

The Scrolls are designed to work in tandem with our Sunday services to maximize the benefit of God's Word in our lives. The Scrolls can be used with a Spiritual Life Notebook, which is available Sunday mornings at the info table in the Plaza. The Scrolls, along with companion materials for small groups, are also available online at www.fbcdavis.org.

Catastrophic!

Christmas is the story of a startling invasion of the transcendent God into his creation of matter and time. It is the story of the counterintuitive entrance of a conquering liberating King. St. Augustine never grew tired of preaching on this great event, saying once:

"But...when he came as a mortal into the narrowest, most cramped...fleabag [stable] it was you he was looking for, for he wanted to save you by dying himself. You're human beings, yes, but you wanted to be God, the result was that you died the death. On the other hand, He was God but wanted to become (human). He wanted to find out what our casualty figures truly were. Catastrophic! Human pride has pressed us so flat that only Divine Humility could raise us up."

Thomas Aquinas said that to those who reflect on this mystery "more and more wonderful aspects (become) manifest." This week we will continue to turn our hearts and minds to the Catastrophic intervention of God who took on infancy and became the speechless Word, the newborn Ancient of Days, the elemental invasion of God...the King in a Manger.

Monday – A Tale of Two Kings

"The principal effect of the (backdrop of the census for the birth of Christ) is to juxtapose the powerful Roman emperor who lives in luxury with subject people whom he forces to render tribute." Richard Horsley - "Gospel of the Savior's Birth"

1. Read Luke 2:1-7. The census was the means by which the occupying Roman government exerted its power through taxation. If you were a first century reader you might find it very compelling that Christ was born in the midst of Caesar's assertion of his sovereignty over the Jewish people? Why so?
2. How does the birth of Christ described in this passage foreshadow a kingship that is dramatically different than the one the people were currently experiencing under Caesar?

Tuesday – Who is Really in Charge

1. Read Luke 2:4. Look at the parallel passage in Matthew 2:3-6. According to the prophets, what was the significance of Bethlehem?
2. How does Caesar's self aggrandizing census serve God's purposes? What does this tell us about who is truly in charge in the situation?

Living it Today - Is there an event in your life that is leaving you feeling powerless and at the whim of others? Mary and Joseph could have easily felt controlled and manipulated by Caesar. Yet in the end, the true Sovereign shows who is in control by manipulating circumstances for his purposes. What encouragement can you draw from that for your day today?

Wednesday – Incarnation

"He was incomprehensible and inaccessible, invisible and altogether beyond all our conceiving. But now He wanted to be comprehended, He wanted to be seen, He wanted to be reached by our conceptions." Bernard of Clairvaux

1. Read John 1:10-14. "The Word" in this passage refers to Christ as God, the second person of the Trinity, before the events of Luke 2. What do you think the phrase "The Word became flesh" in verse 14 means?
2. Why do think God "made his dwelling among us"? What hint does the second part of verse 14 give you?
3. Look back at Luke 2:7. How does this illustrate the beginnings of what is described in John 1:10-11. What lesson might we take from those who did not recognize God's presence?

Thursday – The Great Paradox

"The exciting quality of Christmas rests...upon the great paradox that the power and centre of the whole universe may be found in some seemingly small matter, that the stars in their courses may move like a moving wheel round the neglected outhouse of an inn...the absolute once ruled the universe from a cattle stall...Christianity conquered because of the stunning insolence of its paradox." G. K. Chesterton - "The Christmas Ballads"

1. Read Luke 2:1-7. Why do you suppose the Savior and King of the world was born in an obscure village and laid in a manger?
2. What can we learn from the fact that God was born as a helpless infant in unpleasant accommodations, among the poor and placed in a feeding trough? What implications might this have on our call to be like Christ?

Living it Today – The Extraordinary one entered time and space and in so doing became a part of ordinary life. As you face your ordinary day today, be encouraged to know that God is in it with you. He cares about and wants to be a part of the ordinary things of your life. Thank him for that.

Friday – A Model of Humility

"He got Himself entangled with our mortality, but He drapes us with his own immortality. He made infirmity look strong by making fortitude appear weak. What did he do for us? After all, He raised humility to unheard of heights! All of which is another way of saying, let's burn with His Charity so that we may enjoy his eternity." Augustine of Hippo

1. Read Luke 2: 1-7. Why of all the ways in which Christ could have entered into time and space, did he choose to come as a helpless infant, the child of peasant parents?
2. How does the birth of Christ model his humility and sacrificial love for us?

Living it this Christmas - What is one way that you can emulate the humility and sacrificial love that Christ demonstrated for us by the circumstances of his birth? How might your Christmas celebration serve as a reminder of these things for you and your family?