

Luke 2:1–7 *And it came to pass in those days* [the days after John the Baptist was born], *that there went out a decree* [a command] *from Caesar Augustus* [the Emperor of the Roman world], *that all the world should be taxed.* <sup>2</sup>*(And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.)* <sup>3</sup>*And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city* [the city that the family's ancestors came from]. <sup>4</sup>*And Joseph also went up<sup>1</sup> 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:)* <sup>5</sup>*To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child.* <sup>6</sup>*And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered* [that she went into the pre-birth pains of labor]. <sup>7</sup>*And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes* [a linen baby blanket], *and laid him in a manger* [similar to a cattle trough]; *because there was no room for them in the inn.*

## I. Introduction

### A. Miracles recorded in Bible often repeated multiple times

1. Raising dead back to life – Elijah (1 Kings 17:17-22), Jesus (John 10:17-18)
2. Feeding thousands of people from a little food – 5000 (Matthew 14:15-21), 4000 (Matthew 15:32-38)
3. Throwing demons out of people (see Luke 4:41; 8:2; 8:27-38; 10:17; 13:32, many others)
4. Souls being saved (too many to mention)

### B. Miracle of the incarnation

1. Only happened once in human history
2. One person: Jesus of Nazareth

*Hebrews 9:28 So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin* [the second time, not to pay for our sins, but] *unto salvation.*

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<sup>1</sup> The term "...went up..." is in reference to elevation, not the direction on a map. Judaea is up ~ 2500 feet above Galilee, but is south (down) on a modern, north-at-the-top map.

## II. Orchestration of the Incarnation

### A. Prophecy of God

1. Jesus was born of the seed of the woman

*Genesis 3:14-15* <sup>14</sup> *And the LORD God said unto the serpent [in judgement in the garden of Eden], ...* <sup>15</sup> *And I will put enmity [a constant state of conflict] between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it [the seed of the woman (meaning Jesus)] shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.*

2. Jesus was born of the seed of David

*John 7:42* *Hath not the scripture said, **That Christ cometh of the seed of David** [meaning in the direct bloodline of David], and out of the town of Bethlehem, where David was?*

3. Jesus was a man of sorrows

*Isaiah 53:3* *He [Jesus] is despised and rejected of men; **a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him** [people don't want their last image of someone they know to be right before they're executed]; *he was despised, and we esteemed [valued] him not.**

4. Jesus the Son called “the Mighty God” & “Prince of Peace”

*Isaiah 9:6* *For unto us [the nation Israel] a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, **The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.***

5. Jesus the King called “the Righteous Branch” & named “the Lord Our Righteousness”

*Jeremiah 23:5-6* <sup>5</sup> *Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David **a righteous Branch**, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth.* <sup>6</sup> *In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, **THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.***

### B. Proclamation of government

1. Roman general Pompey annexed Jerusalem in 63 BC as Roman client state
2. Reign of Caesar Augustus, first emperor to reign from Rome from 27 BC to 14 AD
3. Herod the Great ruled for Rome in the eastern Mediterranean region (which included Israel) between 34 BC to 4 BC (or maybe 1 BC?)
4. Unknown governor (to modern historians) of Syria between 4 BC to 1 BC
5. Publius Sulpicius Quirinius known legate (ambassador for Rome) of Syria from 6 AD to 12 AD

6. First Roman Imperial tax/census started in 6 BC under Caesar Augustus in Roman Empire, but it could have taken a few years to complete in the vast Roman empire
7. God moved the hearts of governments that forced Joseph & Mary to go to Bethlehem while she was in the late stages of pregnancy

*Proverbs 21:1 The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will.*

### C. Precision of guidance

1. Joseph & Mary were both of the house & lineage of David the King
2. They arrived in Bethlehem in time for Mary's delivery of baby Jesus
3. Bethlehem

- a. Name Bethlehem means "house of bread"
- b. Future king of Israel would be from Bethlehem, just as King David was from Bethlehem

*Micah 5:2 But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah* ['Bethlehem in the south', there were two cities named Bethlehem associated with Israel (Joshua 19:15)], *though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet **out of thee shall he come forth unto me*** [the person] **that is to be ruler in Israel;** *whose goings forth* [whose origins] *have been from of old, from everlasting.*

- c. Jesus is the Bread of Life from the house of bread

*John 6:35 And Jesus said unto them* [the people of Capernaum in Galilee], **I am the bread of life:** *he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.*

4. God directed the steps of Joseph, husband of Mary

*Psalms 37:23 The steps of a good man are ordered* [directed, planned out] *by the LORD: and he* [God] *delighteth in his* [the good man's] *way.*

### III. Obedience in the Incarnation

#### A. Promised visit – Jesus

1. God needed obedient servants to do His work
2. Obedient Son of God

*Philippians 2:5-7 Let this mind be in you, which was also in **Christ Jesus:*** <sup>6</sup>*Who, **being in the form of God,** thought it not robbery to be equal with God* [though He was God Himself, needed to be a man to accomplish His Father's mission for Him]: <sup>7</sup>*But made himself of no reputation* [He left His glorious Godly characteristics in heaven], *and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:*

3. Obedient Son of Man

*John 8:28-29 Then said Jesus unto them [Jews in the Jerusalem Temple], “**When ye have lifted up the Son of man** [on the cross], then shall ye know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things. <sup>29</sup>And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him.”*

4. Obedient Savior of the world

*John 3:14-15 And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness [see Numbers 21:8-9], even so must the Son of man be lifted up: <sup>15</sup>That **whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.***

5. Obedient to death

*John 12:32-33 “And I [Jesus], if I be lifted up from the earth [on the cross], will draw all men unto me.” <sup>33</sup>This he said, signifying what death he should die.*

*Philippians 2:8 And being found in fashion as a man, **he** humbled himself, and **became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.***

6. Obedient sacrifice to God

*Ephesians 5:2 And walk in love, as **Christ** also hath loved us, and **hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God** for a sweet-smelling savour.*

*Hebrews 10:12 But this man [Jesus], after he had offered one sacrifice for sins forever [compared to the Priests that must offer sacrifices year after year], **sat down on the right hand of God;***

B. Pure virgin – Mary

1. Virgin shall conceive a child

*Isaiah 7:14 Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.*

2. Miraculous conception

a. Angel tells Mary that she will have a son (Luke 1:31)

b. Mary knows how women become pregnant & questions how that is possible (Luke 1:34)

c. Angel tells Mary that God’s power will create the baby (Luke 1:35)

3. Mary accepts God’s plan for her life and is obedient

*Luke 1:38 And Mary said, “Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word.” And the angel departed from her.*

C. Pliable vessel – Joseph

1. Joseph also had to be obedient to God’s instruction

2. Difference between modern engagement & espousal (in Joseph's day)
  - a. Engagement is commitment to marry in modern society
  - b. Espousal in Biblical society was much more
    - i. Only sin of fornication broke an espousal
    - ii. Espousal only broken by a legal process (writing of divorcement)
    - iii. Punishment for fornication was stoning to death
3. Joseph's journey of obedience
  - a. Joseph heard about Mary's pregnancy (Matthew 1:18)
  - b. He thinks of divorcing Mary quietly instead of publicly (Matthew 1:19)
  - c. God gives him directions to take Mary as his wife & not wait any longer (Matthew 1:20)
  - d. Joseph obeyed God's command

*Mat 1:24 Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden [instructed] him, and took unto him his wife:*

#### IV. Outcome of the Incarnation

##### A. Earthly dwelling

1. Jesus is "God with us"

*Matthew 1:22-23 Now all this [the angel Gabriel's interaction with Mary] was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, <sup>23</sup>" Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel," which being interpreted is, **God with us.***

2. God's living Word became flesh

*John 1:14 And the Word [God the Son] was made flesh, and dwelt [lived] among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.*

*Hebrews 10:5 Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me:*

3. John the apostle was eyewitness to life, death, burial, & resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth

*1 John 1:1 That [Jesus] which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life;*

B. Eternal deliverance

1. Jesus came to look for lost souls & to save them from sin

*Luke 19:10 For the Son of man [Jesus] is come **to seek and to save that which was lost.***

2. God sent His Son to save the world

*John 3:17 For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; **but that the world through him might be saved.***

3. Jesus will save His people from their sins

*Mathew 1:21 And she [Mary] shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name **JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.***

4. God promised eternal life before He created the worlds

*Titus 1:2 In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began;*

5. Jesus will accept anyone who comes to Him

*John 6:37 All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise [I will never] cast out.*

V. Conclusion

- A. God did not send a vaccine (to cure a single sickness for only a period of time), but God sent victory for the soul which benefits eternally

*John 10:10 The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I [Jesus] am come that they might have life, and that they [the sheep that belong to The Great Shepherd] might have it more abundantly.*

- B. God sent His only Son to give you eternal life

*John 3:16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*