews? For we saw His star in the east and have come to worship Him.”

<sup>3</sup>When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.

<sup>4</sup>Gathering together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born.

<sup>5</sup>They said to him, “In Bethlehem of Judea; for this is what has been written by the prophet:

<sup>6</sup>“And you, Bethlehem, land of Judah, Are by no means least among the leaders of Judah; For out of you shall come forth a Ruler Who will shepherd My people Israel.””

\*It is clear that no one in Jerusalem went to check on the Savior of the world

\*Six miles away – that’s all!

**Jn.1:10** He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him.

<sup>11</sup>He came to His own (**His own things**), and those who were His own did not receive Him.

**\*Man’s indifference toward the Savior**

V.19 But Mary treasured all these things, pondering them in her heart.

V.20 The shepherds went back, glorifying and praising God for all that they had heard and seen, just as had been told them.

V.21 And when eight days had passed, before His circumcision, His name was then called Jesus, the name given by the angel before He was conceived in the womb.

- 1) “when eight days had passed, before His circumcision, His name was then called Jesus”
  - a) HE would be given His name
  - b) On the 8<sup>th</sup> day the father would circumcise Him w/ a flint knife

V.22 And when the days for their purification according to the law of Moses were completed, they brought Him up to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord

- 1) “when the days for their purification according to the law of Moses were completed”
  - a) Because He was a male child her days of purification were 40
  - b) For a female – the days of purification were 80
    - i) B/c a female would bring more unclean children into the world

V.23 (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, “Every firstborn male that opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord”),

- 1) “Every firstborn male that opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord”
  - a) Every 1<sup>st</sup> born male was offered to God according to **Ex.13**

V.24 and to offer a sacrifice according to what was said in the Law of the Lord, “A pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons.”

- 1) “A pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons”
  - a) This was the cheapest purification offering that could be given
  - b) They had no money

V.25 And there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; and this man was righteous and devout, looking for the consolation of Israel; and the Holy Spirit was upon him.

V.26 And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Christ.

V.27 And he came in the Spirit into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to carry out for Him the custom of the Law,  
 V.28 then he took Him into his arms, and blessed God, and said,  
 V.29 "Now Lord, You are releasing Your bond-servant to depart in peace, According to Your word;  
 V.30 *For my eyes have seen Your salvation,*  
 V.31 Which You have prepared in the presence of all peoples,  
 V.32 A Light of revelation to the Gentiles, And the glory of Your people Israel."  
 V.33 And His father and mother were amazed at the things which were being said about Him.  
 V.34 And Simeon blessed them and said to Mary His mother, "Behold, this Child is appointed for the fall and rise of many in Israel, and for a sign to be opposed—  
 V.35 and a sword will pierce even your own soul—to the end that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed."

1) "For my eyes have seen Your salvation" (V.30)

- a) Simeon saw & knew Salvation when he saw Him
- b) But the whole city passed by w/out seeing or knowing Him

**Jn.1:10** He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him.

<sup>11</sup>He came to His own <sup>(His own things)</sup>, and those who were His own did not receive Him.

<sup>12</sup>**But** as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name,

**\*But (by His grace) not everyone is indifferent V.36**

V.36 And there was a prophetess, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was advanced in years and had lived with her husband seven years after her marriage,

V.37 and then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple, serving night and day with fastings and prayers.

V.38 At that very moment she came up and began giving thanks to God, and continued to speak of Him to all those who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.

V.39 When they had performed everything according to the Law of the Lord, *they returned to Galilee, to their own city of Nazareth.*

**\*I'm amazed at the love God has shown mankind by giving His Son for Us**

**1 Jn.4:10** In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins.

**\*Something else I have pondered over the years – little is mentioned of His childhood**

V.40 The Child *continued to grow and become strong, increasing in wisdom*; and the grace of God was upon Him.

1) "continued to grow and become strong, increasing in wisdom"

- a) Everyday life which can seem so mundane should never be boring for the believer
- b) We should continue to grow in grace & knowledge of God – that is never a wasted time

Today we serve a risen victorious Savior!

He is no longer a baby in a manger

HE is no longer a suffering Savior hanging on the cross

HE is victorious – the World – Death – over Satan