

Christmas 2018: Think About It.

Luke 2:1-20

I. ME

- A. **Following Raffle**... We love to give b/c God loves to give
- B. Xmas is all about God's greatest gift... Jesus
- C. Jesus- Proof that God loves you and is for you.

II. WE

- A. Xmas is the beginning of one of the greatest stories ever told.
- B. That's nice... it's fun but it doesn't really make a difference in my everyday.
 1. A lot of people see the Xmas story like the story of George Washington cutting down the Cherry Tree.
 2. Nice story with a tinge of historical info with a good moral lesson for the kids... but not very believable.
 3. But what if it's more than that?
- C. Want to invite you simply to think about it.
 1. Could this be true?
 2. And what if it is? Does it make any difference?
- D. The most popular account of the first Xmas (Jesus' birth) is found in the historical document that we call the Book or Gospel of Luke.
 1. **Luke background**- Historian/Investigated and interviewed.
 - a. Around 60 AD
 - b. **60 AD- Gospel of Luke Written**
- E. Here's what he recorded...

III. GOD

A. Luke 2:1-7

- B. "In those days"
 1. Not once upon a time... but "What I'm about to tell you actually happened."
 2. And he puts this account in a very specific historical context... almost like he's daring the reader to check the accuracy of the story.
 3. To do so he names the most famous/powerful person of the time... Caesar Augustus. **(Pic of Augustus)**

C. Augustus.

1. Original name Gaius Octavius... born 63 BC
 - a. **63 BC- Gaius Octavius born.**
2. Son of Julius Caesar's niece
 - a. **Pic of Julius Caesar**
3. During Rome's conquest of Spain Caesar took notice of his leadership abilities.
4. On **March 15th 44 BC** Julius Caesar assassinated... in his will he named the 19 yr old Octavius his adopted son and heir.
 - a. Became Gaius Julius Caesar
 5. Gaius gets revenge for his adopted father's murder
 6. In **42 B.C.** Senate deifies Julius Caesar as Divine Julius... Which makes Gaius... Son of the Divine or Son of god
 7. After defeating Marc Antony and Cleopatra... the senate gives Gaius sole power to rule and eventually he becomes Rome's first emperor... and is given the name **Augustus**... Sacred or Revered.
 8. He names his wife's son (Tiberius) from a previous marriage his heir.- **Pic of Tiberius**
 9. Tiberius Caesar Augustus... 2nd emperor... the man who appointed Pontius Pilate governor of Judea (get to that in a few months)- **Pic of Pilate Stone**

D. Censuses

1. **Caesar Augustus** went about changing and improving the Empire's monetary and tax system... making it more fair but also more productive.
2. Part of the reform was getting an accurate count of the people under the empire... to do this he enacted censuses. 28BC 8AD and 14 AD
 - a. **28BC-8AD-14AD Tax Censuses of Caesar Augustus**
3. But he also enacted another census/registration (not well known)... this one for the people's of the empire to swear their loyalty to him when he received the title Pater Patriae (Father of the Country)... in 3 BC.
4. **3BC- Caesar Augustus named Pater Patriae (Father of the Country)**
5. It was the 25th anniversary of Augustus' elevation to supreme power and the 750th anniversary of the founding of Rome.
6. So the following year, he sent out a decree that everyone (especially those who were royal or of royal descent) should go and register as loyal subjects of the emperor.
7. Enter Joseph and Mary both in the royal line of Israel because of their ancestor King David.
8. Either of these Censuses/Registrations could be the one Luke is describing.

E. Enter God

1. God used one of these censuses to bring Joseph out of Nazareth and to Bethlehem with his wife who was pregnant with their firstborn... a son. Not just any son...
2. A son that Jewish prophets had predicted 100's of years earlier...
3. The true Son of God

F. Luke 2:1-14

IV. YOU

- A. So think about it...
 1. If this is true... I mean the historical accuracy of Luke is astonishing...
 2. If the Xmas story is true what does that mean?
- B. It means God really did send a baby that can bring joy to all people
 1. There really was a savior born FOR us.
- C. In fact it means **God is for you.**
 1. It means God is for you so much that he came as baby and died and rose again FOR YOU.
 2. If someone will die for you... they are for you.
- D. It means God is not mad at you.
 1. He's not waiting for you to screw up so he can punish you
- E. It means he orchestrated human history to show you how much he loves you.
- F. So think about it...
 1. Has there ever been a time or moment in your life... that you could say... "If God exists, then that was Him taking care of me or showing me He's real"?
 2. Anything you can't explain that if there's a God it was Him?
 3. Could me minor things or major things...
 4. A car wreck you should've been in but for some reason weren't
 - a. **Me and Liz on 99**
 5. A recovery from illness
 6. The gift of a child you know you don't deserve?
 7. Answered prayer?
 - 8. My dad's best friend dying in Vietnam**
- G. Think about it...

V. WE

A. A Footnote

1. Caesar Augustus, 1st Roman Emperor, Son of Julius Caesar, son of god... the man who sat at the epicenter of world political and military power... became a footnote in the story of another king.
 2. Caesar Augustus' name is still known throughout the world, it's read in 100's of languages every year... but not b/c of his great accomplishments and power... but b/c one of his censuses would serve as an introduction to the greatest story ever told.
- B. If God used the most powerful leader of the most powerful empire to show the world He loves them... why can't He do the same in your life?
- C. Is it possible that God could be using events in your life to show you He is real and loves you?
- D. Could God actually be for you?
- E. Here's what Jesus' best friend said about him... **John 3:16-17.**
- F. This Christmas I'm asking that you just think about it.
- G. B/c if it **IS** true, you have to admit, this changes everything!