

**Luke 2:1-2:20**

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# THE BIRTH OF JESUS

## 1. The Place of Birth - God-shaped politics

“An enrolment 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 enrolment 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: but so it must be; and thus were things ordered by an infinite, and all wise providence to effect it.” -Gill

“Augustus Caesar, the nephew and heir of Julius Caesar, the first of the Roman emperors, was now the ruler of the civilized world. Though Judea was ruled by Herod as king, he was dependent upon and the servant of Augustus Caesar.” PNT

“The Syriac Sinaitic expressly says that both Joseph and Mary were of the house and city of David. Same verb as in #1:27 |, but here it really means "married" or "espoused" as #Mt 1:24f. | shows. Otherwise she could not have travelled with Joseph.

The people under Rome's rule came to call the emperor "Saviour" and Christians took the word and used it of Christ. See inscriptions (Deissmann, *Light from the Ancient East*, p. 344).” RWP

## 2. The Witness of Birth - Shepherds

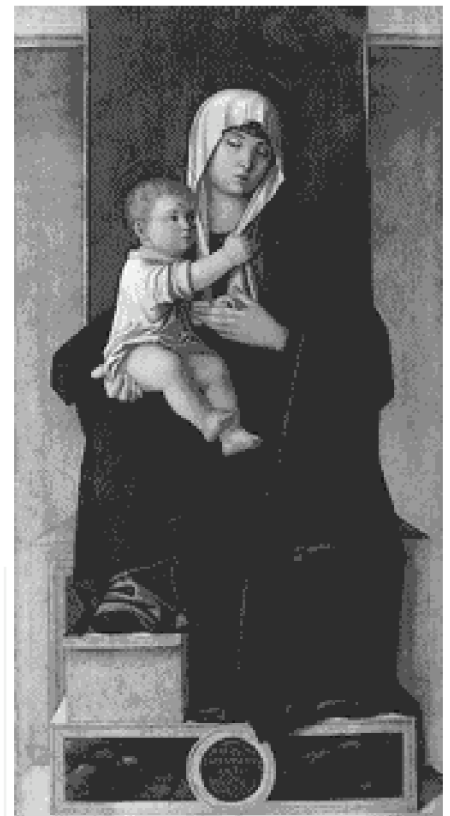
- \* His name/title (2:11)
- \* His sign (12)
- \* His mission (11, 14)



Why didn't God notify the kings and emperors of Jesus' birth? Why wasn't the ambassadors let known of this crucial event? God did the miraculous by appearing to the shepherds. But why the shepherds?

The poor and neglected shepherds were notified. The low class were instantaneously excited because the angelic announcement was given to them. Someone paid attention to them. We must also note the message communicated by the lowly place of Jesus' birth.

**Attention to the poor and rejection from the world become a theme for this Gospel of Luke.**



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### Luke attacked:

- No such decree mentioned by Greek or Roman historians, “but papyri and inscriptions have confirmed Luke on every point in these crucial verses.”
- Luke confused the two census (with Acts 5:37).
- Quirinius was not the governor of Syria during Christ's birth, but in fact Ramsay has found “inscriptions that Quirinius was twice in Syria and that Luke is correct here also.” RWP

*So when is Christmas?*

**“And it came to pass, while they were there, the days were fulfilled that she should be delivered.”** “The early Christians made no record of the date of Christ's birth; we find no mention of December 25 earlier than the fourth century. The Eastern church celebrated Christ's birth by a feast called Epiphany, which means manifestation. They chose January 6 as the date for this feast, for they reasoned that if the first Adam was born on the sixth day of creation, the second Adam must have been born on the sixth day of the year. The Western church celebrated Christ's birth on the 25th of December by a feast called Natalis, which means Nativity. But Pope Julius I (A.D. 337-352) designated December 25 as the proper day, and the Eastern churches soon united with the Western churches in observing this day; and the custom has become universal. We do not observe this day because of the Pope's decree, but because of the tradition on which the Pope's decree was founded.” TFG