

# That Moment in History!



#2904 1213 20P Advent  
**VIRTUAL**

That moment in history when God visited earth and Jesus was born in Bethlehem, is much *more* than the beginning of our Savior's life, it is a fulfilled *plan* like no other. It is about a humble King of kings who was approachable—who walked and talked with His subjects. He came to *serve* and then make the *sacrifice* for His servants. It was that *one moment in history* never to be *ignored*; never to be *forgotten*; and always *understood*!

Two thousand years have passed, but the *significance* of Jesus' birth; the *life* He lived; the *Truth* He taught; His *sacrifice* on the Cross; and His *resurrection* to life increases in importance as the world becomes ever darker spiritually. *That moment in history* is part of the greatest plan ever given!

The birth of Jesus divides time by—B.C. and A.D. His birth is directly connected to eternity for all who understand the story and accept the Truth He gave to the world. There is no other birth like it, because there is no other One like *Jesus*. Most do not understand why this birth was unique, because they do not understand why God in Person had to visit His creation on earth. He came to be the *Light* and to pay the *debt* of everyone's sin. Jesus was God incarnate living with the creation He loved.

With all the distractions of the holiday, we must guard against being too busy to keep our

focus on the most important *birth* ever—a birth that led to the greatest *sacrifice* ever. We can forget what Jesus did for us at Calvary, because we can be preoccupied with much less important things. The devil is always trying to *distract*; to be *too busy*; or *too interested* in something or in anything.

Angels appeared in the night sky to the shepherds over two thousand years ago—saying Luke 2:14 “*Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.*” It was a momentous event like no other; it was when God visited earth. Let us not think of this moment in history as *not* important, because it is *central* to the Christian life of faith.

Before Jesus was born at Bethlehem, there had been four hundred years without a word from God. There were no prophets or prophecies; no angels, and no visions, and no signs or messages from God—it was four hundred years of silence, until the angel announced the birth of John the Baptist.

Luke 2:1 “*And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed. 2 (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.) 3 And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city. 4 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:).*”

Luke was not one of the twelve disciples, nor was he an eyewitness to the ministry of Jesus. Luke was *not* Jewish, but a *Gentile* who wrote one of the gospels—in which he pens much detail in his account of that *one moment in history* when God came to visit.

Luke includes certain facts to give historical basis—he mentions Caesar Augustus and Quirinius, so we would *know* this was an actual

event of much significance—one moment in history we should fully understand.

Caesar Augustus was the great-grandnephew of Julius Caesar. Augustus fought his way to power—using force and much human effort. He did, however, give the Roman Empire a solidarity that lasted for centuries. Caesar Augustus was the first to think of himself as a god, and as time went by, the Caesars began to accept worship—causing many to commit idolatry.

Emperor worship led to many difficulties—the government *demand*ed that people say: *Caesar is Lord*. True followers of Christ would *not worship* anyone but the one and only true God, so they faced much persecution.

The angels said to shepherds Luke 2:11 “*For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.*” Caesar was *not* lord and *not* anyone's *savior*. Jesus is the only Savior and Lord for all who are willing to put their faith and trust on Him for healing, protection, deliverance, and salvation. Caesar Augustus was only a pawn in the hands of the true King.

God's plan was that Caesar would give the decree for people to be taxed, so that Mary and Joseph would come to Bethlehem fulfilling the prophecy. Micah 5:2 “*But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.*”

That One Moment in history continues—Luke 2:6 “*And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. 7 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.*”

God chose this time in history to introduce a *Savior* to the world. It was a time called *Pax Romana*—*Roman peace*—lasting from 27 B.C. to

A.D 180. With no military conflicts to speak of, people had time to discover literature, art, religion, and philosophy—many were asking questions and probing for answers.

Roman Roads made travel easier and the Greek language made *learning* increase. God knew that the time had come, and that it was the right moment in human history for the arrival of the Savior. There had been talk of a *coming One*, and rabbis were writing about the arrival of a *Messiah*. This caused a sense of anticipation for someone *important* to appear.

Simeon waited in the temple to see the Messiah—then he took Luke 2:28 “*Him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said, 29 Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: 30 For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, 31 Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; 32 A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.*”

The apostle later wrote Galatians 4:4 “*When the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, 5 To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.*” That is why this moment in history is so significant!

Many knew that the Messiah would arrive at the right time. It was a *riches to rags* story as Jesus went from the highest place in Heaven, to the lowest place on earth. He went from Sovereign to Savior; and from a *palace* in *Paradise* to a *crib* in a *cave*.

When royalty and the queen of England visit the United States, they bring clothes to last for months—along with personal valets and many servants; but when the Lord of lords and King of kings visited our earth, He left Heaven to live in a stable.

The Christmas story that is pictured is far from reality. Many things have been added that were not part of the original scene. We can miss

the profound meaning of what took place in that *one moment in history*. Lyrics: *It is not in the snow that may or may not fall; and it is not in the gifts around the tree; but it is the Gift that heaven gave, the night our Savior came* unquote.

Mary was a young girl in Nazareth—she may have been in her teens when the angel Gabriel made the announcement. Luke 1:28 “*Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women.*”

It would be difficult for her to understand what would take place, but it was all part of the greatest plan ever. The angel appears to Joseph also and says Matthew 1:21 Mary “*Shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.*”

Mary and Joseph were biding their time and living in Nazareth, as the day of birth was getting close. The government decree that everyone had to be registered was rather sudden. They seemed surprised when the government decree was made, but it was all part of God’s plan. They were willing to make the difficult journey, because the prophecy of a Messiah from Bethlehem would be fulfilled.

We usually picture a scene of quiet nights under a full moon, with silhouettes of Mary and Joseph slowly making their way toward the city of Bethlehem. The journey was, however, much different than what is portrayed on Christmas cards. The ninety-mile trip would have been more strenuous and difficult than we can imagine.

Twenty miles a day would be average over such mountainous terrain. The temperatures at night could have been near freezing, with wild animals and bandits along the way. A warm room awaiting them at Bethlehem was also not the reality—every place was *full*, and every inn *packed*—a *No Vacancy* sign was out front when the Savior visited earth.

Christmas cards picture a baby wrapped in linen, while Joseph and Mary look on smiling, but the reality was a cold and dark cave—a very cold and unpleasant place to sleep—much less give birth. Our Savior did not have a comfortable room with warm blankets and soft pillows. He *could* have had a mansion in the wealthy side of town instead of a manger on a humble hillside of Bethlehem.

2 Corinthians 8:9 “*For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.*” Jesus went from a *throne* in *Heaven* to a *manger* in a *cave*. Few details are given following the birth of Jesus—we just know that Luke 2:52 “*Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.*”

It is a marvelous story of God leaving the glory of Heaven, only to arrive at a dark stable on a cold night in Bethlehem. His first blankets would have been the coarse cloth of the *poor*, rather than a soft cashmere of the *rich*. It is a unique and matchless account of the first Christmas that is like no other. It is a time when *deity* took on *humanity*, and God became part of our world.

The King of kings who lived in Heaven, came to our world to die on a cross so *payment* could be made for our sins and *atonement* made for our mistakes. He came to lay down *His* life so we could have a *new* life—one that *trusts* in God; one that *loves* our neighbor; and one that *forgives* everyone. Now He beckons and invites us to follow His example. And it all began with that *One Moment in History!*



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