

Peace & Goodwill Toward Men - Luke 04

Luke 2:1-52 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. (4) 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. (7) And 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.

This sounds like Murphy's law - if anything can go wrong it will

- A decree - a census and **a tax imposed** on them by the government
Then to make matters worse
- Everyone to his own city - **A trip of about 100 miles** - 6-7 days journey
Then to make matters worse
- Great with child - In her **9th month of pregnancy**
Then to make matters worse
- **There was no room in the inn** - What else could go wrong?

But in reality God was at work fulfilling His purpose

One in 100 Trillion

- Prophecy had stated that He would be born in **Bethlehem** (Micah 5:2)
 - The decree to be taxed took him there (AT THIS EXACT TIME - His birth)
- That He would be called a **Nazarene** (Matthew 2:23)
- That he would sit on **David's throne** (Isaiah 9:6-7)
- That he would be **born of a virgin** (Isaiah 7:14 ESV)

We marvel at the prophecies about Jesus that were fulfilled (some say as many as 351) ...but sometimes we forget that all the while Joseph and Mary were moved about by circumstances beyond their control, and greatly inconvenienced - God was working out His plan.

Many of the prophecies concerning the Messiah were totally beyond human control: Birth: Place, time, manner of Death: People's reactions, piercing of side, burial Resurrection: Where did His body go? By using the modern science of probability in reference to just eight of these prophecies, **the chance that any man might have lived to fulfill all eight prophecies is one in 100 trillion!**

To illustrate this point: If we take 100 trillion silver dollars and lay them on the face of Texas, they would be two feet deep. Now we mark one of these silver dollars and thoroughly stir the whole mass--all over the state. Now blindfold a man and let him travel as far as he wishes, but he must pick only one silver dollar.

What can we learn?

Our perspective is limited - we need to understand that God is also at work

- How do I respond when things are not going my way?
 - It is possible you are in the center of God's will but don't recognize it
 - Think of the story of Joseph - you meant it for evil, God worked it for good

- How do we respond when our government makes decisions that inconvenience us?
 - Those decisions are often used of God to fulfill His purpose
 - Think about the decision to crucify Jesus for example

- The Lord's #1 purpose is NOT to make me happy and comfortable
 - The secret of Joseph and Mary is they both had a heart for the will of God
 - Be it done unto me according to your word
 - Don't be afraid to marry her - she has conceived by the Holy Spirit

We can trust that God is at work to do HIS will

We can set our hearts to want His will above all else

I Bring You Good Tidings of Great Joy for All People

Luke 2:(8) And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. (9) And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. (10) And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you **good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people**. (11) For unto you is born this day in the city of David a **Saviour**, which is **Christ the Lord**.

1) Good Tidings - This is it

- **Savior** - call him Jesus - He will **save us from our sin** - Mat 1:21-23
- **Christ** -He is the long awaited Messiah -To deliver, heal & set free - **the Anointed One**
- **LORD** - Immanuel "**God with Us**" - Mat 1:21-23

2) Great Joy - This is a by-product of salvation

Great Joy in the City - the Outcome of Preaching the Good News

- Acts 8:5-8 ESV Philip went down to the city of Samaria and proclaimed to them the Christ. (6) And the crowds with one accord paid attention to what was being said by Philip when they heard him and saw the signs that he did. (7) For unclean spirits, crying out with a loud voice, came out of many who had them, and many who were paralyzed or lame were healed. (8) So there was much joy in that city.

Great Joy in heaven over one sinner that repents

- Luk 15:7 KJV 7 I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.
- Luk 15:10 KJV Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.

God rejoices and sings over us with loud singing

- Zephaniah 3:17 ESV The LORD your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save; he will rejoice over you with gladness; he will quiet you by his love; he will exult over you with loud singing.

3) For ALL PEOPLE - The LORD has bared His arm - He has sent Messiah

Isaiah 52:7-10 ESV How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who publishes peace, who brings good news of happiness, who publishes salvation, who says to Zion, "Your God reigns." (8) The voice of your watchmen--they lift up their voice; together they sing for joy; for eye to eye they see the return of the LORD to Zion. (9) Break forth together into singing, you waste places of Jerusalem, for the LORD has comforted his people; he has redeemed Jerusalem. (10) **The LORD has bared his holy arm before the eyes of all the nations, and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.**

Yet for all the Joy - He had to endure the cross ...

- Heb 12:2 ESV looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who **for the joy that was set before him endured the cross**, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

What Can I Learn

The LORD has stepped in to bring salvation - He has paid the price of our redemption

The Sign of Swaddling Clothes

Luke 2: (12) And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

- Shepherds around Bethlehem kept sheep for sacrifice and Passover
- According to Josephus (Jewish historian) 256,500 sheep slaughtered for Passover at the time of Christ

JOSEPHUS informs us that the syrian Governor Cestius Gallus requested the high priest to take a census of Jerusalem to convince Nero of the importance of the city and of the Jewish nation. The method used by the high priest was to COUNT the NUMBER of lambs SLAIN at Passover, namely, 256,500. Then he multiplied that number by 10, the average number of persons served by each lamb. At the LOWEST computation of TEN person per lamb, this would give a population of 2,565,000 or, as Josephus himself puts it, 2, 700, 200 persons (Josephus, Jewish Wars 6, 9, 3). On an earlier occasion, Josephus computed the number of Jews present in Jerusalem at Passover to be not fewer than 3,000,000 (Ibid., 2, 14, 3).

In his book “The Life and Times of Jesus Messiah” (1899), Alfred Edersheim wrote about this:

- Migdal Eder was a watchtower located in the northern part of Bethlehem built to protect the Temple flocks
- “During lambing season the sheep were brought there from the fields, as the lower level functioned as the birthing room for sacrificial lambs.”
- Priestly shepherds “would wrap the newborn lambs in swaddling clothes” and place them in a manger “until they calmed down”³ to keep them “without defect”⁴, so they would not become bruised or injured, they had to be a lamb without spot or blemish in order to be suitable as a sacrificial lamb for the sin of the Israelites.

When they saw the baby

- These shepherds would have understood the significance of a sheep wrapped in swaddling clothes - “i.e. one that would be set aside as a Passover lamb
- But to see a baby wrapped in the same manner may have surprised them, or it may have given them immediate understanding as to the ultimate calling for this baby, that he would become THE ultimate Passover lamb for the sins of the world

The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world

- Joh 1:29 KJV The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.

What is the SIGN of swaddling clothes

That this baby - the SAVIOR - the MESSIAH - the LORD is born with a destiny to die as a perfect sacrifice - the unblemished lamb of God - our relationship is to the LAMB

- Rev 13:8 KJV And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the **Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.**
- 1Pe 1:18-19 KJV [we were redeemed]...with the precious blood of Christ, as of **a lamb without blemish and without spot:**
- Rev 21:9 KJV ... Come hither, I will shew thee **the bride, the Lamb's wife.**
- Rev 21:27 NIV Nothing impure will ever enter it,...only those whose names are written in

the Lamb's book of life.

Peace & Goodwill Toward Men

(13) 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, good will toward men.** (15) And 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. (16) And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. (17) **And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child. (18) And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds.** (19) But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart. (20) And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.

In Giving His Son - the praise springing from multitudes of angels is:

1) Glory to GOD for what he is doing - and This child is a gift of PEACE and GOODWILL to men

His birth makes His death imminent - it is on a timeline:

Peace only comes through His death

The Son was slain from the foundation of the world...but NOW he steps into the world and the mission takes on focus and becomes immanent - now He is taking on flesh and soon he would take on sin and death. It is not like He was not committed before this, but NOW it is for real...(it is like a man who has been on death row for 20 years, and one day you wake up and you realize TODAY is the day set for the execution) - the Father inserts his son into this world through the virgin Mary - and now the time has come to carry out the plan.

- Col 1:19-20 KJV 19 For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell; 20 **And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself;**

GOODWILL - (translated as Desire (Rom 10:1) or Good Pleasure (Eph 1:5-10) and it shows that it was God's desire - it was His good pleasure to give his Son.

- Isa 53:10 NIV Yet it was the LORD's will to crush him [*KJV Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him*]; and cause him to suffer, and though the LORD makes his life an offering for sin, he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the LORD will prosper in his hand.

The shepherds made known abroad the things that were made known to them

What can I learn?

God is for me...Peace and Goodwill to All Men

That the gift of His Son, while bringing great joy - it brings it at a great cost...

Laying his son into the manger in swaddling clothes was a great act of Love and sacrifice...

Rom 8:31-32 KJV What shall we then say to these things? If **God be for us**, who can be against us? 32 **He that spared not his own Son**, but delivered him up for us all, **how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?**

WHO COULD HAVE COME UP WITH A BETTER PLAN?