

Luke 2:1-7a

God's playbook of the events and people that are central to His divine plan of the ages is nothing like ours. Our playbooks measure, and we are taught, history from the perspective of major events, important stand-out individuals, migrations, nations, wars, invasions, competing interests, disease outbreaks and cures, discoveries, travel, technology and cities humming with activity. But God's playbook is upside down from ours! It ain't like ours at all. All those things are there, all right, but they're merely a backdrop, a well-painted set-piece in the back of God's theater. The stagelights are not on them but on the real action that plays out before and is valued by Beings in the heavenly audience.

Think about our key scripture text above that we just read, the well-worn passage read every Christmas. **Our familiarity with it runs the risk of losing the real impact the Holy Spirit is going out of His way to draw to our attention.** I want to draw your attention to the stage being set for us, and how *everyone in the entire Mediterranean, up into Europe, and in Northern Africa, and east into Asia experienced this very disruptive event.*



Have you ever considered the fact that God exerted his Providential powers to influence the mighty Augustus to have it in his royal, administrative mind to decree a census that moved and disrupted the lives and economies of millions and millions of people within the empire? **Why did God do this?** So that two insignificant people, in a small buffer state on the periphery of the empire, would move a mere 70 miles, from their home in Nazareth to the town of Bethlehem! I mean, wasn't there a simpler and less painful or less harmful way for God to do this? Why not just send an angel like he'd done previously?

All this disruption of a civilization, and big political machinations by a pagan king and his empire-ruling government, ostensibly so taxation and other measures could be better calculated, but really, from the divine audience perspective, so that one line of prophetic scripture written seven centuries before, would be fulfilled precisely, and Joseph and Mary would personally benefit and participate in its fulfillment:

*"But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, Too little to be among the clans of Judah,
From you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel. His goings forth are from long ago, From the days of eternity." - Micah 5:2*

And out of that small, backwater village, on the edge of the empire and away from its action, in the quiet of night, unnoticed among all but a few country-bumpkin humans, the singular most important event in human history transpired! God took on human flesh and

became one of us! The 3rd stanza of the beloved carol, O Little Town of Bethlehem captures the irony of God's way vs man's way,

*How silently, how silently,
the wondrous gift is giv'n!
So God imparts to human hearts
the blessings of his heav'n.
No ear may hear his coming,
but in this world of sin,
where meek souls will receive him, still
the dear Christ enters in.*

Have you ever considered the events of the life of Joseph in the OT, unfolding in this light? After all was said and done, including all those years later with him rising from slave and prisoner to prime minister and the 7 fat years and 7 lean years, there is something that often escapes our notice and it is really the main action from the divine perspective: It is found in Genesis 46:1-27. How many Israelites were there on the earth at the time? The family size _____ plus Joseph and his two sons, _____ Plus Jacob _____ = _____!! *A kingdom and world was shaken, all for the sake of the elect.*



If you feel small, unimportant and insignificant as a believer in a world of big, impressive people, scary movements and mysterious political and social machinations, you need to stop.. really... and realize that God moves kings and nations and events large and small for the spiritual benefit of his children, and for our appreciation and participation in His glory, in Christ, the Son of David.

History is not about the big events! It's about the little people that are His, who are called by grace and who believe in His Son. It is our very smallness that makes his sovereign exercise of Providential power over kings and presidents, and nations and corporations, and the weather and the seas, all the more special... grace to us who are helpless otherwise. He indeed, "*works all things for the good of those whole love Him and are called according to His purpose.*" **One day soon we now insignificant ones will rule the world in glory and great honor. The sons of God are what its all about. Think on**

this!