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Jesus' Birth

Definitions in **bold letters** are from **Strong's** Exhaustive Concordance
Other definitions are from **Webster's** Dictionary, 1828 Edition
or Roget's Thesaurus – **December 22, 2013**

Luke 2:1-17

Introduction: In this chapter, we have an account of the **birth** and **infancy** of our Lord Jesus: having had notice of his conception, and of the birth and infancy of his forerunner, in the former chapter. The **First-begotten** is here brought into the world; let us go meet him with our hosannas, blessed is he that cometh. Here is, I. The place and other circumstances of his birth, which proved him to be the true Messiah, and such a one as we needed, but not such a one as the Jews expected, Luke 2:1-7. II. The notifying of his birth to the **shepherds** in that neighbourhood by an angel, the **song of praise** which the **angels sung** upon that occasion, and the spreading of the report of it by the shepherds, Luke 2:8-20. III. The circumcision of Christ, and the naming of him, Luke 2:21. IV. The presenting of him in the temple, Luke 2:22-24. V. The testimonies of Simeon, and Anna the prophetess, concerning him, Luke 2:25-39. VI. Christ's growth and capacity, Luke 2:40-52. VIII. His observing the passover at twelve years old, and his disputing with the doctors in the temple, Luke 2:41-51. And this, with what we have met with (Matthew 1:1-2:23), is all we have concerning our Lord Jesus, till he entered upon his public work in the thirtieth year of his age.

(Source: The Matthew Henry Commentary on the whole Bible classic.studylight.org/com/mhc)

Luke 2:1-2, *And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a **decree** from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be **TAXED (enrol)**. (And this taxing was first made when **Cyrenius (Quirinus)** was **governor** of Syria.)*

NOTE: Augustus ..."This is the title given by the Roman Senate on January 17, 27 B.C., to Gaius Julius Caesar Octavianus (63 B.C.-14 A.D.)." **All the world ...** was "a technical term used freely to refer to the Roman Empire," which was indeed, at that time, the whole civilized world. **Should be enrolled ...** Critical allegations denying that such enrollments were made have been proved false. As Barclay said: Such censuses were taken every fourteen years; and from 20 A.D. to 270 A.D., we possess actual documents from every **census** taken ... Here is an instance where further knowledge has shown the accuracy of the New Testament.

The second census under Quirinius was in 6 A.D. (Acts 5:37); and the words "the first" in this passage refer to the census fourteen years earlier in 8 B.C., but which was delayed in Palestine until the time coinciding with the **birth** of Christ in **6 B.C.** Quirinius was twice governor and presided over both. Robertson said: Luke is now shown to be wholly correct in his statement that Quirinius was twice governor, and that the first census took place during the first period. A series of inscriptions in Asia Minor show that Quirinius was governor of Syria in 10-7 B.C., and again in 6 A.D.

(Source: Coffman Commentaries on the Old & New Testament classic.studylight.org/com/bcc/)

NOTE: History has recorded that from time to time, Rome ordered a **census** of the peoples under its **rule** so that it could **increase** the **tax ROLLS** and thus raise additional **revenue**

to carry out imperial projects. It is likely that **Roman soldiers** were assigned the task of announcing **news** of these **events** in the provinces, which at the time of **Jesus** included Palestine. (Source: *Readers Digest, Jesus and his Times*)

Luke 2:3-5, And ALL went to be taxed, every one into his own city. And **Joseph** also went up 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**;) To be taxed with **Mary** his espoused wife, being great with child.

NOTE: Some scholars doubt that Mary and Joseph ever had to endure the **80-mile**, nearly week-long journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem, with a pregnant Mary jostled around on a donkey. It is claimed that Rome never required its subjects to return to their original homes for such an enrollment and that Luke merely erred on his facts, invoking a later, 6 AD census by Quirinius, the governor of the Roman province of Syria, to justify the presence of the couple in Bethlehem. Let us examine the facts: Papyri discovered in nearby Egypt indicate that in 104 AD, taxpayers were "summoned to return to their own hearths, in order that they may perform the customary business of registration.

The Romans **collected** plenty of **taxes!** There were income taxes, food taxes, land taxes based on harvests, transport taxes on goods, a purchase tax and customs duties. These were on top of the **poll tax** (tributum capiti) that went directly to Rome, for which the **census** was taken that led Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem. In the 1st century BC/AD this tax was set at one silver Denarius per head, an extra load deeply resented by the Jews. (http://www.welcometohosanna.com/LIFE_OF_JESUS/002_NazarethToBethlehem1.htm)

NOTE: Who was betrothed to him ... indicates that the relationship between Joseph and Mary was still that of an unconsummated marriage; although, of course, they had been living together since the command to Joseph by the angel in a dream (Matthew 1:20). (Source: *Coffman Commentaries on the Old & New Testament classic.studyilight.org/com/bcc/*)

Thought 1. The trip was really a very rough on Mary since she was going to give birth to Jesus in a little over a week. But, I'm sure the word of God from Gabriel and in the prophecies from Elisabeth came back to her mind. As a matter of fact, if she was wise, she recalled them purposely in order to keep her mind stayed on her God because she trusted him! This would give her peace in spite of the physical conditions! The same is true for Joseph, since he too was told of Jesus' birth in a dream. (See Matt. 1:18-25)

Isaiah 26:3-4, Thou wilt keep him in **perfect peace**, whose **mind** is **stayed** on THEE: because he **trusteth** in thee. Trust ye in the Lord for ever: for in the Lord **Jehovah** (*God the Father*) is everlasting **strength...**

Psalms 4:7-8, Thou hast put gladness in my heart, **more** than in the time that their corn and their wine increased. I **will** both lay me down in **peace**, and **sleep**: for thou, Lord, only makest me dwell in **safety**.

Psalms 23:1-6, The Lord is my **shepherd**... Yea, though I **walk** through the **valley** of the shadow of **death**, I will FEAR no **evil**: for thou art with me; thy **rod** and thy **staff** they **comfort** me.

Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine **enemies**: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup Runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me ALL the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

Luke 2:6-7, And so it was, that, **while** they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her **firstborn** son, and wrapped him in **SWADDLING CLOTHES**, and laid him in a **MANGER**; because there was **no room** for **them** in the inn.

Swaddling clothes defined 4683, (a strip; a derivative of the base of 4682 meaning to strap or wrap with strips); to swathe (wrap) (an infant after the Oriental custom).

Manger defined 5336, a crib (for fodder [dry food for cattle, horses and sheep, as hay, straw and other kinds of vegetables]).

NOTE: The **fulness of time** was now come, when God would send forth his Son, **made of a woman**, and **made under the law**; and it was foretold that he should be born at Bethlehem. Now here we have an account of the time, place, and manner of it.

I. The time when our Lord Jesus was born. Several things may be gathered out of these verses which intimate to us that it was the proper time.

1. He was born at the time when the **fourth monarchy** was in its height, just when it was become, more than any of the three before it, a *universal monarchy*. He was born *in the days* of Augustus Cæsar, when the Roman empire extended itself further than ever before or since, including Parthia one way, and Britain another way; so that it was then called *Terrarum orbis imperium--The empire of the whole earth*; and here that empire is called *all the world* (Luke 2:1), for there was scarcely any part of the civilized world, but what was dependent on it. Now this was the time when the Messiah was to be born, according to **Daniel's prophecy** (Daniel 2:44): *In the days of these kings, the kings of the fourth monarchy, shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed.* (Source: *The Matthew Henry Commentary on the whole Bible* classic.studylight.org/com/mhc)

NOTE: Her firstborn son ... "This means that there were other children born to Mary after this. If Luke had believed in the perpetual virginity of Mary he most likely would have used "**only born**" ([Greek: monogene]) rather than "**firstborn**" ([Greek: prototokon])." Both Mark and Matthew named **four sons** called "brothers" of Jesus; and there was utterly no indication by either sacred writer that "brothers" was to be construed otherwise than in the ordinary sense. (Matt. 13:55; Mark 6:3). This writer feels no compulsion toward accommodation with the superstitions that arose with reference to Mary's perpetual virginity. Strong agreement is felt with Childer's comment: Commentators who accept the **Roman Catholic** view that Mary had no other children deny that the term firstborn indicates later births by her; but it seems clear to this writer that **they are denying fact to support doctrine.** (Source: *Coffman Commentaries on the Old & New Testament* classic.studylight.org/com/bcc/)

Luke 2:8-10, And there were in the same country **shepherds** abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by **night**. And, lo, the **angel** of the Lord came upon them, and the **glory** of the Lord **shone** round about them: and they were sore **afraid**. And the **angel** said unto them, **Fear not** for, behold, I bring you **good tidings** of great JOY, which shall be to all people.

Thought 1. This is normal when humans SEE such a display of God's Power, Authority, Sacredness and Sublime (magnificence)! As they listened, they'd be at ease a bit more, but because of their reverence, which includes awe for God, they'd still have some trembling. As a matter of fact, their REVERENCE for God is the main reason he chose first to share this good news with them! Also, since it was God's will for Jesus to come here in humble surroundings, the shepherds that had reverence for him would be the logical choice.

And even though Jesus was born an Israelite, as we know, he would be a blessing to ALL people: past, present and future! That is, to the entirety of the species of man!

NOTE: See here how the shepherds were employed; they were abiding in the fields adjoining to Bethlehem, and keeping watch over their flocks **by night**, v. 8. The angel was not **sent** to the **chief priests** or the **elders** (they were not prepared to receive these tidings), but to a company of poor shepherds, who were like Jacob, plain men dwelling in tents, not like Esau, cunning hunters. The patriarchs were shepherds. Moses and David particularly were called from keeping SHEEP to rule God's people; and by this instance, God would show that he had still a favour for those of that innocent employment. Tidings were brought to Moses of the deliverance of Israel out of Egypt, when he was keeping sheep, and to these

shepherds, who, it is probable, were devout pious (reverent, godly) men, the tidings were brought of a **greater salvation**.

(Source: *The Matthew Henry Commentary on the whole Bible* classic.studylight.org/com/mhc)

2 Samuel 5:12, And **David** perceived that the Lord had established him **king** over Israel, and that he had exalted his kingdom for his people Israel's sake.

Luke 2:11, For unto you is **BORN** this day in the city of David a **Saviour (a deliverer)**, which is **Christ (anointed, the Messiah)** the **LORD (master** [a ruler: person in authority]).

Thought 1. When Jesus was born, the scriptures tell us that he was a human being.

John 1:1, 14, In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God (*the Father*), And the Word was **God** (*the Son*). ...And the Word was **made FLESH**, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his **glory**, the **glory** as of the ONLY begotten (only-born) of the Father...

God defined 2316, theos pronounced theh'-os, a deity (divinity [God the Son]).
Flesh defined 4561, sarx pronounced sarx, a human being.

Thought 2. So, John 1:1 is saying the Word was God the Son. And he was with the Highest God: his Father. Next, John 1:14 is saying the Word was **made (to cause to be) a human being**. Notice, the scripture did NOT say, "the Word was made a human being AND was still God".

However, prior to laying down his life, Jesus prayed to his Father, asking, that he would once again be elevated to being a "God" (deity). He called it the "glory" he HAD "with God" before the world was. This is the JOY at which he looked when he was about to go to the cross. In the scriptures, doing this is called "despising" (thinking against) the shame. Hebrews 12:2 As we know, after he died and rose again from the dead, God did EXALT Jesus again to be God, sitting at his right hand side. Today, he is both God and man: a God-man!

John 17:4 ...O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the **glory** which I had **WITH thee** before the world was.

1 Timothy 2:5, For there is one GOD, and **one mediator** between God and men, the MAN Christ Jesus...

Thought 3. Speaking of what would happen in regard to Jesus' ministry, the angel said he was the Christ: the anointed. When he was born, being the Son of God, he had God's nature, but he was about thirty years old when he was anointed. (Luke 3:22-23)

John 5:17-18, But Jesus answered them, My **Father** worketh hitherto, and **I work**. Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that **God** was his **Father**, making himself **EQUAL** (like in NATURE) with **God**.

Thought 4. And because God was always "with" him, God (*the Father*) also was therefore "with" THEM (*the people*); thereby, fulfilling the name Emmanuel: "God with us".

Acts 10:38, How God **anointed** Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with **power**: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for **God** (*Jehovah, Yahweh*) was **"WITH"** him.

Thought 5. Furthermore, it would be after he was raised from the dead that he'd become Lord, receiving ALL authority from his Father, God (Yahweh). "Lord" can also be defined, "supreme [Highest] in authority". However, even though Jesus was given authority in the earth, and ALL authority after he rose, he was NOT, nor will he ever be, the Highest. That rank has always been, and always will be our Father's position.

Matthew 28:18, And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All **power (authority)** is given unto me in heaven and in earth.

1 Corinthians 15:21-27, For since by MAN came death, by MAN came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. Then cometh the end, when he (*Jesus*) shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he (*Jesus*) must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For he (*Father*) hath put ALL things under his (*Jesus*'s) feet. But when he saith, ALL things are put under him, it is **manifest (clear)** that He (*Father*) is **excepted**, which did put ALL things under him.

Luke 2:12, And this shall be a **SIGN** unto you; Ye shall find the **babe** wrapped in **swaddling** clothes, lying in a **manger**.

Thought 1. As you know, babies are not normally found in mangers where animals eat.

Luke 2:13-14, And suddenly there was with the angel a **multitude** of the heavenly **host (the angels)** **PRAISING** God, and saying, **Glory to God in the highest (the heavens)**, and on earth peace, good will toward **men**.

Praising defined 134, aineo pronounced ahee-neh'-o from 136; to praise (God):--
Praise (to extol: RAISE, speak well of, in words or **SONG**; to magnify).

NOTE: praising God; on account of the birth of Christ, and the redemption that was to be obtained by him, for elect men; which shows their friendly disposition to them, and how much they rejoice at their spiritual and eternal welfare; see (Luke 15:10); And thus, as at the laying of the foundation of the earth, these "morning stars **sang** together, and all these sons of God shouted for joy", (Job 38:7) they did the same when the foundation of man's salvation was laid in the incarnation of the Son of God... (Source: biblestudytools.com/commentaries/gills-exposition-of-the-bible/)

Luke 2:15-17, And it came to pass, as the **angels** were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto **Bethlehem**, and **SEE** this thing which is come to pass, which the **Lord (supreme in authority)** (*Jehovah, Yahweh, God the Father*) hath made known unto us.

And they came with haste, and **found** Mary, and Joseph, and the **babe** lying in a manger. And when they had **seen** it, they made **KNOWN abroad** the **saying** which was told them concerning this **child**.

NOTE: When they had seen it, though they saw nothing in the child that should induce them to believe that he was *Christ the Lord*, yet the circumstances, how mean soever they were, agreeing with the **SIGN** that the **angel** had given them, they were abundantly **satisfied**; and as the lepers argued (2 Kings 12:9, This being a **day of good tidings**, we dare not hold our peace), so they made *known abroad* the whole story of what was *told them*, both by the *angels*, and by Joseph and Mary, *concerning this child*, that he was the Saviour, even *Christ the Lord*, that in him there is *peace on earth*, and that he was *conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost*, and *born of a virgin*. This they told every body, and agreed in their testimony concerning it. (Source: The Matthew Henry Commentary on the whole Bible classic.studylight.org/com/mhc)

Luke 2:18-20, And **all** they that **heard** it **wondered (admire, marvel** [stare, hold one's breath]) at those things which were told them by the shepherds. But Mary KEPT all these things, and **pondered** them in her **heart (mind)**. And the shepherds returned, **glorifying** and **praising** God for all the things that they had **heard** and **SEEN**, as it was told unto them.