

## Tightly-Bound Blessings

Luke 2.1-20



Many things we do not know about Jesus –

How He LOOKED

Color of Skin

Shape or COLOR of his Eyes

Age of Parents

How many Brothers & Sisters had



Exact PLACE of Birth?

Know in Bethlehem, NOT INN

Stable? Cave?

Exact DAY of Birth

PROBABLY Neither

December 25 or January 6



What we DO KNOW about

BIRTH/COMING of Jesus to World >> BIBLE

Just 2 of 4 Gospels – Matthew and Luke –

DETAILS about BIRTH of Jesus

All 27 Books of NT – UNITED Witness –

REAL EVENT – God came World

Step into LUKE 2 see WELL KNOWN,

MUCH LOVED story...

## 1. Human Struggle vs. 1 - 8

### a. Mother with Child

#### 1) Victim of Circumstances

vs. 1-4 In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) And everyone went to their own town to register. So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David.

Young FAMILY is CAUGHT UP in middle of CENSUS of Entire ROMAN World

CAESAR AUGUSTUS - Roman Emperor from 27 B.C. to 14 AD

Grandnephew of Julius Caesar

Name - OCTAVIAN changed to GAIUS JULIUS CAESAR

GAVE SELF Title - "Augustus" def. "majestic, sublime, highly exalted"

Ruthless Climb to Power // Became Skilled Administrator

Luke - Accurate Historian >> Never Proven Wrong by Scholars  
 CENSUS - Periodic Registration: TAXATION every 14 yrs?  
 NOT GIVEN DATES btwn 4 to 6 B.C. > Best Historical Estimate

December 25 - Roman Orgiastic Festival >> Saturnalia  
 Celebrate Return of Sun after Days of Long Darkness - Festival Gifts Exchanged  
 4th C Emperor Constantine - decreed 25 Dec. day celebrate CHRIST MASS  
 SUN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS - chased away Spiritual Darkness

JOSEPH, MARY, & JESUS - Pawns moved by Government Decree  
 NO PROXY – Family Could NOT Send Letter saying Young Woman PREGNANT  
 Apparently THIS BIRTH No More Effect on Caesar & Roman Empire  
 Than You & I are having on Presidents & Parliaments of OUR World

Mary COULD NOT BE LEFT ALONE - Ridicule and Shame  
 LEGALLY RESPONSIBLE TO ENROLL  
 ALREADY BEGINS - "Rendering unto Caesar what is Caesar's"

2) Painful Journey – almost 150 kms on DONKEY / 8 or 9 MONTHS Pregnant

v. 5 He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child.

Joseph & Mary > Bethlehem "town of David" / 1000 yrs Earlier Shepherd Boy

### 3) Anguish and Loneliness



vs. 6,7 While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger

Picture > Many in WORLD > Severe POVERTY

“SHE WRAPPED AND PLACED”

MARY was BOTH MOTHER and MIDWIFE

FAR from RELATIVES and FRIENDS

Jesus’ BIRTH > PUBLIC EVENT

Many Impartial Witnesses NOT MYTH

He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. John 1.11  
NO Room in INN or WORLD He Made > Only place for JESUS was the CROSS

#### b. Occupied Innkeeper

v. 7 because there was no guest room available for them. NO ROOM IN INN

"NO ROOM FOR THEM" > Joseph failed Make ON-LINE Booking

UNKNOWN INNKEEPER - Name? Man / Woman? Details?

Small Village Full of ROMAN OFFICIALS - CENSUS TAKERS

Born in STABLE of INN?- Underneath? Within Walled Enclosure? Cave?

NOT MALICE, Cruelty, being INHOSPITABLE > NO ROOM FOR JESUS

NO ROOM for HIM Today // HEARTS of many - TOO FULL

Overcrowded w/ Thoughts of Prestige, Pleasure, Honor, Business

One CHRISTMAS – Linda’s JOB to Hand Out PRESENTS to the FAMILY  
 Now Linda was 5 yrs old CAN READ all NAMES on TAGS on Presents  
 HANDED OUT All the FAMILY GIFTS – Stood Looking at TREE  
 "I thought Jesus' b-day, where is his gift?" > NO ROOM for JESUS

“O come to my heart Lord Jesus, there is room in my heart for thee”

### c. Searching Shepherds

v. 8 And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night.

Invitation from ANGELS NOT TO KING, SCRIBES, PHARISEES, RULERS  
 Not appear Caesar's Palace – Rome or Vegas! - or Temple in Jerusalem

#### 1) Outcast

vs. 8,9 “keeping watch over their flocks at night... and they were terrified”

Probably NOT Bible Scholars – LITTLE Time to Perform Rituals at TEMPLE  
 Erratic Attendance at SYNAGOGUE >> SHEEP Needed CONSTANT Watching

Many Preachers Wondered if DRINKING to KEEP WARM?

SEPARATED FROM FAMILIES > Who knows what’s Happening on those Hills?

NO ROOM FOR THEM IN THE WORLD EITHER

We might have BAD Things to SAY about Shepherds > IMPORTANT to God

Personal Invitation from HEAVEN 1<sup>st</sup> Christmas Night > COME, SEE Jesus!

Brothers, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise 1 Corinthians 1.26-29

## 2) Open

v. 15 When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about."

EAGER = "Let's GO...HURRIED OFF"

MORE OPEN to God than Many People in BUSY WORLD Today

Lots of People SLEEPING In – SHOPPING – Not even Christmas get them Church

Listen, my dear brothers: Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom he promised those who love him?  
James 2.5

GOD IS NO RESPECTER OF PERSONS / Examines Hearts Not Incomes

Humbled by SPIRITUAL GIANTS: Make More \$ in Year > than They in Lifetime

v. 20 The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

Their OBEDIENCE of FAITH Brought them GREAT BLESSING

## 2. Divine Interpretation

a. God's Glory VAGUE CONCEPT Weight, Heavyness, Tangible Presence God

ACCOMPANIED BY...1) Angels

v. 9 An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. >> SUDDEN APPEARANCE - Brilliant, Awesome

vs. 13,14 Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest heaven..."

SURPRISE UPON SURPRISE - Entire Army of Angels Descends

## 2) Terror



v. 9 the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified

Seen DANIEL's Typical Reaction –

Seen from Genesis to Revelation

NO WONDER – Holy God appears to Sinful Person – Staggering, Devastating

## 3) Humility

v. 12 “This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.”

Have you heard this So OFTEN – that there is NO MORE SHOCK in WORDS?!

SAVIOR, CHRIST, LORD...LYING IN MANGER

STABLE NOT Palace // Feeding TROUGH for Animals not Pretty Bassinet

...he had no form or majesty that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

Isaiah 53.2,3

Veiled in flesh the Godhead See, Hail the Incarnate Deity

## b. God's Grace

### 1) Love >> GOD came DIRTY, SMELLY MANGER

GOOD NEWS - EVANGEL "GOSPEL"

ONLY PLACE in his Gospel that Luke uses the word "Savior"

If HE can Stay in Dirty Manger & there is HOPE for Our Dirty Hearts

For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. John 3.17

PURPOSE of Jesus' COMING was the CROSS

"Now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'? But for this purpose I have come to this hour... He said this to show by what kind of death he was going to die. John 12.27,33

### 2) Joy

v. 10 And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people.

NO GREATER CAUSE FOR JOY

GOD SOLVED MAN'S GREATEST PROBLEM Tariffs? Hunger? Pollution?

MAN'S Greatest PROBLEM SIN - Not Right with Creator God > All Else Wrong

AMAZING to See PEOPLE SING CHRISTMAS Carols - NEVER SING AT ALL

World Realizes - Something Great Happened

GREAT MUSIC OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH - All Languages and Styles



### 3) Peace

v. 14 “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.”

#### GOD'S SOVEREIGN DELIGHT

Father WELL PLEASED with His SON / PLEASURE FOUND IN HIM

EMBRACE the Son – You will DWELL in God’s PLEASE

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Isaiah 9:6

#### c. God's Plan

##### 1) Sovereign Decree

v. 11 Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord.

PROMISES & PROPHECIES given to Daniel 500 yrs Before INCARNATION

> Point Here: Today, Savior, Born

God who sustains WORLD by His WORD – STEPS into World as BABY

When the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law Galatians 4.4

VICTIMS OF CIRCUMSTANCES - NOT Mary, Joseph, and Jesus

Pawns of God this Story > Named Caesar Augustus and Governor Quirinius

## 2) Scripture Fulfilled

Just ONE of More than 300 PROPHECIES fulfilled by Jesus - 650 years earlier --

"But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times. " Micah 5.2

## 3) Sign Seen

v. 12 "This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."

Jesus PROBABLY NOT ONLY Baby Born THAT NIGHT in Bethlehem  
City Full of all TRIBE of Judah > Come to PAY taxes to ROME  
Jesus NOT ONLY Newborn WRAPPED in CLOTHS that NIGHT  
ONLY Baby in Bethlehem HONORED by 3 Titles: Savior, Christ, Lord  
Only one who SLEPT in a MANGER

Angels Right! Good News > EVANGELION > Good NEWS of GREAT JOY  
Word used by Romans to Announce Births of Caesars

NO Caesar's Birth – Ever FILLED Skies with SUCH AWESOME SIGHTS  
WHERE will FIND this LONG EXPECTED ONE – Fulfillment of Israel's Hope?  
Where FIND One whose ANGELS FLOOD the SKIES w/ LIGHT & SOUNDS?



WHAT?? – HONORED One in such HUMBLE PLACE?

GLORIOUS One amidst the GROVEL of Animal FOOD and DUNG?

One who FILLS BOUNDLESS Skies NOW is BOUND in STRIPS of Cloth?

UNLIMITABLE God now LIMITED by BANDS of Man-Made Weave?

***THIS will be the SIGN??*** > CREATOR tucked away in secluded CAVE?

TIMELESS One now TIED Round by Simple STRIPS of Cloth

HOW could THIS be a SIGN?

Remember that His DESTINY was DECREED in His NAME > JESUS

An angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph and said, "...you are to give him the name Jesus, because *he will save his people from their sins.*" Matthew 1.20-21

THIS is the SIGN > Came as ONE UNDER AUTHORITY

BOUND to HIS COVENANT Promise > Made before CREATION

When Christ came into the world, he said: 'Here I am - it is written about me in the scroll - *I have come to do your will, O God.*' Hebrews 10.5-7

THEN 30 something Years Later – Lived Perfect Life – Loving God and Man  
Teaching – Healing – Helping – Loving > Pointing Relentlessly to GOD

Early in the morning, all the chief priests and the elders of the people came to the decision to put Jesus to death. *They bound him*, led him away and handed him over to Pilate, the governor...he had Jesus flogged, and handed him over to be crucified.

Matthew 27.1,2,26



In 30 something years > Jesus from COLD CAVE to CRUEL CROSS

FROM the CROSS Jesus was ONCE AGAIN Bound in CLOTH

So they took the body of Jesus and bound it in linen cloths with the spices, as is the burial custom of the Jews.  
John 19.40

NOT Same WORD from BUNDLING Cloth and BURIAL Cloth

Lord Jesus – ENTERS / LEAVES World BOUND > Child AND on CROSS

NOT a TRAGIC ACCIDENT > but the DIVINE PLAN

BORN to be BOUND > from BIRTH to DEATH/BURIAL to RESURRECTION

Appears 3 Days Later – Risen from Dead – CLOTHED in GLORY

His MISSION was to RELEASE US from what BINDS US!  
 ADDICTIONS, Horrible HABITS, Besetting SINS – Deadly CHOICES  
 CROSS sign of VICTORY > EMPTY // MISSION of Redemption FINISHED

This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us.  
 1 John 3.16



TODAY

Remember CHILD:

Bound in CLOTH

Remember MAN:

Bound to CROSS

We BOUND to HIM

Savior / Healer

Lord / Friend

2018 ENTIRE World STOPS and REFLECTS > Christmas is EVERYWHERE

People EVERY NATION Worship

We – Gathered from Every Nation – Very Different in MANY WAYS  
 BECOME a SIGN to World > As we WORSHIP Him who WAS Bound  
 NOW Find our FREEDOM in being BOUND to Him

Luke 2.<sup>1</sup>In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. <sup>2</sup>(This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) <sup>3</sup>And everyone went to their own town to register. <sup>4</sup>So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. <sup>5</sup>He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. <sup>6</sup>While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, <sup>7</sup>and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them. <sup>8</sup>And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. <sup>9</sup>An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. <sup>10</sup>But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. <sup>11</sup>Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. <sup>12</sup>This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.” <sup>13</sup>Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, <sup>14</sup>“Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.” <sup>15</sup>When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let’s go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.” <sup>16</sup>So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. <sup>17</sup>When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, <sup>18</sup>and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. <sup>19</sup>But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. <sup>20</sup>The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.