

Luke 2

The Birth of Jesus

[\(Isaiah 7:10-16; Micah 5:1-6; Matthew 1:18-25\)](#)

1And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed.

Caesar was of course from Rome and as most heads of governments they wanted to make sure they were getting all the tax money they felt they were due. Two thousand years later and governments are still doing mandatory census. Caesar went a step above and beyond, he declared according to this verse that “all the world should be taxed.”

2(And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.)

In the King James this verse is in parenthesis which indicates that it was not in the original text but was added as a further description of the event to make it more understandable. Cyrenius according to historical documents was made governor of Syria in 4 BC.

3And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city.

Genealogy was important within Israel and a good deal of the known world at the time of this decree. It was common for the

birth records and genealogy for Israeli's were to be kept in the town you were born in. Cesar knowing this decreed that each person had to go to the town of their birth, so Joseph being of the tribe of Judah went to Jerusalem to be counted.

4And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:) **5**To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child.

The distance from Nazareth to Bethlehem is about 70 miles.

Many commentators place this journey likely to have occurred in September, not December when we celebrate Christ birth.

December would have been too arduous a trip for Mary seeing that she had entered the 9th month of her pregnancy. December is perhaps the date of conception of the Messiah not His birth. Many commentators put Jesus birth sometime in September.

The early church celebrated what was called Michaelmas- Michael sent on September 29 the same day that the Feast of Tabernacles was to be celebrated which fell on the end of September.

We celebrate Christ's birth on what we call Christmas- Christ sent on December 25. Many scholars believe that this date was more likely when Mary became pregnant with Christ Jesus. As Morris

puts it; It is the time when the sun; the physical light of the world is at its greatest distance from earth a fitting time to send the True Spiritual light to world.

We all know the story of the visit from the angel to both Mary and Joseph. She was pregnant and after a conversation with Michael the Arc Angel, Joseph was convinced that all was as the angel described to him. He was espoused to Mary and that was a binding contract. Both of them were willing to endure the scorn cast upon them accusing them of pre-marital sex in order to carry out the command of God.

6And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered.

*Isaiah 7: 10Moreover the LORD spake again unto Ahaz, saying, 11Ask thee a sign of the LORD thy God; ask it either in the depth, or in the height above. 12But Ahaz said, I will not ask, neither will I tempt the LORD. 13And he said, Hear ye now, O house of David; Is it a small thing for you to weary men, but will ye weary my God also? 14Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; **Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.** 15Butter and honey shall he eat, that he may know to refuse the evil, and choose the good. 16For before the child shall know to refuse the evil, and choose the good, the land that thou abhorrest **shall be forsaken of both her kings.***

If you will remember from our studies that Israel had split into two nations, the 10 northern tribes calling themselves Israel and the

two southern tribes calling themselves Judah. God told them of the coming Messiah but declared that both nations would fall and not have a King, a native-born king, from Israel in either Judah or Israel before that Messianic birth. That is exactly what happened, both Judah and Israel were conquered repeatedly, and their native-born kings removed before Jesus was born.

Also recall from

Luke 1:5 There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judaea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the course of Abia: and his wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elisabeth.

Herod was the first non-Israeli King to rule in Judah. Thus, fulfilling the prophesy of Isaiah 7.

7And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.

As a point of note, this verse indicates that this was her “firstborn son” making the point that there were to be others to follow. There are some that try to make the case that Mary had only Jesus, this verse and others show us that is likely not true.

This first born was like no other. This was the incarnate God laying aside His power and might and taking on flesh to become a man. Born in a manger, not a fitting place for the Creator God to

first see the world He had created through the eyes of a man. Then again maybe this was the perfect place; His creation was around him, the animals He created were there to see their creator as were the humans especially His Mother Mary, whom brought Him into this world. The miracles of God are so far beyond our comprehension it is truly amazing.

The Shepherds and Angels

8And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.

9And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid.

Again, it is doubtful that shepherds would be in the fields tending their sheep in December, the herds would like to be kept in shelters and fed there as the fields would be in winter mode with little usable grass for feed.

This September date would likely coincide with the Feast of Tabernacles where most Israeli's would go to Jerusalem to celebrate the feast.

The angel's appearance was undoubtedly a startling event. These were the common people of the day, shepherds, laborers, the true-blue color workers of the day. They encountered a miracle and are struck with fear.

10And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. 11For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

This term “good tidings” would also be called “good news” or “Gospel” in Greek. The declaration that on this particular day in the City of David which is Bethlehem the Messiah would be born. The Feast of Tabernacles was on or around September 29 and would indeed be fitting to have the Messiah born on that date when the Word became flesh and lived or “tabernacle” among men.

12And this *shall be* a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. 13And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,

Their experience goes from hearing a single angel most likely Michael, and then being in the presence of a multitude of the heavenly host praising God;

And they heard the heavens come alive with voices saying or singing;

14Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

This peace that is spoken of is the type of peace that only comes from God, it cannot be found in any other way or place. Within this

peace that came to earth, was also “good will toward men”. That statement is intended to all of mankind. The gift that was born this night was going to be the ultimate gift to all mankind, not just the Hebrew nation. Jesus came to Israel, but all along God and Jesus knew that to fulfil the promise to Abraham and Isaac it would have to include the entire world that this free gift was sent.

15And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us.

The declaration was truly beyond belief; all of Israel would be familiar with prophesy that said God would send a savior and again they were looking for Messiah King; One who would rule over them and remove the burden of Rome.

These shepherds were looking for proof to verify what they had heard. We would probably all be the same way. When we hear something extraordinary, we always look for verification or we should in today's news economy.

The shepherds found what had been told them, but it would take 30 years for the event to mature to where Jesus would become the savior of Israel and several more years before He would become savior of the gentile nations; Us.

16And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. 17And when they had seen *it*, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child. 18And all they that heard *it* wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds.

News has always had a way of traveling fast and even in these circumstances' news would make it across Israel in short order.

19But Mary kept all these things, and pondered *them* in her heart. 20And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.

It seems that this entire event was a learning process for Mary, Joseph and anyone else involved. The reason I say that is in the verse it indicates that everyone was “pondering or wondering” about these things.

18And all they that heard it **wondered** at those things which were told them by the shepherds. 19But Mary kept all these things, and **pondered them in her heart.**

That would indicate everything they were seeing hearing and learning was in some way connected to prophecies that they had learned in their youth. Even though Mary and Joseph had been told exactly who she was going to give birth to; prophecies did not give great detail as to the events and life of the Messiah growing

up. Each new revelation of reality of living life with the Messiah as their child was not on some road map or prophecy given them.

Like with our own children, as parents you are not given an instruction manual with each new child. And each child is a one of a kind, with their own likes and dislikes. Joseph and Mary were faced with bringing up Jesus in the way that He should go.... just as God had instructed each of us as parents, aunts uncles, grandparents.

Proverbs 22:6 Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.

Jesus Presented at the Temple

21And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the child, his name was called JESUS, which was so named of the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

In the Hebrew tongue it would actually be Joshua. Joshua was his name and Christ was His Title.

Strong's Concordance;

Transliteration: Christos

Phonetic Spelling: (khris-tos')

Definition: the Anointed One, Messiah, Christ

Usage: Anointed One; the Messiah, the Christ.

22And when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were accomplished, they brought him to Jerusalem, to present *him* to the Lord; 23(As it is written in the law of the Lord, Every male that openeth the womb shall be called holy to the Lord;) 24And to offer a sacrifice according to that which is said in the law of the Lord, A pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons.

The law required a young lamb to be offered, but in God's Grace, He allowed for those without many resources to substitute a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons as the sacrifice. Joseph and Mary were poor and so they brought a pair of required birds either turtle doves or pigeons for the sacrifice.

Many societies place a high premium on males, perhaps not as much for male chauvinism as has been shoved in our faces during the 20th and 21st century. God distinctly made males and females different regardless of the current Satanic thrust to blur the lines.

Males were made in such a way that a physical strength was integrated into their Godly design. They were also given a defensive mechanism that would key up during conflict which made them protectors of their families and warriors as the need arose. Women have this same gene but in a more child-oriented

way; more specifically to their own children than to a community or nation as man has.

Satan has tried to blur those differences over the span of man's life on earth. Always the same goal, separation from God. God has a plan and Satan is intent on diverting that plan. So, the premium was put on males for a number of reasons including the handing down of the family name has had a preeminence in life on earth. The fact is we cannot survive without both male and female, that is God's plan. Male and female are equal in God's eyes and no other equality measure is needed. They simply serve different roles cast and created by God.

The Prophecy of Simeon

25And, behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon; and the same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was upon him.

The fourth person in the New Testament to have the Power of the Holy Ghost upon him. Simeon was called "just and devout", not righteous like the Zacharias and Sarah. "Just" is another term that meant that in God's eyes Simeon was fair and equitable in all his dealings with people and God. Devout meant that he followed God without question, so it is difficult to see the difference between "righteous and devout".

The Consolation is another term we use for prize or to console or comfort in times of despair and mourning. Then in this case both are appropriate; the Prize was going to be the Messiah Christ Jesus, and through that prize Israel would be consoled for their many years of back sliding, if only they will open their eyes and see the Glory God has set before them.

26And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ.

A personal prophesy to a man that had walked justly before God, and undoubtedly a man that had mourned over Israel his entire life. This gift was a special gift to Simeon; to see the face of God in the flesh before he died.

27And he came by the Spirit into the temple: and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him after the custom of the law, 28Then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said,

It is not stated otherwise so we can assume that Simeon was assigned the task within the temple “course” to bless young infants and circumcise them before the Lord. Simeon was named after the second son of Jacob, so the blessing of having the Abrahamic covenant fulfilled by a priest named Simeon was of course another part of God’s plan.

29 Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word:

30 For mine eyes have seen thy salvation,

31 Which thou hast prepared before the face of **all people;**

32 A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.

This prophesy was obviously from God because Israel would only focus on their redemption, not that of the gentile nations. It was those gentile nations that had brought such pain and suffering upon Israel; albeit self-imposed for their failure within the Law.

Salvation; redemption make it possible for sinners to repent and be saved from their own sin.

A light unto the gentile world, which included everyone outside the Hebrew nation. Here again in verse 31 we see that one word that seems to include everyone: All

33 And Joseph and his mother marvelled at those things which were spoken of him.

Mary and her betrothed husband Joseph marvel at the things spoken.

34 And Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary his mother, Behold, this *child* is set for the fall and rising

again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against;

There were four signs of the Birth of Christ the Messiah;

Isaiah 7:14 the virgin birth, Matthew 2:2 the guiding star, Luke 2:12 the swaddling clothes, and Luke 2:34 the sign of the stumbling stone.

35(Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also,) that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.

Mary was to carry a burden any mother carries at the loss of a child. Even though fathers carry a similar burden at the loss of a child it is peculiar only to the mother as the mother was the protector and safe abode for the baby since conception. Fathers cannot know that depth of connection with our children.

Can you imagine the entire life of Mary from the conception of Jesus until the cross, the pain and anticipation she must have endured, quietly, silently, intensely?

The daily progress of this infant and her understanding of what He had to do, how He would grow up like any other child all the while knowing that His mission was above anything any human being would ever be tasked with.

Seeing His ministry start and watching the hatred and jealousy start to bloom against her Beloved Son. Seeing Him as He assembled a group of men, mostly known to her, that would become the core of His inner group. Men that would abandon their own lives and lively hoods to follow after her Son. Not fully understanding until the terrible day of His crucifixion the totality of the sacrifice He would have to make. The totality of the sacrifice she would have to make. The sacrifice that God would have to make on behalf of mankind. All of this in a single heart inside a single young girl who would have to endure this all alone in her limited world experience and capacity as a mother to see her Son die to save not only her but all of mankind.

The Prophecy of Anna

36And there was one Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Aser: she was of a great age, and had lived with an husband seven years from her virginity;

Anna was a prophetess from the Tribe of Asher, she had been married seven years when she lost her husband. She was highly respected for her work at the temple, likely trimming lamps for the priests around their quarters. It is believed she was probably given a small room near the temple as her abode.

Prophetesses were not a normal occurrence; with the list containing perhaps Miriam, Hannah, Deborah, Huldah and a few others.

37And she was a widow of about fourscore and four years, which departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day.

Since the death of her husband, she spent the next 44 years serving God through her work at the temple, teaching women and caring for whatever the Priests would allow of her or ask her to do.

38And she coming in that instant gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem.

Jesus was prophesied to be many things to the world, and to God. He would be;

The King; Jesus will become fully King at the end of tribulation and the beginning of the Millennial period and span into eternity. He has already been crowned King by God, but to fulfill that role He will establish His Kingdom rule from His Temple in Jerusalem.

He would be;

The Priest; Jesus will be the Priest to all mankind from the Millennial period on, He fulfills part of that role now today as He is

our intercessor before God the Father, standing against the rebukes of Satan toward the Saints.

He would be;

The Prophet; Jesus was and is the preeminent prophet of Israel, what He spoke is what His Father told Him to speak, so everything Jesus said was prophetic; about His own life and what was to come for the earth, its people and His Church and eternity in His Kingdom.

And He would be;

The Deliverer/Savior; Jesus is our Savior and our Deliverer; He has saved us from sin and from eternal death and separation from God. He will continue in that role until the last human comes to Him for Salvation.

The Return to Nazareth

[\(Isaiah 61:1-11; Matthew 2:19-23; Matthew 13:53-58; Mark 6:1-6; Luke 4:16-30\)](#)

39And when they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own city Nazareth. 40And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him.

Perhaps one of the greatest prophecies in the entire Old Testament about the coming Savior;

Isaiah 61: 1The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound;

2To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn;

3To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified.

4And they shall build the old wastes, they shall raise up the former desolations, and they shall repair the waste cities, the desolations of many generations.

5And strangers shall stand and feed your flocks, and the sons of the alien shall be your plowmen and your vinedressers.

6But ye shall be named the Priests of the LORD: men shall call you the Ministers of our God: ye shall eat the riches of the Gentiles, and in their glory shall ye boast yourselves.

7For your shame ye shall have double; and for confusion they shall rejoice in their portion: therefore in their land they shall possess the double: everlasting joy shall be unto them.

8For I the LORD love judgment, I hate robbery for burnt offering; and I will direct their work in truth, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them.

9And their seed shall be known among the Gentiles, and their offspring among the people: all that see them shall acknowledge them, that they are the seed which the LORD hath blessed.

10I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels.

11For as the earth bringeth forth her bud, and as the garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth; so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations.

The Boy Jesus at the Temple

41Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the passover.

Passover is during the month of Nisan, which on the Gregorian calendar is March or April. So, this would have been spring time, that Jesus and his mother and father and siblings\ would have gone to Jerusalem.

42And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast. 43And when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and Joseph and his mother knew not *of it*.

Many people would travel in large family or close friends as they went to festivals. Often times the younger children would hang out

together as they traveled, which is the reason for Jesus parents not realizing that he was not with the group.

44But they, supposing him to have been in the company, went a day's journey; and they sought him among *their* kinsfolk and acquaintance. 45And when they found him not, they turned back again to Jerusalem, seeking him.

When your child is missing it is a terrifying experience.

46And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions.

If you search out many commentaries, they will through deduction give a list of the prominent doctors of this time that would have likely been in attendance at one of the three synagogues in the Temple.

This is a quote from Pulpit Commentary:

“In the temple enclosure, says the Talmud, there were three synagogues - one at the gate of the court of the Gentiles, another at the entrance of the court of the Israelites, a third in the south-east part of the inner court: it was in these that the rabbis expounded the Law.

Among the famous doctors, or rabbis, then living and teaching in Jerusalem, were the famous Hillel, then very aged, verging, we are told, on his hundredth year; his almost equally illustrious rival,

Shammai; Gamaliel, the master of Saul of Tarsus; Jonathan, the compiler of the Chaldee Paraphrase of the sacred books; Simeon, the son and successor of Hillel; Nicodemus, who, some years afterwards, came to Jesus by night, and, when the end was come, reverently assisted in laying the King's Son with all honor in his tomb in Joseph of Arimathaea's garden.”

47And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers.

What question that any man would have would challenge the Son of the Most High?

48And when they saw him, they were amazed: and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing.

It is interesting to consider when would Mary have told Jesus that He was the incarnate Son of God? At this point she refers to Joseph as His father. It is also interesting to note in the King James version that “Son” is capitalized reflecting of course that this is the Son of God that she is speaking to. Even with all that she had been told and seen as a mother she still could not release her Son to be in the care of God; she was still worried like any mother would be.

49And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?

Even if Mary had not told her Son the story of His birth, He has figured out who His Father was and was not going to be dissuaded about doing the task His Heavenly Father had given Him.

50And they understood not the saying which he spake unto them.

That is a challenging verse and most commentators leave it without comment. One wonders if the twelve years since the meeting with Gabriel; had the influence of that meeting waxed cold. The meaning of the verse before this are quite plain as we look at them from 2000 years in the past with all of the information we have to study. Mary and Joseph had spent 12 years raising a son that was not the son of Joseph. Had the years of life dampened the impact of that first meeting with Gabriel? No other signs are shown us during Christ's 12 years of growing up, then all of a sudden here He is in the Temple answering deep questions.

One fact is that between 12 and 13 in the Jewish tradition is when a boy becomes a man and celebrates the Bar Mizpah. This would have been the greatest Bar Mizpah of all times, when the Son of God reaches manhood. And in that time, He begins His ministry, first with the religious leaders but within the next ten years with

the public at large; and at odds with many of those same religious leaders.

If you consider the prophecy of the coming Messiah from the Old Testament it seems as if this Messiah would arrive a fully-grown man, Crowned King in an instant even though many prophecies revealed He was to be born of a virgin. It seems that no one expected the Messiah to grow from infant to Man, they just seemed to think He would be immediately the savior king.

51And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them: but his mother kept all these sayings in her heart.

Jesus walked a sinless life and so as an obedient Son He deferred to his earthly father and mother.

52And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.

It must have been something to be in the household of Mary and Joseph as Christ grew, as their family grew. To see the interactions within the family, siblings, parents, cousins like John the Baptist. Little is told us about those many years of youth but the sense is that Jesus was aware of His responsibility early on.