

## Luke 2: 1-14

And it came to pass in those days *that* a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. <sup>2</sup> This census first took place while Quirinius was governing Syria. <sup>3</sup> So all went to be registered, everyone to his own city.

<sup>4</sup> Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, <sup>5</sup> to be registered with Mary, his betrothed wife, who was with child. <sup>6</sup> So it was, that while they were there, the days were completed for her to be delivered. <sup>7</sup> And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

<sup>8</sup> Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. <sup>9</sup> And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid. <sup>10</sup> Then the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. <sup>11</sup> For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. <sup>12</sup> And this *will be* the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger."

<sup>13</sup> And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying:

<sup>14</sup> "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men!"

1. Christmas is such a special time of year to reflect on the birth of Jesus
2. As we journeyed through of Matthew 1,2 & Luke 1,2... we've looked at the history & background of the birth of Jesus
  - a. We spoke about the faith of Joseph who was in a predicament
  - b. We also looked at how Mary went to Elizabeth & their encounter
  - c. About the Shepherds – how God uses the unlikely, lowly of society
  - d. About the Magi – who are the official King Makers of the East
    - i. The meaning of the gold, frankincense & Myrrh
  - e. A great story full of suspense & triumph
3. **Christmas is a special time to reflect on Jesus**

- a. We know that Jesus ultimately came to save us on the cross
  - b. Prior to salvation, His arrival set some things in order
  - c. It's a time that gives us a special perspective to take a closer look at Christ
  - d. At His arrival before going to Calvary
  - e. As a harmless baby cradled in the arms of a young woman
4. There is something mysterious & beautiful about God deciding to enter this world as a baby
- a. Most people can't help look at a baby & smile
  - b. There is something so pure & innocent
  - c. With this backdrop, there is an invitation by God for all of humanity to come near
  - d. I believe it's more than just to see what a perfect baby looks like
  - e. God wants to restore what was lost in the garden of Eden
    - i. **Bring beauty out of ashes**
  - f. We know that Adam & Eve were living in paradise
  - g. They had it as close to perfect as possible
    - i. No sin (yet)
    - ii. No sickness or disease
    - iii. No guilt or shame
    - iv. They had freedom
    - v. Dominion
    - vi. Purpose
  - h. One day, they were tempted to eat from the forbidden fruit
    - i. Tempted when they **saw** the tree in the middle of the garden
    - ii. They were tempted to **touch** it

- iii. Tempted to **taste** it's fruit
  - i. So first, it was a temptation with the eyes
    - i. Seeing something, touched & tasted
    - ii. That act of rebellion was the downfall of humanity as sin entered the world
- 5. Our Christmas story is the beginning of God making right what was made wrong in the garden
- 6. God used this lowest point as the starting point
- 7. Instead of drawing away when things got bad, God used it to draw near.
- 8. So near, that Mary held on to the very best that heaven has – That's love
- 9. Adam & Eve were perfectly alone in the garden with no one but God
  - a. Joseph & Mary are alone with baby Jesus
    - i. Although Mary had relatives in Judea, God's providence guided them to where Mary & Joseph would be alone with Jesus
  - b. Instead of a lush garden in a perfect environment, the setting here is in a cold barn with the putrid smell of animals & no one to help
    - i. Picturesque of the current human condition
- 10. The Lord wants to set some things in order & correct some of our understandings before going to Calvary
  - a. Jesus spent 33 plus years on earth showing us who God is from **day 1**
  - b. **John 14:9** He who has seen Me has seen the Father
- 11. I believe the first thing God wants to correct is our **Sight**
  - a. **How we see God**
  - b. The Jews saw God as unapproachable in His holiness

i. He's distant & perhaps angry

1. Obviously that was after the fall of man

c. Even before the fall, Eve apparently did not see God fully

d. If her eyes were full of God's glory and goodness, she probably wouldn't have fallen as she did

e. If she was satisfied and was full, perhaps she wouldn't have fallen in that manner

f. **Prov 27:7** A satisfied soul loathes the honeycomb, But to a hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet

g. **It seems that how we view God is simply a choice**

h. What He's communicating in the manger scene is that He is not distant or angry

i. **He's humble and close**

ii. With a love so great that He's willing to commit Himself to the most vulnerable of circumstances

iii. From the human perspective, He fully committed Himself to Mary

i. It was also the most humble of places

i. This tells us that He's accessible to all people

ii. He could have chosen to be born in a palace

iii. He could have been born into a wealthy family

iv. Instead, He chose the lowest place possible

v. So that there are no barriers between Him and all of humanity

vi. Anyone who wants to see Him can see Him.

vii. He cares for everyone, no exceptions

viii. No one needs special permission or get by a guard...

- j. He cares about the smallest details of our lives
  - k. As He gives us a choice to look at Him, He's always watching us
12. Mary, do you realize that the One you're looking at in this manger is The maker of heaven and earth?
13. Mary, did you know that your Baby Boy will give sight to a blind man?  
 Mary, did you know that your Baby Boy will calm the storm with His hand?  
 Did you know that your Baby Boy has walked where angels trod?  
 When you kiss your little Baby you kissed the face of God?
- a. He see's everything and everyone
  - b. Whether or not you're looking at Him, He's watching over you
  - c. Mary, He's brought you this far, He won't let go of you now
    - i. As He watched Gideon threshing the wheat, He's watching over you
    - ii. As He watched over Joseph in the prison house, He watches over you
    - iii. As He watched the 3 Hebrew children, He watches over you
    - iv. **Psalm 121:5** The LORD watches over you-- the LORD is your shade at your right hand;
  - d. He encourages us to take a look with fresh eyes as we reflect on the baby
    - i. **"Behold" The Lamb of God**
  - e. **It's not just one sided, Jesus is expressing His longing as well**
  - f. **Song 2:14 ESV** O my dove, in the clefts of the rock, in the crannies of the cliff, let me see your face, let me hear your voice, for your voice is sweet, and your face is lovely.
  - g. **Song 4:9 ESV** You have captivated my heart, my sister, my bride; You have captivated my heart with one glance of your eyes...

- h. In poetic form, He speaks to the church
  - i. **Song 6:5** Turn away your eyes from me, for they overwhelm me

#### 14. **The 2<sup>nd</sup> thing is Touch**

- a. After Eve saw the fruit, she reached out and touched it
- b. He's inviting humanity to touch Him
- c. **Luke 24:39** See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself. Touch me, and see. For a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have."
- d. **1 John 1:1** That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life—
- e. And He writes this for us, not to touch Him physically, but to reach out by faith & grasp Him & His truth
- f. **Luke 8:42** But as He went, the multitudes thronged Him. 43 Now a woman, having a flow of blood for twelve years, who had spent all her livelihood on physicians and could not be healed by any, 44 came from behind and touched the border of His garment. And immediately her flow of blood stopped. 45 And Jesus said, "**Who touched Me?**"
- g. This story is repeated in all 3 gospels, not so we can touch Jesus physically, but to extend faith and touch Him
- h. As she heard, (faith comes by hearing) she approached Jesus by faith
  - i. Don't reach out & touch the same fruit as Adam & Eve
    - 1. That forbidden fruit brings death
      - a. **For us:** Good works
      - b. Trying harder
      - c. Getting advise from people who don't love Jesus
      - d. Looking to earn something from God
  - i. Instead, we're to stretch our hands of faith & receive the free Gift = Jesus

- j. As Mary held Him when He was born
  - k. As Peter held Him when he was sinking.
  - l. As the disciples held on to Him to dine with them
  - m. We too can touch Him, by faith
15. **Taste.** Mary got a taste of God's sweetness and care when things seem darkest
- a. Tasting here is presented with the idea of enjoying delicious food
16. **Psalm 34:8** O taste and see that the LORD is good; How blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him!
- a. **The Lord is good**
  - b. He didn't leave Joseph & Mary all alone as the future was uncertain
    - i. Shepherds came in to tell after seeing the angelic hosts
    - ii. Somewhere within a 2 year period, Magi will offer Him gifts
    - iii. God knows how to turn the bitter things sweet
17. We can enjoy the sweetness of God in His Word
18. **Psalm 119:103** How sweet are Your words to my taste! Yes, sweeter than honey to my mouth!
19. As we learn to reflect on Christ in the middle of our greatest needs
20. **Exodus 15:22** (As the people were thirsty) <sup>24</sup> And the people complained against Moses, saying, "What shall we drink?" <sup>25</sup> So he cried out to the Lord, and the Lord showed him a tree. When he cast *it* into the waters, the waters were made sweet.
21. What gives life flavor & satisfaction is when we reflect on the Lord Himself
22. It happens as we choose to trust Christ and His goodness

23. **Psalm 31:19** How great is Your goodness, Which You have stored up for those who fear You, Which You have wrought for those who take refuge in You, Before the sons of men!
24. **We also taste His goodness as we wait on the Lord**
25. **Lam 3:25** The Lord is good to those who wait for Him, To the person who seeks Him.
  - a. The Lord does things His way & in His timing
  - b. So we wait and trust in Him
26. Someone may say, "I want to see God correctly, touch His love, taste His goodness, where do I begin?"
27. We can learn from Adam & Eve's mistake and learn
28. If eating the forbidden fruit on the tree is what made them fall
29. God will use another tree bearing another fruit that will make us live
30. As many as received Him, to them He gave the right to be children of God
31. See The Lord, touch His mercy, taste His goodness