

J.J.

KING ON THE MANGER

Luke 2:1-19

Luke 2: 1 In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. 2 (This was the first census that took place while[a] Quirinius was governor of Syria.) 3 And everyone went to their own town to register.

4 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. 5 He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. 6 While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, 7 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.

8 And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. 9 An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. 10 But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. 11 Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. 12 This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."

13 Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, 14 "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests."

PRAY

INTRODUCTION:

I have 6 siblings. I was the youngest, but after 9 years, my mother got pregnant and gave birth to my youngest brother. I must confess, that did not go well with me. I was jealous. My first question to my mother when she called from the hospital was, "Who is more handsome?". The reason why I'm saying this because the circumstances of your birth in the Philippines is some sort of a status quo. We weren't from a well-off family. Most of my siblings were born in a house. Then, I learned that I was born in a small clinic and then during the time my youngest brother was born, my father got a decent job that my brother was born at Makati Medical Hospital. (As Filipinos know during that time, that was a big deal because it's a status symbol for Filipinos. Not here in Canada where it's socialized health care). So the way, I would tease him when no one is listening is I would always tell him, "You know, we only found in you carabao manure" (tae ng kalabaw). So maybe subconsciously, I was trying to prove that my status is higher than you because, I was born in a clinic but you were found in cow's manure. Of course, nowadays, I love my brother dearly. It brings me tears of joy and proud to see him be well in life.

Now, why did I tell this story? There is much to say surrounding the circumstances on how our Lord was born, and in this case, THE MANGER.

Here's our outline by God's grace.

THE STORY
THE SIGN
THE SIGNIFICANCE

I. THE STORY

Caesar's Census

Luke 2: 1 In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. 2 (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) 3 And everyone went to their own town to register.

Caesar Augustus was the most powerful person in the known world during that time.

By the way Caesar came from Julius Caesar and all the following rulers followed that and so it became a title of a ruler, like an emperor. **Caesar is where we get the word "Kaiser, Tsar"**

Example : If Lisa became the emperor during that time, he will be called Caesar Lisa. Or if June became a ruler, he will be called Caesar June and if he likes vegetables, he will be called Caesar's Salad. Or your name is Ian, you will be called Ceasarian.

Burden After Burden

As we can see, **he issued a decree that everyone should go back to their place of birth to register. For what purpose? TAXES!**

The Jews did not like it because they don't like the Romans occupying Israel in the first place but they can't do anything about it. THIS WAS A SIGN THAT THEY WERE NOT AN INDEPENDENT PEOPLE. And we have to remember, that taxes are used in Rome's military conquest. **It's used against the Jews. To keep them in line or to behave and not rebel against Rome. That's why Jews hated the tax collectors who were fellow Jews.** It's like you're paying your neighbor so you can be maltreated.

Joseph and Mary had to travel from Nazareth to Bethlehem at the time when Mary was about to give birth.

.4 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. 5 He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child.

(show map) Now, in order for us to understand the burden of this, Nazareth in Galilee to Bethlehem in Judea is around 150 kilometers.

By car, it will only take you 1 hour to 2 hours, depends on the traffic. It's like travelling from Scarborough to Niagara Falls.

But by walking, it will take 31 hours. That's if you're not resting, or stopping. So remember, they had to stop and rest and you have Mary (kabuwanan) at the tail end of her pregnancy travelling on rough roads. Remember Israel is not flat lands. It also has hills and valleys. So at best, in order to do this, it will take them around 3-5 days to travel. **BUT THEY HAVE TO DO IT.**

No guest room

6 While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, 7 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.

We have to remember, when they arrived in Bethlehem, Mary did not immediately give birth.

While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born It's while they were there and not immediately after arriving or the Bible would have mentioned that.

We also have to remember, there were a lot of people going back to their hometown and in this case, Bethlehem. Imagine the number of people there.

Illustration : Remember during the time when travel is allowed again after the pandemic Remember the chaos at the airport where flights were cancelled, bags were getting lost and etc. That's the reason *there was no guest room available for them.*

Etymology : guest room "kataluma". It's not an inn.

The Greek word for "inn" is pandecheaion – it's a lodging place for strangers where you pay money. You can see that in the story of the Good Samaritan which was also recorded by Luke.

Luke 10:34 He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him

Note : We always see the Nativity story being dramatized where the innkeeper was driving them away or telling them that there's no room and that's why they were forced to go into a stable. But the Bible never says that Jesus was born in a stable.

The possibility is that Joseph and Mary stayed in a relative's or a friend's place and according to historical findings, the "kataluma" or guest rooms were in the upper room and it was already full and so in order to provide them privacy, they had to go into the lower section where the animals were kept.

(SHOW PHOTOS OF TYPICAL HOME STRUCTURE IN ISRAEL DURING JESUS TIME)

AND THAT'S THE REASON WHY *She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger*

So what's behind all these story?

Joseph and Mary had no reason to travel if not for this census. **It had to take the most powerful man on earth during that time to declare an edict in order for them to do this. Why?**

In order to fulfill one of these several prophecies of the coming Messiah written around 700 B.C.

*Micah 5:2 "But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, (Ephrathah -fruitfulness is old name for Bethlehem)
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."*

Application : Caesar thinks he is the most powerful man at that time. Joseph and Mary might be inconvenienced because of the travel around this. BUT GOD WAS CONTROLLING ALL OF THESE TO FULFILL HIS PLAN OF SALVATION. IT'S ALL PART OF GOD'S PLAN AND THE PLAN WAS TO GIVE US THE BEST GIFT THAT HE COULD GIVE US.

If CNN was existing during that time, the news would have been the census and the tons of people travelling but they have missed the best news, God became Man .

This means, brothers and sisters, whatever is happening in our life today, you are thinking about recession, about the politics or how you are affected by what the government or what your company or what others are doing or you have a big challenge in your life – sickness, relationship problems, tragedy!...BEHIND THE STORY THAT WE SEE GOD IS MOVING TO BRING ABOUT HIS PLAN FOR YOUR LIFE! WHATEVER IS HAPPENING IN YOUR LIFE RIGHT NOW, HE IS DOING THAT TO FULFILL HIS PURPOSE. So trust that God is truly in control.

II. THE SIGN

Quote : When Prince William and Catherine (Duchess of Cambridge) gave birth to their first son George on July 22, 2013, this is how CNN reported it.

“With fanfare fit for a prince, Catherine, Duchess of Cambridge, and husband Prince William welcomed their first child Monday.”

“Her Royal Highness and her child are both doing well,” read an official bulletin placed outside Buckingham Palace, where crowds erupted in cheers.

People from all over the world had gathered outside Buckingham Palace to await news of the birth. At least one group of well-wishers brought flowers, champagne and a card for the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge.” (CNN)

Now, here’s the announcement when our Lord was born.

8 And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. 9 An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. 10 But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. 11 Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. 12 This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.” 13 Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, 14 “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.”

Imagine the scenario, you’re one of the shepherds. It was dark at night. There might be a little fire. Everything is quiet and suddenly IT BECOMES LIKE BLINDING DAY TIME ALL AROUND YOU. YOU CAN’T SEE ANYTHING EXCEPT THE LIGHT.

And the glory of the Lord shone around them

Etymology : shone around “perilampo” peri (around) lampo (to shine),

That word was used by Paul to describe how he met Jesus.

Acts 26: 12 “On one of these journeys I was going to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests. 13 About noon, King Agrippa, as I was on the road, I saw a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, blazing around me and my companions.

Now listen to what the angel said

But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. 11 Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord.

Remember, they were having an extraordinary experience and a strange creature was in front of them.

Remember, angels are real creatures.

Illustration : My father-in-law was telling the story that they had a male helper in the house whom they were already suspicious about since he has three daughters when suddenly the male helper said he had to leave the house because he said, he saw very tall creatures in the living room (the ceiling in my wife's house was around 20 ft.). My father-in-law said he believes they were angels protecting them.

We also heard of stories of missionaries who was supposed to be attacked in the middle of the night by a group of tribesmen but did not push through. The tribesmen became Christians and they confessed that they plotted to kill them but when they approached the hut where they were leaving around 7 tall creatures in blazing white was surrounding them. They asked what time and day that was and they found out also that was also the time, seven men from their church here in North Americas were praying for them.

So, now what did the angel say :

David a Savior has been born - they were waiting for this Saviour
he is the Messiah – Christos, Mashiyach – anointed one – usually, they will understand that as King

Remember, it was from the line of King David that they know, the ruler will come.

Jeremiah 23:5 "The days are coming," declares the LORD, "when I will raise up to David a righteous Branch, a King who will reign wisely and do what is just and right in the land.

the Lord – one who rules completely

In their mind, ok, how will we know WHERE OUR KING IS?

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

What? Remember the sign is not a baby wrapped in cloths. All babies are wrapped in swaddling cloths but **the sign is the manger!!!**

Promised Saviour, Messiah, Christ, the anointed, King, and total ruler...IN A MANGER?

ILLUSTRATION : A few years ago, I love watching in MTV a show called “Crib”. Crib nowadays means where you live... and this show features the “crib” of celebrities and their awesome big houses. We expect significant and powerful people to have those kinds of crib.

We expect Kings to be born like Prince George to be born in Palaces, Castles IN NICE CRIBS.

But the Saviour who is supposed to be majestic, powerful, a King and a Lord! THE KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS is supposed to be born in a palace but now laid in a manger.

What is a manger?

Etymology : phatne (manger) from pateomai (to eat), in French, manger means “to eat”

(SHOW PHOTO OF MANGER) But this manger is used to feed the animals. It's usually clay mixed with straw or it's a protrusion on the wall and the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, the one who created and owns everything is lying on a manger. That was his first crib.

Then what happened?

13 Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,

*14 "Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests."*

Application : You see when we describe glory, it's majestic. It's grand! We love to post in Facebook, OUR GLORIOUS PHOTOS, THE GLORIOUS PLACES WE VISITED, THE GLORIOUS RESTAURANTS, THE GLORIOUS EVENTS, OUR GLORIOUS CLOTHES, CARS, JEWELRY AND ETC.

We never see anyone posting... "Hey guys, I'm cleaning the toilet." Or "I'm wearing socks with holes in it." Because for us there's no glory in it.

But to THE ANGELS AND TO FOLLOWERS OF CHRIST, IT'S NOT THE SITUATION, IT'S NOT THE PHYSICAL THINGS...IT'S NOT THE THING THAT GLITTERS THAT'S GLORIOUS... IT'S THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD THAT MAKES IT GLORIOUS!

GLORY IS WHERE GOD'S PRESENCE IS. So whether you're living in a shack, or eating the humblest meal, or you're alone this Christmas or you're not with family if GOD IS THERE THEN THAT EVENT, THAT PLACE, THAT ACTIVITY IS GLORIOUS. And like the angels you can sing and praise God and say ... *"Glory to God in the highest heaven"*

Note: They weren't focused on the circumstances, the situation, they were focused on God who became man...Jesus Christ! And when you focus on the Lord, you will see His glory!

Another thing, we have to remember, this is the first sign our Lord has given that the King, the Christ, the Messiah, the Ruler has arrived.

John mentions that

John 20:30 Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book.

BUT HIS FIRST SIGN IS THE MANGER... Which brings us to....

III. THE SIGNIFICANCE

NOW LET US REMEMBER AGAIN WHO IS THIS SON IN THE MANGER.

Colossians 1: 15 The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. 16 For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. 17 He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

JESUS IS GOD. HE is the reason we are here and totally dependent on Him is now dependent on two human beings.

What is God telling us here? WHY THE MANGER? This means God is telling the world that His glory and His greatness was in His condescension, His humility, His love.

Isn't that what our Lord said?

Matthew 23:11 The greatest among you will be your servant.

Isn't that what our Lord did?

Philippians 2:

6 Who, being in very nature God,

did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;

7 rather, he made himself nothing

by taking the very nature of a servant,

being made in human likeness.

Isn't that what our Lord was espousing to His disciples in the washing of the feet?

John 13 : 3 Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; 4 so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. 5 After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.

12 When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. "Do you understand what I have done for you?" he asked them. 13 "You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am. 14 Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. 15 I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. 16 Very truly I tell you, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. 17 Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.

The significance of the manger is that the God of the universe was willing to serve...TO WHAT EXTENT?

Matthew 20:28 just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

**And as Christians, as followers of Christ, that is where our greatness lies...when we serve others!
When we give our life for others.**

CONCLUSION :

Story : Long ago, there ruled in Persia a wise and good king. He loved his people. He wanted to know how they lived. He wanted to know about their hardships. Often he dressed in the clothes of a working man or a beggar, and went to the homes of the poor. No one whom he visited thought that he was their ruler. One time he visited a very poor man who lived in a cellar. He ate the coarse food the poor man ate. He spoke cheerful, kind words to him. Then he left. Later he visited the poor man again and disclosed his identity by saying, "I am your king!" The king asked him what the poor man wanted.

You want to know what the man asked for? I'll tell you later.

Now we have to remember, our Lord was laid in a manger not because Joseph and Mary were poor but because our Father in His Sovereignty arranged the circumstances (remember, there was no more space in the guest room) so that his Son will be born in lowly circumstances.

This is what the manger symbolizes, significance

2 Corinthians 8:9 For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.

Now, what is the richness of our Lord? His spiritual riches. His heavenly home and **what is the greatest riches that He has that He has given us?** I'll show you later.

We have to remember that the manger is a symbol of what happened to Him.

Philippians 2:

6 Who, being in very nature God,

did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;

7 rather, he made himself nothing

by taking the very nature of a servant,

being made in human likeness.

Remember, God, who is the Creator, the mighty God, the owner of everything, the one who doesn't need anyone, or anything had to be born and become human flesh who is dependent on others, why?

8 And being found in appearance as a man,

he humbled himself

by becoming obedient to death—

even death on a cross!

We have to remember God has to become man in order to pay for our sin. Why?

Remember that God just has to punish the sinner and the punishment is death (death is eternal separation from God which is hell) He can't just forgive men of their sin or else he wouldn't be a just God.

But God also loves us, and He doesn't want us to be eternally separated from Him. So, someone has to take the punishment of men. It cannot be a fellow man because he will only be paying for his own sins. It cannot be God because God cannot die. So in His great love, wisdom and knowledge, God sent His own Son to become human flesh so that our Lord would be punished or die on our behalf.

Christ was placed on a lowly manger to show that right from the start, that was His mission that He will be placed on a lowly cross.

2 Corinthians 8:9 For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.

Again, what is it that Jesus has that we don't have that Jesus had to become like us in the flesh so that we can have what we have?

LET ME END THE STORY :

Instead he said, "You left your palace and your glory to visit me in this dark, dreary place. You ate the course food I ate. You brought gladness to my heart! To others you have given your rich gifts. To me you have given yourself! All I want is to continue our friendship."

The riches that we have as Christians because of the cross that started in the manger is our relationship with God.

Remember, if you have believed that Jesus Christ has died for your sin, you now have a relationship with God. God is your Father and the Bible says that we are even co-heirs with Christ.

This is the reason why He started His life placed in a manger to show how much He is willing to do in order to reach down to us so that He can lift us up to God. WHY THE MANGER?

BONUS : THE START

THE MANGER WAS ONLY THE STARTING POINT OF WHAT GOD WAS WILLING TO DO IN ORDER TO SAVE US FROM SIN WHICH IS EVENTUALLY THE CROSS.

So when you see the manger during Christmas, see it as a starting point of what God was willing to do in order for us to be with Him and the cross is the finish line. That's why our Lord Jesus cried out on the cross.

QUOTE : IN THE MANGER, GOD SAYS, "It begins". ON THE CROSS, GOD SAYS, "It is finished."

John 3:16 For God so loved the world that He gave His One and Only Son that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.

S.G.D.