

In Luke, Mary and Joseph are from Nazareth, NOT Bethlehem, so how AND WHY does he 'engineer' the situation that gets them to Bethlehem? Look at ch.2:1-5, to remind you why Bethlehem was important.

The Birth of Jesus

2 In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that the entire inhabited earth should be taxed. ²This taxation was first made when Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³And everyone went to his own city to be taxed.

⁴So Joseph also departed from the city of Nazareth in Galilee to the City of David which is called Bethlehem, in Judea, because he was of the house and lineage of David, ⁵to be taxed with Mary, his betrothed wife, who was with child.

Did this Roman census actually take place? We have no record of it from Roman writers. You could read John Dominic Crossan's summary of the problems raised by Luke's 'census'. (*The Historical Jesus*, 1991, p. 372)

If the census is Luke's creative 'invention', why include it?

HINT: remember Matthew's star, and note that it was a 'census of the whole world' (v.1)

