

Luke 2:1-21

Verses 1-3:

--And it came to pass in those days that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This census first took place while Quirinius was governing Syria. So all went to be registered, everyone to his own city.

--Luke continues his ordered account by answering an important question. If the Messiah is to be born in Bethlehem, but Mary lives in Nazareth, what happens?

--God directs their way through human government. Caesar Augustus thinks a census will help him have a tighter grip on his empire, but really, he is helping to usher in the promised Davidic eternal kingdom.

--How did the census **first** take place under Quirinius? There are two main views:

- 1) A system of regular registration began with this census.
- 2) The Jews had their form of registrations, but this was the first run and enforced by a pagan authority.

--Either or, or both and, work.

Verses 4-5:

--Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be registered with Mary, his betrothed wife, who was with child.

--Luke is careful to emphasize the prophetic connections between Jesus Christ and the OT Davidic promises. Joseph and Mary are of the line of David, they are traveling to the city of David where the Messiah is to be born (**1 Sam. 20:6 + Micah 5:2**), as the promised Seed of David. ***Romans 1:1-5***

****2 Timothy 2:8: Remember that Jesus Christ, of the seed of David, was raised from the dead according to my gospel,****

--Luke is also careful to make clear Joseph and Mary still retain a **betrothed** marital status, not yet intimate as a couple.

****Matthew 1:24-25: Then Joseph, being aroused from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took to him his wife, and did not know her till she had brought forth her firstborn Son. And he called His name JESUS.****

--It was about a ninety-mile journey for the pregnant Mary! Obedience often requires labor and effort.

Verses 6-7:

--So it was, that while they were there, the days were completed for her to be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

--Everything here is so brief and simple. Yet, through it all is such love, providence, holiness, humility, power, mystery, and majesty!

1 Timothy 3:16: *And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness; God was manifested in the flesh. . .*

--Luke's first emphasis is that the birth took place **there**—that being the city of Bethlehem.

--Next, Luke tells us that she had a normal birth and **brought forth** a baby. One that needed to be cared for, wrapped, and laid down.

--There are many fanciful tales about how Mary might not have faced any pain, or that her labor was somehow supernaturally unique. The Scriptures just tell us it was all normal. In fact, I think of Jesus saying. . .

John 16:21: *A woman, when she is in labor, has sorrow because her hour has come; but as soon as she has given birth to the child, she no longer remembers the anguish, for joy that a human being has been born into the world.*

--Next, he makes it clear that Jesus was Mary's firstborn Son.

--The Bible clearly teaches that Mary was not a perpetual virgin and that she and Joseph had numerous children after Jesus Christ. (**Mt. 12:46-47; 13:55-56; Mk. 3:31-32; Lk. 8:19-20; Jn. 2:12; 7:3-10; Acts 1:14.**)

--Yet Jesus was her firstborn and the Scriptures teach He is *the* Firstborn in numerous ways: **Rom. 8:29: *the firstborn among many brethren*; Col.1:15: *the firstborn over all creation*; Col. 1:18 + Rev. 1:5: *the firstborn from the dead*.**

--Finally, Luke describes for us the conditions this Child arrived in. Poor conditions.

--The Greek word for **inn** is not the same one translated **inn** in **Lk. 10:34**; but the same one translated **guest room** in **Lk. 22:11**. It may have been simply speaking about an open room, or it could have still referred to an inn—which seems more likely since it was typically the inns that would be connected to a stable or cave used to shelter animals.

--It was not necessarily because there was a mean inn-owner. Romans would also be filling the town to facilitate the census, and no doubt took the best places. Jews would then be forced to battle for whatever was left.

--The larger point is Christ coming into the world poor (no sin in such as it was our Lord's condition from His very first day in this life), outside of even the natural dwellings of men, with a single, lowly, God-fearing couple.

--If this was how He entered our world, then where is He not willing to descend in humility?

--This is our Savior! There is nowhere we can run from Him or hide from Him. We can ignore Him, walk away from Him, mock Him, and if He gets too clear and too insistent, crucify Him, but we cannot ignore the fact that He has come into *the* world, and into *our* world.

Verses 8-9:

--Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid.

--Shepherds were a despised segment of that society. Another lowly group.

--Wonderfully, the Lord sees them working the fields. Work is never a hindrance to God's calling or spiritual revelation. *Zacharias in the temple, Mary at home, shepherds here, disciples, etc.*

James 2:5: Listen, my beloved brethren: Has God not chosen the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him?

--Their response to heavenly glory and manifestation is fear!

Verses 10-12:

*--Then the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger."**

--The angels calm their fears and then preach the gospel! Good news!

--What message does Jesus send back to a discouraged John the Baptist about His Messianic purpose?

Matthew 11:5: The blind see and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up and the poor have the gospel preached to them.

--(11) Here is the explanation of the good news. We can take it for granted how important this is! What does His birth mean? Why was He coming? What is the purpose of His coming? To be a **Savior!**

--The long-awaited birth of the Messiah has come. They were not abandoned. We are not abandoned **(to all people)**. The Savior has come to seek and to save the lost.

--**born to you.** . . Not us working our way to God, but God coming down to us. Life is a gift. So is salvation. We didn't ask for either.

--(12) What form would they find this Savior in? That of a swaddled Babe.

--How would they know Him? The halo? The miracles? No, the irregularity of finding Him in a manger.

Verses 13-14:

--And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men!"

--This birth, so mysterious and majestic, with such self-emptying humility and self-sacrificing purpose, thrilled and awed the hosts of heaven! ***1 Peter 1:12: things which angels desire to look into.***

--**goodwill toward men.** . . . God loves because of who He is, not because we are “good” people, or even trying to be. God tells a group of normal people—shepherds—that He is good, and that He has done something very good!

--The word *good* has lost its meaning for us. Anything that is basically above bad is good. *Ice cream, normal days, mediocre meals, someone not a serial killer, etc.*

--But when we say that God is good, we mean something more than that! God is good in and of Himself. ***Why do you call Me good? There is none good but one, that is God.***

--God’s goodness doesn’t come from anywhere else, and isn’t affected by anything else, or that thing would be “more good” than Him. He made everything good, and nothing made Him good. Any goodness we find in any person, or creature, or in this world is simply God’s goodness breathed upon it.

--This is why He looked upon all of creation and said that it was ***very good***. God’s goodness is communicated in various degrees through men, angels, animals, creation, and so on (Even true of Satan—morally vs. physically!). Everything in existence has some affectionate fingerprint of God’s goodness to show that He loves it. *Why He loves even the animals & All creation will praise Him!*

--And with all of that, there is still enough goodness in God to enrich an infinite number of other worlds if He so desired. *Think of the new heavens and earth!*

--*God’s goodness is His inclination to deal well and generously with His creation. He is beneficial to us*

--This is not to say that God doesn’t possess other attributes. He most certainly does! He is wise, powerful, holy, and just, but His goodness conducts all His dealings with us so that we are blessed.

1) His wisdom might confuse us, but because God is good, it directs and plans for us.

2) His power might crush us, but because God is good, it works through us and protects us.

3) His holiness might frighten and damn us, but because God is good, His holiness covers us!

--His justice might condemn us, but because God is good, the Savior has become a propitiation by His blood, so that He is now both Just and the Justifier of anyone who has faith in Jesus.

--Jesus communicates God’s goodness more than anyone or anything else. Do we believe?

Colossians 2:9: For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily;

Verses 15-17:

--So it was, when the angels had gone away from them into heaven, that the shepherds said to one another, “Let us now go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has come to pass, which the Lord has made known to us.” And they came with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the Babe lying in a manger. Now when they had seen Him, they made widely known the saying which was told them concerning this Child.

--The angels leave. What now? Seek and you will find!

--(16) What a moment of confirmation for shepherds, but also for Mary and Joseph, who no doubt worried about their circumstances and this new Babe. Were they doing the right thing? Did God really want things to be like this?

--The shepherds' arrival proved that God was involved and taking care of them.

--(17) The shepherds then make this private supernatural event and widely known public saying—sharing the good news. ***2 Kings 7:7-9***

--Unbelief is forced to deny Christ and real events. Facts. Life.

Verses 18-20

--And all those who heard it marveled at those things which were told them by the shepherds. But Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart. Then the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told them.

--The public questions, but Mary ponders. We are told something similar in **51: *but His mother kept all these things in her heart.***

--Mary's faith is placed before us again and again. Not that it was perfect, but it was certainly growing (**Jn. 2:5; Acts 1:14**).

--(20) Praise is the proper response to spiritual revelation.

Verse 21:

--And when eight days were completed for the circumcision of the Child, His name was called JESUS, the name given by the angel before He was conceived in the womb.

--We had the naming of John in faith at his circumcision; now we have the naming of Jesus as an expression of his parents' faith.

--Why would Jesus need to be circumcised? Isn't it an expression of the cutting away of the flesh? Yes, but He was there for us! Carrying our guilt and sin that must be cut away.

****Galatians 4:4-5: But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.****

**Boreham (Mountains In The Mist): "A new universe is created,' Jean Paul Richter used to say, and to say truly, 'every time a child is born.' This is the way in which God cleanses and sweetens and brightens His world; and He has no other way of doing it. He has no other way, because He wants no other way. The baby is sufficient for the task. What a baby cannot do, cannot be done.*

*Yet who looks to the baby? Who turns to the baby as the strategic point in the struggle of nations? It is always so; we are forever staring at the hippopotamus. Europe was never darker than when Wycliff was born. But which of those villagers in the little Yorkshire hamlet suspected, as he saw that tiny baby in that modest cradle, that, with his nativity, the new day had dawned? Slavery was most strongly entrenched when Abraham Lincoln was born. Who that watched his baby antics on the one hand, and listened to the cry of the oppressed on the other, dreamed that the baby before them was the key to the whole situation? No; we never find room for the baby. He is always in the manger. It never occurs to us, as we confuse our minds with the world's worries and the world's woes, that the baby in its swaddling-clothes is really the way out...That is always the blunder we short-sighted people make. We fancy that God can only manage His world by big battalions abroad, when all the while He is doing it by beautiful babies at home. When a wrong wants righting, or a work wants doing, or a truth wants preaching, or a continent wants opening, God sends a baby into the world to do it. That is why, long, long ago, a babe was born at Bethlehem."**