

Luke 2:1-24, The Birth of Jesus

In those **days Caesar Augustus** issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. 2 (This was the first **census** that took place while **Quirinius** was governor of Syria.) 3 And everyone went to their own town to register. 4 So Joseph also went up from the town of **Nazareth** in Galilee to Judea, to **Bethlehem** the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. **5 He went there to register with Mary**, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child.

1. First Roman Emperor, Caesar Augustus ('lofty' or 'serene'): Octavian (27BC – AD14).
2. Census registration was for tax purposes:
 - a. Maximize Revenue for the Roman Empire.
 - b. Ensure the Security of the Empire.
3. Travel time: Nazareth → Bethlehem (3 days journey: 90 miles).
4. Luke shows Mary & Joseph are law abiding citizens in keeping with the Census.
5. As believers we are to keep with the laws of the land (see Romans 13)
 - a. *Rom. 13:1 Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. 2 Consequently, whoever rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves. 3 For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and you will be commended. 4 For the one in authority is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for rulers do not bear the sword for no reason. They are God's servants, agents of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer. 5 Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also as a matter of conscience. 6 This is also why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God's servants, who give their full time to governing. 7 Give to everyone what you owe them: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor.*

6 While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, 7 and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She **wrapped him in cloths** and placed him in a **manger**, because there was no guest room available for them.

1. Approximately 6 miles from Jerusalem.
2. Swaddling cloths were placed wrapped around the baby's arms and legs (Ezek. 16:4). This was used to keep babies limbs straight so they could grow properly.
3. Manger:
 - a. Stables were often caves with feeding troughs (mangers) carved into the rock walls; where animals were kept.
 - b. Some scholars believe it was for Temple flocks to be raised for sacrifices.
4. Unconventional: God found a place for the child despite no inn. God always meets our needs and may even do it in the most unconventional way possible!

8 And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. 9 An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. 10 But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. **11 Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah (Christ 1984 NIV), the Lord.** 12 This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." 13 Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, 14 "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests."

- 1) **Davidic Line:** Jesus was born in the line of David and thus could be a king to reign over Israel forever. His will be an eternal Kingdom that will never end.
 - a) 2 Sam. 7:11 *"The Lord declares to you that the Lord himself will establish a house for you: 12 When your days are over and you rest with your ancestors, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, your own flesh and blood, and I will establish his kingdom. 13 He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. 14 I will be his father, and he will be my son. If he does wrong, I will punish him with a rod wielded by men, with floggings inflicted by human hands. 15 But my love will never be taken away from him, as I took it away from Saul, whom I removed from before you. 16 Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever."*
 - b) Psalm 89:3 *You said, "I have made a covenant with my chosen one, I have sworn to David my servant, 4 'I will establish your line forever and make your throne firm through all generations."*
 - c) Jer. 33:17 *For this is what the Lord says: 'David will never fail to have a man to sit on the throne of Israel,*
 - i) **E.g., A lady from our congregation told me she had a conversation with a Hasidic Jew** who said that they cannot attend a Christian church because it would be against their religious beliefs. The Hasidic Jew said the problem is they worship **ONE GOD**, but **we worship TWO, God & Jesus!** For them, this is unacceptable, but they disregard Scriptures such as Dan. 7:13-14, which says that we will worship the son of man, whom we know to be Jesus!
 - (1) Dan. 7:13 "In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. 14 He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all nations and peoples of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.

2) **The Major Offices of Jesus are confessed in v.11:**

- a) Savior = Deliverer
- b) Messiah (Christ) = Anointed King
- c) Lord = Master

15 When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about." 16 So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. 17 When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, 18 and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. 19 But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. 20 The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told. 21 On the eighth day, when it was time **to circumcise the child**, he was named **Jesus**, the name the angel had given him before he was conceived.

- 1) **Flow Events:** Luke presents these actions as the normal flow of events for a first-born son in a Jewish family:
 - a) Circumcision → Naming → Purification → Presentation → Consecration
 - 2) **Jesus (Savior): Heb. Yeshua** - was a common alternative form of the name יהושע (Yəhōšūa' – The Greek derivative is Joshua) in later books of the Hebrew Bible and among Jews of the Second Temple period. Yeshua in Hebrew is a verbal derivative from "to rescue", "to deliver". Often translated "He saves" = Salvation (Gk. Soter).
 - a) Tetragrammaton: Yeshua is the Hebrew form of the Tetragrammaton YHWH (the Name for God). Ultimately meaning Yahweh Saves!
 - b) SOZO: Greek Save=SOZO is a Greek word translated "saved, healed, delivered." The word is used over 100 times in the New Testament to refer to the "complete package" of salvation, deliverance and healing.
 - i) The basic meaning of rescuing one from great peril: to protect, keep alive, preserve life, deliver, heal, be made whole.
 - c) Our Savior, Saves, heals, delivers, protects, makes whole!
 - i) Savior = Soter (Soteriology = Salvation)
 - (1) One who saves, preserves, and delivers from destruction or danger. Heb. Root is YASHA (Yaw-shah). The Primitive root means, "to be open, wide, or free, by implication to be safe." (e.g., What comes to mind is Jesus' open arms on the cross, His arms are extended open and wide, ready and willing to receive all who come to Him to set them free.)
 - (2) To defend, deliver, help, preserve, rescue, be safe, to succor, to give assistance in time of want, difficulty, or distress.
- **Notice** Luke is going out of the way to tell us what the names are, because in Jewish culture the name signified the character of the person.

3) **Became Human: Had to Enter the Earth as a Human to Redeem Us:** Jesus' Birth is quite humbling, as he had to enter as a human in order to redeem humanity. He had to become one of us and become like us in many ways to redeem us. A man had fallen into Sin in the Garden (Adam) and a man, (Jesus), the second or last Adam had to redeem us. In other words, a man had fallen and therefore only a man could redeem us, the God-Man, Jesus!

a) Phil. 2:5 (NASB) *Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, 6 who, as He already existed in the form of God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped [or, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God - NKJV], 7 but emptied Himself by taking the form of a bond-servant and being born in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death: death on a cross.*

i) Emptied Himself: set aside His divine rights

ii) E.g., Jesus was tempted by Satan to act on his divine privileges in the wilderness temptation, when Satan said, "If you are the son of God turn these stones to bread." Jesus was tempted to act like God in that moment, but laid it aside and overcame the temptation as a man. He was setting an example for us as humans, he was overcoming as a man, and was fulfilling the Scripture, "that man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God."

22 When the time came for the purification rites required by the Law of Moses, Joseph and Mary took him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord 23 (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, "Every firstborn male is to be consecrated to the Lord"), 24 and to offer a sacrifice in keeping with what is said in the Law of the Lord: **"a pair of doves or two young pigeons."**

1) Jesus Dedicated → Baby Dedications (Exod. 13:1-2): This is why we perform baby dedications. Because Jesus was dedicated we, too, dedicate our children to the Lord when they are born.

a) Exod. 13:1 *Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 2 "Consecrate to Me all the firstborn, whatever opens the womb among the children of Israel, both of man and beast; it is Mine."...**V.12** that you shall set apart to the Lord all that open the womb, that is, every firstborn that comes from an animal which you have; the males shall be the Lord's.*

i) Notice that Jesus was not baptized in water, but rather he was dedicated in the Temple. This is why we do not baptize infants.

2) Law of Moses Prescribed (Lev. 12:1-8)

a) Mary would lay hands on the pigeons, then a priest would take them to the Southwest corner of the Altar, wringing one birds' neck as a sin offering and burning the other as whole burnt offering.