

## Luke 2.1-21: The Birth of Jesus

Below is the Vulgate text (St. Jerome's translation of the original Greek) of the Christmas story. Use the vocabulary in the back of Wheelock (pp. 409-442) and the notes that follow this to help you read the text. This is the full and unabridged Latin of Jerome, so you will encounter grammatical constructions we have not yet covered; these will be translated and explained in the notes that follow the text.

Factum est<sup>1</sup> autem in diebus illis, exiit<sup>2</sup> edictum<sup>3</sup> a Caesare Augusto ut describeretur universus orbis.<sup>4</sup> Haec descriptio<sup>5</sup> prima facta<sup>6</sup> est a praeside Syriae<sup>7</sup> Quirino<sup>8</sup>: et ibant<sup>9</sup> omnes ut profiterentur singuli<sup>10</sup> in suam civitatem. Ascendit<sup>11</sup> autem et Ioseph<sup>12</sup> a Galilaeae<sup>13</sup> de civitate Nazareth<sup>14</sup> in Iudaeam<sup>15</sup>, in civitatem David<sup>16</sup> quae vocatur Bethlehem, eo quod esset<sup>17</sup> de domo et familiae<sup>18</sup> David, ut profiteretur<sup>19</sup> cum

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<sup>1</sup>*Factum est*: “It happened,” lit. “It was done” [perf. pass. indic. 3s]

<sup>2</sup>*exiit*: “there went out” [perf. act. indic. 3s]

<sup>3</sup>*edictum*: “edict, proclamation” [nom. s. neut.]

<sup>4</sup>*ut describeretur universus orbis*: “that the whole world be counted/censused”

<sup>5</sup>*descriptio*: “census” [nom. s. f.; 3rd decl.]

<sup>6</sup>*prima*: “first,” here “for the first time”

<sup>7</sup>*praeside Syriae*: “the prefect of Syria” [abl. s. m./gen. s. f.]

<sup>8</sup>*Quirinus*: Quirinus is a Roman name

<sup>9</sup>*ibant*: “went”; the subject is *omnes* (“all people, everyone”)

<sup>10</sup>*ut profiterentur singuli*: “in order that they be publicly registered one by one”

<sup>11</sup>*Ascendit*: “went up,” because Bethlehem is higher in altitude than Nazareth

<sup>12</sup>*et Ioseph*: Joseph is nominative; *et* means “too” here

<sup>13</sup>*Galilaeae*: Galilee [abl. s. f.]

<sup>14</sup>*Nazareth*: ablative, in apposition to *civitate*

<sup>15</sup>*Iudaeam*: Judea [acc. s. f.]

<sup>16</sup>*David*: genitive

<sup>17</sup>*eo quod esset*: “for this (reason) because he was . . .”

<sup>18</sup>*David*: genitive (same as above, note 16)

<sup>19</sup>*ut profiterentur*: “in order that they be publicly registered” (same as above)

Mari<sup>20</sup> desponsat~sibi uxore<sup>21</sup> praegnante<sup>22</sup>. Factum est<sup>23</sup> autem, cum essent ibi<sup>24</sup>, impleti sunt<sup>25</sup> dies ut pareret<sup>26</sup>. Et peperit<sup>27</sup> filium suum primogenitum<sup>28</sup> et pann<sup>29</sup> eum involvit<sup>30</sup> et reclinavit<sup>31</sup> eum in praesepio<sup>32</sup> quia<sup>33</sup> non erat e<sup>34</sup> locus<sup>34</sup> in diversorio<sup>35</sup>.

Et pastores<sup>36</sup> erant in regione<sup>37</sup> e~dem vigilantes<sup>38</sup> et custodientes vigilias noctis<sup>39</sup> super gregem<sup>40</sup> suum. Et ecce<sup>41</sup> angelus Domini stetit<sup>42</sup> iuxta<sup>43</sup> illos et claritas<sup>44</sup> Dei circumfulsit<sup>45</sup> illos et timuerunt timore magno. Et dixit ill<sup>46</sup> angelus: Nolite<sup>46</sup> timere:

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<sup>20</sup>*Mari* ~: Mary [abl. s. f.]

<sup>21</sup>*desponsat~sibi uxore*: “who had been pledged to him as wife”

<sup>22</sup>*praegnante*: “pregnant” [from *praegnans*; abl. s. f.]

<sup>23</sup>*Factum est*: “It happened” (see above)

<sup>24</sup>*cum essent ibi*: “when they were there,” i.e. in Bethlehem

<sup>25</sup>*impleti sunt*: “were finished” [from *impleo*, “fill”; perf. pass. indic. 3pl]

<sup>26</sup>*ut pareret*: “for her to give birth,” i.e. the nine months of her pregnancy were complete

<sup>27</sup>*peperit*: “she bore, gave birth to” [from *pario*; perf. act. indic. 3s]

<sup>28</sup>*primogenitum*: “first-born” [acc. s. m.]

<sup>29</sup>*pan n<sup>s</sup>*: “in swaddling clothes,” lit. “in rags” [from *pannus*; abl. pl. m.]

<sup>30</sup>*involvit*: “wrapped . . . in” [from *involvo*; perf. act. indic. 3s]

<sup>31</sup>*reclinavit*: “lay (him) down” [from *reclino*; perf. act. indic. 3s]

<sup>32</sup>*praesepio*: “crib, stall, manger” [from *praesepeum*; abl. s. n.]

<sup>33</sup>*quia*: “since”

<sup>34</sup>*non erat e<sup>s</sup> locus*: “they did not have a room,” lit. “there was not to them a place”

<sup>35</sup>*diversorio*: “inn” [from *diversorium*; abl. s. n.]

<sup>36</sup>*pastores*: “shepherds” [nom. pl. m.]

<sup>37</sup>*regione*: “vicinity” [abl. s. f.; 3rd decl.]

<sup>38</sup>*vigilantes*: “guarding,” i.e. protecting their flocks [nom. pl. m.]

<sup>39</sup>*custodientes vigilias noctis*: “keeping the night’s watch” [nom. pl. m.]

<sup>40</sup>*gregem*: “flock” [from *grex, gregis*, m.; abl. s. m.]

<sup>41</sup>*ecce*: “behold!”

<sup>42</sup>*stetit*: “stood” [from *sto, stare, steti, statum*; perf. act. indic. 3s]

<sup>43</sup>*iuxta*: “next to” [preposition + acc.]

<sup>44</sup>*claritas*: abstract quality of *clarus*, i.e. “the state of being *clarus*”

<sup>45</sup>*circumfulsit*: “shone all around” [from *circumfulgeo*; perf. act. indic. 3s]

<sup>46</sup>*Nolite*: “Don’t” (+ infinitive), lit. “Be unwilling (to . . .)”; a polite way of making a command

ecce<sup>47</sup> enim evangelizo<sup>48</sup> vobis gaudium magnum, quod erit omni populo<sup>49</sup>: quia<sup>50</sup> natus est<sup>51</sup> vobis hodie Salvator<sup>52</sup>, qui est Christus Dominus, in civitate David<sup>53</sup>. Et hoc vobis signum<sup>54</sup>: invenietis infantem<sup>55</sup> pann<sup>56</sup> involutum<sup>57</sup>, et positum<sup>58</sup> in praesepio<sup>59</sup>. Et subito facta est<sup>60</sup> cum angelo multitudo<sup>61</sup> militiae caelestis<sup>62</sup> laudantium<sup>63</sup> Deum et dicentium<sup>64</sup>:

Gloria in altissim<sup>65</sup> Deo,

Et in terr~pax in hominibus bonae voluntatis<sup>66</sup>.

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<sup>47</sup> see above (note 41)

<sup>48</sup> *evangelizo*: “I announce,” lit, “I bring good news (of . . .)”; a direct borrowing of the verb used in the Greek original text (*eu-* “good” + *-angel-* “report” + *-izo* “I”)

<sup>49</sup> *quod erit omni populo*: “which all people will have (i.e. share in),” lit. “which will be to all people,” cf. above, *non erat e<sup>5</sup> locus*)

<sup>50</sup> *quia*: see above (note 33)

<sup>51</sup> *natus est*: “there has been born”

<sup>52</sup> *Salvator*: “the Savior”

<sup>53</sup> *David*: see above (note 16)

<sup>54</sup> *hoc (erit) vobis signum*: cf. above, *non erat e<sup>5</sup> locus*

<sup>55</sup> *infantem*: “baby” [acc. s. m.]

<sup>56</sup> *pan<sup>5</sup>*: see above (note 29)

<sup>57</sup> *involutum*: “(having been) wrapped in” [acc. s. m.]

<sup>58</sup> *positum*: “(having been) placed” [acc. s. m.]

<sup>59</sup> *praesepio*: see above (note 32)

<sup>60</sup> *facta est*: “there arose, there appeared”

<sup>61</sup> *multitudo*: abstract quality of *multus*, i.e. “the state of being *multus*”; here, a “multitude” [nom. s. f.; 3rd decl.]

<sup>62</sup> *militiae caelestis*: “the heavenly host,” lit. “the celestial army” [gen. s. f.]

<sup>63</sup> *laudantium*: “praising,” refers to the heavenly host

<sup>64</sup> *dicentium*: “saying,” refers to the heavenly host

<sup>65</sup> *in altissim<sup>5</sup>*: “in the highest (things)” [substantive; abl. pl. neut.]

<sup>66</sup> *bonae voluntatis*: “of good will,” genitive of description referring to *hominibus*; the inferior Greek variant *εὐδοκία* (*eudokia*; nom. s. f.) is the origin of the familiar but undoubtedly less likely to be correct ‘and good will towards men’.

Et factum est, ut discesserunt<sup>67</sup> ab e<sup>S</sup> angeli in caelum, pastores<sup>68</sup> loquebantur<sup>69</sup> ad invicem<sup>70</sup>: “Transeamus<sup>71</sup> usque<sup>72</sup> Bethlehem<sup>73</sup>, et videamus<sup>74</sup> hoc verbum<sup>75</sup> quod factum est, quod Dominus ostendit nobis.” Et venerunt festinantes<sup>76</sup> et invenerunt Mariam et Ioseph<sup>77</sup> et infantem positum in praesepio<sup>78</sup>. Videntes<sup>79</sup> autem cognoverunt<sup>80</sup> de verbo quod dictum erat ill<sup>S</sup> de puero h<sup>C</sup>. Et omnes qui audierunt<sup>81</sup> mirati sunt<sup>82</sup>, et de h<sup>S</sup> quae dicta erant a pastoribus ad ipsos<sup>83</sup>. Maria autem conservabat<sup>84</sup> omnia verba haec,

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<sup>67</sup>*Et factum est, ut discesserunt*: “And (so) it happened that they departed”; the subject (“they”) is *angeli* mentioned after *ab e<sup>S</sup>* [from *discedo*, -ere, *discessi*, *discessum*; perf. act. indic. 3pl]

<sup>68</sup>*pastores*: see above (note 36)

<sup>69</sup>*loquebantur*: “said” [3pl]

<sup>70</sup>*ad invicem*: “to each other,” lit. “in turn”; i.e. not just one shepherd said the following speech

<sup>71</sup>*Transeamus*: “Let’s go”

<sup>72</sup>*usque*: “to” + acc.

<sup>73</sup>*Bethlehem*: here, acc.

<sup>74</sup>*videamus*: “let’s see”

<sup>75</sup>*verbum*: “report,” lit. “word”; i.e. what the angel said

<sup>76</sup>*festinantes*: “in a hurry,” lit. “hurrying”

<sup>77</sup>*Ioseph*: here, acc.

<sup>78</sup>*infantem positum in praesepio*: see above (notes 55, 58, 59)

<sup>79</sup>*Videntes*: “Seeing (the baby)”

<sup>80</sup>*cognoverunt*: here, “they made known, broadcast, went public,” though the usual meaning of *cognosco* is “learn, recognize”

<sup>81</sup>*audierunt*: = *audiverunt* [from *audio*; perf. act. indic. 3pl]

<sup>82</sup>*mirati sunt*: “were amazed,” hinting at the public’s general disbelief in the miraculous birth-story, as does also the subsequent *et* (“*even* when they heard for themselves these things from the shepherds,” n.b. Jerome has added the *et* which has no equivalent in the Greek original), all in a clear attempt to explain why the story was not more widely known prior to the publication of the Book of Luke, n.b. no other gospel includes this story.

<sup>83</sup>*ipsos*: i.e. the people who heard about the angels and the birth of Jesus from the shepherds

<sup>84</sup>*conservabat*: here, “kept to herself,” another attempt to explain why this story was not more widely known: Mary for some reason did not tell the story to anyone but kept it to herself

conferens<sup>85</sup> in corde suo. Et reversi sunt<sup>86</sup> pastores<sup>87</sup> glorificantes<sup>88</sup> et laudantes<sup>89</sup> Deum in omnibus quae audierant<sup>90</sup> et viderant, sicut dictum est ad illos<sup>91</sup>.

Et postquam consummati sunt<sup>92</sup> dies octo<sup>93</sup>, ut circumcideretur<sup>94</sup>, vocatum est nomen eius Iesus, quod vocatum est ab angelo priusquam<sup>95</sup> in utero<sup>96</sup> conciperetur<sup>97</sup>.

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<sup>85</sup>*conferens*: “discussing (them), debating (them),” lit. “bearing (them) with her”; the King James version says “pondering”

<sup>86</sup>*reversi sunt*: “they returned”; i.e. the shepherds went back to their fields

<sup>87</sup>*pastores*: see above (note 36)

<sup>88</sup>*glorificantes*: “glorifying” [nom. pl. m.]

<sup>89</sup>*laudantes*: “praising” [nom. pl. m.]

<sup>90</sup>*audierant*: = *audiverant*

<sup>91</sup>*ad illos*: = *illis* §

<sup>92</sup>*consummati sunt*: from *consummo* (I), “complete”

<sup>93</sup>*octo*: “eight” [nom. pl. m.]

<sup>94</sup>*ut circumcideretur*: “in order that he (i.e. Jesus) be circumcised,” i.e. they waited for eight days before circumcising and naming Jesus because Mary needed to be purified after giving birth

<sup>95</sup>*priusquam*: “before”

<sup>96</sup>*utero*: “womb” [from *uterus*; abl. s. m.]

<sup>97</sup>*conciperetur*: “he was conceived”