

The Forgotten Jesus Podcast

S7E23 - LIVE RECORDING

Throw Away Your Nativity - Luke 2:1-7

Description – Join us today with a LIVE studio audience as we look at some of the myths of the Christmas story.

Today on the podcast we're going to do something a bit different. We're jumping over Matthew 5:21-26 and will come back to that at a later time.

Remember, we read the bible for intimacy with a person, not just for facts.

Today we're going to talk about the Christmas story. We're going to deconstruct and reconstruct the Christmas nativity.

We'll be in Luke 2

Luke 2:1-7

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.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, ⁵ to be registered along with Mary, who was engaged to him and was pregnant. ⁶ While they were there, the time came for her to give birth. ⁷ Then she gave birth to her firstborn son, and she wrapped him tightly in cloth and laid him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.

Remember with the gospel accounts, Matthew and John were with Jesus. But Mark and Luke were not with Jesus first hand. Mark got his information from Peter. Luke got his information from as many eyewitness accounts as he could. Lots of insights from Paul and Mary.

2:1-2 - Caesar Augustus, Quirinius in Syria - Luke is placing this in a real time, in a real place.

Luke is timestamping this as a real, historical account.

All we get from Luke is v. 7 about the birth of Jesus, God's son. That's it. Why?

The God of the universe just stepped into creation, lowly and humble. Jesus is the epitome of humility.

Why don't we have a nativity story account in the other gospels? Why only Matthew & Luke?

Remember, the Jewish / eastern culture wasn't always concerned with the detailed origin story like we are. Also, you have to consider the audience of the author.

There was no Donkey.

Really? So why do so many nativity sets / displays today have a donkey?

People assume they didn't just walk on foot, which was common in the day to walk by foot. This would have been a 4 or 5 day, maybe even a 6 day journey.

You would have to have had money to be able to travel with a donkey. A donkey was like having a Cadillac. But we know Joseph and Mary were very blue collar, likely lower middle class.

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**).

We know Joseph and Mary were devout Jews. But how could you be devout and not offer to sell your donkey if you had one to offer a lamb or animal from the flock as the law required for the offering for Jesus.

Instead, since they could not afford an animal, the law also offered that they could dedicate their son with a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons.

Leviticus 5:7

⁷ "But if he cannot afford an animal from the flock, then he may bring to the LORD two turtledoves or two young pigeons as penalty for guilt for his sin—one as a sin offering and the other as a burnt offering.

The Wise Men were not there at the Birth of Jesus.

Matthew 2:9

⁹ After hearing the king, they went on their way. And there it was—the star they had seen at its rising. It led them until it came and stopped above the place where the child was.

Again, not a normal star. Normal stars don't rise and fall. This would have been a supernatural star or sign in the sky that this entourage of men traveling from the east, (likely Babylon, as these men were most likely disciples of Daniel from 500 years earlier) would have been traveling for months following the star.

Matthew 2:10-11

¹⁰ When they saw the star, they were overwhelmed with joy. ¹¹ Entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and falling to their knees, they worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts: gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

Notice here the specific location. A house, not a manger or a cave for animals. This was the house that Jesus, Joseph and Mary are living in.

Also notice the word used here, "child" - (Greek) "paidion" - means child, little child, toddler.

The gifts the entourage of wise men brought

1. Gold - symbolic of Jesus's Kingship
2. Frankincense - the altar of incense was burning and the smoke rising was a picture of prayers rising to God.
3. Myrrh - used for embalming at death.

So you have Jesus's identity being confirmed in these gifts: A King, A Priest, A Sacrifice.

There was no Inn

When we hear "Inn" we think "Holiday Inn Express" or "Ramada Inn" But those didn't exist in that day.

Most Jewish homes in the 1st century had 1 main room that everyone lived in, and sometimes a guest room, but certainly not all had guestrooms.

If you had a home with a guestroom, you would have put people there who were traveling. Some families would have even had a cave or a lean to to cover up their animals from being outside.

Remember in the gospel account where we see Jesus send ahead the disciples into the town to look for a particular man to go to that man to say the teacher requires your guest room to celebrate the Passover meal.

Luke 22:7-13

⁷ Then the Day of Unleavened Bread came when the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed. ⁸ Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, "Go and make preparations for us to eat the Passover."

⁹ “Where do you want us to prepare it?” they asked him.

¹⁰ “Listen,” he said to them, “when you’ve entered the city, a man carrying a water jug will meet you. Follow him into the house he enters. ¹¹ Tell the owner of the house, ‘The Teacher asks you, ‘Where is the guest room where I can eat the Passover with my disciples?’’ ¹² Then he will show you a large, furnished room upstairs. Make the preparations there.”

¹³ So they went and found it just as he had told them, and they prepared the Passover.

But think about this, in a hospitality culture, big on shame and honor, why would no one give up their bedroom to a pregnant woman? Doesn’t this seem strange?

Two possible options:

1. You don’t want to be associated with the scandal of this couple, pregnant outside of marriage.
2. You don’t want to be considered unclean from the birth of the baby.

Since they traveled for 4-6 days away from home, people likely didn’t know who they were unless they shared their story. “Hey, we’re J & M, we’re pregnant but not married yet...”

If you gave birth, you were ceremonially unclean for 7 days, for the whole house and everyone in the house. Now, if Jesus was born in April, which is what Pastor thinks, because shepherds were not in the field in the winter (December). He was likely born around or near Passover.

So in their mind, they didn’t want to have Mary around because they didn’t want to be unclean in order to be able to celebrate the passover.

So Jesus is born into the hypocrisy that he would argue against His whole ministry. That they were more concerned about the letter of the law instead of the heart behind the law.

So we know they were not in the house in the bedroom, or in the guest space, guest room, because Mary lays Jesus in a Manger.

A manger was a food trough for animals. Think of it like a large dog food bowl.

That’s why it’s such a strange thing, that the Angel tells the shepherds, “Hey, you’re looking for a baby wrapped in cloths LYING IN A MANGER....”

Why not a royal palace, with soft linens, and gold plated doorways, etc. Because it’s showing us the character of God. God is humble, and in this we see why God hates pride so much. It’s so opposed to his very nature.