

# Salvation is Born

Luke 2:1-7

1. Introduction.
2. The Setting (1-3).
  - a. Luke begins with a political, historical marker.
    - i. This grounds the passage in real time and history.
    - ii. Rome was the ruling presence of the day.
    - iii. A census was declared for tax purposes.
  - b. Luke is not writing as a mere historian, but also theologian. To understand this as a simple historical marker would be a misreading of the text.
    - i. The insertion of the census is a theological insertion.
    - ii. We must understand the point of including these details is to make clear God's utter sovereignty over history and world powers. He is sovereign and uses these realities to bring about faithfulness to His historical promise.
  - c. Each was to register for the census in his own city—a reference to birth place or family origins.
    - i. It was not normal for people to travel to their hometown for a census.
    - ii. This appears to be a Jewish tradition.
3. Prophetic Fulfillment (4-5).
  - a. The Messiah was to be born in the city of Bethlehem (Micah 5:2-4).
    - i. This was God's plan from the beginning (c.f., Gal. 4:4-5).
    - ii. Bringing forth a Messiah was never a back-up plan.
  - b. In order for God to bring about fulfillment of the Micah prophesy, we see Him using a secular, wicked government to fulfill His purposes.

- i. This is utter sovereignty.
      - ii. Luke understands this, and includes these details not simply to give time markers, but show forth God's sovereignty.
    - c. This was a difficult situation for Mary and Joseph.
      - i. It was about a 90 mile trip from Nazareth to Bethlehem. Moreover, Mary was just days from labor.
      - ii. Yet we see no complaint from Mary. She perhaps embraced this burden with joy (c.f., 1:38).
4. The Birth (6-7).
- a. Notice the unadorned language.
    - i. This is typical of Luke.
    - ii. He's a historian quoting the simple facts.
  - b. "The days were completed." Again, this is what Paul picks up on in Gal. 4:2-4.
    - i. This was part of God's original plan, and had a specific time, date, and location in mind to bring about His Messianic promise.
  - c. He makes the simple statement that the Christ is born.
    - i. He leaves out details regarding the birth itself. As such, we can safely assume it was normal birth, which includes all the normal realities of a typical birth.
    - ii. Yet in light of this, he describes other details.
      - 1. The term for "manger" is the term used for an animal feeding trough.
        - a. The term can also be used to speak of an animal stall (c.f., 13:15).
        - b. Since she places Jesus "in" this object, the best understanding is Luke is referring to an animal feeding trough.

2. The “inn” is a typical word used to speak of “guest room.”
  - a. V. 6 states, “While they were there.” As such, this is the place Mary and Joseph were staying during the census. In other words, this wasn’t an emergency stop along the road.
  - b. Since this was Joseph’s hometown (v.3), it is safe to assume they were staying with family.
  - c. In light of this, we can understand the “guest room” was full—most likely because other family members were in town for the census as well.
    - i. As a result, Mary and Joseph were staying on the bottom floor of the home where animals were kept at night.
    - ii. On this bottom floor there would have been a feeding trough for the animals—this is where Mary laid Jesus.
3. The point of these details, however, is to communicate the shame and weakness into which Jesus was born—that’s the point.
  - a. The Creator comes as a creature.
  - b. “No room” bespeaks of the fact He would be rejected by the world. From His birth, the world shows inhospitality to its Savior.
  - c. God takes on the weakness of flesh and sets aside His right of glory (Phil. 2:6-8).
  - d. The purpose of this is because God loves to be worshiped against the backdrop of weakness.
    - i. Why? For it’s against the backdrop of weakness that God’s glory shines brightest.
    - ii. This is a truth we see from Genesis to Revelation.

## 5. Conclusion.

- a. God's humility (c.f., Psalm 113:4-6).
- b. God came to earth to take on flesh so that He might redeem that which is flesh.
- c. He came so that He might be that great, sympathetic high priest—He knows our frame and is mindful we are but dust.
  - i. He understands what it means to be a finite creature.
  - ii. He understands what it means to be tempted by every lie of a broken world.

#### Small Group Question

1. What stood out to you in this sermon?
2. Why did Jesus come in the manner He came, namely, weakness?
3. What can this passage teach us about the nature of humility?
4. Is there a person in your life whose suffering or weakness you can enter for the purpose of bringing the Gospel?
5. If not, why? Is there an area in which you (or your community group) can do this within the community (e.g., schools, nursing homes, local mercy ministries, etc.). In other words, how can you sacrifice some time and resources to have a presence (and be a simple blessing) for the purpose of getting to know people and bring the Gospel?