

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.* 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* [the city that the family's ancestors came from]. ⁴*And Joseph also went up*¹ *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* [that she went into the pre-birth pains of labor]. ⁷*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.*

1. Introduction

- a. God possesses the ultimate choice in anything – His plan. Many things are God's plan
 - i. Creation – In the beginning God created (Genesis 1:1)
 - ii. Love – God so loved the world (John 3:16)
 - iii. Bible – All Scripture is given by inspiration of God (2 Timothy 3:16)
 - iv. Church – I will build my church (Matthew 16:18)
 - v. Preaching – It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save (1 Corinthians 1:21)
 - vi. Marriage – They shall be one flesh (Genesis 2:24)
- b. God chose the time of Jesus birth

Galatians 4:4-5 *But when the fulness of the time was come* [when the world had been prepared], *God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law,* ⁵*To redeem them that were under the law, that we* [Christians] *might receive the adoption of sons.*

¹ 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.

- c. God chose Bethlehem as the place of Jesus birth

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.*

2. Alternative Place

- a. Illogical place

- i. Logical place would be an inn (motel for temporary lodging)
- ii. Stable not a logical place to stay
 - a) Stable is logical place for animals
 - b) Stable is good place to store animal feed & equipment
- iii. But why a stable for Jesus birth?
 - a) The stable was accessible to all. The Inn was only for people who could pay
 - b) The Inn was a temporary place, not intended for a long-term residence. Joseph and Mary stayed in Bethlehem past Jesus' first birthday (read Matthew 2:11 carefully)
 - c) The shepherds would not have been allowed into the Inn, but they were comfortable in a stable with animals
 - d) The shepherds were told to look for a sign from God, something out of the ordinary. A baby in a crib was expected, but a baby in a cattle trough was unusual.

- b. God's gift is free

- i. God's gift is eternal life

Romans 6:23 *For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*
- ii. God's unspeakable gift of grace

2 Corinthians 9:8, 15 *And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things* [having enough to do everything you need to do], *may abound to every good work...* ¹⁵*Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable* [indescribable] *gift.*
- iii. Saved by God's grace

Ephesians 2:8-9 *For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves* [it is not something you can do for yourself]: *it is the gift of God: ⁹Not of works, lest any man should boast.*

c. God's gift is permanent

i. Our future home in heaven is eternal

2 Corinthians 5:1 *For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle [if the body we live in here on earth] were dissolved [dies], we have a building of God [we have a body designed by God], an house not made with hands [and made by God], eternal in the heavens [a body that will never dissolve].*

ii. Christian has life & immortality (never ending life)

2 Timothy 1:10 *But [God's holy calling to us] is now made manifest [has been shown to us] by the appearing of **our Savior Jesus Christ**, who hath abolished death, and **hath brought life and immortality to light** [so that we can see them] through the gospel:*

iii. Christian will have the victory over death

1 Corinthians 15:53-54 *For this corruptible [human body and soul] must put on incorruption, and this mortal [human body and soul] must put on immortality. ⁵⁴So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, "Death is swallowed up in victory."*

d. Christian's future gift to stay forever with the Lord

1 Thessalonians 4:17 *Then [after the dead in Christ have their new physical bodies united with their spirit and soul] we which are alive and remain [those Christians who are still alive when Christ comes to take His people out of the world] shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air:*

e. God's gift provides all that is needed

i. The Lord is with the Christian

Psalms 23:1 *The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want [I'll trust God to be sure I have all I need].*

ii. Christian complete in Christ

Colossians 2:10 *And ye [Christians] are complete in him [Jesus], which is the head of all principality and power [ruler and authority]:*

iii. Christian filled with the fullness of God

Ephesians 3:19 *And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that **ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.***

f. God's gift is available to all

- i. Jesus is the true light who gives light to every man

John 1:9 *That [Jesus, the Word] was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.*

- ii. Jesus receives those who receive Him

John 1:12 *But as many as received him [Jesus], to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:*

3. Amended Place

- a. Stable not suitable place for childbirth, but God chose the place

- b. Jesus arrival changed the world

- i. Jesus gave light to the world

John 8:12 *Then spake Jesus again unto them [the Pharisees], saying, "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."*

- ii. Jesus came to give abundant life

John 10:10 *The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they [Jesus' sheep (meaning Christians)] might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.*

- iii. Jesus makes Christian a new creation

2 Corinthians 5:17 *Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.*

- iv. Jesus makes peace between Christian & God

Ephesians 2:14-15 *For he [Jesus] is our peace, who hath made both [Jews and non-Jews] one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; ¹⁵Having abolished in his flesh the enmity [constant state of conflict], even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain [to put both Jews and non-Jews into Himself] one new man, so making peace;*

- c. Sanctification is gradual daily change in Christian's life by the Holy Spirit

- i. Christian is conformed to the image of Christ

Romans 8:29 *For whom he [God] did foreknow, he also did predestinate [determined before it happened] to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he [Jesus] might be the firstborn among many brethren.*

- ii. Christian only knows God in part on earth

1 Corinthians 13:12 *For now we [Christians] see [God's eternal plan] through a glass, darkly; but then [after we have fully become like Christ] face to face: now I know in part [my knowledge of God is limited]; but then shall I know even as also I am known.*

- d. Glorification is when Jesus comes back & changes Christian's body

- i. Dead in Christ raised to new life

1 Corinthians 15:52 [We will all have our corruptible body changed into an eternal body...] *In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible [raised so they will never die again], and we [living Christians] shall be changed [so that we will never die].*

- ii. All Christians go home to heaven with Jesus

1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 *For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: ¹⁷Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.*

- iii. Christian in heaven will be like Jesus

1 John 3:2 *Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be [what our new, heavenly bodies will look like]: but we know that, when he [Jesus] shall appear, we shall be like him [we will have a body that is like the body that Jesus has now, after His resurrection]; for we shall see him as he is.*

4. Accessible Place

- a. What parts of town were open to the shepherds?

- i. Bethlehem Inn? Probably not
- ii. Stable? Yes, freely open to shepherds
- iii. Read the shepherd's story for yourself in Luke 2:8-19

- b. Accessible salvation

- i. Anyone can call on God's name to be saved

Romans 10:13 *For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.*

- ii. Anyone can come drink of the water of life

John 4:14 *But whosoever drinketh of the water that I [Jesus] shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.*

Revelation 22:17 *And the [Holy] Spirit and the bride [the Church] say, "Come". And let him that heareth say, "Come". And let him that is athirst [thirsty] come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.*

- iii. God is not willing that any should be lost

2 Peter 3:9 *The Lord is not slack concerning his promise [is not slow to fulfill his promise], as some men count slackness [and some men might think that He does not plan to keep His promise to us because they don't see it happening for such a long time]; but is longsuffering to us-ward [extremely patient towards us], not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.*

b. Accessible savior

- i. Come to Jesus & receive rest for your soul

Matthew 11:28 *Come unto me [Jesus], all ye that labor and are heavy laden [all of you who have worked until you are weary and are carrying heavy burdens], and I will give you rest.*

- ii. The Lord is Christian's help & deliverer

Psalms 40:17 *But I [God's child] am poor and needy; yet the Lord thinketh upon me [I am not very important, but God still thinks about how I'm doing]: thou art my help and my deliverer; make no tarrying [I need your help soon], O my God.*

- iii. Jesus will never leave Christian

Hebrews 13:5-6 *Let your conversation [lifestyle] be without covetousness; and be content [satisfied] with such things as ye have: for he [God] hath said, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." ⁶So that we [Christians] may boldly say, "The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me."*

- iv. Christians can put all their cares on God

1 Peter 5:7 *Casting all your care upon him [God]; for he careth for you.*

5. Conclusion

- a. Joseph & Mary would not have chosen a stable for Mary to give birth
- b. God chose the place & time for Mary to give birth to Jesus
- c. And God chose the place that shepherds could freely come to see baby Jesus