

Christmas Midnight 2009

The Wonder of Our Savior's Birth

In the Name JESUS. [Amen]

We need to learn to look beyond mere circumstances to see God's purpose in our Christian lives and in the world around us – and the events recorded in Holy Scripture regarding our Savior's Birth are a good place to begin. On the surface, it would appear that Caesar's decree was the reason why Joseph & Mary left Nazareth and went to Bethlehem. But it is only circumstantial – used by God to accomplish His purpose ... to get Joseph & Mary ... and especially the not-yet-born Baby Jesus ... where He wanted them to be ... where He had foretold in Holy Scripture that they **would** be through the Prophet Micah; namely, Bethlehem. Mighty Caesar's desire *that all the world should be registered* [LK 2.1] was merely the **circumstance** – the instrument ... the means – God used to accomplish His purpose. But His **purpose** was the fulfillment of Scripture – and especially the fulfillment of God's promise made to David a thousand years earlier that his throne would have an everlasting King:

When your days are fulfilled and you rest with your fathers, I will set up your Seed after you, who will come from your body, and I will establish His kingdom. He shall build a house for My Name, and I will establish the throne of His kingdom forever. I will be His Father, and He shall be My Son. If He commits iniquity, I will chasten Him with the rod of men and with the blows of the sons of men. But My mercy shall not depart from Him ... And your house and your kingdom shall be established forever before you. Your throne shall be established forever. [2SAM 7.12-16]

Caesar, Quirinius, Joseph, Mary – even the unnamed innkeeper who had no room for them ... and for that matter, the whole multitude who got there before Joseph and Mary – were **all** God's instruments in fulfilling His Word and His purpose. Thus, when the days were completed for Mary to bring forth her Firstborn Son, JESUS was born in Bethlehem's stable – according to God's promise ... according to God's prophecy ... according to God's will.

Later – because the iniquities of all people had been laid upon Him ... though He Himself remains sinless – another portion of God's Word to David would come to pass: *the rod of men and ... the blows of the sons of men* would also fall upon

Christ. Both the Jewish and the Roman leaders would be God's instruments as well – they are **circumstantial**. They are responsible for their own sins of rejecting and lying about and ultimately killing the Son of God – just as we are responsible for all of our own sins ... no matter the circumstances in which we commit them; but in God's infinite wisdom and **purpose**, He uses their evil and turns it for the good ... so that there is *Good News of great joy for all people* [LK 2.10]. God turns their worst evil into that greatest Good to accomplish the desire of His own heart: the salvation of all people – so that Jesus may be Jesus **for us** ... so that the Lord may save **us** and **all people** from our sins.

Even the place known as *the city of David, which is called Bethlehem* is a circumstance with a greater purpose – and thus, no mere circumstance. The very name of this city in which our Savior is born serves God's purpose – and teaches us. For Bethlehem means *house of bread* in the Hebrew language. And so it is. For Christ the Living Bread comes down from heaven and makes His dwelling among men there at Bethlehem. Thus Bethlehem becomes the House of the Bread of Life at our Savior's Birth.

Nor should the circumstance that the Infant Jesus is laid in a manger – a feeding trough – escape us as pointing to God's greater purpose for this Child Who is born unto us as Savior. For Christ the Lord is He Who feeds us and gives us our daily bread. But most importantly He feeds us with Himself for the forgiveness of sins.

This, then, is *The Wonder of Our Savior's Birth* – that the Son of God is born as the Infant Jesus to save us from our sin and be our Bread of Life Who comes down from heaven to feed us with Himself that we might live with Him eternally. *Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men!*

In the Name of the FATHER and of the ✠ SON and of the HOLY SPIRIT. [Amen]