

Christmas In Code

Luke 2:1-20

In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. ² (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) ³ And everyone went to their own town to register. ⁴ 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. ⁵ He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. ⁶ While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, ⁷ and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them. ⁸ And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. ⁹ An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰ But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. ¹¹ Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹² This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." ¹³ Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God, and saying, ¹⁴ "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favour rests." ¹⁵ When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about." ¹⁶ So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. ¹⁷ When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, ¹⁸ and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. ¹⁹ But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. ²⁰ The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

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A. The Wonder of Wonders

Christmas is a season filled with wonder, and the greatest of these is a child's wonder, especially at Christmas. After a long period of prophetic silence (from Malachi ~430 BC to Matthew), the world was suddenly filled with swift prophetic fulfillment. Christmas brings us the wonder of the Virgin Birth, as foretold in Isaiah 7:14, and the miraculous incarnation of Jesus. Philippians 2:5-7 reminds us that Christ, though truly God, humbled Himself to become human, a slave for our salvation.

B. Christmas Was Observed in Times of Persecution

Throughout history, Christians have faced persecution, sometimes requiring them to hide their faith, as seen in symbols like the fish (Ichthus) and coded songs. Examples include the coded messages in the underground railroad and gospel songs. Even Christmas traditions, like nursery rhymes, have carried hidden meanings.

C. "Mary Had a Little Lamb"

The well-known nursery rhyme, "Mary Had a Little Lamb," connects to the Biblical story of Christ's birth. Jesus, the "Lamb of God," was born into humble circumstances, symbolizing the sacrificial lambs in Israel's worship. Lambs were essential in the daily sacrifices for sin, foreshadowing Jesus' role in salvation. John 1:29 calls Him the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.

D. "His Fleece Was White as Snow"

The reference to white fleece symbolizes holiness in the Bible. Isaiah 1:18 highlights how Christ can cleanse sinners, turning their scarlet sins as white as snow. White also signifies purity and judgment, as seen in Revelation 20:11. Christ, the sinless one, died on the cross to cleanse us, and through faith, He transforms sinners into saints, offering salvation to all.

E. "Everywhere That Mary Went the Lamb Was Sure to Go"

The manger symbolizes Christ's accessibility to all. Jesus came to seek and save the lost (Luke 19:10). His presence assures that believers are never alone, as He promises to be with us always (Matt. 28:20; Heb. 13:5). The presence of Christ is both comforting in life and a promise of eternal fellowship with Him in heaven.

F. The Gospel Is So Simple It Can Be Coded in a Nursery Rhyme

The core message of Christmas, though profound, can be simplified: God's eternal plan through the cross, His unfailing promises through the resurrection, and His unlimited power to offer new birth to all who believe.

G. Childlike Faith in Christ Assures Us of Heaven

Receiving Christ with childlike faith ensures salvation. Trusting Jesus as Savior and Lord offers peace with God and security in His promises.

H. Receive the Lamb and Enjoy His Fellowship Forever

The message of Christmas is one of receiving Christ, the Lamb of God, and enjoying His fellowship, now and forever. Through faith in Christ, we are invited into eternal relationship with God, secured by His sacrifice and resurrection.