

## Luke 2 Chapter Study

### INTRODUCTION

As we began our study in the Gospel of Luke last week, we looked at . . .

#### I. Dedication Preface 1:1-4

#### II. Birth Announcements 1:5-2:38

##### *A. John the Baptist's Announcement 1:5-25*

##### *B. Jesus' Announcement 1:26-38*

##### *C. The Mothers Meet 1:39-56*

##### *D. John's Birth 1:57-80*

Tonight we begin with . . .

##### *E. Jesus' Birth 2:1-21*

##### 1. The trip to Bethlehem vs. 1-5

**<sup>1</sup> And it came to pass in those days that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered.**

The story of how Rome came to control the Mediterranean world is a long & fascinating one.

Rome's dominance of Israel began in a rather benign & almost welcomed way during the time when the Herods, a family Edomites & distant relatives of the Jews, began to take political control of Israel.

Until the time of Augustus, Rome had been a Republic, ruled by a Senate.

It was his uncle Julius Caesar who'd effectively cracked the power of the Senate & asserted the role of Emperor as the undisputed ruler of Rome.

But Julius was assassinated before he could enjoy the position of Emperor – that privilege fell to his favorite nephew, Octavius, who upon ascension to the throne took the title of the August One – Augustus!

The Roman Empire took periodic censuses to determine what a proper tax revenue for a given province ought to be, as well as for discovering what men could be drafted for military service.

Since the Jews were exempt from military service, any census of Israel would be only for purposes of taxation.

Since many of these Roman census documents have been found in Egypt, we have a really good idea of how they were conducted. <sup>[1]</sup>

Roman census were usually taken on a 14 year cycle, but could be conducted for special reasons as well – such as a new military campaign in which the Emperor wanted to raise new funds or troops.

That's what this census appears to be since it's stated that a special decree went out from Augustus. Plus, the next verse adds further insight -

## **2 This census first took place while Quirinius was governing Syria.**

Thinking like a historian, Luke is concerned to locate his story of Jesus within a specific timeline – as a real event that took place in time & space.

This is no myth he's weaving – he's reporting facts & careful to place the birth of Jesus at a specific time in history.

Quirinius became governor in 10 B.C. <sup>[2]</sup>

If this census was one of the usual 14 year censuses, then it would have been taken in 8 B.C., which is a bit too early for the birth of Christ.

So many scholars see it as a special census Augustus called for.

## **3 So all went to be registered, everyone to his own city.**

For years, critics of the Bible saw Luke's comment here as something made up, just to get Joseph & Mary south to Bethlehem from where they were living in the north.

Then among the census documents found in Egypt was this –

“Gaius Vibius Maximus, Prefect of Egypt orders: ‘Seeing that the time has come for the house-to-house census, it is necessary to compel all those who for any cause whatsoever are residing outside their districts to return to their own homes, that they may both carry out the regular order of the census, and may also diligently attend to the cultivation of their allotments.’”<sup>[3]</sup>

One by one over the years, the arguments of the skeptics have been amply answered by the discoveries of archaeology.

So much so that *today* the Bible, once regarded as nothing but a collection of myths & fables by the academics, has become *one of the primary source document* for archaeology in the Middle East.

**4 Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, <sup>5</sup> to be registered with Mary, his betrothed wife, who was with child.**

[Map]

V. 4 says they went “up” to Bethlehem, even though from our view, they went south, which we’d call “down.”

This is one of those examples where understanding the scriptures means looking at it from the historical setting of its original writing.

The use of maps was a rather late development in history.

While a few ancient rulers and their courts had basic drawings of the features of their lands, the average person never saw a map in their entire lifetime.

And because of that, they had little sense of north, south, east & west.

They thought to direction in terms of where the roads & highways went.

While we call traveling north, going “up” and south “down” – “up to the ancient meant literally *up* in elevation and down meant going from a higher to a lower place.

Judea, the southern province of Israel, was mountainous country, so traveling from Galilee to Judea meant going *up*.

It’s about 80 miles from Nazareth to Bethlehem.

Since they were used to travel by foot and could make at least 20 miles a day – the trip took 3 or 4 days.

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Bethlehem was Joseph’s home town.

First Samuel tells us that David’s family was centered in Bethlehem.

Even though David became the King of Israel, the family’s tribal lands were located at Bethlehem.

That's where Joseph had been born & where his wider family still lived.  
He'd moved to Nazareth in the north because as a craftsman, that's where the work was.  
Herod was building a new capital for the province of Galilee at Sepphoris & thousands of masons & carpenters were employed in the project.  
Nazareth was a Jewish village a few miles from Sepphoris that served as a home for the Jewish workers who wouldn't live close to the many Gentiles workers also constructing Sepphoris.

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The fact that Joseph took Mary with him indicates that by this time they'd had the official wedding ceremony.

The text says they were betrothed because *technically*, even though the wedding *ceremony* had taken place, the marriage would not be *final* until they consummated it – which they would not dare to do until Jesus was born.

Joseph's earlier misgivings about Mary's pregnancy had been answered by God & he knew Mary was carrying the Messiah. The whole point of the virgin birth of Christ would be ruined if they were to consummate their union prior to his birth. But we can be assured that following the birth, Joseph & Mary followed through on the last step of making their marriage official.

In fact, the gospels tell us Jesus had younger brothers & sisters.  
[Mark 6]

## 2. Jesus is born vs. 6-7

**<sup>6</sup> So it was, that while they were there, the days were completed for her to be delivered. <sup>7</sup> And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.**

Bethlehem was a small town & didn't have adequate space for all those who'd had to come for the census. Joseph & Mary found room in a stable.

While there, she gave birth, wrapped the baby tightly in some humble strips of cloth, & placed him in a trough used to feed

the animals.

Bethlehem means “House of Bread.”

It got that name because of the many small hills it sits among are great for growing grain.

When the fields are harvested, the grain was taken to Bethlehem where it was ground into flour and baked into bread.

Bethlehem was a bakery for Jerusalem which is just a few miles north.

It’s always fascinated me that Jesus, the Bread of Life, was born in a town called “Bakery.”

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Another amazing thing to me, something that I just never get over no matter how often I read or teach on this story is how when God came to earth, He came in such a humble & simple way.

If we were to give the bare outline of the story of the Incarnation to a Hollywood screenwriter, this is not the way he/she would design the story.

We say – “Write a screenplay in which God, the Creator and Sustainer of the universe comes to earth as a man, all for the purpose of restoring humanity to the glory and power it had in the original creation but was lost in the Fall.”

That screenplay would be a huge production with the greatest special effects ever conceived.

God would come as One even greater & more powerful than Augustus Caesar.

The Messiah would arrive as a full-grown man, descending from the clouds wearing a uniform of dazzling splendor, overwhelming power flashing from His fingertips, and an orchestra of a billion angels playing the loudest, most magnificent overture ever heard.

No one would pen a production that has Him coming through the womb of a young Jewish maiden married to a poor construction worker.

No one would have Him born in a stable, placed in rags and cribbed in a spittle-flecked feeding trough.

So why does God do things in a way so contrary to what we’d expect when He becomes a man?

As Paul explains in Philippians 2 when speaking about the Incarnation – Jesus was born in such a humble manner, because

## HE **IS** HUMBLE!

His birth was totally consistent with Who & What He is. Our God, though possessing all power and a glory the greatness of which would consume us if we were to see it now, is totally approachable and yearns for us, for each and every one of us to come close to Him.

He came so humbly to make it absolutely clear that His offer of forgiveness & restored fellowship is *for everyone*.

There is no one who can be intimidated by Jesus' credentials & background.

When we want to shame someone for being impolite, we say to them, "What, were you born in a barn?" Jesus was born in a stable!

His humble origins pave the way for even the poorest & most underprivileged to be able to come to Him.

There's no one who has ever lived who can say that Jesus can't relate to them.

In the incarnation, He's known the gamut of human experience.

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### **3. The birth announced to shepherds vs. 8-20**

**<sup>8</sup> Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night.**

Luke says that in the region near Bethlehem were shepherds keeping a close night-watch on their flocks.

Actually, these were special sheep they tended.

Every morning & evening a sheep was offered in the temple just a few miles away.

The priests demanded that these sheep be perfect specimens so they had their own private supply of the best sheep which were kept in the fields outside Bethlehem.

But here's the rub – while the priests were so concerned with perfect sacrifices, they despised the shepherds who looked after their flocks.

Because of the nature of their work, shepherds were unable to abide by all the ritual cleansings that were thought to mark true godliness.

They couldn't wash their hands in the ritual way.

And they were daily in contact with animals that were anything but clean.

For this reason, shepherds were mostly despised by the orthodox.

Earlier in Israel's history, being a shepherd was an honored & honorable profession.

Abraham, Isaac, Jacob & all his sons were shepherds.

During the Exodus, Israel was a nation of nomadic shepherds.

David had begun as a shepherd – the Shepherd King & beloved Psalmist of Israel who wrote Psalm 23 – “The Lord is my Shepherd.”

But by the time of Jesus, the reputation of shepherds had fallen & they had become dubious characters.

They were considered to be thieves & ne'er-do-wells who were best left out in the countryside, far from polite company.

Spending so much time alone, tending their flocks, they were seen as a bit strange & anti-social.

To get an idea of how shepherds were esteemed at that time, think about the homeless person you see pushing a packed grocery cart down the aide of some lonely road, dressed in ragged clothes, with long, unwashed hair, sun-blasted skin, and muttering to himself.

Now you have a good picture of the way shepherds were seen in Jesus day.

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These shepherds in the fields outside Bethlehem were charged with keeping the special flocks of sheep to be offered to God.

It was to them God came with the message about the birth of *the Lamb of God*, the true sacrifice all their sheep pointed to.

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After spending a day taking their flocks to various pastures, shepherds would gather at an agreed on meeting place that had been specially prepared with a sheepfold – a pen into which they would collect their sheep so they would be safe from predators at night.

Then the shepherds would eat their evening meal, & enjoy some company around a common fire until they went to sleep.

That's where we find this little group of shepherds.

When we go to Israel in the Fall, we'll be visiting the fields of Bethlehem & seeing this scene firsthand.

**[9 And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid.](#)**

There it is again. When an angel appears – the reaction is terror.

Why? Well, because of the glory that radiates from them.

What happens when a hugely successful & powerful man walks into a room of other men?

While some guys become envious, most just feel petty & small.

A guy can be doing fine, thinking everything is great, then some superstar appears & he immediately compares himself & feels as though he's been a total failure.

What happens when an incredibly beautiful woman walks into a room of other women?

Most of the ladies will immediately compare themselves to her, & truth be told, no matter what *they* look like, they'll become envious of her because they feel they don't measure up.

It's human nature to compare ourselves with others.

And in the vast majority of our encounters with other people, we come off okay.

It's rare that we're around someone whose very presence shames us because of their surpassing excellence.

But that is exactly what happens when a man or woman encounters *an angel*.

Suddenly we experience a being that dwells in a realm of existence that is so powerful, so beautiful, so beyond the realm of the physical universe that this world seems like a shadow, as if it's dissolving & becoming unreal.

Many people think of the spiritual realm as being light & airy, kind of dreamy & ethereal.

Because it's not *physical*, it seems kind of *imaginary*, made up of thoughts rather than concrete, tangible, real things.

But the word Greek word for "glory" comes from a root word meaning, "weighty; that which presses down."

In comparison with the spiritual realm, it's the *physical* realm that's light & ethereal.

The reality of the spirit is higher, primary, eternal, & with the right apparatus to sense it, far more tangible than anything we've ever experienced in this world.

All of that becomes immediately real for those who encounter an angel in its glory.

And they're near to such glory, it moves them to an inevitable



comparison that creates a shame so great it becomes fear.  
Thank the Lord angels know they cause this reaction.

It's why they always first speak a word of *comfort* – to let the person they've appeared to know that they aren't there to execute judgment.

**10 Then the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. <sup>11</sup>For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.**

Remember that the word “Christ” is the word for “Messiah.”

Now – I want to ask you to stop & think about how stunned the shepherds would be at this news.

How long had they been waiting for the Messiah? A long time! There had been many pretenders who'd come claiming to be the Messiah – but they'd all been proven to be fakes & frauds.

It's one thing for a guy to call himself the Messiah, but when an angel appears & says the Messiah has come, well, that tends to put a different spin on things.

The shepherds had to be thinking – “Thanks for telling us Mr. Angel person, but uh, we think maybe you took a wrong turn somewhere, because well, we're shepherds. Shouldn't you be telling the high priest in Jerusalem or Herod in Tiberius?”

The angel intended more than a simple announcement of the Messiah's birth.

He wanted the shepherds to go see for themselves . . .

**12 And this *will be the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger.* <sup>13</sup> And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying: <sup>14</sup> “Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!” <sup>15</sup> So it was, when the angels had gone away from them into heaven, that the shepherds said to one another, “Let us now go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has come to pass, which the Lord has made known to us.” <sup>16</sup> And they came with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the Babe lying in a manger.**

As the angel ended his message to the shepherds, the doorway to

glory opened wider & they saw a vast host singing praises to God. This was entirely fitting – you see, in Israel, when a woman went into labor, musicians would be sent for.

They would gather outside the door where the birth was taking place & they would prepare to play.

As soon as the news came of the delivery of a son, they would break out in joyous celebration.

There were no earthly musicians for Joseph & Mary to help them celebrate the birth of Jesus because they were too poor to pay them and weren't at their home where friends might pay the cost for them.

Besides – no one was feeling much like celebrating. Why was Bethlehem so crowded? They were there to be taxed!

So in the absence of earthly musicians, God called forth the heavenly choir to sing.

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The angel's message that the shepherds would find the baby in a *manger* narrowed their search.

When they arrived in Bethlehem, all they had to do was poke their head in every stable they could find.

Since Bethlehem was a small town, it wouldn't take long for them to find the right one.

**17 Now when they had seen *Him*, they made widely known the saying which was told them concerning this Child. 18 And all those who heard *it* marveled at those things which were told them by the shepherds. 19 But Mary kept all these things and pondered *them* in her heart. 20 Then the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told them.**

The shepherds told any & everyone who would listen to them what they'd experienced – and all who heard it marveled.

They probably marveled at the news itself – that the Messiah had been born, but also that it was to shepherds that the angelic message had been given.

Since shepherds weren't know as the most honest people, we can be sure there was a lot of discussion among those who heard their report about just how reliable it was.

What couldn't be denied was the obvious change that had taken place

in the shepherds themselves.

They'd clearly had an encounter that had deeply effected them.

That could not be denied or gainsaid by even their harshest critics.

And so it is with us.

Some of us, before we came to Christ, had dubious character.

Some of us were dishonest thieves.

Some were drug addicts for whom lying was as natural as breathing.

Some of us were conniving manipulators who played people like violins.

Then God opened our eyes and showered us with His glory and brought us to the Lord.

We were transformed – made new creatures, given hope and love, renewed in truth.

And when we went to those who'd known us previously, in our days "BC", they marveled & didn't know what to make of us or our message about Jesus.

No matter how much they might want to *argue* with that *message*, the thing they can't deny is the *change* that's taken place in us.

For us, the message isn't just words to argue – it's truth to live.

So while they quibble & argue, we'll just keep on living & proving by our living the reality & truth of the message that Christ has come, that He loves, and forgives those who put their faith in Him.

The true story is told of a young woman who came to faith in Christ and immediately began discipleship classes at her church.

In the very first class she was taught the basic steps to spiritual growth; prayer, reading the Bible, fellowship, and sharing your faith.

She was so excited about her new life that she went out onto the street during her lunch break at work the next day, and passed out tracts to those who passed by.

She'd only handed out a few when a nice looking businessman stopped and challenged her.

He took one look at the tract, saw it was a gospel message, and began to criticize her.

She was taken aback at his hostility. Up till that point, her joy & excitement had been only encouraged. This was her first

encounter with a skeptic and she was stunned. The man had several stinging challenges she wasn't able to answer.

In response to each, all she could say was, "Sir, I don't know the answer to your question or what to say, other than this – I'm a different person today than I was a week ago. God has forgiven me for my past and changed me into a new person. I may not have all the answers but one thing I do know – God is real, and I have a new life."

The businessman, just smirked, shook his head and walked away. A week later, in her second discipleship class she shared what had happened and how she'd felt like a failure because she couldn't answer all the arguments the man had raised. She admitted she'd not gotten up the nerve to go back out and pass out tracts. The class prayed for her and for the man, that God would somehow reach his hard heart.

So the next day, once again encouraged, she went back out at lunch time to pass out tracts.

A few minutes went by when she saw the same man walking toward her.

She thought, "Oh now, not again."

But she noticed he had a big smile on his face and seemed really eager to talk to her.

As he drew near, he thrust out his hand in an invitation to shake, telling her his names as he did.

She shook his hand while giving her name, then out came his story.

After walking away from her a week before, he'd felt very smug in his challenge of her faith in Christ.

She'd seemed like so many of the Christians he'd talked to – people who had a blind faith that hadn't been thought through and couldn't give a good reason for itself.

But as the afternoon wore on, her smiling face and sincere testimony about how God had changed her kept coming back to his memory.

All night long, he kept hearing her words playing over and over in his mind; "God changed me and gave me a new life."

As that scene and those words kept playing over and over in his

mind, it was as if every one of his challenges crumbled and fell apart.

In real sincerity, he prayed and asked that if the God that had forgiven and changed her was real, if He would do the same for him.

No more had he prayed that, than the whole message of Christ became clear to him and he'd given himself to the Lord.

He'd come out to that sidewalk every day for the last week hoping to find her and tell her what had happened.

You might not have the answer to every skeptic's question – but one thing the skeptic cannot argue with or gainsay is your experience of the power & love of God.

At the end of the day, when all is said and done – we have eternal life, while the skeptic only has an argument.

#### **4. Jesus is circumcised v. 21**

**21 And when eight days were completed for the circumcision of the Child, His name was called JESUS, the name given by the angel before He was conceived in the womb.**

According to Lev. 12, Jewish boys were circumcised on the 8<sup>th</sup> day, when the clotting agents were at their highest level & when the body had developed the greatest ability to numb itself against the pain.

It was at the joyous ceremony of circumcision, when a child was officially welcomed into the covenant of Abraham, that he would be given his name.

And of course, this Child was given the name Gabriel directed – Y'shua – Yahweh Saves.

#### ***F. Jesus' Presentation at the Temple 2:22-38***

##### **1. Mary's purification vs. 22-24**

**22 Now when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were completed, they brought Him to Jerusalem to present *Him* to the Lord <sup>23</sup> (as it is written in the law of the Lord, "*Every male who opens the womb shall be called holy to the LORD*" ), <sup>24</sup> and to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the law of the Lord,**

## **“A pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons.”**

Lev. 12 said that after a woman gave birth to a son, she would be ritually unclean for 40 days.

After that she was to go to the temple & make a special offering to restore her purity.

Now, the law said she was to bring a lamb and a pigeon as a purification offering.

But that would cost quite a bit so the law added that if the woman was too poor to bring a lamb, she could bring two birds instead.

This was referred to technically as “The Offering of the Poor.”<sup>[4]</sup>

That is what the offering Mary brought tells us about the economic status of Jesus’ family – they were poor.

Since Jesus was Mary’s firstborn they would also have to offer the redemption price for Him of 5 shekels, as spelled out in Ex. 13:2 & Number 18:16.

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It was when the family came to the temple to perform these rituals that something special happened . . .

### **2. Simeon sees Jesus vs. 25-35**

**25 And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon, and this man was just and devout, waiting for the Consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him.**

Simeon was a resident of Jerusalem who was well-known as a godly man.

His chief goal was to see the Messiah.

Because of the OT prophecies, the Jews believed they were destined to become the masters of the world.

Most believed this mastery would come through the arrival of the Messiah as a great heavenly champion who would descend upon the earth like one of the glorious angels, defeat their foes, and then make them rulers of the Earth.

Others believed the Messiah would arise as another king of David’s line and that all the old glories would revive.

Some believed God himself would break directly into history by supernatural means.

In contrast to all these kind of powerful and dramatic ways the Messiah would come were some few people who were known as *“the Quiet in the Land.”*

They had no dreams of violence or power or conquering armies.

They called the Messiah, “the Consolation of Israel.”

They believed in a life of constant prayer & quiet watchfulness until God should come however He chose to come.

All their lives they waited quietly and patiently upon Him.

Simeon was like that; in prayer, in worship, in humble & faithful expectation he was waiting for the day when God would comfort his people. <sup>[5]</sup>

**26 And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Christ.**

God had promised Simeon that his life would not end before he had seen the Messiah.

**27 So he came by the Spirit into the temple. And when the parents brought in the Child Jesus, to do for Him according to the custom of the law, <sup>28</sup> he took Him up in his arms and blessed God and said: <sup>29</sup> “Lord, now You are letting Your servant depart in peace, According to Your word; <sup>30</sup> For my eyes have seen Your salvation <sup>31</sup> Which You have prepared before the face of all peoples, <sup>32</sup> A light to *bring* revelation to the Gentiles, And the glory of Your people Israel.”**

From Simeon’s words we can infer he was an old man, his life only prolonged by the fact that God had made him a promise he would not see death till he’d seen the Bringer of Life.

Now that the promise of God to his heart has been fulfilled, Simeon is ready to go.

It’s interesting that Simeon identifies that Jesus isn’t just the Jewish Messiah; He brings the light of revelation to the Gentiles as well. Jesus isn’t just the Consolation of Israel, He’s the Savior of the World.

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But what intrigues me is how 3 times, Simeon is referred to as being a

man of the Spirit.

V. 25 – the Holy Spirit was *upon* him.

V. 26 – the Holy Spirit *revealed* to him.

V. 27 – the Holy Spirit *led* him.

Now, notice what one thing the Holy Spirit united in all of these 3 things to do for Simeon – point him to Jesus.

The Holy Spirit was upon him to empower his looking for Jesus.

The Holy Spirit revealed to him that His life was tied up with Jesus.

The Holy Spirit led him into the temple to see Jesus.

And so it ever is with the work & ministry of the Holy Spirit – to lead us to Jesus.

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### **33 And Joseph and His mother marveled at those things which were spoken of Him.**

As the parents listened to this aged saint named Simeon speak about Jesus, the awareness of just how special the child was became even more real to them.

You know, because of all the historical perspective we have, we assume that Mary & Joseph were completely clued into who Jesus was & what He would do.

No – they had only the faintest idea of what was going on.

The proof of that is their *amazement* at the shepherds' & Simeon's honor showed to the baby.

For Joseph & Mary, this was all an amazing adventure & not a little baffling, as we'll see.

### **34 Then Simeon blessed them, and said to Mary His mother, "Behold, this *Child* is destined for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign which will be spoken against <sup>35</sup> (yes, a sword will pierce through your own soul also), that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed."**

After speaking such lofty words about Jesus in vs. 29-32, Simeon drops his gaze from the glory of Jesus' *destiny* as the reigning King, to the *path* that lies between the temple *that day* & his ultimate throne in future glory.

That path lies through great trial and sorrow.

For Jesus is THE Watershed of all history.



What people decide about Him determines their eternal fate.  
The fact is, not all will choose rightly or well.  
And those who oppose Him will seem to defeat Him – bringing  
Mary into the hard place of seeing her own Son crucified.

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What Simeon says here is all important.

Jesus is the Watershed of all history, of all eternity, and of every  
man, woman & child who has ever & will ever live.

What we decide about Jesus is the final & truest revelation of our  
hearts.

If we *chose* Jesus, if we believe in Him, then it's the *proof* of a  
heart *for* God.

If we *reject* Jesus, then it's proof of a heart *rejecting* God.

The person who says he/she loves God but rejects Jesus is simply not  
telling the truth.

The person who says he/she believes in God but who refuses to put  
their trust in Christ is wrong.

The true heart, the person who genuinely seeks God *WILL* find  
Christ.

There are **NO** exceptions.

### 3. Anna sees Jesus vs. 36-38

**<sup>36</sup> Now there was one, Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of  
Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, and  
had lived with a husband seven years from her virginity; <sup>37</sup>  
and this woman was a widow of about eighty-four years,  
who did not depart from the temple, but served God with  
fastings and prayers night and day. <sup>38</sup> And coming in that  
instant she gave thanks to the Lord, and spoke of Him to  
all those who looked for redemption in Jerusalem.**

Like Simeon, Anna was another of those known as "*The Quiet of the  
Land.*"

As a widow, Anna would have known much hardship, for the life of a  
widow was not an easy one in Israel.

She'd only been married for 7 years when her husband died,  
leaving her a young widow, but she'd never remarried.

Instead she'd spent her next 60 some years as an attendant in the  
temple, speaking to people about the Lord as they came to  
worship.

Though Anna had known sorrow, she'd not grown *bitter*.

Sorrow can do one of two things to us –

It can make us hard, bitter, resentful, & rebellious against God,

Or it can make us kinder, softer, & more sympathetic.

It can despoil us of our faith,

Or it can root faith even deeper as we look for what God is doing in us through the sorrow.

It all depends on how we think of God.

If we think of God as distant & detached we'll despair.

But if we think of Him as intimately involved with us, ever diligent to move us to perfection and steering our course toward glory, then we'll trust and surrender into His safe keeping.

That's what Anna did, & the proof is right here in our text.

She never ceased to *worship*.

She spent her life in God's house with God's people.

God is our Father who has given us a mother in His church.

We rob ourselves of a priceless treasure when we neglect to be one with his people.

Anna also never ceased to *pray*.

Public worship is great; but private worship is essential.

The years had left Anna without bitterness & in unshakable hope because day by day she kept her contact with God who was the source of strength & in whose strength our weakness is made perfect. <sup>[6]</sup>

### **III. Jesus' Childhood 2:39-52**

#### **A. A Normal Childhood 2:39-40**

**<sup>39</sup>So when they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own city, Nazareth.**

The time between Jesus' birth & presentation at the temple had been spent in Bethlehem. But now they head back to their home in Nazareth.

**<sup>40</sup>And the Child grew and became strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him.**

This is Luke's way of saying that Jesus had a normal childhood.

Yes, He lived a sinless life & so would prove an unusual child in that regard.

But His lifestyle was such that He appeared to the people who saw Him as just a typical kid.

He didn't float 2 inches off the ground.

He didn't have a glowing halo over His head.

He didn't make clay animals & bring them to life for his friends.

He didn't walk around spouting deep theological truths that caused people to run to the nearest dictionary to look up the words he was using.

He was just a really good kid Mary & Joseph never had to discipline because He obeyed the Commandment to honor His parents.

### ***B. A Trip to Jerusalem 2:41-50***

***41*** His parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover.

And they did so because that's what the law said they should do.

***42*** And when He was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem according to the custom of the feast. ***43*** When they had finished the days, as they returned, the Boy Jesus lingered behind in Jerusalem. And Joseph and His mother did not know *it*; ***44*** but supposing Him to have been in the company, they went a day's journey, and sought Him among *their* relatives and acquaintances. ***45*** So when they did not find Him, they returned to Jerusalem, seeking Him.

At 12, Jesus was at that age when he was transitioning from child to man.

Before this he would have stayed with the women, but after this he'd be having his bar Mitzvah and formally be welcomed into the world of men.

Since Jews often traveled to & from Jerusalem for the Passover as a community, they would go enmass.

The women & children would go first & the men would follow after.

When the time came for the group from Galilee to head home, Joseph thought Jesus was with Mary, & Mary thought He was

with Joseph.

Turns out, He was with neither.

When they got to their first stopping place & gathered for the evening meal, they asked each other where Jesus was and realized they'd both assumed wrongly.

They'd lost the Messiah! Oh No!

So they went back to Jerusalem as quick as they could.

**46 Now so it was that after three days they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both listening to them and asking them questions. 47 And all who heard Him were astonished at His understanding and answers.**

It was 3 days before they found Him sitting in the temple rapping with the religious teachers.

By 3 days we ought to understand this as a day on the journey north, another day back, then one day searching Jerusalem.

As Jesus engaged the religious teachers in discussion, it was clear His grasp of the scriptures & spiritual things was unique.

He became something of a novelty around which they gathered.

**48 So when they [Joseph & Mary] saw Him, they were amazed; and His mother said to Him, "Son, why have You done this to us? Look, Your father and I have sought You anxiously."**

Mary issued a challenge to Jesus, as though Jesus had done this *to them*.

But the fact of the matter is, the fault lay with Joseph & Mary.

They'd each assumed Jesus was with the other & had left without checking to see.

Jesus had done the right thing in staying put where they'd last seen Him.

For that is where they ought to have looked for Him.

**49 And He said to them, "Why did you seek Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?"**

Jesus isn't being a smart Alec when He says this.

He's simply reminding them that they ought to have known where to look for Him.

Their sense of growing anxiety as they searched the City was the result of their own error. It came through no fault of His.

Over the last 12 years they may have lost something of the sense of His identity & mission, but He hadn't.

His whole life was to do His real Father's will & they ought to have known they would find Him in His Father's house.

**50 But they did not understand the statement which He spoke to them.**

This is further proof that Jesus had lived the life of a normal child for the last 12 years.

So much so that Joseph & Mary don't really understand what He means.

In their thinking, Jesus is their son, and as such just like other children.

### **C. From 12 to Adulthood 2:51-52**

**51 Then He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them, but His mother kept all these things in her heart. 52 And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.**

Some time back I shared about the model for learning in place in Galilee at that time.

Children were taught the scriptures in the torah schools by torah teachers.

If a boy did really well and showed exceptional skill in his studies, he graduated to the next level of study.

If not, he went into the family business.

Of course, Jesus excelled in His studies but also helped with the needs of his family.

At some point during this time, Joseph drops out of the picture.

We don't know why but most scholars believe he died.

As the eldest son, Jesus would then have been responsible for providing for the family.

Luke's comments here tell us that he pursued a parallel track of preparing Himself to be a rabbi at the same time that He diligently provided for the needs of His mother & younger brothers & sisters – as we read about in Mark 6:3.

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[1] *The Gospel of Luke*. 2000, c1975 (W. Barclay, lecturer in the University of Glasgow, Ed.). The Daily study Bible series, Rev. ed. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press.

[2] *ibid*

[3] *ibid*

[4] *The Gospel of Luke*. 2000, c1975 (W. Barclay, lecturer in the University of Glasgow, Ed.). The Daily study Bible series, Rev. ed. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press.

[5] *The Gospel of Luke*. 2000, c1975 (W. Barclay, lecturer in the University of Glasgow, Ed.). The Daily study Bible series, Rev. ed. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press.

[6] *The Gospel of Luke*. 2000, c1975 (W. Barclay, lecturer in the University of Glasgow, Ed.). The Daily study Bible series, Rev. ed. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press.