

# The Glory of Jesus' Birth

1. Why did God send his Son into the world as to save a people from their sins?
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## **The Glory of God: Foretold then Fulfilled in History**

2. Luke mentions Caesar Augustus and Quirinius along with the registration to remind us that Jesus birth was a \_\_\_\_\_ birth.
3. Augustus' decree was part of God's decree to fulfill his words to Micah which said the child would come forth from \_\_\_\_\_, and his words to Isaiah which said the child would come from the land of \_\_\_\_\_.

## **The Glory of God: Veiled in a Baby in Swaddling Cloths**

4. The Son humbled himself by... (circle all that apply)
  - i. Giving up his divine attributes.
  - ii. Adding a human nature to his divine nature (i.e., subtraction by addition).
  - iii. Veiling his glory.
5. The glory of the gospel is veiled in weak vessels yet accomplishes God's purposes. (Yes/No)

## **The Glory of God: Revealed in Good News**

6. Define each title for Jesus:
  - i. Savior: \_\_\_\_\_
  - ii. Christ: \_\_\_\_\_
  - iii. Lord: \_\_\_\_\_
7. "Peace on earth" refers primarily to peace between human beings. (Yes/No)

## **The Glory of God: Told, Treasured, and Praised**

8. Mary's response was a sign of unbelief. (Yes/No)
9. What response to the good news of Christ is most challenging for you? \_\_\_\_\_

## Extra Notes for Theological Nerds

### Quirinius: Did Luke commit a historical blunder?

Now some scholars point to this passage to show that Luke made a major historical blunder. They point to the fact that Quirinius, a known ruler over Syria, was not made legate of Syria until 6AD. This is after the death of Herod the Great who is mentioned in Luke 1:5 as King of Judea when these events take place.

It is such a big historical blunder that it seems unbelievable that Luke, so careful in his history, would falter here on something that would be common knowledge to those in the first century. Before we agree with those skeptical of the Scriptures and believe every other document more accurate than Scripture, let's consider this in more detail.

We know that Quirinius was made Legate of Syria in 6AD and in that year, he ordered a census to take place for taxation purposes over the territory that he was now given command over. The Jews resented this intrusion and, according to the first-century historian Josephus, a revolt was led by a Zealot named Judas of Galilee. Luke, mentions this in Acts 5:37 where he quotes Gamaliel saying, "Judas the Galilean rose up in the days of the census and drew away some of the people after him. He too perished, and all who followed him were scattered." So Luke knew about and wrote about the census by Quirinius in 6AD that led to this revolt which happened after the time of Herod the Great.

So was there another census before this one? This seems to be why Luke mentions that this was the *first* registration—to differentiate this one from the larger one mentioned in Acts 5. But there is still the problem that Quirinius wasn't legate until 6AD! However, the term "governor" (ESV) is a general word for ruler or authority not the specific word for legate. We know that Quirinius, being a friend and faithful servant of Augustus, was a governor of Crete and Cyrene around 14BC. He was listed as a Roman consul in 12BC. He was probably legate of Galatia around 5–3BC, where he was also elected as duumvir of Antioch in Pisidia. We do not know where he was during the events of Jesus' birth. I believe further archeological evidence will only confirm that Quirinius was in Syria in an high office of prefect or ruler before he was named legate when this census, his first registration, took place.

### Translation Difference? "on earth peace, goodwill toward men" or "on earth peace among men with whom he is pleased"

Christmas tradition makes the phrase "goodwill toward men" very familiar and iconic. However, most translations translate the phrase, "peace among men with whom he is pleased." The former speaks about Christ's coming bringing peace and goodwill (favor, kindness) to mankind, the latter speaks of Christ's coming as bringing peace to God's favored people.

Why the difference? Many manuscripts have the Greek phrase *καὶ ἐπὶ γῆς εἰρήνη ἐν ἀνθρώποις εὐδοκίας* (lit. and on earth peace among men of favor). Some manuscripts contain this phrase: *καὶ ἐπὶ γῆς εἰρήνη ἐν ἀνθρώποις εὐδοκία* (the only difference is the ending letter: *ς*). The lack of a "ς" (sigma) changes the form of favor from a genitive (of favor) to a nominative (along with *εἰρήνη*) which in English would be our subject and be placed before the prepositional phrase *ἐν ἀνθρώποις* "among men." So we would translate this: "and on earth peace, (and) favor among men."

Why do most translators favor the former reading (and on earth peace among men of favor) as correct? Three main reasons: 1) the manuscript evidence is much stronger for this reading; 2) the grammatical phrase of a single nominative (subject of peace) followed by a prepositional phrase is a much more straightforward reading rather than a double nominative (double subject); and 3) the theological consistency where Jesus comes to make peace with a particular people (those who fear the Lord, cf. 1:50) rather than all men.