

## **“The Birth of Jesus Christ”**

### **Part 1**

**Luke 2:1-7**

July 18, 2021

**God had promised that the Savior would be:**

- a human, not an angel (Gen. 3:15; Heb. 2:16)
- a Jew, not a Gentile (Gen. 12:1-3; Num. 24:17)
- from the tribe of Judah (Gen. 49:10)
- from the family of David (2 Sam. 7:1-17)
- born of a virgin (Isa. 7:14)
- born in Bethlehem, the city of David (Micah 5:2).

### **Micah 5:2**

2 "But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah,  
Too little to be among the clans of Judah,  
From you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel.  
His goings forth are from long ago,  
From the days of eternity."

### **Gal 4:4**

4 But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son,

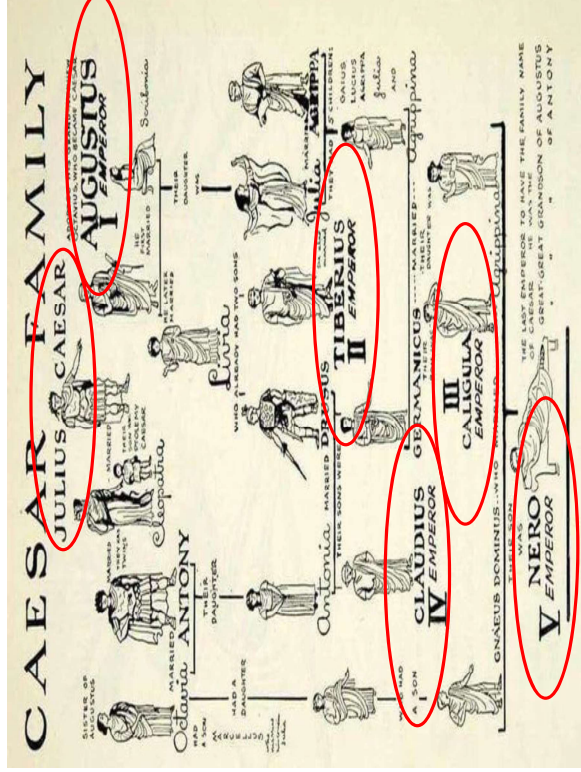
How does one get Mary and Joseph from Nazareth down to Bethlehem when the last thing they want to do is to travel?

**Luke 2:1-7**

- 1 Now in those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus, that a census be taken of all the inhabited earth.
- 2 This was the first census taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria.
- 3 And everyone was on his way to register for the census, each to his own city.
- 4 Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the city of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David,
- 5 in order to register along with Mary, who was engaged to him, and was with child.
- 6 While they were there, the days were completed for her to give birth.
- 7 And she gave birth to her firstborn son; and she wrapped Him in cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

**5 In the days of Herod, king of Judea, there was a priest named Zacharias, of the division of Abijah; and he had a wife from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth.**

- Herod begins the furthest back of the gospels.
- Herod (part of Herodian dynasty)
  1. Herod the Great (ruled 37-4 B.C.) – father, Gentile (Edomites - the descendants of Esau and enemies of Israel.), married Jewish woman to be accepted by Jews/building projects (temple, cities), tried to trick the wisemen, killed all male babies under 2 in Bethlehem, killed wife and sons, egomaniac, paranoid, ruthless, a tyrant. Jews hated him.
  2. Herod Archelaus (ruled 4 B.C.-A.D. 6) – son, received one-half of his father’s territory, the area surrounding and near Jerusalem (Judea and Samaria), replaced by Pontius Pilate, like father.
  3. Herod Antipas (ruled 4 B.C.-A.D. 39) – son, received a quarter of his father’s territory (Galilee and Perea), “fox”
  4. Herod Philip the Tetrarch (ruled 4 B.C.-A.D. 34) – son, received the remaining quarter of the territory (north and east of Galilee—mostly ruled over Syrians and Greeks), like father.
  5. Herod Agrippa I (ruled A.D. 37-44) - Grandson of Herod the Great, ruled more territory than grandfather, put Peter in prison, like his grandfather.
  6. Herod Agrippa II (ruled A.D. 50s until long after the end of the Jewish war; died around A.D. 93) – final Herod, great grandson, ruled over large territory, he and Festus interviewed Paul (Acts 26), like his great grandfather.



- 1 Now in those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus, that a census be taken of all the inhabited earth.
- The birth of Jesus is anchored to concrete, historical facts.
- “Now in those days” – the days of chapter 1 –

**Luke 1:5**

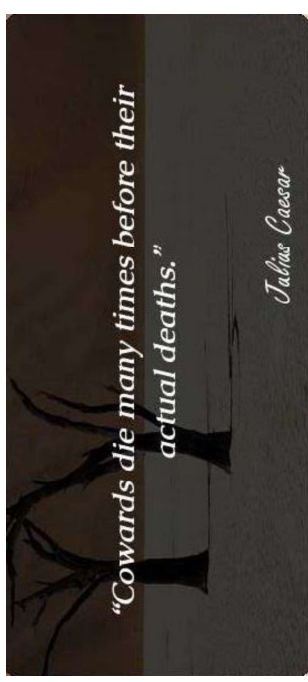
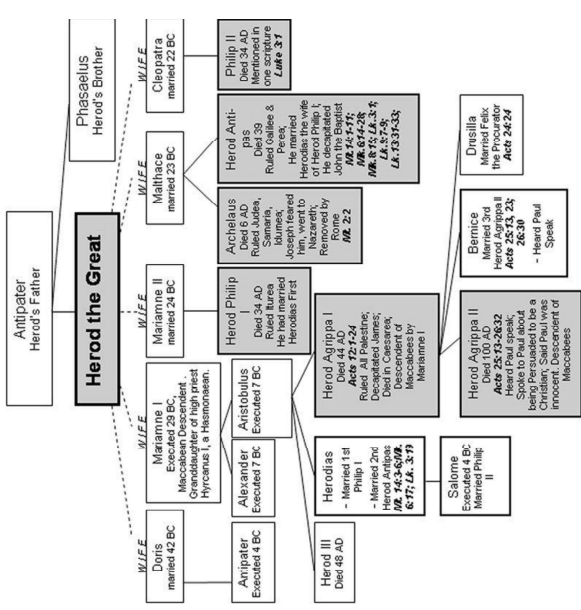
- 5 In the days of Herod, king of Judea,
  - Herod died in 4 BC.
  - Elizabeth’s pregnancy.
  - Birth of John,
  - Mary’s pregnancy.

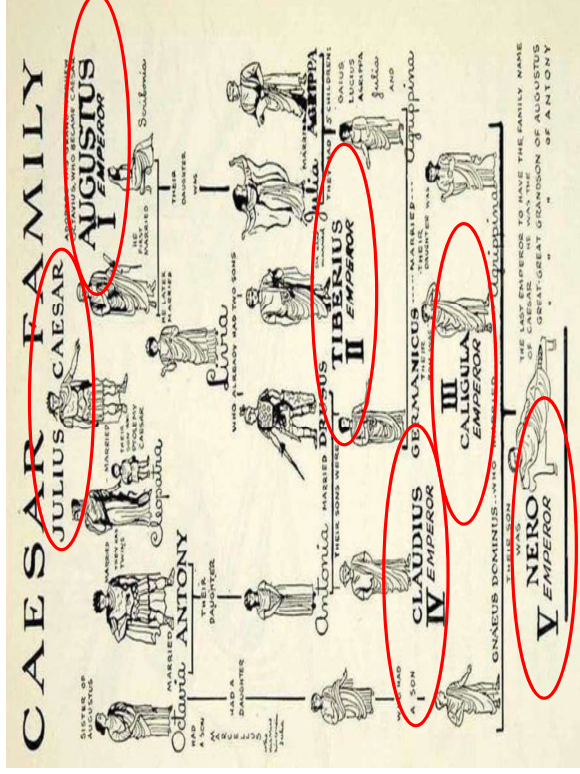
“decree” – a fixed and authoritative requirement. Not an option to obey.

“Caesar Augustus – “Caesar”- title of Roman emperor.

“Augustus” - adjective – revered, exalted, sacred, honored, esteemed.

Note: History of Caesar Augustus – see following pages.





Octavian                      Lepidus                      Antony

Octavian                      Antony

Octavian                      Lepidus                      Antony

Octavian                      Antony

Antony

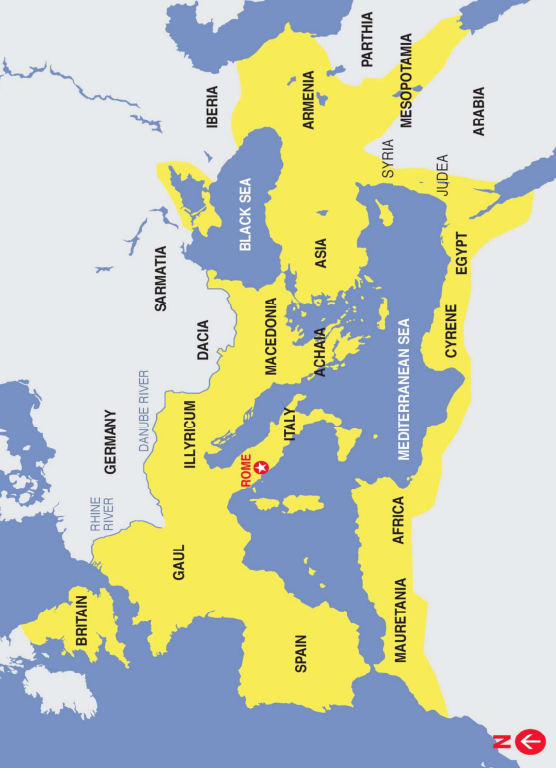
500 warships,  
100,000 foot soldiers  
12,000 cavalry.

Octavian

400 warships  
80,000 infantry  
12,000 horsemen.

**Octavian (Caesar Augustus)**

1. 20 years old. Would reign for 58 years. 13 w/ Ant. + 45 by himself.
2. Large empire.



Octavian                      Lepidus                      Antony

Octavian                      Antony

**Octavian (Caesar Augustus)**

1. 20 years old. Would reign for 58 years. 13 w/ Ant. + 45 by himself.
2. Large empire.
3. Pax Romana (Roman Peace). Put an end to a civil wars.
4. Roads everywhere.
5. "when he came to Rome it was a city of brick and when he left it was a city of marble."
6. When he died Rome called him the "savior of the world."
7. Greatest of the caesars.



**1 Now in those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus, that a census be taken of all the inhabited earth.**  
“that a census be taken” – a census was taken every 14 years.  
2 purposes for the census:

1. For taxation. (to find out who was a property owner)
  2. For the military. (to find out who could serve, Israel was exempt)
- To run a large empire and keep it in tact you need money and military might.

“of all the inhabited earth.” – the entire Roman empire.

**2 This was the first census taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria.**

“Quirinius” – an administrator over Syria, which included Judea and Bethlehem. 6-9 AD minus 14 years = 8BC

- He would administer the census.
- Syria - Syria was the large Roman province of which Judea was part. The capital was Antioch.

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- Roman law required that everyone go back to their hometown, native town where they were born, to register.
- Genealogical records of families in Judah were traditionally kept in their ancestral home towns
- May have also been an incentive – see old friends and family.
- Everyone was traveling, busy roads, inns are crowded and full.

How does one get Mary and Joseph from Nazareth down to Bethlehem when the last thing they want to do is to travel?

God used the political system.

### **Col 1:16**

16 For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or **rulers or authorities** — all things have been created through Him and **for** Him.

“For it is implicit in Scripture that all the mammoth political forces and all the giant industrial complexes, without their even knowing it, are being guided by God, not for their own sake but for the sake of God's little people—the little Mary and the little Joseph who have come from Nazareth to Bethlehem.”

### **Application:**

1. Pagan authorities are responsible for bringing Jesus to Bethlehem to be born.

### **Prov 21:1**

- 1 The king's heart is like channels of water in the hand of the Lord; He turns it wherever He wishes.
2. There is no one and not one thing that is outside the directive will of God.
3. God knows how to get you where you need to be.
4. Being where the Lord wants you to be may require hardship, difficulty, inconvenience, and expense.
5. Everyday, the things we do are helping complete the plan of God.