



## 5: WELCOME MY SON, WELCOME TO THE POO SHEEP

I've been on a Pink Floyd kick lately, ok?

Roger Waters, the bass player, lyricist, conceptual thematic architect, and in many ways creative driving force behind Floyd penned these lyrics in 1975's "Welcome to the Machine"<sup>1</sup> on the album "Wish You Were Here":

*Welcome my son Welcome to the machine  
Where have you been? It's alright we know where you've been  
You've been in the pipeline Filling in time  
Provided with toys and scouting for boys  
You brought a guitar to punish your ma  
And you didn't like school  
And you know you're nobody's fool  
So welcome to the machine*

*Welcome my son Welcome to the machine*

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fn1R-5p\\_i5c](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fn1R-5p_i5c)

*What did you dream?  
It's alright we told you what to dream  
You dreamed of a big star, He played a mean guitar  
He always ate in the Steak Bar, He loved to drive in his Jaguar  
So welcome to the machine*

During the time of Roger Waters writing this, Pink Floyd had, in a sense, been consumed by, or maybe even *become* the “Machine”. They had gone from being a relatively obscure, cult underground Rock group out of the UK from 1968 up until 1973 (post Syd Barrett as the frontman in 1967- when they were just an entirely different group altogether!). And then in 73’, they released the explosive “Dark Side of the Moon”, and on the back of the single “Money” off of Dark Side, they were all of a sudden selling out stadiums and travelling all around the world to play shows.

But Rogers, ever the cynic, penned a scathing critique of the downfalls of money and power, even while he was probably deeply captivated by it all himself.

Much of the gospel of Luke is about the struggle of faithful Messiah-hopers against the Machines of the day- the religious machines of Israel, and the governmental machines of the Roman Empire. It contrasts the down and out with the powers that be, and reveals that the God of the Universe very much chooses to reveal Himself powerfully to the down and out, the broken, the humble, the struggling, the marginalized, and those hungry for righteousness, holiness, mercy, and truth!

After narrating John’s birth, Luke related the birth of Jesus in what we now deem Luke Chapter two. In this section, he explained how Jesus came to be born in Bethlehem.<sup>2</sup>

*<sup>1</sup> In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that the whole empire should be registered. <sup>2</sup> This first registration took place while Quirinius was governing Syria. <sup>3</sup> So everyone went to be registered, each to his own town. (Luke 2:1-3)*

A few things about the context of these verses here...

Caesar Augustus was ruler of the Roman Empire. Born Gaius Octavius in September of 63 bc, the Roman senate gave him the name “Augustus” in 27 BC to honor his defeat and annexation of Egypt. Formerly one of three co-rulers, Augustus gained sole control of the empire and reigned from 27 bc to ad 14. Although harsh and unrelenting, he was a master administrator who restored order to the empire after two decades of civil war. He was responsible for ushering in Rome’s Golden Age—an era known as Pax Romana

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<sup>2</sup> Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). [Faithlife Study Bible](#) (Lk 2:1–7). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

or Pax Augusta (meaning “Roman Peace” or “Augustus’ Peace”), which lasted for roughly 250 years.<sup>3</sup>

Caesar put out a decree that the whole empire should be registered. Known censuses in proximity to Caesar Augustus’ reign (27 BC–AD 14) occurred around 28 BC, 8 BC, and AD 14. Given the size of the Roman Empire, the task of registering its people would have taken years; consequently, Luke could’ve be pointing to the census of 8 BC. Based on the reference to Quirinius (see v. 2 and note), this would place Jesus’ birth around 6–4 BC.<sup>4</sup>

Additionally, Quirinius was a legate or emissary of Augustus Caesar. He served in this capacity AD 6–9, and conducted a census in about AD 6 (see Acts 5:37). However, he may have served on two separate occasions.<sup>5</sup>

The machines of Rome were in control as Messiah was ushered into the world. They were the most powerful machines of history, and here came the most powerful human being to ever dwell on the earth, but not in the way that they would define “power”.

*<sup>4</sup> Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family line of David, <sup>5</sup> to be registered along with Mary, who was engaged to him and was pregnant. <sup>6</sup> While they were there, the time came for her to give birth. <sup>7</sup> Then she gave birth to her firstborn son, and she wrapped him tightly in cloth and laid him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them. (Luke 2:4-7)*

Joseph split from his obscure hometown with a bad rep, Nazareth, and went up to Judea, the city of David called Bethlehem to take the Machine’s census. He had to travel to his ancestral city for the census. Bethlehem was David’s hometown (1 Sam 16:1, 4; 17:12; compare Matt 2:5–6). It’s important to add that a Roman census normally did not require people to travel to their ancestral town. Censuses served the purpose of registering people for military service or taxation, and it was possible that Joseph owned land in Bethlehem on which he paid taxes.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). *Faithlife Study Bible* (Lk 2:1). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

<sup>4</sup> Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). *Faithlife Study Bible* (Lk 2:1). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

<sup>5</sup> Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). *Faithlife Study Bible* (Lk 2:2). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

<sup>6</sup> Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). *Faithlife Study Bible* (Lk 2:4). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

While Joseph, and Mary, pregnant with the Messiah, were in Bethlehem, Mary went into labor. She then gave birth to her “firstborn son” Luke probably noted this detail here because Yahweh had consecrated Israel’s firstborn children (Num 3:13).<sup>7</sup>

Mary wrapped him tightly in cloth Wrapping or swaddling provided warmth, comfort, and security to newborn infants (and is still practiced today).<sup>8</sup>

I remember y’all, I’ve had three daughters and we have swaddled em all! Beautiful times of being a parent for sure! Sleepy times but beautiful times.

Mary laid him in a manger, which was a trough out of which animals were fed. This may imply that they were in a barn of some sort, but a house is a stronger possibility; animals were often kept indoors at night in the house’s lower level.<sup>9</sup>

The machines of Rome were busy taking a census to exert more power and control over the world, but meanwhile, the son of God was being born secretly in a dung-laden animal domicile.

The Greek text here (at the end of verse 7) used the term *katalyma* in reference to a guest room (compare Luke 22:11). In this context, a *katalyma* was best understood as a “caravansary”—a roadside lodging in which several groups of travelers could spend the night. This was the same word used to describe Hannah’s accommodations in the Septuagint (ancient Greek OT) version of 1 Sam 1:18; Luke alluded to Hannah’s story throughout his opening chapters. The Greek word *pandocheion*, which referred more clearly to an inn, appeared at Luke 10:34.<sup>10</sup>

Roman machine higher-ups would have stayed in the ancient equivalent of a Ritz Carlton Hotel, or at least an Embassy Suites. The Son of God was born in the ancient equivalent of a youth hostel, an ultra cheap air BnB rented room, or something less than that.

Then we jump into Luke 2:8–21, where angels announced the news of Jesus’ birth to shepherds.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>8</sup> *In the same region, shepherds were staying out in the fields and keeping watch at night over their flock. (Luke 2:8)*

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<sup>7</sup> Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). *Faithlife Study Bible* (Lk 2:7). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

<sup>8</sup> Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). *Faithlife Study Bible* (Lk 2:7). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

<sup>9</sup> Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). *Faithlife Study Bible* (Lk 2:7). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

<sup>10</sup> Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). *Faithlife Study Bible* (Lk 2:7). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

<sup>11</sup> Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). *Faithlife Study Bible* (Lk 2:8–21). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

An announcement of the Savior's birth was about to come. By noting that an announcement came to lowly shepherds rather than to the religious elite, Luke continued the theme developed in 1:48–52, and really, the rest of his gospel account.<sup>12</sup>

Again y'all- God didn't pick the equivalent of the evangelical megachurch pastors of the time. God didn't pick the equivalent of the Christian celebrities and influencers of the time. God didn't pick the equivalent of the theological geniuses of the time. God didn't pick political powerhouses. Maybe too many would've been too caught up in the game of religion to hear from Him. Maybe too many would've been caught up in hypocrisy to be able to handle such a revelatory moment. God picked the lowdown, blue-collar level, dirty, hard laboring, lower-middle class workers of the time that spent most of their lives in the literal crap of the world- shepherds who spent their lives tending dirty sheep.

Again- it's not that the Lord is only with the poor and lowly, but the poor and lowly are more strategically positioned to hear from the Lord because they have much less to lose in obeying and following Him.

We'll sit in a Church gathering and sing the words of Nahum Tate, penned in the year 1700...

While shepherds watched their flocks by night,  
all seated on the ground,  
an angel of the Lord came down,  
and glory shone around.

We'll imagine for a moment that we were there two thousand years ago standing in what we envision as plastic sheep dung, and then we'll stop worshiping right after to go and find people to flex their spiritual muscles to impress us, completely missing the point that the Lord loves to reveal Himself in the most unlikely, obscure places!

Guess what y'all- if you're part of Streetlight Community Church, you get to live and dwell in a place like that- in Kenmore. In a place that too much of Akron underestimates and ignores, that too much of the Evangelical Industrial Complex of Akron would be willing to safely gentrify a version of Christianity into, but are frankly terrified to allow Christ to lead them to incarnate themselves into. They'll throw checks at missionary ministries in different countries, or even in American cities many miles away from them, but will ignore the areas of poverty, blight, addiction, violence, trauma, and great need within thirty minutes from them.

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<sup>12</sup> Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). *Faithlife Study Bible* (Lk 2:8). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

To shame the machines, God chose shepherds. God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; (1 Cor. 1:27)

<sup>9</sup> Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. <sup>10</sup> But the angel said to them, “Don’t be afraid, for look, I proclaim to you good news of great joy that will be for all the people: <sup>11</sup> Today in the city of David a Savior was born for you, who is the Messiah, the Lord. <sup>12</sup> This will be the sign for you: You will find a baby wrapped tightly in cloth and lying in a manger.” (Luke 2:9-12)

Now I know some of you, like me, are thinking of little Linus, a spotlight on his face, blue blanket in hand, so sincerely and lovingly quoting this scripture passage. Totally! Brings a tear to my eye every early December.



But **dang Linus!** These shepherds were getting a blast of heaven right in their faces! They were terrified and flipped out, getting a supernatural vision of an angel of the Lord. The angel chilled the dung laden shepherds out and told them the amazing thing that they were about to witness.

They were given good news of great joy. The Greek word used here for good news was *euangelion*, and commonly referred in Luke’s Gospel to the saving message that the savior of humanity had come into the world.<sup>13</sup> And this news was *joyful* man. Not *somber*. I don’t get why Jesus followers could be so bummed out when they pray to Jesus, worship Jesus, or talk about Jesus! Jesus’s existence, Jesus’ gospel, Jesus’s salvation, Jesus’s forgiveness, Jesus’s love, Jesus’s obedience is the **best news in the world!!!!**

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<sup>13</sup> Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). *Faithlife Study Bible* (Lk 2:10). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

This news, in the face of the machines of the day, was for “all the people”. This hinted that the good news was not just for Jewish people, but also for non-Jewish people.<sup>14</sup> And again, why wouldn’t the best news in the Universe be available for anyone who could receive it? Pringles potato chips aren’t just for people of certain backgrounds, and once you pop, you can’t stop! So it is with the gospel of Jesus y’all it’s the most amazing thing in the galaxy!

The angels said that **In the city of David a Savior had been born *that day***. If we remember, in Mary’s song of praise, this title referred to Yahweh (1:47); now it was aptly applied to Jesus. This Savior would be **the Messiah, the Lord**. The angels employed two titles: “Christ” or “Messiah” emphasized Jesus’ anointing as God’s promised Servant; “Lord” emphasized His sovereign authority. Luke used the title “Lord” (*kyrios* in Greek) interchangeably to refer to both Yahweh and Jesus (compare v. 9). This seemed to indicate that Luke intended to refer to Jesus as Yahweh.<sup>15</sup>

And just so the shepherds knew who was who, this God breathed Messianic baby would be found in a manger. This is significant. Mangers—though quite familiar to the shepherds—were unusual beds for babies (v. 7). This oddity would’ve served as a sign to the shepherds that they had found the Messiah.<sup>16</sup> It would’ve stuck out like a sore thumb. Leave it up to Jesus to do that from day one- **stick out!**

We have certainly sanitized and normalized the manger scene with our plastic lego Christmas sets and Baptist front lawn porcelain scenes. But there was nothing sanitary or normal about the manger. This abnormal, divine, God-baby entered the world into a dirty, uncomfortable, stinky bed of difficulty. He entered our difficulties from day one. He entered our pain from day one. He entered our struggles from day one. He took on the evil machines of the day from **day one**. His very existence did so.

<sup>13</sup> *Suddenly there was a multitude of the heavenly host with the angel, praising God and saying: <sup>14</sup> Glory to God in the highest heaven, and peace on earth to people he favors! (Luke 2:13-14)*

So the Alpha dog angel was there, and all of a sudden, a multitude of the heavenly host showed up as well. This referred to a massive group of angels.<sup>17</sup> These angels were

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<sup>15</sup> Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). *Faithlife Study Bible* (Lk 2:11). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

<sup>16</sup> Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). *Faithlife Study Bible* (Lk 2:12). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

<sup>17</sup> Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). *Faithlife Study Bible* (Lk 2:13). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

praising and extolling the God of heaven, echoing the angelic song in Isa 6:3 (see Luke 1:27; compare 1:46–55, 68–79).<sup>18</sup> Again, we don't get the sense that these angels are all bummed out here. They're pumped up. And again, we too ought not be all bummed out and solemn in the presence of God, He is too good! I'm not saying we need to act fake and plastically Christian, I'm just saying that God is good, all the time!

These angels proclaimed “**peace**” on earth to people that the Lord favored. The Greek word used here, *eirēnē*, was similar in meaning to the Hebrew word *shalom* (which means “peace,” “wholeness,” or “completeness”); it carried connotations of well-being, harmony, and security. Peace was a major theme of Luke's Gospel (e.g., 1:79; 7:50; 10:5–6; 19:38; 24:36).

At first, it can seem that the idea of Messianic peace contradicted 12:51, where Jesus declared that He would bring division rather than peace. He was explaining that people will have to make a decision about Him which may cause division. Ultimately, those who chose to follow Him would receive peace. Jesus will bring peace to the whole world upon his second coming (see Rev 21). But Luke likely intends a contrast between the peace offered by God through His Messiah and that offered by the machines of Rome through the emperor.

The idea that peace came from Caesar Augustus was prevalent throughout the Roman Empire at the time of Jesus' birth (see note on Mark 1:1). During his reign (27 BC–AD 14), Augustus ended the civil strife and widespread warfare that dominated the reigns of other emperors. Consequently, people erected shrines to him with inscriptions hailing him as the savior of the whole world. For example, an inscription found in the city of Priene (located in modern-day Turkey) declared: “the birthday of the god Augustus was the beginning of the good news for the world that came through him.” In contrast, Luke portrayed Jesus as the true Savior of the world, the authentic bearer and proclaimer of good news (the gospel). Jesus' words divided people as they choose allegiances, but unlike Emperor Caesar Augustus of the earthy machine, King Jesus of Heaven could offer true salvation.<sup>19</sup>

*<sup>15</sup> When the angels had left them and returned to heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let's go straight to Bethlehem and see what has happened, which the Lord has made known to us.” <sup>16</sup> They hurried off and found both Mary and Joseph, and the baby who was lying in the manger. <sup>17</sup> After seeing them, they reported the message they were told about this child, <sup>18</sup> and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. <sup>19</sup> But Mary was treasuring up all these things in her heart and meditating*

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<sup>18</sup> Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). [Faithlife Study Bible](#) (Lk 2:14). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

<sup>19</sup> Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). [Faithlife Study Bible](#) (Lk 2:14). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.



*on them. <sup>20</sup> The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had seen and heard, which were just as they had been told. (Luke 2:15-20)*

The shepherds couldn't help but to talk about the amazing things that God had done! We too, will find it hard to hold back our love and enthusiasm when we've been impacted by the Lord! Go tell someone today that God loves them!