

Jesus In Christmas

Luke 2:1-6

It Came To Pass

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1. All Scripture Has Applied Meaning

FOCAL Luke 2:1-3^{KJV} And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed. {2} (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.) {3} And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city.

Many people will look at history - particularly Biblical history - and will think that there is neither *doctrine* nor *practical application* in it. They will read the history - if they accept it as history and not so much fancy or imagination - and will either conclude that it is either an *interesting story*, or will read through it with numbed mind looking for greater truths beyond it. Beloved, we as God's people need to understand that

2 Timothy 3:16 **All Scripture is given by inspiration of God¹**, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

All Scripture is God breathed - the very breath of God.

God breathed the Scripture. If we begin to consider that which we read to be of little note, then we will never

KJV all texts are King James Version, unless otherwise noted

1 G2315 (Strong's Hebrew and Greek Dictionaries), θεόπνευστος, theopneustos, *teh-op'-nyoo-stos*, From G2316 and a presumed derivative of G4154; *divinely breathed in*: - given by inspiration of God.

benefit from this precious Word. When we read these words:

➤ **And it came to pass...**

We don't want to look at that text like it's a desert, devoid of water, free from all sustenance. That phrase, **it came to pass**, is found four hundred and fifty two times in the Bible for a reason. Reading further, we see **it came to pass**

➤ **in those days ...**

Look for meaning in the text. What is Luke referring to? _____

Again, look to the context. In the previous verse we see John the Baptist had been born:

- **Luke 1:80** And [John the Baptist] grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his shewing unto Israel.

Three to four months after John's birth to Elisabeth the events of chapter two occur. Why is this significant? Now that John is born, isn't this the only proof needed that we would see Jesus Christ as the Messiah, the Savior of the world? No, not at all. There were many other prophecies that had to be fulfilled so that we would know that Jesus Christ is the *only Savior of the world*.

Two of these very important prophecies were:

➤ Micah 5:2 But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, [though] thou be little among the thousands of Judah, [yet] out of thee shall he come forth unto me [that is] to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth [have been] from of old, from everlasting.	2 Samuel 7:16 And thine [o David] house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever.
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These two prophecies - both very important, and linked together in the decree of God - had to be fulfilled. First, the Messiah must come from **Bethlehem Ephratah**. The word **Bethlehem** means *house of bread*, and the Messiah - the Bread of God, the Manna from Heaven, *must* come from Bethlehem. But which Bethlehem? There was also a Bethlehem *in the Tribe of Zebulun* (see **Joshua 19:15**). This is where the Prophet used the *second part* of this name. Jesus must be born in **Bethlehem Ephratah**, a city belonging to the Tribe of Judah. Again, we see prophecy to be *very specific*. Messiah is not just born in Bethlehem, but in **Bethlehem Ephratah** or **Bethlehem of Judah**. This is certain because, when *Matthew quotes Micah*, the Scripture states:

- **Matthew 2:6** And thou Bethlehem, [in] the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel.

Messiah must be born in **Bethlehem of Judah**. Why is this important? Because

God promised David in the Davidic Covenant that the Kingdom of David would **be established**, and that his **throne would be established forever**. How can an earthly throne be *established forever*? This is not possible - unless God sits on that earthly Throne.

forever throne
forever ruler
forever is God
God must be sit on David's Throne

What God was going to do was amazing!
Messiah *must* come of the Tribe of Judah, of the House of David.
How in the world is God going to work this out? I want you to look at the

impossibilities that God has set before the Messiah. God the Son, the Savior of the world:

- I. *must* be born in Bethlehem of Judah
- II. *must* be a direct descendant of King David
- III. God has *already* promised Miriam, the virgin bride of Joseph, that she will bear the Messiah
- IV. Both Miriam and Joseph are direct descendants of King David, now living *in Nazareth*
- V. Mary is *just before* giving birth to the humanity of Christ. There is *no way* that any husband is going to move his pregnant wife in her ninth month to another city. And finally,

VI. There were *other descendants of King David* in better positions, of nobler birth, of better station in life, than these two dear believers. If Joseph and Mary stood up - poor people - and promoted Christ as Messiah, would any believe?

How will God work this out? In our day, people have come to regard the Almighty as the *Maybe Mighty*, yet nothing could be further from the truth! God is God! We look and moan about things going on around us, and in our hearts believe that God stands to the side, subject to His creation. How foolish we have become in our wisdom! God is God! The Bible tells us:

Proverbs 16:33 The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof [is] of the LORD.

and

- **Isaiah 46:9-13 Remember the former things of old: for I [am] God, and [there is] none else; [I am] God, and [there is] none like me, {10} Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times [the things] that are not [yet] done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure: {11} Calling a ravenous bird from the east, the man that executeth my counsel from a far country: yea, I have spoken [it], I**

will also bring it to pass; I have purposed [it], I will also do it. {12} Harken unto me, ye stouthearted, that [are] far from righteousness: {13} I bring near my righteousness; it shall not be far off, and my salvation shall not tarry: and I will place salvation in Zion for Israel my glory.

What will God do to (1) move Joseph and Mary to Bethlehem Ephratah where the Child can be born, and (2) give an iron clad proof that Jesus is a *direct decedent of King David*? _____

2. Our God Is In Control

What's impossible with man is child's play for God! We read:

FOCAL Luke 2:1-2 And it came to pass in those days, that there **went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed.** {2} (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.)

The Lord would cause **Herod, a mere puppet king put on David's Throne by Rome** - to irritate **Caesar Augustus**, the chief Emperor and *self professed god* of Rome. **C.H. Spurgeon** relates:

"A little tyrant, Herod, by some show of independent spirit, offends the greater tyrant, Augustus. Augustus informs him that he shall no longer treat him as a friend, but as a vassal; and albeit Herod makes the most abject submission, and his friends at the Roman court intercede for him, yet Augustus, to show his displeasure, orders a census to be taken of all the Jewish people, in readiness for a contemplated taxation, which, however, was not carried out till some ten years after. Even the winds and waves are not more fickle than a tyrant's will; but the Ruler of tempests knoweth how to rule the perverse spirits of princes. The Lord our God has a bit for the wildest war horse, and a hook for the most terrible leviathan. Autocratical Caesars are but puppets moved with invisible strings, mere drudges to the King of kings."

How foolish Herod was! Though Caesar had decided earlier to re-certify and re-tax the people some time before now, as **John Gill** notes:²

"... such an enrollment had been determined on by Augustus, when at Tarracon in Spain, twenty seven years before; but he was diverted from it by some disturbances in the empire, so that it was deferred to this time, in which there was a remarkable interposition of divine providence; for had this enrollment been made then, in all likelihood it had not been done now, and Joseph and Mary would not have had occasion to have come to Bethlehem .."

2 John Gill's Exposition of the Bible

God allowed or caused Herod to so irritate the great Augustus so that he would order an *immediate census of the people*. To fail to go when so ordered would mark you as a traitor. Further, the Bible tells us that:

FOCAL Luke 2:3 And all went to be taxed, **every one into his own city.**

You had to go back to your *tribal city*, the place where you first came to be known in Israel. If you did not go, you were guilty of treason, and as a traitor subject to death under Roman Law. So the decree goes out. Herod is punished! Joseph and Mary head toward Bethlehem Ephratah to register, regardless as to the fact that she is in her ninth month of pregnancy. They must, with the rest of the world, go **into his own city**. We read:

FOCAL Luke 2:4-6 And **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. {6} And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered.

As the head of the family Joseph would take his wife to the place of his birth - Bethlehem of Judah, that **city of David**. Joseph was, our text tells us

➤ **of the house of David**

That is, Joseph was **of Judah**, of the ruling tribe of Israel. However, only the *direct line of David* had the right to sit on the Throne of David. There were many families within the Tribe of Judah, many children not directly descended from King David. But not so with Joseph and Mary. Joseph was not only **of the house of David**, that is, **of Judah**, but he was also

➤ **of the lineage of David**

Directly in line with the Throne of David. The line of David to Christ is shown unbroken in the genealogy of Matthew,

Matthew 1:16-17 And **Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ. {17} So all the generations from Abraham to David [are] fourteen generations; and from David until the carrying away into Babylon [are] fourteen generations; and from the carrying away into Babylon unto Christ [are] fourteen generations.**

as well as in the genealogy of **Luke 3:23-38**.

The Lukan genealogy, written after the baptism of Christ, establishes our Savior as a direct descendant of King David *through Mary*. The Matthew

genealogy establishes our Savior as a direct descendant of King David through His step-father Joseph.

John Wesley states in his commentary on Luke:

"The son of Heli - That is, the son - in - law: for Heli was the father of Mary. So St. Matthew writes the genealogy of Joseph, descended from David by Solomon; St. Luke that of Mary, descended from David by Nathan. In the genealogy of Joseph (recited by St. Matthew) that of Mary is implied, the Jews being accustomed to marry into their own families."

Jesus is established as a *direct descendant* of King David, the heir to the Throne of Judah. A Roman Seal would prove this, for Joseph would register for taxes in *his own city*, the **city of David**. Who did this? Did Augustus Caesar, proclaiming himself to be god, cause this to be? Did Herod, the little despot, bring all this into being? My Beloved, I pray that you understand this truth above all else.

There is only one God, and He is not you or I. There is only one God, and He is in control of all things! His hand is on the donkey that Mary rides on, and His hand is on the heart of those who suppose themselves to be gods. Caesar may order the census, but it is the Almighty God Who controls all things. He is in control now, He has never not been in control. What God has said, that He will do. We may make a god of ourselves, of our wills, of our abilities, of our powers, of our might. Yet it

is God Who oversees all things, and controls all things according to the good pleasure of His Will.

Mary was not better than other women, and because of this *better quality* called to be the mother of the humanity of Christ. Mary was called because God Willed it, and God did it. Joseph was not called because he was of more excellent character than his contemporaries. No Beloved, Joseph was called to be step-father to Christ because God willed it. He is God - it is He that made us, and not we ourselves!

Psalms 100:3 Know ye that the LORD he [is] God: [it is] he [that] hath made us, and not we ourselves; [we are] his people, and the sheep of his pasture.

The God Whom we love - the Eternal Father, Proceeding Son, and Indwelling Spirit - is Almighty in power and in majesty. Men today, just as in yesteryear, will try to nullify God. How can the created thing nullify the Creator of all things? We cannot! The Lord says:

Isaiah 40:13-17 Who hath directed the Spirit of the LORD, or [being] his counselor hath taught him? {14} With whom took he counsel, and [who] instructed him, and taught him in the path of judgment, and taught him knowledge, and shewed to him the way of understanding? {15} Behold, the nations [are] as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance: behold, he taketh up the isles as a very

little thing. {16} And Lebanon [is] not sufficient to burn, nor the beasts thereof sufficient for a burnt offering. {17} **All nations before him [are] as nothing; and they are counted to him less than nothing, and vanity.**

God is in control. Believe in Him, trust in Him, cling to Him.

