

Summary

Luke places the birth of Jesus in the context of a national census in the whole Roman Empire. Thereby, Luke gives Christ's birth a universal meaning. The evangelist is not interested in exact factual data and its chronology. He has adjusted history to his own theological aims. He proves that the promised Messiah was born in Bethlehem according to the prophecy (Mi 5:1). Jesus comes to this world in extreme simplicity and humility. His humility is in opposition to the Roman Emperor Cesar Augustus, who is considered to be a giver of peace and saviour, able to shake the whole Empire with just one decree. It is a paradox that the true Saviour who is at the same time the Messiah and the Lord, who gives a new beginning to human history and brings about the possibility of God's peace to all, should come to this world without publicity and far from the centre of the world. An event with a universal meaning does not reveal itself in splendour but among the extreme simplicity of everyday life. According to God's paradox the first to receive the joyful news are the poor. The pericope teaches us that the appropriate answers to a saving and universal God's intervention, visible in the Saviour's birth, are: astonishment, pondering in one's heart, praise and worship.