

Luke 2:1-7 –Jesus: Directed and Delivered

Brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ: When someone makes a promise to you, you want them to keep that promise. But sometimes that person doesn't. He may have lost the ability to do what he promised. Sometimes he changes their minds and decides he doesn't want to do it, or he changes his minds because you didn't fulfill your end of the bargain (议价). And you can be hurt and disappointed. The breaking-off of an engagement is an example of a broken promise that can be particularly hurtful.

But you never have to worry and will never be disappointed with God. From the Fall God promised that the Child of the woman would come to crush the head of the Serpent. And that child did come and he did what he came to do. You will hear about this today.

Our headings are:

Jesus: Directed

Jesus: Delivered

Our goals: **That you will see how God overcame many obstacles (阻碍) the Wicked One threw at him and kept his promise of sending the Serpent Head Crusher – Jesus.**

Jesus: Directed

1. Everything about Jesus was decreed (被预定) by God, starting from the Fall (堕落).

Genesis 3:15 And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; **He shall crush your head, And you shall crush His heel.**"

You can trace the promise of Jesus in the Old Testament **through direct promises, through prophets (先知), and through angels.** You can trace that promise through **signs, symbols, and ceremonies (典礼, 仪式).** The promise was beyond doubt. When the "Head Crusher" came, he came under Divine direction.

1 And it came to pass in those days that **a decree (法令) went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered.** 2 This **census first took place** while **Quirinius was governing Syria.** 3 So all **went to be registered,** everyone to his **own city.**

2. God providentially directed Caesar Augustus to prepare for Christ's coming.

a. Augustus secured peace in the world. The world had hardly known peace for many years before and it did not know peace for many years after. **But because of this peace Jesus and his disciples were free to travel to preach.**

b. Augustus improved the administration of the Roman provincial governments. He removed the worse abuses 滥用 of the tax system. This allowed Jerusalem to be rich, being a city of business. **So people would go there for business from all over the world and learn of the sacrifice 献祭, 牺牲 for the sins of the world.**

c. Augustus made sure travel was easy. He built thousands of miles of new roads...linking faraway places. There were merchant and travel ships in the Mediterranean Sea (地中海). **This helped the fast spread of the Gospel.**

d. Augustus required a census 人口统计 be taken for all citizens of the empire at the right time. Augustus, when he was at Tarracon in Spain, planned a census 27 years earlier but the Emperor was diverted from it by some disturbances (干扰, 骚乱) in the empire. Augustus' earlier plans were not right for God, so God stopped it. **Mary was likely not even born yet.** She couldn't have gone to Bethlehem. This was not luck. This was God's directing the greatest event of history.

So while these were Augustus' works, God was doing the directing!

4 Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the **city of Nazareth,** into 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 wife (订婚之妻),** who was with child.

3. God directed Joseph and Mary to go to Bethlehem, the place where David had shepherded his father's sheep 1000 years before. **Though some might consider this coincidence (巧合), it was not so at all.** God prophesied this!

Micah 5:2 "But you, **Bethlehem Ephrathah, Though you are little** among the thousands of Judah, Yet out of you **shall come forth to Me The One to be Ruler in Israel, Whose** goings forth are from of old, From everlasting."

Bethlehem means "house of bread." Jesus is also called "the bread which came down from heaven, and gives life to the world." Jesus' foremother, Ruth had gone to Bethlehem for bread, but now her Son was **The Bread of Life** to Bethlehem. God also directed this couple to live in Nazareth before they went to Bethlehem for the birth.

4. God directed and ordained (命定) that both Mary and Joseph would come from David, who was from the tribe of Judah.

No one could stop God's plans.

Concerning Judah: In Genesis 49, Jacob prophesied that Shiloh "the peaceful one," a name for Jesus, would come. (Isaiah called Jesus the "Prince of Peace." Isaiah 9:6)

Genesis 49:10 – The **scepter shall not depart from Judah, not a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh comes;** and to him shall be the obedience of the people.

Herod was the first non-Jew (partly from Edom, Esau's people) to rule over God's people. Judah's line was broken...so it was time for someone to restore that line, as God said!

Concerning David: Jesus would come from David's line – and he would rule on David's throne.

2Samuel 7:16-17 - "And your house and **your kingdom shall be established forever before you**. Your throne shall be established forever...

Isaiah 11:1 There shall come forth **a Rod** from the **stem of Jesse**, And a Branch shall grow out of his roots.

Hosea 3:5 Afterward the children of Israel shall return and seek the LORD their God and **David their king**. They shall fear the LORD and His goodness in the latter days.

Hosea literally compares Jesus to David.

5. God directed Mary and Joseph to each other, betrothed (half way between an engagement and marriage) to be married.

Joseph did what many men would not do – marry a pregnant woman!

6. God directed even more events:

a. God had dispersed 分散 his people throughout the world. He did it for punishment, but he used their dispersion to establish the Jews everywhere so the Gospel could spread faster. This dispersion of Israel (North) was under the Assyrians in 722 BC. This dispersion of Judah (South) was under the rule of Nebuchadnezzar, the Babylonian Emperor in 605-586 BC. The Jews had built synagogues 犹太会堂, around which they built their lives. This was important because the Apostles almost always began to preach the Gospel in Jewish synagogues.

b. The Roman Empire was quite protective of other religions, including Christianity at that time. The Jewish leaders were more troublesome. This was God's doing!

c. The time of Jesus' coming was prophesied and directed by God. This baby was ordained to come at the time of the Roman Empire (Empire of iron and clay) in order to crush it!

Daniel 2:34 "You watched while a **stone was cut out without hands**, which struck the image on its feet of iron and clay, and **broke them in pieces**. 35 "Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold were crushed together, and became like chaff (糠秕) from the summer threshing floors (禾场); the wind carried them away so that no trace of them was found. **And the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.**

d. There was 1 common language for the world-Greek. This common language merged Rome and Greece in religion and philosophy (哲学). **The Gospel could easily spread and Christianity consolidated.** Many disciples spoke Greek. **Yes, God was the controller of all these activities.** It is difficult to think of a more convenient time for the Christ-child to come.

7. Lessons:

a. God never forgets his promises. Whatever you go through in life, remember this!

b. God is always able to do what he promises.

c. What was his greatest promise? To crushed the head of the serpent who struck you with his venom (毒液). Jesus took your death, death that came from Satan's venom, and he then crushed Satan. God's Son saved you!

Jesus – Delivered

6 So it was, that while they were there, the days were completed for her **to be delivered**. 7 And she brought forth **her firstborn Son**, and wrapped Him in **swaddling cloths**, and laid Him in **a manger** (马槽), because there was **no room for them in the inn**.

1. While Mary and Joseph were there in Bethlehem, Mary went into labor and gave birth to Jesus, her firstborn.

The Bible says: Her son, the firstborn. This emphasized that he was **the** (definite article) Firstborn. Christ was the firstborn, not only for Mary, but for his Father in heaven. Col 1. (Firstborn means the one who was most important – having pre-eminence 优越性. This concept of Firstborn was not strange. God had prepared his people for the firstborn in the Old Testament. The firstborn of every man or animal was given to God...either sacrificed (被献祭) or redeemed (被赎回).

Exodus 13:2 "**Consecrate to Me all the firstborn**, whatever opens the womb among the children of Israel, both of man and beast; it is Mine."

But all those firstborns that were redeemed by animals were not redeemed eternally, only temporarily. God's people needed a permanent substitute.

So **while Jesus was delivered by Mary, Jesus was delivered by God for the world, in fulfillment of his promise. He had to redeem the unclean!**

2. Jesus – God's Firstborn and Mary's firstborn - was born in the humblest of situations (最卑微的状况). In a cold and lonely place... in a place for feeding animals – a shack 简陋的窝棚 for animals...or possibly in a limestone cave. (He was not born in a manger!) He was wrapped in strips of cloth because they were poor. **And yet, he was God's greatest gift to man-a firstborn-delivered to die in your place.**

3. Jesus, God's gift to man, was given in the animal's house because there was no room for him in the inn. NO VACANCY 没有空房间 – was the sign awaiting him. They did not even have the “poor” rooms in the inn where he could be born. Jesus was ignored... and his pregnant mother also. In the East, hospitality (热情好客) was practiced, so that a traveler had little difficulty obtaining shelter and food. While they did not know who Jesus was at this time, this would still symbolize what would happen later in his life. He came to his own and his own did not receive him into their hearts, homes.

Isaiah 53:3 – He **despised (藐视) and rejected by men**, a man of **sorrows and acquainted with grief**. And **we hid, as it were, our faces from Him**; He was despised, and we **did not esteem him**.
Matthew 8:20 – The Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.

3. Why did the Jews not recognize the Savior?

a. They were lacking knowledge of Divine revelation – the Scriptures. It took wise foreigners, maybe 2 years later, to find and worship him. But the Jewish rejection of the Christ-child was the opening the doors to the Gentiles!

b. Because of their lack of knowledge of the Scriptures, they had different expectation, expecting a kingdom of the sword and military power and expecting Jesus in a palace, not in backward Galilee.

4. Even though his people did not recognize Jesus when he was delivered, he fulfilled his purpose anyway.

Micah 5:3 Therefore He shall give them up (to slavery), Until the time that she who is in labor has given birth; **Then the remnant of His brothers shall return to the children of Israel.**

This was not speaking of Mary giving birth, but of Israel giving birth to the Christ. After Israel gave birth, God restored those who were straying from God.

5. Lessons:

a. Even though his people would not invite Jesus into their homes, he still hangs out the banner of love for his sign and welcomes all who would come to his home. He offers you a spiritual home. He is still offering his life and his death for you! He is the Firstborn for you. Whoever comes to Christ, no way will he cast him out... He welcomes those that come without money and without price. All is free of your cost. Look for him with all your heart and come in.

b. If you will not submit to him and come into his house, he will crush you.

Daniel 2:44 "And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever.

What will he find in you? Will you accept his offer...or will he have to crush you?

Conclusion:

God's Divine hand was unmistakable in Christ's coming. You see that in how God directed the events to the coming of Jesus and how he delivered Jesus at the right time.

Brother and sisters in Jesus Christ:

1. Only a few Jews had use for Christ – the one who would offered them the greatest gift of all. They were busy with their lives, making money and fulfilling their ritual (礼仪的) actions. They ignored the signs (神迹) and the evidences. He didn't fit their expectations. They had no need for him in their hearts or homes.

2. Do you need him? If you are a Christian you would answer 'yes...absolutely.' You would say: I know that without the Divine Jesus taking on human flesh I would still be in my sins and heading for hell. But more than saying “yes,” you would also thank God for all that he has done for you through his Son.

If you are not a Christian, you will have to stand before God and say why you rejected the only hope you had that God lovingly gave to you. Are you prepared to say that? Or are you willing today to say: “Yes, Jesus came into the world to die for me, and today I will give myself totally to him?”