

The Certainty of Christmas **Luke 2:1-7 (12/24/2017 AM)**

These seven verses reveal one of the greatest events in all of history, the birth of Jesus. It is of the greatest events along with the resurrection of Jesus. Luke is the only Gospel writer to state his purpose at the beginning (1:1-4). A key purpose of the Gospel of Luke was to confirm the faith of “Theophilus” and of every Christian for succeeding generations.

❖ We can know ***with certainty*** that the accounts of Jesus’ birth, life, death and resurrection are true.

The word for “certainty” that Luke uses is found only two other times in the New Testament. In Acts 5 the Apostles were put in prison for preaching the Gospel. An angel of the Lord let them out that night. In the morning the Sanhedrin called to bring them before them. The officers reported back that they were not there but that “we found the prison shut **securely**”, Acts 5:9. In 1 Thessalonians 5:3 Paul reveals the condition of the lost when Christ returns “For when they say ‘Peace and **safety!**’” What Luke is saying is that you can not only know what you’ve been taught but you can know this about “those things.” They are secure, locked down, unshakable reality.

➤ The birth narrative is part of the ***unshakable things*** that God has revealed to us, Hebrews 12:25. The writer of Hebrews is quoting from Haggai 2:6-7 which prophesies that God “will shake heaven and earth” at the Second Coming of Jesus. Do not be shaken by Satan’s and the world’s constant attacks upon the true accounts of Christmas. We can look to Jesus’ return as we see God beginning to shake things up throughout the world. God shook things up during WW II which resulted in millions of Jews coming back to the land of Palestine and establishing the State of Israel. God shook things up when He ordained the kingdoms of Babylon, Media-Persia, Greece and Rome to bring His Son into the world.

❖ We can know with certainty that God ordained ***the certainty*** of Jesus’ birth (1-2).

We should not get the idea that the word translated “came to pass” means that it just happened, Galatians 4:4. Luke is writing history not mythology. Rome is the fourth kingdom of Daniel’s prophecies. “Caesar” was the emperor’s title and “Augustus” was his description which meant honored or highly esteemed. Augustus brought in the *Pax Romana* or Roman peace. He also built the Roman road system which would be used by the Apostles to spread the Gospel. Also the Greek empire had made Greek a common language. He rearranged the power structure taking the power of life and death away from the Jews. The Messiah would die the Roman way by crucifixion. Daniel 9:24, “And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself.”

➤ It was a time of ***expectation*** in Israel.

The Babylonian captivity had purged the Jews of idolatry. Synagogues had been established in most major cities. Rabbis were proclaiming the worship of the one true God and hope of a coming Messiah.

The books of the Old Testament were well established in Israel. The Old Testament closed with the prediction of Messiah’s coming, Malachi 4:5-6. The 70 Weeks prophecy of Daniel 9:24-26 predicted the time of Christ’s coming.

❖ We can know with certainty that God ordained ***the place*** of Jesus’ birth (3-4).

Bethlehem was the birthplace of King David to whom God made the sweeping covenant we considered last Sunday. The place of Jesus’ birth was prophesied in Micah 5:2.

➤ The journey by Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem was from a human perspective ***unexpected***.

The Romans did not usually require people to go to the place of their ancestral home. This was most likely a Jewish custom or something which Herod required. We don’t really know humanly speaking why Mary went with Joseph so late in her pregnancy (5). The census did not require her to be there. However God ordained that Mary would be in Bethlehem when Jesus was born. Bethlehem means “house of bread.” It was where “the bread of life”, John 6:48 came into the world.

❖ We can know with certainty that God chose to send His Son into the world through ***human birth*** (6-7).

Luke most likely got the account of Jesus’ birth from Mary according to (1:2). Jesus’ conception in Mary’s womb was supernatural. Jesus’ birth was natural which in and of itself is stunning. Jesus Who is God of very God came into this world born as a baby boy. Galatians 4:4. Paul declares Jesus’ deity with the words “God sent forth His Son”. Here the emphasis is not upon the virgin birth but upon the fact of Jesus’ humanity. Jesus Christ is both fully God and fully man, 1 Timothy 3:16. Jesus assumed all of the weaknesses and limitations of humanity but

without sin. H.G. Wells, "I am a historian, I am not a believer, but this penniless preacher from Galilee is irresistibly the center of history."

➤ The humanity of Jesus is essential for His ***saving work***.

In order for Christ to save men He had to become a man. His sinless life, substitutionary death, burial, resurrection, ascension and intercession demand a true humanity. 1 John 3:5, "And you know that He was manifested to take away our sins, and in Him there is no sin." MacArthur, "The only way God could provide a sinless man as a substitute for sin was to provide a Man who was God, because only God alone is sinless."

▪ ***Jesus had to be man in order to die yet He had to be God for His death to have infinite value.***

Jesus is really a man but not only a man. God the Son took on the full nature of man yet retained the nature of God, Colossians 2:9-10. Jesus is the only way to God. 1 Timothy 2:5-6, "For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all..." God the Father laid our sins upon His Son, 1 Peter 2:24, "who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree."

Because of These Certainties We Can Be Certain about Our Own *Personal Salvation***.**