

December 17, 2006
Pastor Tim Wood



O Little Town of Bethlehem
Luke 2: 1-7

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

1. Caesar Augustus was just doing what God wanted him to do.
 - “The king’s heart is in the hands of the LORD; He directs it like a watercourse wherever He pleases.”
Proverbs 21:1
2. The significance and insignificance of Bethlehem.
 - Micah 5:2
 - 1 Corinthians 1:27–28
 - 2 Corinthians 4:7
3. The headlines would read:

Small Groups and Personal Bible Study – Week of 12/17

This Week’s Memory Verse: Isaiah 7:14

Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.

Daily Reading Schedule:

- Day 1-Matthew 1:1-17
- Day 2-Luke 1:1-38
- Day 3-Luke 1:39-80
- Day 4-Matthew 1:18-25
- Day 5-Luke 2:1-20

Small Group Study: Luke 1:67-79 Zechariah's Song

⁶⁷His father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied: ⁶⁸“Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, because he has come and has redeemed his people. ⁶⁹He has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David ⁷⁰(as he said through his holy prophets of long ago), ⁷¹salvation from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us— ⁷²to show mercy to our fathers and to remember his holy covenant, ⁷³the oath he swore to our father Abraham: ⁷⁴to rescue us from the hand of our enemies, and to enable us to serve him without fear ⁷⁵in holiness and righteousness before him all our days. ⁷⁶And you, my child, will be called a prophet of the Most High; for you will go on before the Lord to prepare the way for him, ⁷⁷to give his people the knowledge of salvation through the forgiveness of their sins, ⁷⁸because of the tender mercy of our God, by which the rising sun will come to us from heaven ⁷⁹to shine on those living in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the path of peace.”

1. In this scripture we hear Zechariah (Father of John the Baptist) sing praises to the Lord as he acknowledges the coming of the Savior. What do you sense is the emotional position of Zechariah as he cries out in these verses?
2. Zechariah, and later his son, John the Baptist, being led by the Holy Spirit, had the prophetic role of preparing the way for the Lord who came to bring the forgiveness and redemption of our sins and lead us to peace with God. How does your call from God today in many ways match the role of Zechariah and John?

In the past few weeks, we studied 2 Corinthians 5:14-21 where we learned how God has called us to be ambassadors for Christ and in 2 Corinthians 12:7-10 we learned how it is only through the power of God that we can be used by Him. The message, is reinforced in the Christmas story of Zechariah and John the Baptist that it is our calling to declare the coming of salvation (verses 68 & 77) through Jesus Christ as we are carried by the Holy Spirit (verses 67 & 76) and allow the Holy Spirit to work in the hearts of people.

3. This Christmas, who is God laying on your heart to “shine on those living in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide into the path of peace”?

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