

Advent: the Shepherds

Mary taught us Jesus is God.

Joseph and Zacharias taught us Jesus is Lord.

Shepherds reveal that Jesus is Savior!

Luke 2:1-5 And it came to pass in those days *that* a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. ²This census first took place while Quirinius was governing Syria. ³So all went to be registered, everyone to his own city. ⁴Joseph 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, ⁵to be registered with Mary, his betrothed wife, who was with child.

- Legitimate timeline listed here. Accurate records made.
- This is a census of the entire known world.
- Bethlehem because this is where David was born.

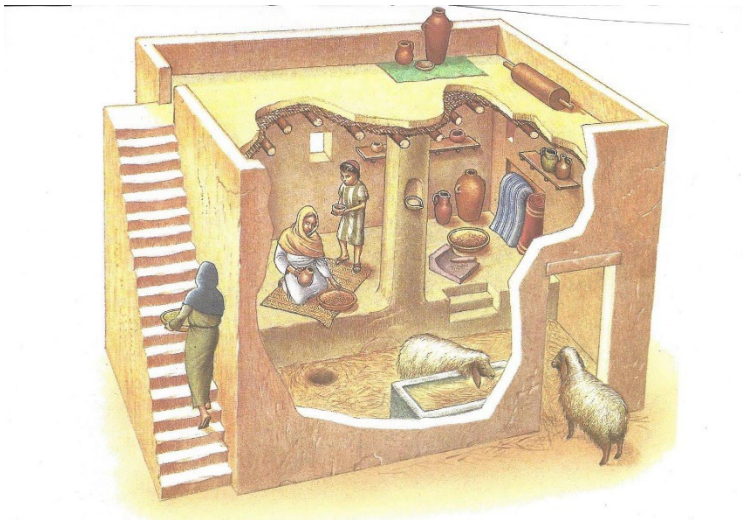
Caesar Augustus decrees this to feed his ego. To show how powerful he is. But God will use him to bring fulfillment to the prophecies.

- **Micah 5:2-3** "But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, *Though* you are little among the thousands of Judah, *Yet* out of you shall come forth to Me The One to be Ruler in Israel, Whose goings forth *are* from of old, From everlasting." ³ Therefore He shall give them up, Until the time *that* she who is in labor has given birth; Then the remnant of His brethren Shall return to the children of Israel.

Luke 2:6-7 So it was, that while they were there, the days were completed for her to be delivered. ⁷ 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.

- While they were there – Mary was not in imminent danger of going into labor on the way.

- Inn – Inns like we think of them was not really common in this time and place. An inn most commonly was simply a guest room. They relied on hospitality in their culture.
 - **Luke 22:11-12** Then you shall say to the master of the house, “The Teacher says to you, ‘Where is the guest room where I may eat the Passover with My disciples?’” ‘¹² Then he will show you a large, furnished upper room; there make ready.”
 - Inn = Kataloomah = guest room
- Manger actually means stall. The entire room where animals are kept.
- The way a large house was setup



- Jesus was born in the manger of Migdal Eder (we'll come back to that).
- Swaddling cloths – These were actual strips of cloth wrapped tightly around newborns to prevent their arms and legs from moving.
 - They were also used in one other way – around newborn lambs that would be used in the sacrificial system to keep them from scratching themselves, as the sacrificial lambs had to have no blemishes.

Luke 2:8-9 Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹ And behold, an angel of the

Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid.

- The first annunciation to those outside of the family were not to the priestly establishment in Jerusalem or those of Herod's royal house or to the rich landowners of Judea but rather to these common shepherds whom the rabbinic tradition had tarnished.
- Shepherding up until just before the birth of Christ was actually a noble profession. It wasn't until the occupation of Rome and the rise of the pharisees that they began to consider it less than. Because Rome and Greek culture looked down on them.
 - Abraham, Moses, and David were all connected to shepherding, and all three were greatly esteemed in Jewish society.

Not to the philosophers, kings, or government. Not to religious rulers. But to shepherds.

Why does God come to the shepherds?

- Besides Jesus is the good shepherd.
- Ultimately to reveal that Jesus is Savior.
 - Because Jesus is the Lamb of God.
 - Because Jesus is the perfect sacrifice

Animals in the vicinity of Bethlehem (specifically Migdal Eder — "Tower of the Flock") were to be offered for Temple sacrifices

- **Micah 4:8** And you, O tower of the flock, The stronghold of the daughter of Zion, To you shall it come, Even the former dominion shall come, The kingdom of the daughter of Jerusalem."
- What does this prophecy mean? It says that the Messiah would come out of Migdal Eder – the place where lambs are born and raised for sacrifice.
- This is a prophecy that Jesus would be the sacrificial lamb.
- Jesus is born at Migdal Eder.
- Laid in a manger – stall, like a lamb would be.

- Wrapped in swaddling cloths – like the protected sacrificial lambs.
- Lives a perfect life (has no blemishes)
- Is examined for sacrifice (questioned by Herod, Agrippa, Pilate)
- He is pronounced perfect (Pilate – I find no fault...)
- He is crucified – He takes on our sin.

The announcement is made to the shepherds that the sacrificial lamb – Jesus – is born.

- These shepherds kept the flocks for the sacrificial system. They understood what was happening at least on some level.

Luke 2:9 And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid.

- The **shekinah** glory of God has not been seen since Jeremiah. Shown at the temple.
- This is the glory that described the glory of the mercy seat when God met with His people.
- It is also the glory at the mount of transfiguration.
- It is the very presence of God.

Luke 2:10 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.

- Good Tidings of great joy
- Good Tidings = euaggelizo = Announce Good news, proclaim the Gospel.
- The Gospel is great joy. We were not worthy, destined for condemnation, but we have a Savior who freely gives us eternal life to those who ask.

Why did the angel specifically use that wording?

- 9 BC Preine Calendar Inscription “...the birthday of the god Augustus was the beginning of the good tidings for the world...”

- The angel says on Jesus' birthday is the beginning of the Gospel (good news) rather than Augustus declaring his birth was the beginning.
- Caesar did not bring actual good news for the world. Jesus did. And it is for all people.

Luke 2:11-12 For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. ¹² And this *will be* the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger."

This will be a sign:

- City of David - Bethlehem means house of Bread. Jesus constantly called Himself bread. – Remember Micah 5:2 from out of Bethlehem.
- And wrapped in swaddling cloths. Like we talked about earlier.
- Lying in a manger
- The angel is all but telling them this Baby is the perfect sacrifice.
- I don't know what kind of a Savior they may have been looking for, but they got the message that a Savior is born. A savior to redeem us from all our sin.

Luke 2:13-14 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying: ¹⁴ "Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!"

- Jesus will bring peace between God and man, **Romans 5:1** Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,
- We were once enemies of God. Now we are friends.
- ESV - **Luke 2:14** "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!"
- In Greek it reads more like God is pleased with all men. In other words, we weren't given a Savior because we needed one (though we do), we were given one because He likes us. He loves us. He wants to dwell with us.
- That was the plan. The original plan was to redeem us.

- **Revelation 13:8** All who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

Luke 2:15-18 When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us." ¹⁶ And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. ¹⁷ And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. ¹⁸ And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them.

- The Gospel leads to an action. Jesus is Savior when we go to Him.
Romans 10:13 For "*whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved.*"
- The actions of the shepherds showed they had faith.
- When their faith is made sight, they go and tell.
- They are the first evangelists.

Our testimony, our witness will cause people to wonder. To marvel.