

Recap of 12/20/20 message (Chris Sommerfieldi – Luke 2:1-20): God Enters Human History: Part 4

JESUS WRAPPED IN HUMILITY - Luke begins this section by noting the decree by Caesar Augustus for a census. His specificity to include Quirinius has caused some issues in placing the exact timing of Jesus' birth, but the detail with which Luke records also provides evidence and confidence to the account of Jesus' birth.

- Joseph, a Jewish man and in the line of David, obeys a gentile king for the census. This serves to point out that things are not right. The King over all creation, the one who would set things right, restore Israel, and bless the whole comes from Israel. Gentile rulership over Israel shows that darkness still pervades and illustrates the setting of Israel still awaiting the Messiah, the one who would save.
- The use of David twice within verse 4 is a flashing neon sign that the narrative is moving toward the long awaited arrival of the Messiah.
- Notice too that human decrees, however powerful, fall under and within divine decree, like here with Jesus' birth. This should bring us comfort and resolve in difficult matters in our life. God is in control.

- There is a contrast between two kings that the first century audience would have likely noticed. The Emperor of Rome had all the pageantry and fanfare befitting a king, but the true King, the Messiah, is born in humble means. A manger emphasized the lack of pageantry for the coming of Jesus. He was not born in the customs and the palace of a king. Our Savior was born in simplicity—a baby wrapped in cloths and put into a manger—and lived in humility.

JESUS RADIANT IN GLORY - The announcement to the shepherds follows the pattern of a royal birth announcement. This too is a comparison of the two kings and is used to show the greater worth and glory of the Messiah.

- The Emperor of Rome would have a herald tell the crowds gathered of the birth of his heir. Here we see the Father sending a herald to tell shepherds of the birth of his son. This shows the humility contrast in that it was only shepherds, and not crowds. Conversely, it shows the greater glory of the true King in that the herald is an angel of the Lord, and not merely a human messenger. The shepherds were standing in a dark field and are encompassed by the glory of the Lord that shone from the herald, glory eclipsing any the world had ever seen in a human king.
- The announcement itself is similar to a “good news” announcement made years earlier about Caesar. In it he claimed to be the “son of god,” and it refers to him as the “savior” who brought “peace through ceasing all wars.” Luke shows in this account that Jesus is greater because of his true divine origin, He is God's Anointed Savior, and will bring “shalom” to the whole world. “Shalom” is the Hebrew word for peace, and means so much more than mere cessation from hostility. It has the idea of wholeness, harmony, prosperity, and safety along with so much more. It is the summation of all of God's blessings in one word: shalom. Jesus is the true king, wrapped in humility and radiant in glory.

- **THE LIGHT THAT SAVES US FROM DARKNESS**

- Jesus refers to Himself as the “light of the world” in John 8:12. We see the use of light in the passage with the glory shining upon the shepherds. Jesus' birth is bookended with mentions of light in Luke 1:78-79 and Luke 2:32. Other references to read for this idea of “light versus dark” are: John 1, 3:19-21; 1 John 1; Isaiah 9:2; and Colossians 1:12-14.

- **JOYFULLY SPREAD THE WORD AS WE GLORIFY AND PRAISE GOD**

- Our response to the birth of the true King and the salvation we have from darkness should be the same as the shepherds. Upon beholding the Messiah, they “spread the word” (NIV) and then they went back to their flocks glorifying and praising God

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