



# Stuff They Didn't Teach Me In Sunday School



## Episode 017: Real Baby- Real Place

Luke 2:1-7 (<http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke%202:1-7&version=NIV>)

"Once upon a time. ..." These familiar words begin many a fairy tale.

"A long time ago in a galaxy far, far away. ..." These words set the stage for the *Star Wars Trilogy*.

Notice how uncertain these familiar phrases are; we have no clue when or where the story takes place.

The biblical account of Jesus' birth is completely different. "In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus ... This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria" (Luke 2:1a, 2). Using Roman rulers, the registration for a Roman census, and many other specific details, Luke indicates that Christmas was all about a real baby born in a real place in real time.

- Why is it important Luke set Jesus' birth in human history?

Joseph and Mary traveled to a real place to enroll in this Roman registration. Bethlehem was already significant in Israel's history for two reasons: Jacob's wife Rachel died here as she gave birth to Benjamin, and King David was born and raised in this town.

Though Bethlehem had these claims to fame, it was still a small, unimportant town in relation to the other towns in Judea, especially Jerusalem. Similarly, Jesus was not born to a rich, powerful couple, but to a poor, insignificant maiden who married an unremarkable carpenter.

At one point or the other, most of us will look at our lives and ask, "Is this all there is? Is this the best my life will ever get?"

- What comfort can you draw from the little town and humble circumstances God chose for Jesus' birth?

In the previous chapter of Luke, Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for He has looked on the humble estate of His servant. For behold, from now on all generations will call me blessed" (Luke 1:46-48).

- How does the fact that Christ comes to dwell in us bring honor to our lives no matter how humble or insignificant we may appear in the world's eyes?

Next week we will consider the shepherds receiving the angelic announcement of Jesus' birth.