

**December 19<sup>th</sup>**

So Mary is married. Joseph is honoring God's faith in him by honoring this girl. And she grows large with child as the days pass. She gets into her 9<sup>th</sup> month, and something unexpected happens.

**Luke 2:1-2** – *And it came to pass in those days that a \_\_\_\_\_ went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be \_\_\_\_\_.<sup>2</sup> This \_\_\_\_\_ first took place while Quirinius was governing Syria.*

The Roman Empire wants to count the people so their taxes flow into city coffers and personal pockets. Every man needs to step up and account for himself and his family. But it will not be as easy as going to a designated place in your small town.

**Luke 2:3** – *So all went to be \_\_\_\_\_, everyone to his own \_\_\_\_\_.*

Who is your relative? Of whose lineage are you? That determines where you have to go to find your ancestral records. This may mean traveling far from home to appease the Roman Empire.

**Luke 2:4** – *Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, to the city of David, which is called \_\_\_\_\_, because he was of the house and \_\_\_\_\_ of David,*

He has to travel over 60 miles to the town of David. But not alone.

**Luke 2:5** – *to be \_\_\_\_\_ with Mary, his betrothed wife, who was with child.*

He has to pack up Mary, who is now 9 months pregnant, and travel by foot to Bethlehem.

She is heavy with child.

She has difficulty walking.

She tires easily.

Yet she must go.

And we have to remember that travel was so difficult compared to today's standards. No paved roads. No interstates. No cars or trains or buses with fast speeds and comfortable seats.

Just a man with only a mule to offer relief to her tired body and weary feet.

And so they journey, for probably up to 14 days.

Oh how miserable Mary must have been! Yet she goes. Probably hoping and praying that her Son will wait to be born back in her little village.

*Going Deeper:*

1. *What does Micah 5:2 say about the importance of Bethlehem?*

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2. *Who is Mary carrying and about to give birth to, according to Micah 5:5? Why is this important, especially in light of the violent and cruel Roman Empire being in power?*

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3. *What does 1 Samuel 16:1,4,11-13 tell us about the specialness of Bethlehem?*

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4. *What does John 7:40-42 tell us about Bethlehem?*

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5. *Why do you think we do not hear any of the thoughts or feelings from the traveling couple during the hard and possibly treacherous journey to Bethlehem? What would each of them have been thinking and feeling?*

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6. *What do you have difficulty with (speaking up, keeping quiet, trusting, giving, praising, etc)? How do you handle it?*

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