

The Forgotten Jesus Podcast

S3E27

It's All About The Benjamins - (Luke 2:1-4)

Description – We don't fully understand what it's like to live under an Emperor. Today we'll talk about emperor worship in the 1st century and what happened if you opposed the Caesars of Rome.

Today we're getting into Luke 2, the birth of Jesus. We're not rushing to get there, we want to take our time.

Luke 2:1-2

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that the whole empire should be registered. ² This first registration took place while Quirinius was governing Syria.

What is Luke doing here? He's dating this event in history. He's rooting it as historical fact, to a precise time and location.

Who was Caesar Augustus? A Roman Emperor. Caesar let the Jews do a couple of things:

1. They could rest on the sabbath
2. They could still celebrate their holidays and feasts

During this time, worship of Caesar was not encouraged, but after Jesus dies and into the 100's Caesar worship became mandatory, or you'd face death.

That's why it's such a big deal when Paul says to the church at Rome, "If you confess Jesus as Lord with your mouth..." Because to do so could be a death sentence in Rome. Rome had only one lord, one ruler, one king, Caesar.

Luke giving this date allows us to compare it to the historical record. Most scholars date Luke 2:1-2 to 4 BC, with Jesus dying in 30AD, so he would have been 33 years old. Remember, we don't count 0 as a year, it jumps from 1 BC to 1 AD.

Why is a census important? Taxes. It's all about the benjamins... or denari.

Side note: Ever wonder how the temple burned down? When the temple was built the mortar was flammable. So when it caught fire, it literally fell apart and burned completely.

Luke 2:3-4

³ So everyone went to be registered, each to his own town. ⁴ Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family line of David,

So Joseph is going back to Bethlehem, because he's of the line of David, but remember, he's disqualified himself because he's of the lineage of Jeconiah.

They went from Nazareth to Bethlehem, an 80-90 mile Journey. God is using in the natural realm a decree from Rome to have a census to bring the “frist family” back to Bethlehem to fulfill the prophecy in Micah.

Micah 5:2

² Bethlehem Ephrathah, you are small among the clans of Judah; one will come from you to be ruler over Israel for me. His origin is from antiquity, from ancient times.

To make this 80-90 mile journey by foot would take 1 - 2 weeks. Robby believes that they went on foot because they didn't have money. A donkey would have cost \$, it would have been like having a premier luxury vehicle today.

Why Robby believes they didn't have money:

Luke 2:21-24

²¹ When the eight days were completed for his circumcision, he was named Jesus—the name given by the angel before he was conceived. ²² And when the days of their purification according to the law of Moses were finished, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord ²³ (just as it is written in the law of the Lord, **Every firstborn male will be dedicated to the Lord**) ²⁴ and to offer a sacrifice (according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, **a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons**).

Leviticus 12:8

⁸ But if she doesn't have sufficient means for a sheep, she may take two turtledoves or two young pigeons, one for a burnt offering and the other for a sin offering. Then the priest will make atonement on her behalf, and she will be clean.”

The rule from Leviticus about ritual purification after birth was the minimal exception, not the normal, standard offering. It was the exception to allow the poor to still find a way to be purified.

Why were they poor? Joseph was a handyman.

Tekton - “Builder / Craftsman” - In other words, someone who worked with their hands.

Question for next time: What did Joseph work with in Israel?