

The Four Gospels of the Bible, Birth of Christ

Luke 2:1-7

¹ In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world...⁷ and she (Mary) gave birth to her firstborn, a son...(NIV)

About that time Caesar Augustus ordered a census to be taken throughout the Empire. This was the first census when Quirinius was governor of Syria. Everyone had to travel to his own ancestral hometown to be accounted for. So Joseph went from the Galilean town of Nazareth up to Bethlehem in Judah, David's town, for the census. As a descendant of David, he had to go there. He went with Mary, his fiancée, who was pregnant. While they were there, the time came for her to give birth. She gave birth to a son, her firstborn. She wrapped him in a blanket and laid him in a manger, because there was no room in the hostel. (The Message)

The Emperor and the Empire

Said to be the greatest of emperors, Caesar Augustus ruled during the transition from a republic to an imperial form of government. In the transition, the senate became powerless while the emperor achieved an exalted, unprecedented level of authority to the degree of a deity or god.

The decree – which is an order or judicial command – was used by God to fulfill prophecy in the Old Testament book of Micah, chapter 5.

Setting

Bethlehem was a relatively small town or village; yet, as foretold in Micah, was the birthplace for the Messiah.

Often displayed as a stable, the setting for Christ's birth has been thought to be like a cave or cut-out in rock – which could have served as a stable.

Prophecy and Background

Already mentioned is the book of Micah; some other books that refer to Christ include:

- 📖 Isaiah, chapter 42, 53 – the servant and ironic humility and suffering of the King
- 📖 Job, chapter 19 – Job refers to the Father as “the redeemer”...as was Christ
- 📖 Hosea, chapter 11 – God's son, called out of Egypt (where Jesus went as a babe)
- 📖 Zachariah, chapter 9 – the pronouncement that “your king is coming” and...
- 📖 Zephaniah – the “Great Judgment Day” – when Christ will return and...
- 📖 Ezekiel – Christ referred to as “a shoot” of an eventual “majestic Cedar”

The list above *scratches the surface* of the foretelling of Christ; but the birth of Christ was the manifestation of what God foreordained – that in His Providence and knowledge of the *human condition* – **man could not find salvation through the law (Old Testament and Judaism), but by faith in God, man was (and is) made righteous.**

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