



IMMANUEL BAPTIST CHURCH
SERIES: ADVENT: JESUS, ONLY JESUS
LESSON: MAKE ROOM
TEXT: LUKE 2:4-7
DATE: DECEMBER 21, 2025

MAIN POINT

Many things want to fill up our lives; make room for Christ at the center.

INTRODUCTION

God brings humanity's only hope for salvation and reconciliation, Jesus, into the world via humble beginnings. So humble in fact, the inn and those individuals in closest proximity to the birth of the long awaited Christ were too busy to be bothered.

- On a scale from 1-10, how busy would you say this Christmas season is for you? What is your sense for what is taking up the most time?
- Do you every feel the pressure that *this Christmas* needs to be the most special Christmas ever?
- In your honest assessment, what would make *this Christmas* feel special?

Text

Luke 2:4-7

(4) And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, 5) to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. 6) And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. 7) And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

Explanation

Joseph was required to travel from Nazareth, in the region of Galilee in the north of modern-day Israel, to Bethlehem, in the region of Judea in the south of modern-day Israel. Caesar Augustus had decreed everyone to register in their ancestral town for a census. This would not have been an easy trip for Mary and Joseph, somewhere between 70-90 miles depending on the route taken. It could have taken approximately 4 or 5 days under the best conditions. It is estimated to have taken closer to 8 to 10 days for Mary and Joseph considering the rough and rocky terrain along with Mary's advanced stage of pregnancy. This census requirement was ultimately all part of God's plan to fulfill the prophecy in Micah 5:2: "But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days."

Bethlehem is called the City of David. As king, David dwelt in Jerusalem, but his origins come from Bethlehem. It was there that Samuel traveled and anointed him to be king (1 Samuel 16:4).

Verse 5 provides critical context to the relationship between Mary and Joseph that although Mary is pregnant, they are betrothed. By mentioning them as betrothed, several notes could be made. First, this further highlights all things working towards God's plan as Mary would not have been required to make the trip with Joseph prior to marriage yet they chose for Mary to make the arduous journey to Bethlehem and fulfill Scripture. Also, being in the advanced stages of pregnancy, we can understand Mary's possible hesitancy to separate from Joseph. Second, noting their betrothed status also highlights that Mary and

Joseph had not consummated their marriage. Mary is a virgin fulfilling another Old Testament prophesy (Is. 7:14).

Luke is clear this birth is Mary's *firstborn* and indeed the long-awaited Messiah. Mary would of course have more children later. But noting Jesus as firstborn also is a note about his right to be an heir to David. In the Old Testament, the firstborn son is the one who has the right to inherit the throne. Jesus, as firstborn son to Joseph and Mary will continue the kingly line from David.

Amazingly, although this is Emmanuel, God in the flesh with us, humanity has little clue of Jesus' birth when it happens. People in the town appear unbothered to notice the Savior of world being born. For all they know, this is just another birth of any average boy. Evidently, lots of people had traveled to Bethlehem and there was no room for them in an inn. It really is amazing how quiet beginning of Jesus' life was. God's angels had to be the ones to make it known.

Presumably, Mary's delivery also must have been uncomfortable. Those of us with children can understand the challenges of childbirth even in a hospital bed with modern medicine, but it must have been immensely more difficult for Mary to labor on her own, likely on the floor of a cave serving as a stable for local animals. The arrival of king Jesus was also lowly and humble.

Verse 7 states that Mary herself wrapped the baby in strips of cloth, likely torn from garments they brought with them on the journey. To rest, the baby was laid in a manger or animal feeding trough as even after birth there was no lodging available for young family. This would end up being the sign for the shepherds to know they had found the right baby as described by angels (Lk. 2:12). As a man, I can't help but laugh thinking about *Mary* placing baby Jesus in the manger. I mean, if *I* suggested putting our newborn in a feeding trough, my wife would roll her eyes bigtime. I can imagine her saying, "There may be no room in the inn, but you might be kicked out of the stable for *that* idea." ☺

Seriously though, we really don't get any sense from the text about Mary and Joseph complaining about the circumstances. They may not have had any room in the inn, but I imagine their hearts were full. And even if they did have a sense of frustration, the shepherd's soon arrival would lead them to marvel and treasure the events surrounding Jesus' birth (Lk. 2:19). After all, God had been faithful to Mary in the promise of conceiving by the Spirit. So too God kept his promise of the baby being born in Bethlehem.

Discussion Questions:

- How would you have expected God to enter the world?
- Can you think of any other extraordinary birth stories in the Bible? How do they compare to Jesus' birth?
- Why do you think Mary made the journey to Bethlehem with Joseph even though they weren't yet married?
- What are some of the hardships Mary and Joseph likely experienced on the journey, arrival, and delivery? Try to imagine what would go through your mind in those circumstances?
- Does it surprise you that seemingly everyone in the town of Bethlehem had no clue that the Savior was being born? Do you think there is any significance to this?
- How can you see God's sovereignty and providence as part of this story?

Conclusions or Application

LET US NOT BE TOO HECTIC THIS SEASON

Christmas season can easily become filled with distractions. There are certainly lots of good things to be involved in (Christmas parties with loving friends, opportunities to serve, gift giving, family to visit, and more) that can all have meaningful purpose. At same time, we must try to balance what is busy and meaningful with what is hectic and potentially missing the point of Christmas.

As Christians we will always face temptations to lose focus off the main thing. In those times, we can pause, reflect, and evaluate. We can turn our focus to Christ and adjust.

Don't just make room for Jesus, make Jesus the center of how we worship and celebrate this season.