

## DAY 4: Time to comply with authorities – on the way to Bethlehem for the census

*“In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world” Luke 2:1*

On top of all the unexpected already happening in Joseph’s life, the government called for a census of the entire Roman empire. Everybody needed to go to his own town to register. This meant Joseph and Mary, who were both from the house and line of David, needed to go to Bethlehem, a three-day journey from Nazareth. There was probably a deadline to complete this census and Mary was near her due date.

We don’t know what waivers may have been or not in place for them to avoid having to travel to Bethlehem, but Joseph and Mary complied. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born. Could you picture these series of unexpected events happening? A town bursting to the seams with people from all over to register; Joseph and Mary arriving from Nazareth and having to shelter in a stable (Luke 2:7).

We may think it’s easier to avoid having to go the extra mile in order to comply with authorities. But God always sees. Mary and Joseph were allowing themselves to be part of God’s bigger picture and going to Bethlehem was part of that plan (Micah 5:2).

Think of these nine months of 2020. States in different stages of lock-down and mask wearing due to the pandemic... Much has changed in our surroundings, but God remains in control. Let’s continue to comply with the mandated safety protocols in public and at home. The world is also watching our lives of compliance as believers.

Christmas starts with Christ and thus, is always a time to rejoice. Sing today’s carol with

joy and gratitude for the difference complying with authorities can make in witnessing Jesus, the righteous one, to those around us.

O Little Town of Bethlehem

O LITTLE town of Bethlehem  
How still we see thee lie!  
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep  
The silent stars go by  
Yet in thy dark streets shineth  
The everlasting light;  
The hopes and fears of all the years  
Are met in thee tonight.

O morning stars together  
Proclaim the holy birth,  
And praises sing to God, the king,  
And peace to men on earth,  
For the Christ is born of Mary;  
And, gathered all above,  
While mortals sleep the angels keep  
Their watch of wondering love.

How silently, how silently  
The wondrous gift is given!  
So God imparts to human hearts  
The blessings of His Heaven.  
No ear may hear His coming;  
But in this world of sin  
Where meek souls will receive Him, still  
The dear Christ enters in.  
But in this world of sin  
Where meek souls will receive Him, still  
The dear Christ enters in.

O holy Child of Bethlehem  
Descend to us, we pray;  
Cast out our sin and enter in,  
Be born in us today.  
We hear the Christmas angels  
The great glad tidings tell;  
O come to us, abide with us,  
Our Lord Immanuel.

