Luke 2 Commentary

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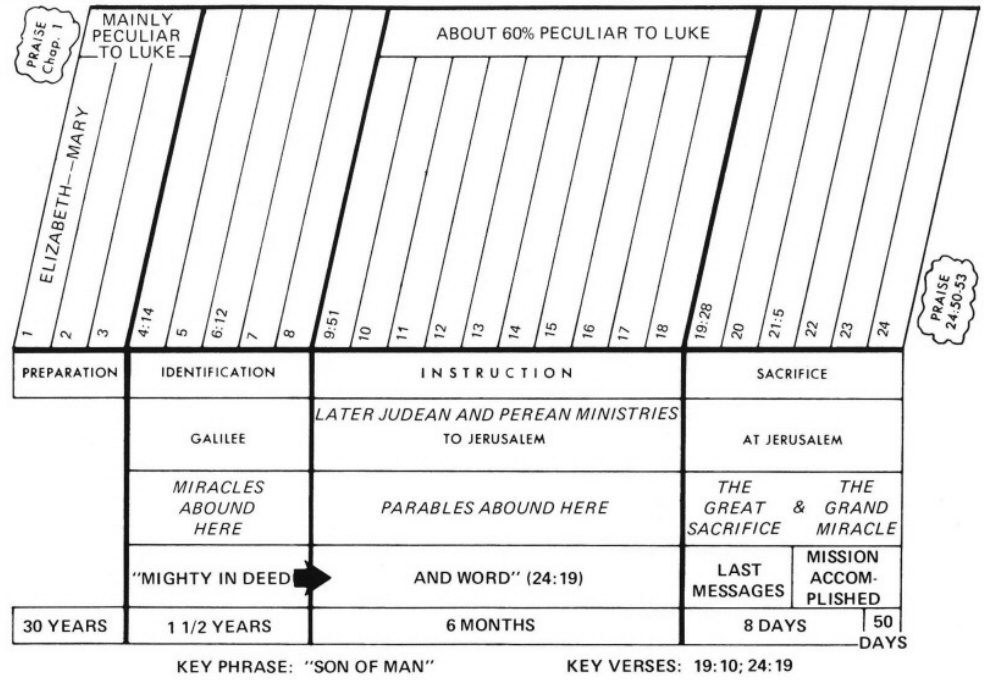
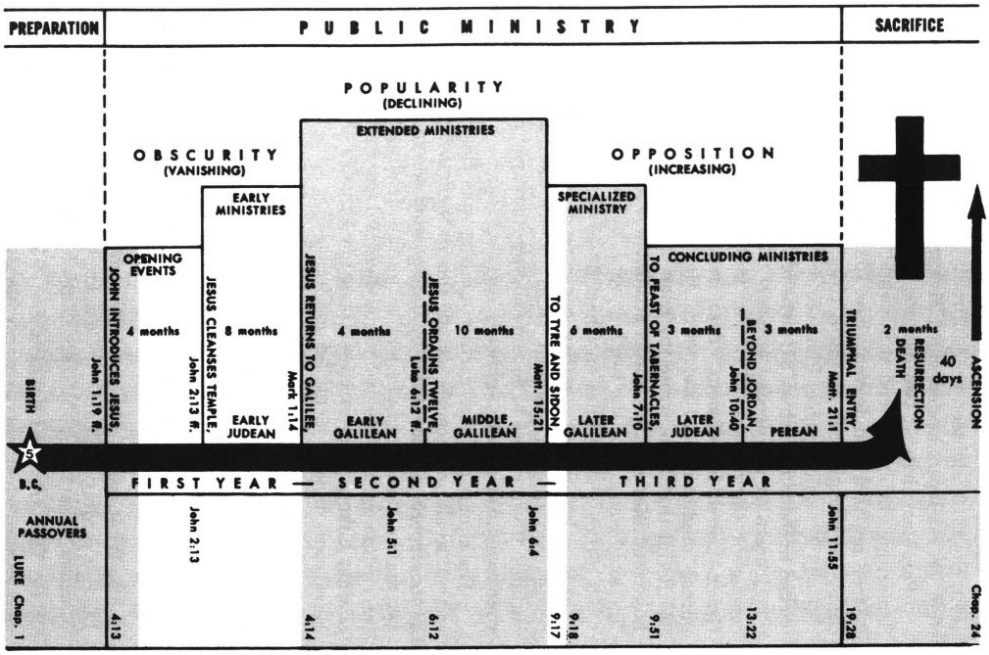


From Jensen's Survey of the NT by permission
John MacArthur's Introduction to the Gospel of Luke
Charles Swindoll's Introduction to Luke
Luke Overview Chart by Charles Swindoll



Click chart to enlarge LIFE OF CHRIST IN GOSPEL OF LUKE (See Shaded Areas)
Chart from recommended resource Jensen's Survey of the NT - used by permission

Ryrie Study Bible -Borrow

c. 5 B.C.	c. A.D. 28–33	c. A.D. 62
Birth of Jesus	Jesus' ministry, death, resurrection	Luke's Gospel written

Source: ESV Global Study Bible

Luke 2:1 Now in those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus, that a census be taken of all the inhabited earth.

NET Now in those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus to register all the empire for taxes.

GNT γ νετο δ ν τα ς μ ραις κε ναις ξ λθεν δ γμα παρ Κα σαρος Α γο στου πογρ φεσθαι π σαν τ ν ο κουμ νην.

NLT At that time the Roman emperor, Augustus, decreed that a census should be taken throughout the Roman Empire.

KJV And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed.

ESV In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered.

NIV In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world.

- **Caesar**: Lu 3:1 Ac 11:28 25:11,21 Php 4:22
- **all**: Mt 24:14 Mk 14:9 16:15 Ro 1:8
- Luke 2 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Here are the pericopes for Luke 2

1. The Birth of Jesus Luke 2:1-7
2. The Shepherds and the Angels Luke 2:8-20
3. Jesus Presented in the Temple Luke 2:21-40
4. The Boy Jesus at the Temple Luke 2:41-52

Gene Brooks - Sermon Points:

1. The humble entrance of a glorious Savior (Luke 2:1-7)
2. The humble hearers of a glorious Announcement (Luke 2:8-14)
3. The humble proclamation of a glorious Birth (Luke 2:15-20)

Related Passages:

2 Chronicles 36:22-23 Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia–in order to fulfill the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah–**the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia**, so that (purpose - what purpose?) he sent a proclamation throughout his kingdom, and also put it in writing, saying, “Thus says Cyrus king of Persia, ‘The LORD, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and He has appointed me to build Him a house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Whoever there is among you of all His people, may the LORD his God be with him, and let him go up!’”

IN THOSE DAYS:
GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY RULES

Try as you might as Wiersbe says "You cannot escape Jesus Christ. His birth affected Caesar’s politics (Lk 2:1–3), the ministry of the angels (Lk 2:8–15), and the activities of common men (Lk 2:15–20)." As I drive around I see signs saying "**Merry Christmas**," the very word which includes His Name. But the sad irony is that so many say "**Merry Christmas**" who have no real concept of Who this Christ is or what incredible gift He has made available to them if they would only receive His gift of eternal life by grace through faith in Christ (Jn 17:3, Ro 10:9-10+). Then they would be truly "**Merry**" in both time and eternity!

Steven Cole has interesting introduction - A few years ago, newscaster Andy Rooney responded to the charge that his profession only covered the negative side of everything. He imagined a newscast in which it was reported that planes took off and landed safely. In Florida, the orange crop was hit by another night of average weather. The oranges just hung in there and grew. In Detroit, General Motors announced that 174,000 Chevrolets would not be recalled because they were all perfect. Rooney’s point was that good news isn’t

always appreciated unless it's against the backdrop of bad news. Our text tells us **the best news in the world,** but two factors make it difficult for people to appreciate it. **First, the Christmas story is perhaps the most widely known story in history. As a result, many people, even Christians, shrug it off as not being especially exciting or relevant to the problems they are facing. Second, many people do not realize what dire straits they are in regarding their standing before God and their eternal destiny**. So when they read the familiar story that a Savior has been born in the city of Bethlehem, they yawn and say, "That's nice. What's for dinner?" Not seeing their desperate need for salvation, they fail to appreciate the fact that this story is the best news in all of history. The best news in the world is that a Savior was born for you, who is Christ the Lord. A couple of years ago, Moody Magazine (Jan./Feb., 1996) reported that 49 percent of professing Christians agree that "**all good people, whether they consider Jesus Christ to be Savior or not, will live in heaven after they die**." (**ED**: Compare this **August, 2021 Barna report** which notes that of Americans who claim to be born again "60% believe that if a person is good enough, or does enough good things, they can earn their way into Heaven." Woe! Jesus' words in Mt 7:21-23+) If that opinion is true, then the story of the birth of Jesus may warm your heart and make you feel good. But it won't be the best news in the world, news that you cannot live without. However, if the Bible is correct in stating that all people have sinned and apart from Christ they are under God's condemnation (**ED**: cf Ro 3:10, Ro 3:20, Ro 3:23, Ro 6:23), then the news that the Savior has been born is hardly just nice! It is the best news in the world and it is absolutely crucial! (The Best News in the World Luke 2:1-20)

"**God doesn't roll dice**." (R C Sproul)
Nothing happens by chance. Ever.

Roman Empire
Ruled by Caesar Augustus
Click to enlarge

Now in those days a decree (dogma) **went out from Caesar** (kaisar) **Augustus that a census be taken** (apographo) - Don't read over this too fast and miss that the good news about Christ the Savior is historically true. Don't intertwine the legend of Santa Claus who brings gifts with the historical truth of Jesus Christ Who brings the only gift that really matters! And so we begin by asking what **days**? **Days** of Caesar Augustus and **days** of a census. See note on census. Every day is the day of the Lord. There are NO "**accidental events**" in the history of the world, for as has often been said "**history**" is "**HIS STORY**!" Proverbs says that "**The king's heart is like channels of water in the hand of the LORD; He turns it wherever He wishes**" (Pr 21:1) and so in Luke's account we see God moving the heart of Augustus who, by his edict calling for a census, sets the historical stage for the Messiah to be born in Bethlehem. God through the edict caused Joseph to go from **Nazareth** to Bethlehem in order to fulfill Micah 5:2. So these were the days of the birth of the long expected Messiah. God is **sovereign** over everything, including the timing of events! You can stake your life on it! (See also Divine Providence).

THOUGHT - The twist in the story is, of course, that it is the very pagan authorities who are responsible for bringing Jesus to Bethlehem. Caesar, like Cyrus before him (ED: 2Chr 36:22, cf Nebuchadnezzar who God calls "My servant" - Jer 25:9, 43:10), unknowingly becomes the servant of God's purpose. The promise is fulfilled through the actions of the unlikeliest of people. For God is Lord of all the earth and there is no power not under his authority, no poverty to which he turns a blind eye of indifference. (June Osborne)

John MacArthur explains that it was "Critical that Joseph and Mary go to Bethlehem, which was their own city, so that they would be there when the Messiah was born so the prophecy of Micah would come to pass. Little did Caesar Augustus know that he was being moved by the Spirit of God to do exactly what he did on time, on schedule to effect exactly the result God wanted. There was a few days in which Joseph and Mary had to be in Bethlehem, right at the very time of the birth of the child. God knew exactly when that moment was, exactly when that day was. He knew when they had to be there and He had planned for that to happen under the authority and power of a Caesar who was far removed from the little village of Bethlehem and utterly removed from the purposes of God and utterly ignorant of the Word of God. But nonetheless he was a main player in bringing the prophecy to pass, which shows the mighty, incomprehensible, providential work of Almighty God. (Jesus' Birth in Bethlehem - Part 1)

Ray Pritchard - Most of us read those words without giving them a second thought. Actually, Caesar Augustus was the greatest of the Roman emperors, greater even than his granduncle, Julius Caesar. It was said that when he came to Rome it was a city of brick and when he left it was a city of marble. Caesar Augustus was 19 years old when he came to power in 44 B.C. He reigned as emperor for 58 years. His greatest single act—the one which would have the most lasting effect on world history—was to call for a census of the empire. The purpose of the census was to compile a list of property owners for the purpose of collecting taxes and

military registration. It was a thoroughly secular decree, the kind of thing governments have been doing since the beginning of time. Historians tell us that it is not likely that the whole empire was enrolled at the same time. Given the slow system of communication in those days, it might have taken years for the census to be completed in some of the outlying provinces. A lot would depend on the local political situation and the willingness of local rulers to cooperate. When the time came to take the census in Israel, it is just possible that a compromise was made to take into account Jewish custom. The Romans ordinarily enrolled men where they were currently living, while the Jews counted families according to their ancestral hometowns. That would explain why Joseph and Mary had to return to Bethlehem at a most inconvenient time—in the ninth month of Mary's pregnancy. (Journey to Bethlehem)

> **In those days** (see value of querying expressions of time) - Always pause and ask what **days**? Go back to Lk 1:5 "**In the days** of Herod, king of Judea," which would include two prophecies of miraculous conceptions, 3 hymns of praise, one miraculous birth of the forerunner, John the Baptist. Mt 2:1+ says "Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea **in the days of Herod the king**, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem." There is good evidence that the magi did not visit at the actual birth of Jesus until sometime later in the subsequent 2 years. See Matthew 2 Commentary.
>
> > **In those days** - 52x in 51v in NAS - Gen. 6:4; Exod. 2:11; Deut. 17:9; Deut. 19:17; Jos. 20:6; Jdg. 17:6; Jdg. 18:1; Jdg. 19:1; Jdg. 20:27; Jdg. 20:28; Jdg. 21:25; 1 Sam. 3:1; 1 Sam. 28:1; 2 Sam. 16:23; 2 Ki. 10:32; 2 Ki. 15:37; 2 Ki. 20:1; 2 Chr. 32:24; Neh. 6:17; Neh. 13:15; Neh. 13:23; Est. 1:2; Est. 2:21; Isa. 38:1; Jer. 3:16; Jer. 3:18; Jer. 5:18; Jer. 31:29; Jer. 33:15; Jer. 33:16; Jer. 50:4; Jer. 50:20; Ezek. 38:17; Dan. 10:2; Joel 2:29; Joel 3:1; Zech. 8:6; Zech. 8:23; Matt. 3:1; Matt. 24:19; Matt. 24:38; Mk. 1:9; Mk. 8:1; Mk. 13:17; Mk. 13:24; Lk. 2:1; Lk. 5:35; Lk. 9:36; Lk. 21:23; Acts 2:18; Rev. 9:6

Spurgeon - Little did any idea enter into Caesar's head that he was accomplishing the purpose of God by bringing Mary to Bethlehem, at that particular time, so that her child might be born there. But God can accomplish the purpose of his providence, and of his grace, in any way that he pleases and although Caesar is not aware of all that is involved in his action, his decree, which he intends simply to be a means of registering his subjects, and of filling his exchequer, is to be overruled by God for the fulfillment of the prophecy, uttered centuries before the event happened, that Christ must be born at Bethlehem. It may seem, to some of you, a strange thing that there should be an imperial edict, issued from Rome, which should have an important influence upon the place of birth of the Child; yet I do not doubt that, in God's esteem, the whole of the great Roman Empire was of very small account in comparison with his Son, our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ; and today, the thrones and dominions of the mightiest monarchs are only like the small cogs of the wheels of divine providence where the welfare of even the least of the Lord's people is concerned. He reckons not events according to their apparent importance; the standard of the sanctuary is a very different measure from that which worldlings use. When any purpose of God is to be accomplished, all other things will be subordinated to it. (Luke Exposition)

A decree (dogma) **went out from Caesar** (kaisar) **Augustus** - Note that this is not his actual name but a combination of two titles. **Caesar** is a title like king or emperor and Augustus is an adjective to describe somebody. Augustus means august, revered, highly esteemed, highly regarded, honored. Augustus was given as an indication of how they honored him. And thus Caesar Augustus refers to **Gaius Octavius Thurinus**, (born 63 B C) who ruled Rome from 27 B.C. to A.D. 14. He was known for his administrative prowess. **Wikipedia** says "His status as the founder of the **Roman Principatehas** consolidated an enduring legacy as one of the most effective and controversial leaders in human history."

God prompts **Caesar** to issue a **decree**, an imperial edict. Indeed, Our God Reigns (notice the main word in sove**reign**!)

> **MacArthur** asks and answers - **Who is Caesar Augustus?** ...This versatile and able ruler of the Roman Empire was born September 23 of 63 B.C. His name when he was born was Gaius Octavius. Later on he became and is often referred to as Octavian. Now Gaius Octavius, born in 63 B.C., Before Christ, had a mother named Atia. His mother, Atia, was the daughter of Julia. Julia was the sister of Julius Caesar. Now this made Gaius Octavius the grand-nephew to Julius Caesar. So he was born in high places. For whatever reason, Julius Caesar took a tremendous affinity to this boy. He adored little Gaius Octavius. He lavished him with gifts and he honored him. In 43 B.C. Gaius Octavius had reached the age of twenty. Julius Caesar at that point adopted him as his own son and declared him to be the heir to the throne of the Roman Empire...One year later, Julius Caesar was murdered, and when he was murdered Gaius Octavius learned of his choice as Julius Caesar's heir. At that point he changed his name to **Gaius Julius Caesar** in honor of his adopted father....Caesar was murdered by his friends, namely **Brutus**. One of his sisters married **Mark Antony** a very dominant figure in Roman history. So here he was, the grand-nephew of Julius Caesar, adopted as a son and heir; his sister married to Mark Antony who was a powerful person. At the death of Julius Caesar three people reigned in Rome...There was Lepidus, Octavian, and Mark Antony, a triumvirate who ruled Rome. It wasn't long until Lepidus fell out and the rule of Rome was left with Octavian and with Mark Antony. They ruled together for a while until Mark Antony began to do things that bothered Octavian. First thing he did was he left

his wife and his wife was the sister of Octavian. He didn't like that. He left his wife because he became infatuated with the legendary and bewitching **Cleopatra**, queen of Egypt, who really is legendary as to her powers of seduction and ability to bewitch. Well she bewitched Mark Antony successfully....Eventually he began to show more concern for Egypt, more concern for the successes of Cleopatra, more concern for her personally and his own welfare than he did for Rome. And so the irritation to Octavian began to escalate. The result was tremendous conflict between Mark Antony and Octavian, which ultimately brought them to a great battle, a battle that the Egyptians never should have gotten involved in because it was a sea battle in which the Egyptian navy tried to fight the great Roman navy and was soundly defeated. It was called the **battle of Actium**...when Octavian literally destroyed the Egyptian fleet, the power of Mark Antony and Cleopatra and became sole ruler of the Roman Empire, 31 B.C. is when that occurred. Both Mark Antony and Cleopatra soon after that committed suicide together and Octavian was left to rule. Officially then his rule ran to 14 A.D. Forty-five years this remarkable man was the absolute monarch of the Roman Empire. Great military skill, great political skill, great social skill, he put an end to all civil wars, literally extended the Roman Empire from the west of Europe deep into the Middle East, as far east as the desert region of Iraq today, vastly dominating the entire inhabited known world at that time, at least known to those people.

He brought in the amazing **Pax Romana**, the Roman Peace (**ED**: SEE Roman peace) which was often called the Pax Augusta in tribute to this man. He literally, not only conquered the world, as it were, but he brought peace to all that realm by the skill that he had as a leader. This Roman Peace literally made soft borders everywhere. Then he built massive **Roman roads** and effective transportation systems in all directions for the extent of this great power of Rome in the world. And what it did was it facilitated the easy spread, the rapid spread of the gospel of Jesus Christ. It was perfect timing. Galatians 4:4 says, "**In the fullness of time God sent His Son.**" One of the elements of the **fullness of time** was into a world where you had the most rapid, easy access to take the gospel everywhere. And because Rome controlled it all, there were no borders. There were no points to stop. There was fluidity and facility and the Gospel spread rapidly largely along Roman roads and Roman trade routes by sea and by land. The Pax Romana (Roman peace) brought an unheard of period of peace at the hand of this great leader. In 14 A.D. he died and was succeeded by **Caesar Tiberius**, a familiar name to anybody who studies the New Testament because Tiberius, taking the throne in 14 A D was the Caesar through the latter life and ministry of Jesus Christ. He is the Caesar that we read about in the Gospels during the ministry of Jesus Christ....

Now in the year 27 B.C., three years after Octavius began his rule, the Roman Senate gave him the title **Augustus**, which means majestic one, highly honored one..**august** one could mean holy one. It was a term reserved for the gods. It was used to refer to the gods and always referred to the gods before this man but now it was being used to refer to him because he was viewed as if he were a god. Then it began to be used for Julius Caesar, who himself had wanted to be treated as a god. So it was after that 27 B.C. titling of Caesar Augustus that the idea that the caesar was a god took root. (See his full sermon Jesus' Birth in Bethlehem - Part 1)

The reign of the Roman Emperor **Caesar Augustus** was a time of relative peace on earth (the **Pax Romana** (SEE Roman peace)) and is one aspect of the "**fullness of time**" of which Paul spoke in Galatians 4:4+ writing "But when **the fullness of the time came**, God (Notice Who is in control of TIME! Our God is sovereign!) sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law." This "time was full" because several events converged by God's providential working: (1). Roman civilization had brought peace and a road system (2). Grecian civilization provided a language--the lingua franca (3). Jews proclaimed monotheism and messianic hope in the synagogues of the Mediterranean world. There was a remnant of believing Jewish men and women who anticipated the time was at hand and who were actively "**looking for redemption in Jerusalem**" (for example, godly Simeon was "looking for the consolation of Israel" = the Messiah - Lu 2:25+). Sadly most of the "chosen people" did not recognize the fullness of time as explained by Jesus Himself in Luke 19:44+ when He declared "you (Jews) did not recognize the **time** (kairos) **of your visitation** (episkope - see word study - what a word picture! Verb form was used by Mary in Lk 1:78+ - "the Sunrise from on high will visit [episkeptomai] us.")." If they had read and interpreted literally the prophecy of Daniel they would have recognized Messiah the Prince (see Da 9:24+; Da 9:25+; Da 9:26+; Da 9:27+ - note Messiah [Lxx = Christos] is mentioned specifically in Da 9:25, 26 -- and note who gave Daniel this prophetic message - Da 9:21+, the same angel we encounter twice in Luke 1, Gabriel!).

Warren Wiersbe - Augustus Caesar (kaisar) was ruling, but God was in charge, for He used Caesar's edict to move Mary and Joseph eighty miles from Nazareth to Bethlehem to fulfill His Word. Rome took a census every fourteen years for both military and tax purposes, and each Jewish male had to return to the city of his fathers to record his name, occupation, property, and family. When Mary said "Be it unto me according to Thy word" (Luke 1:38), it meant that from then on, her life would be a part of the fulfillment of divine prophecy. God had promised that the Saviour would be a human, not an angel (Ge 3:15; Heb. 2:16), and a Jew, not a Gentile (Ge 12:1-3; Nu 24:17). He would be from the tribe of Judah (Ge 49:10), and the family of David (2Sa 7:1-17), born of a

virgin (Isa. 7:14) in Bethlehem,' the city of David (Micah 5:2). (**ED**: SEE Messianic Prophecies) All of this occurred just as the Scriptures said, and Caesar unknowingly played an important part. A.T. Pierson used to say, "History is His story," and President James A. Garfield called history "the unrolled scroll of prophecy." If God's Word controls our lives, then the events of history only help us fulfill the will of God. "I am watching over My word to perform it," promises the Lord (J*er.* 1:12, NASB) (Scroll to page 143 in The Bible Exposition Commentary)

Caesar Augustus - (Latin: Imperātor Caesar Dīvī Fīlius Augustus 23 September 63 BC–19 August 14 AD) was the founder of the Roman Principate and considered the first Emperor, controlling the Roman Empire from 27 BC until his death in AD 14.

R Kent Hughes - It was under Augustus' rule that decisive strides were taken toward making the Caesars gods. In fact, at about the same time Luke was writing these words, some of the Greek cities in Asia Minor adopted Caesar's birthday, September 23, as the first day of the New Year, hailing him as "**savior**." An inscription at Halicarnassus (birthplace of the famous Herodotus) even called him "*savior of the whole world*." Historian John Buchan records that when Caesar Augustus died, men actually *"comforted themselves, reflecting that Augustus was a god, and that gods do not die*." So the world had at its helm a self-proclaimed, widely accepted god and savior. Luke, the historian and theologian, wants us to see this as the tableau for understanding the coming of the real Savior. The contrast could not be greater. Inside Rome, in the Forum, the doors of the Temple of War had been closed for ten years and would remain closed for thirty more. To memorialize the peace, the famous monument ***Ara Pacis Augustae*** propagandizing Augustus' peace had been erected. Rome and Augustus had bludgeoned every foe into submission. There was "*peace*," but it was a dark peace—a Hitler's peace—and no man or woman or boy or girl could say a word against it without fearfully looking over their shoulder....The baby Mary carried was not a Caesar, a man who would become a god, but a far greater wonder—the true God who had become a man! (See Luke (2 volumes in 1 / ESV Edition): That You May Know the Truth)

Caesar had a census on earth but God has a more important census in heaven the writer of Hebrews recording

> But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels, 23 to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are **enrolled** (perfect tense = speaks of past completed action with ongoing effect or result. In past when we believed we were in a sense "*enrolled*" and our enrollment will endure forever and ever amen!) in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of [the] righteous made perfect, (Heb. 12:22-23+)

Of all the inhabited earth - Not the entire earth. In context of the decree of Augustus clearly it speaks of that portion of the world which was subject to Augustus. So civilizations like the Mayans obviously were not part of this census. It follows that such a decree ("all the inhabited earth") does not reflect **ignorance** on the emperor's part, but **arrogance**. As great as the Roman empire was, Caesar Augustus certainly knew that Rome could not gather taxes beyond its own boundaries. He did believe, however, that the rather limited part of the "**earth**" which was controlled by Rome was all that deserved the designation. Thus is the pride of so many rulers of empires!

Darrell Bock - Luke portrays Augustus as the unknowing agent of God, whose decree leads to the fulfillment of the promised rise of a special ruler from Bethlehem (Mic. 5:1–2 [4:14–5:1 MT]). In the period of the emperor known for his **reign of peace**, God raises up the **child of peace**. For many interpreters, Luke is not only placing Jesus' birth in the context of world history, but he also is making a play on the theme of the peaceful emperor (Schürmann 1969: 102; Fitzmyer 1981: 393–94; R. Brown 1977: 415–16). **The real emperor of peace is Jesus, not Octavian**. But in the absence of Lucan comment about Augustus, the point, if present, is subtle. In addition to the historical connection, the mention of the census explains how a couple from Nazareth gave birth to a child in Bethlehem. The accidental events of history have become acts of destiny. Little actions have great significance, for the ruler was to come out of Bethlehem and only a governmental decree puts the parents in the right place**.** (BECNT - Luke)

Related Resources:

- Providence - in depth study
- What is divine providence?Gotquestions.org
- Is it true that everything happens for a reason? Gotquestions.org
- What does the Bible say about fate / destiny? Gotquestions.org
- What are some undeniable examples of divine intervention? Gotquestions.org

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Decree (1378)(**dogma** from **dokéo** = to think) refers to a fixed and authoritative decision or requirement (see the "decree" [dogma] of the emperors in Lu 2:1, Acts 17:7 = "the decrees of Caesar").

Caesar (2541)(**kaisar** - of Latin origin) refers to the emperor of Rome. It was originally a surname of Julius Caesar, later taken as a title by the chief Roman ruler.

Gilbrant on **kaisar** - The proper noun **Kaisar** is the Greek transliteration of the Latin word **Caesar**. "Caesar" was originally the family name of **Gaius Julius Caesar**. Julius Caesar was the final leader of the Roman Republic. He was assassinated on March 15, 44 B.C., by opponents in the Roman Senate who were concerned that he had amassed too much power. In his testament he had adopted his nephew Octavian, who assumed not only the name "**Caesar**" but also the military support and ultimately the political power previously held by Julius Caesar. By the year 27 B.C. Octavian had gained for himself the Republic's ancient sacral title "**Augustus**" and was officially known as Imperator Caesar divi filius Augustus ("**the Emperor Caesar Augustus, sacred son of god**"). Caesar Augustus, as he was popularly called (cf. Luke 2:1), gradually consolidated virtual monarchic power in the imperial office, bringing the Roman Republic to a close and founding what is known as the "Principate." Following his death in A.D. 14 each of his successors took the name "**Caesar**" as their imperial title. For an excellent brief summary of the political and military intrigue surrounding Julius and Augustus Caesar and the transition from the Republic to the Principate, see Koester, History, Culture and Religion of the Hellenistic Age, pp.298-307. **Kaisar** is used in the New Testament to refer to **Augustus** (Luke 2:1); **Tiberius** (Luke 3:1 - A.D. 14–37), who was emperor during Jesus' ministry; **Claudius** (Acts 17:7 and Acts 18:2 - A.D. 41–54); and **Nero** (probably the Caesar to whom Paul appealed in Acts 25:8-12, mentioned specifically in the subscript to 2 Timothy - A.D. 54–68). As mentioned above, "Caesar" was a name when applied to Augustus, but a title when referring to his imperial successors. It is possible that the title "Caesar" is used figuratively to refer to any human ruler or to the state in general in Jesus' famous aphorism, "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's" (Mark 12:13-17; cf. Matthew 22:15-22; Luke 20:20-26). However, the context of the politically sensitive issue of paying taxes to support the Roman occupation makes this figurative use unlikely. (Complete Biblical Library Greek-English Dictionary)

Kaisar - Usage: Caesar(21), Caesar's(8). 29x in 23v - Matt. 22:17; Matt. 22:21; Mk. 12:14; Mk. 12:16; Mk. 12:17; Lk. 2:1; Lk. 3:1; Lk. 20:22; Lk. 20:24; Lk. 20:25; Lk. 23:2; Jn. 19:12; Jn. 19:15; Acts 17:7; Acts 25:8; Acts 25:10; Acts 25:11; Acts 25:12; Acts 25:21; Acts 26:32; Acts 27:24; Acts 28:19; Phil. 4:22

Census be taken (583) (**apographo** from **apo** = from + **grapho** = to write)) is used here literally of citizens enrolled or registered, e.g., as occurred in an official registration in tax lists. Also used in Luke 2:3, Luke 2:5 and once in Heb 12:23. **Agographo** is translated in the NAS: census be taken(1), enrolled(1), register(1), register for the census(1).

Earth (3625)(**oikoumene** the feminine participle present passive of **oikeo** = to dwell or abide) describes the inhabited portion of the earth, exclusive of the heavens above and hell below. In the Septuagint David says "the **earth** (Lxx = oikoumene) is the LORD'S and all it contains." (Ps 24:1) The Romans used **oikoumene** in their secular writings to refer to the Roman Empire, for to them their empire equated with the whole world. Finally, in some NT contexts **oikoumene** was used to refer to the inhabitants of the world (see Acts 17:31+, Acts 19:27+, Re 12:9+). All uses in NT - Mt. 24:14; Lk. 2:1; Lk. 4:5; Lk. 21:26; Acts 11:28; Acts 17:6; Acts 17:31; Acts 19:27; Acts 24:5; Ro 10:18; Heb. 1:6; Heb. 2:5; Rev. 3:10; Rev. 12:9; Rev. 16:14

Steven Cole - A few years ago, newscaster Andy Rooney responded to the charge that his profession only covered the negative side of everything. He imagined a newscast in which it was reported that planes took off and landed safely. In Florida, the orange crop was hit by another night of average weather. The oranges just hung in there and grew. In Detroit, General Motors announced that 174,000 Chevrolets would not be recalled because they were all perfect. Rooney's point was that good news isn't always appreciated unless it's against the backdrop of bad news. Our text tells us the best news in the world, but two factors make it difficult for people to appreciate it. First, the Christmas story is perhaps the most widely known story in history. As a result, many people, even Christians, shrug it off as not being especially exciting or relevant to the problems they are facing. Second, many people do not realize what dire straits they are in regarding their standing before God and their eternal destiny. So when they read the familiar story that a Savior has been born in the city of Bethlehem, they yawn and say, "That's nice. What's for dinner?" Not seeing their desperate need for salvation, they fail to appreciate the fact that this story is the best news in all of history. The best news in the world is that a Savior was born for you, who is Christ the Lord. A couple of years ago, Moody Magazine (Jan./Feb., 1996) reported that 49 percent of professing Christians agree that "all good people, whether they consider Jesus Christ to be Savior or not, will live in heaven after they die." If that opinion is true, then the story of the birth of Jesus may warm your heart and make you feel good. But it won't be the best news in the world, news that you cannot live without. However, if the Bible is correct in stating that all people have sinned and apart from Christ they are under God's condemnation, then the news that the Savior has been born is hardly just nice! It is the best news in the world and it is absolutely crucial!

A man traveled a great distance for an interview with a distinguished scholar. He was ushered into the man's study, where he said, "Doctor, I notice that the walls of your study are lined with books from the ceiling to the floor. No doubt you have read them all. I know you have written many yourself. You have traveled extensively, and doubtless you've had the privilege of conversing with some of the world's wisest men. I've come a long way to ask you just one question. Tell, me, of all you've learned, what is the one thing most worth knowing?" Putting his hand on his guest's shoulder, the scholar replied with emotion in his voice, "My dear sir, of all the things I have learned, only two are really worth knowing. The first is, I am a great sinner, and the second, Jesus Christ is a great Savior!" If you know those two things personally, you know the best news in the whole world, that a Savior has been born for you who is Christ

the Lord! (The Best News in the World Luke 2:1-20)

Story-shaped Faith Daniel Taylor

"In the beggining, God..." (Gen. 1:1).

"There was once a man in the land of Uz whose name was Job" (Job 1:1).

"**Now in those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus**" (Luke 2:1).

"There came a man sent from God, whose name was John" (John 1:6).

"Jesus said, 'A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among robbers'" (Luke 10:30).

God is telling the world a story. It begins in eternity past and stretches into eternity future. It climaxed two thousand years ago when God entered into his creation in a new way. It could reach its temporal conclusion today—or in five thousand years. The theme of the story is shalom: all things in their created place doing what they were created to do in loving relationship with their creator. And, amazing grace, it is a story into which God invites you and me as characters. Human beings are story-shaped creatures. We are born into stories, raised in stories, and live and die in stories. Whenever we have to answer a big question—who am I, why am I here, what should I do, what happens to me when I die?—we tell a story. The Ur-story, the foundational story, is the story of God's love for his creation, and all other stories are to be measured against it. The single best way of conceiving of faith, and of a faithful life, is as a story in which you are a character. Your life task is to be a character in the greatest story every told. It is what you were created for. If faith were primarily an idea, the intellect alone might be adequate for dealing with it. Since it is instead a life to be lived, we need story. Story, as does life, engages all of what we are—mind, emotions, spirit, body. Faith calls us to live in a certain way, not just to think in a certain way. It is no surprise, then, that the central record of faith in human history opens with an unmistakable story signature: "In the beginning..." (The Power of Words and the Wonder of God)

John MacArthur's introductory background is very interesting - This chapter, which provides the most detailed look at the events of the first Christmas, is perhaps the most widely known chapter in the Bible. Its familiar story has inspired music, cards, books, and pageants over the centuries. But the world celebrates the birth of Jesus Christ for all the wrong reasons. Christmas has become an excuse for self-indulgence, materialism, and partying; it has degenerated into a secularized social event that misses entirely its true meaning.

For the first few centuries of its existence, the church did not celebrate Christ's birth. Some of the early fathers, most notably Origen, even argued against celebrating the birthdays of saints and martyrs (including Jesus). They reasoned that such people should be honored instead on the day of their martyrdom. Noting that the only birthdays mentioned in the Bible are those of Pharaoh (Gen. 40:20) and Herod (Matt. 14:6), they viewed birthday celebrations as a pagan custom. By the second century, the actual date of Christ's birth had been forgotten, as evidenced by the numerous dates proposed for it (e.g., January 2, 6; March 21, 25; April 18, 19; May 20, 28; November 17, 20). Exactly when the early church settled on December 25 is not known. The first recorded reference to that date as the day of Christ's birth is found in the writings of Sextus Julius Africanus early in the third century. The earliest evidence of the church celebrating Christmas on December 25 comes from the fourth-century manuscript known as the Chronography or Calendar of 354. According to that document Christmas was being celebrated on December 25 by the church at Rome no later than A.D. 336. That date was gradually adopted by the church as a whole over the next several centuries. Why the church finally decided to celebrate the birth of Jesus on December 25 is also not known for certain. Some believe that it was to offer a Christian alternative to the popular pagan holiday known as Dies Natalis Solis Invicti ("the birthday of the unconquered sun"), which was celebrated on December 25. That festival was inaugurated late in the third century to honor several sun gods, chief of which was Mithras, whose worship (Mithraism) posed a serious threat to the Christian church. Others hold that the date was chosen because it is nine months after March 25, the day that some in the early church believed (without biblical warrant) was the date of Jesus' conception.

Over the centuries the trappings now commonly associated with Christmas gradually seeped into the celebration. Gift giving was an integral part of the pagan winter festivals, and became firmly associated with Christmas by the end of the eighteenth century. Mistletoe was sacred to the ancient Druids, who attributed to it both magical and medicinal powers. Kissing under the mistletoe may derive from a Druid or Scandinavian custom that enemies who met under mistletoe were to cease fighting and observe a truce. The crèche, or manger scene, originated with St. Francis of Assisi in the thirteenth century. The practice of singing carols also originated in the Middle Ages. The city of Riga in Latvia claims to be the home of the first Christmas tree, dating from the year 1510. Others legends attribute the first Christmas tree to Martin Luther, who allegedly brought an evergreen tree into his house and decorated it. There is, however, no contemporary record of his having done so. Christmas trees became popular in Germany in the seventeenth century, and first appeared in America early in the nineteenth century. The first commercial Christmas cards were sold in London in 1843. Santa Claus, the secular symbol of Christmas, derives from the fourth-century Saint Nicholas, bishop of Myra in modern Turkey. Though little is known of his life, Nicholas was remembered for his generosity and kindness. According to one legend, he rescued three daughters of a poor family from being forced into prostitution by providing dowries for them so they could marry. After doing their laundry, the girls hung their stockings by the fireplace to dry. That night Nicholas tossed a small bag of gold coins into each girl's stocking. The custom of hanging Christmas stockings derives in part from that story. Settlers from the Netherlands, where

Nicholas is popular, brought his tradition with them to America. Nicholas's Dutch name, Sinterklaas, or Sinte Klaas, eventually became Anglicized into "Santa Claus." All of those extrabiblical elements only obscure the simple, yet unfathomably profound, meaning of Christmas. No less a theologian than Martin Luther confessed,

> "When I am told that God became man, I can follow the idea, but I just do not understand what it means. For what man, if left to his natural promptings, if he were God, would humble himself to lie in the feedbox of a donkey or to hang upon a cross? God laid upon Christ the iniquities of us all. This is that ineffable and infinite mercy of God which the slender capacity of man's heart cannot comprehend and much less utter—that unfathomable depth and burning zeal of God's love toward us…. Who can sufficiently declare this exceeding great goodness of God? (cited in Roland H. Bainton, Here I Stand [Nashville: Abingdon, 1950], 223)

For the moment, the curtain has fallen in Luke's narrative on the story of John the Baptist (Lk 1:80), and is about to rise on the story of Jesus Christ. The promise made to Mary by Gabriel (Lk 1:31-35) is about to be fulfilled. As Luke picks up the story of Jesus' birth, he demonstrates how God sovereignly orchestrated events to bring about a direct fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy. Divine intervention was required, because in the normal course of events, Jesus would not have been born in Bethlehem as the Old Testament predicted (Mic. 5:2), since Joseph and Mary lived in Nazareth. (Luke Commentary - See also sermon Jesus' Birth in Bethlehem - Part 1 for some of the historical background).

QUESTION - What was Augustus Caesar's impact on biblical history?

ANSWER - Augustus Caesar's birth name was Gaius Octavius. He was the nephew, adopted son, and hand-picked successor to Julius Caesar. Upon Julius' death, Octavian (as he was then called) had to fight to consolidate control, but, when he finally secured his position as the first Roman emperor, he reigned the longest of any of the Caesars in Julius' line, from 63 BC to AD 14. He received the name *Augustus* ("Venerable") in 27 BC.

Caesar Augustus is only mentioned once in the New Testament, at the beginning of the well-known Christmas story recorded in Luke 2: "In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world" (verse 1). As a result of this decree, Joseph had to return to his ancestral home, Bethlehem, and he took with him Mary, who was already expecting the Baby Jesus. While they were there in Bethlehem, Jesus was born, as the prophet Micah had foretold: "But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah (**ED**: FIRST CALLED "EPHRATH" IN Ge 35:16, 19, etc), though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times" (Micah 5:2).

The census that forced Joseph and Mary to go to Bethlehem was Augustus Caesar's most obvious impact on biblical history; however, there are other facts concerning Caesar Augustus that would have been meaningful to first-century readers of the Gospels.

Octavian was given the name *Augustus*, which means "great" or "venerable" or "worthy of reverence," which is an insinuation that he was worthy of worship. In 42 BC, the Senate formally deified Julius Caesar as *divus Iulius* ("the divine Julius"). This led to his adopted son, Octavian, being known as *divi filius* ("son of the god"), a title that Augustus Caesar embraced. Coins issued by Augustus featured Caesar's image and inscriptions such as "Divine Caesar and Son of God." An Egyptian inscription calls Augustus Caesar a star "shining with the brilliance of the Great Heavenly Savior." In 17 BC an uncommon star did appear in the heavens; Augustus commanded a celebration, and Virgil pronounced, "The turning point of the ages has come." During Augustus' reign, emperor worship exploded, especially in Asia Minor, which later became a hotbed for persecution of Christians. (Asia Minor was the area Paul covered in his first two missionary journeys as well as the location of the seven churches receiving letters in Revelation.)

From what we know of Augustus and the worship that was paid to him, it is clear that Luke is telling the story of Jesus in such a way that Christ is seen as the true possessor of the titles claimed by Augustus. It is not Augustus who is Savior and Lord, but "Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ, the Lord" (Luke 2:11). It is not Augustus, but Jesus who is the Son of God (Luke 1:32). And it is not in Augustus that the turning point of the ages has come, but in Jesus Christ, who ushers in the kingdom of God (Luke 4:43).

The Roman creed stated, "Caesar is Lord," but the Christian only recognizes Jesus as Lord. Because of their longstanding history of monotheism, Jews were granted an exemption from the required emperor worship. As long as Christianity was considered a sect of Judaism, Christians were also exempt from being forced to worship the Roman emperor. But as Jews began to denounce Christians and put them out of the synagogues, the Christians no longer were allowed this exception. Thus, the Roman government was the instrument of Jewish persecution in much of the New Testament. We see the first instance of this in the charges brought against Jesus Himself (Luke 23:1–2). This happened again to Paul and Silas in Thessalonica, where some unbelieving Jews stirred up the crowd by saying, "They are all defying Caesar's decrees, saying that there is another king, one called Jesus" (Acts 17:7).

Augustus Caesar died shortly after Jesus' birth. While Augustus himself may not have claimed the prerogatives of deity, he

accepted divine titles as a means of propaganda. As the Roman religion developed, emperor worship became a patriotic duty. The New Testament refutes Roman religion at every turn, proclaiming Jesus, not Caesar, as the Son of God and Lord (Mark 1:1; 1 Thessalonians 1:1). Augustus decreed the census that was the human mechanism God used to fulfill the prophecy regarding the place of the Messiah's birth. Augustus thought he was taking measure of the greatness of his kingdom, but, in reality, he was setting the scene for his ultimate Replacement. It was also under Augustus Caesar that the Roman peace was established, roads were built, and a common, stable culture was established so that the gospel could easily spread throughout the Roman Empire. While Augustus and the emperors after him thought they were building their own kingdom, they were simply unwitting and often unwilling actors in the building of the kingdom of God.GotQuestions.org

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Luke 2:2 This was the first census taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria.

NET This was the first registration, taken when Quirinius was governor of Syria.

GNT α τη πογραφ πρ τη γ νετο γεμονε οντος τ ς Συρ ας Κυρην ου.

NLT (This was the first census taken when Quirinius was governor of Syria.)

KJV (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.)

ESV This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria.

NIV (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.)

- **census**: Ac 5:37
- **governor**: Lu 3:1 Ac 13:7 18:12 23:26 26:30
- Luke 2 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

GOD'S TIMING:
THE FIRST CENSUS

The KJV translates it "(And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.)"

Luke's Gospel is not only good news but it is a historically accurate record of the events surrounding the birth, life and death of the Messiah.

This was the first census (apographo) **taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria -** Critics of the inerrancy and inspiration of the Bible appeal to this passage as an example of an error. See discussion below for explanation. (See Wikipedia article on Quirinius) A second census is mentioned in Acts 5:37+. **Utley** adds that "These Roman censuses took many years to complete, possibly up to fourteen years (i.e. evidence from Egypt)."

Darrell Bock - The reference to the "**first**" (prōtē) census here can be taken most naturally to mean either that this census was the first ever done in the province or that it was the first of at least two censuses done under Quirinius. The second meaning is more natural....The reference to (Quirinius') governing need not refer to official office as governor, but could refer to administrative authority as a representative of the emperor (MM 276–77; Josephus, Antiquities 18.4.2 §88; Fitzmyer 1981: 402). The mention of the **census** is another way to refer to the tax registration of Lk 2:1. (See BECNT - Luke)

Steven Cole on **Quirinius** - There are some difficult problems which scholars have raised about Luke's historical accuracy. One concerns the census in the time of Quirinius mentioned in chapter 2. There is no record that Augustus ever ordered such a census, and there is dispute over whether Quirinius was indeed governor of Syria at the time when Jesus was born. The fact that there is no independent record of such a census does not mean that it did not happen. We lack many historical records from the reign of Caesar Augustus. And the same is true regarding the years of Quirinius' governorship. As one scholar has pointed out, "The probabilities are against Luke's having been careless of a point so easily checked when he was affirming to a prominent leader his own care for accuracy, and was using historical detail to substantiate his central message." Another scholar, William Ramsay, asked "how, if Luke made such a glaring error in the facts surrounding the birth of Christ, did these inaccuracies escape the attention of the enemies of the Gospel in Roman times?" (W. T. Dayton, *Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible* [Zondervan], 3:1006). (Luke 1:1-4 - Faith Rooted in History)

Syria - Syria was the large Roman province of which Judea was part. The capital was Antioch. Under this administration came smaller political divisions such as Judea, which was ruled by Pilate at Jerusalem from A.D. 26 to 36.

Roman Emperors in New Testament Times

- Augustus (27 B.C.–A.D. 14) Ordered the census that involved Joseph and Mary going to Bethlehem (Luke 2:1)
- Tiberius (A.D. 14–37) Jesus ministered and was crucified under his reign (Luke 3:1; 20:22, 25; 23:2; John 19:12, 15)
- Caligula (A.D. 37–41)
- Claudius (A.D. 41–54) An extensive famine occurred in his reign (Acts 11:28). He expelled Jews from Rome, including Aquila and Priscilla (Acts 18:2).
- Nero (A.D. 54–68) He persecuted Christians, including the martyrdoms of Paul and Peter. He is the Caesar to whom Paul appealed for a fair trial (Acts 25:8, 10–12, 21; 26:32; 27:24; 28:19).
- Galba (A.D. 68–69)
- Otho (A.D. 69)
- Vitellius (A.D. 69)
- Vespasian (A.D. 69–79) Crushed the Jewish revolt, and his son Titus destroyed the Jerusalem temple in A.D. 70. (BKC)

Norman Geisler addresses a question critics raise noting that "Luke states that the **census** decreed by Augustus was the first one taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. However, Quirinius did not become governor of Syria until after the death of Herod in about A.D. 6. **Is this an error in Luke's historical record?**

Luke has not made an error. There are reasonable solutions to this difficulty. First, Quintilius Varus was governor of Syria from about 7 B.C. to about 4 B.C. Varus was not a trustworthy leader, a fact that was disastrously demonstrated in A.D. 9 when he lost three legions of soldiers in the Teutoburger forest in Germany. To the contrary, Quirinius was a notable military leader who was responsible for squelching the rebellion of the Homonadensians in Asia Minor. When it came time to begin the census, in about 8 or 7 B.C., Augustus entrusted Quirinius with the delicate problem in the volatile area of Palestine, effectively superseding the authority and governorship of Varus by appointing Quirinius to a place of special authority in this matter. **It has also been proposed that Quirinius was governor of Syria on two separate occasions, once while prosecuting the military action against the Homonadensians between 12 and 2 B.C., and later beginning about A.D. 6. A Latin inscription discovered in 1764 has been interpreted to refer to Quirinius as having served as governor of Syria on two occasions.** It is possible that Luke 2:2 reads, "This census took place before Quirinius was governing Syria." In this case, the Greek word translated "**first**" (prōtos) is translated as a comparative, "**before**." Because of the awkward construction of the sentence, this is not an unlikely reading. Regardless of which solution is accepted, it is not necessary to conclude that Luke has made an error in recording the historical events surrounding the birth of Jesus. Luke has proven himself to be a reliable historian even in the details. Sir William Ramsey has shown that in making reference to 32 countries, 54 cities, and 9 islands he made no mistakes! (See When Critics Ask)

QUESTION - **"Does Luke's Claim that Jesus Was Born in Bethlehem at the Time of Quirinius' Census Match the Historical Record?"**

ANSWER - This is a question that has been a point of controversy among biblical scholars and skeptics for centuries. History tells us that Caesar Augustus reigned over the Roman Empire from 27 BC to AD 14 and ordered a census to be conducted during his tenure. Herod the Great reigned until 4 BC, meaning Jesus has to be born sometime before that time. The mention of Quirinius as governor of Syria in Luke chapter 2 appears to cause a problem as history records that Quirinius held this office between AD 6–7, at least 10 years after the birth of Jesus according to Matthew and Luke. There are at least three possibilities here for how we can interpret what is written in Luke 2:2:

> (1) Luke made a historical error. This would presuppose that Luke was not inspired by the Holy Spirit in all his writings.
>
> (2) The Greek word for "**first**" in Luke 2:2 is protos and can be translated "**before**." Thus Luke 2:2 could actually be translated, "This was the census taken **before** Quirinius was governor of Syria."
>
> (3) Quirinius actually ruled Syria on two separate occasions and there were actually two censuses taken. The "first census" mentioned in Luke 2:2 occurred during his first term as governor, and another was ordered during his second term as governor mentioned in Acts 5:37, which probably took place between AD 6–7 (Josephus links this census to an uprising under Judas of Galilee). With Luke being the author of both Luke and Acts and wanting to write in "consecutive order" (Luke 1:3), it would seem unlikely for Luke to make such a mistake in dating.

Further, the Christian doctrine of the inerrancy of the Word of God (2 Timothy 3:16, 2 Peter 1:20–21) leads us to accept explanation (2) or (3) as the most likely, with the most evidence pointing to explanation (3). The Bible is true and spoken from God's mouth (God-breathed), and we accept it as truth more than the historical writings of the Romans or even the writings of the Jewish historian

Josephus. (See Gotquestions an excellent resource)

QUESTION - What Year Was Jesus Christ Born?

ANSWER - The Bible does not provide the exact day or even the exact year in which Jesus was born in Bethlehem. But a close examination of the chronological details of history narrows the possibilities to a reasonable window of time.

The biblical details of Jesus' birth are found in the Gospels. Matthew 2:1 states that Jesus was born during the days of Herod the king. Since Herod died in 4 B.C., we have a parameter to work with. Further, after Joseph and Mary fled Bethlehem with Jesus, Herod ordered all the boys 2 years old and younger in that vicinity killed. This indicates that Jesus could have been as old as 2 before Herod's death. This places the date of His birth between 6 and 4 B.C.

Luke 2:1–2 notes several other facts to ponder: "In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria." We know that Caesar Augustus reigned from 27 B.C. to A.D. 14.

Quirinius governed Syria during this same time period, with records of a census that included Judea in approximately 6 B.C. Some scholars debate whether this is the census mentioned by Luke, but it does appear to be the same event. Based on these historical details, the most likely time of Christ's birth in Bethlehem is 6–5 B.C.

Luke mentions another detail concerning our timeline: "Jesus, when he began his ministry, was about thirty years of age" (Luke 3:23). Jesus began His ministry during the time John the Baptist ministered in the wilderness, and John's ministry started "in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene, during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas" (Luke 3:1–2).

The only time period that fits all of these facts is A.D. 27–29. If Jesus was "about thirty years of age" by A.D. 27, a birth sometime between 6 and 4 B.C. would fit the chronology. More specifically, Jesus would have been approximately 32 years old at the time He began His ministry (still "about thirty years of age").

What about the day of Christ's birth? The tradition of December 25 was developed long after the New Testament period. It's the day Christians have agreed to celebrate the birth of Jesus, but the exact day of His birth is unknown.

What is known is that biblical and historical details point to an approximate year of birth. Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea approximately 6–5 B.C. to Mary, His mother. His birth changed history forever, along with the lives of countless people around the world.

Luke 2:3 And everyone was on his way to register for the census, each to his own city.

NET Everyone went to his own town to be registered.

GNT κα πορε οντο π ντες πογρ φεσθαι, καστος ε ς τ ν αυτο π λιν.

NLT All returned to their own ancestral towns to register for this census.

KJV And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city.

ESV And all went to be registered, each to his own town.

NIV And everyone went to his own town to register.

- Luke 2 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

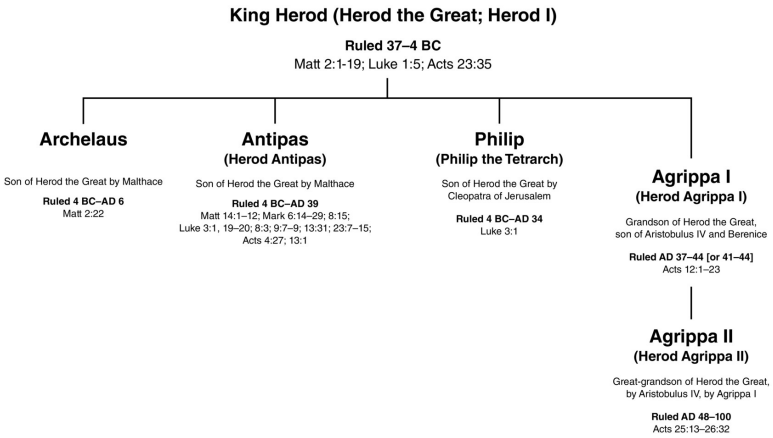
REGISTRATION IN ONE'S OWN CITY

And everyone was on his way to register for the census (apographo) - NLT = "All returned to their own ancestral towns." The Roman Emperor's decree dare not be disobeyed! Does this not once again underscore the mysterious interaction between God's sovereignty (and divine providence) and man's responsibility (free will)? Amazing grace indeed!

Each to his own city - His hometown or native city, his ancestral home, the place of tribal origin. This is a reference to the fact that

the genealogical records of families in Judah were traditionally kept in their ancestral home towns. Rome was not just seeking to determine how many people lived in Judah but wanted to assure that all paid their taxes!

Octavian was ruling and declared himself "Augustus Caesar" = he was declaring himself God. At the same time God was saying "No. My Son is God."



Click to Enlarge
(Source: Lorgos.com)

- Herod the Great (who began rebuilding the 2nd Temple in 20BC) ruled until 4BC, the same year that Jesus was born. (See map of Judea under Herod the Great)
- Herod Antipas followed from 4BC to 39AD
- Herod Agrippa I: 39-44AD
- Herod Agrippa II: 27/28-92AD--ruling during Paul's 3 missionary journeys (Painting of Paul before Agrippa II) and when Jerusalem was destroyed. (See full Family Tree)

Luke 2:4 Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the city of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David,

---

NET So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family line of David.

GNT ν βη δ κα ωσ φ π τ ς Γαλιλα ας κ π λεως Ναζαρ θ ε ς τ ν ουδα αν ε ς π λιν Δαυ δ τις καλε ται Βηθλ εμ, δι τ ε ναι α τ ν ξ ο κου κα πατρι ς Δαυ δ,

NLT And because Joseph was a descendant of King David, he had to go to Bethlehem in Judea, David's ancient home. He traveled there from the village of Nazareth in Galilee.

KJV And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:)

ESV And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David,

NIV So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David.

- **Joseph:** Lu 1:26,27 Lk 3:23
- **from the city:** Lu 4:16 Mt 2:23 Joh 1:46
- **to Judea**: Ge 35:19 48:7 Ru 1:19 2:4 4:11,17,21,22 1Sa 16:1,4 17:12,58 1Sa 20:6 Mic 5:2 Mt 2:1-6 Joh 7:42
- **he was:** Lu 1:27 3:23-31 Mt 1:1-17
- Luke 2 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

O LITTLE TOWN OF BETHLEHEM

Events of Jesus' birth
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Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the city of Nazareth, to Judea - **Joseph**, (he is about age 14) barely introduced in Lk 1:27+, enters center stage. Taxation followed his lineage, and Joseph obediently brought his pregnant wife Mary (who is about 13) some 85-90 miles from Nazareth to **Bethlehem** where the Scriptures had foretold the Messiah would be born (Micah 5:2+) **Bethlehem** was about 2,564 feet above sea level, so travelers from Nazareth which is about 1,830 feet above sea level would have to ascend in altitude, hence Luke's accurate description of **went up**. For the **city of Nazareth** click Luke 1 commentary on **Nazareth** including The Puzzling Problem of Nazareth.

> **Robert A Stein** adds that "A traveler always "**goes up**" to Jerusalem (Lk 2:22; 18:31; 19:28; Acts 11:2; 13:31; 15:2; 21:12, 15; 25:1, 9) and "**goes down**" from Jerusalem (Lk 10:30; Acts 11:27; 25:7) because Jerusalem lies 2,500 feet above sea level." (See Luke: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition)
>
> **Leon Morris** comments "We should perhaps reflect that it was the combination of a decree by the emperor in distant Rome and the gossiping tongues of Nazareth that brought Mary to Bethlehem at just the time to fulfil the prophecy about the birthplace of the Christ (Mic. 5:2). God works through all kinds of people to effect His purposes. (Borrow the The Gospel according to St. Luke TNTC)

Related Resources:

- When were Joseph and Mary considered married?
- Why are Jesus' genealogies in Matthew and Luke so different?
- Was Joseph married before Mary?
- Where was Joseph when Jesus was an adult?
- What were common marriage customs in Bible times?

To the city of David which is called Bethlehem (house of bread) - In fulfillment of the Messianic prophecy in Micah. How fitting that the **House of Bread** would be the site of the birth of the **Bread of Life** (Jn 6:35) Who would grow up, die and be raised from the dead that He might be able to nourish the entire world with "spiritual bread."

> "But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, [Too] little to be among the clans of Judah, From you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel. His goings forth are from long ago, From the days of eternity." (Micah 5:2-commentary)
>
> **Comment** - Notice that phrase "**from you One will go forth**" which speaks of Messiah's birth. And while He came to be Ruler, Israel rejected His rule. Therefore the prophecy "to be Ruler in Israel" was not fulfilled at His birth but will be fulfilled at His Second Coming when He returns as **Deliverer** (Ro 11:26+) and **King of kings and Lord of lords** (Rev 19:16+). At that time "**all Israel will be saved**" (Ro 11:26+) referring not to all Jews of all time but to all Jews who at the time of His return had come to believe in Him as Messiah and Savior and which will only be a remnant (1/3 - Zech 13:8+ Note that many Jews will have been saved prior to the Second Coming but this verse does not refer to those.). At His return Messiah's rule over Israel would be fully and finally consummated. See related notes on Isa 11:1, notes on Isaiah 11:10, and notes on Jer 33:15.
>
> **How did the Jewish writers interpret Micah 5:2? James Gloag** observes that even "Jewish writers in general… have adopted the Messianic application of this passage. They, however, avoid the reference to Jesus by supposing that Bethlehem is mentioned here as the birth-place of the Messiah only indirectly, denoting merely that he was to be descended from David; and the eternal duration here mentioned alludes not to the person but to the name of the Messiah. According to the rabbinical fancies, there were seven things created before the world existed; and one of these is the name of the Messiah. Other Jewish writers grant that Bethlehem is to be the birth-place of the Messiah, but they regard the prophecy as still unfulfilled, and look forward to its accomplishment in the future." (The Messianic Prophecies - Paton James Gloag - Google Books)

Because he was of the house and family of David - **Because** is a term of explanation. Luke is explaining how Joseph knew that he had to go to Bethlehem **the city of David** for the census.

Related articles -

- What was the star of Bethlehem?

- Where was Jesus born?
- Is Micah 5:2 a Messianic prophecy?
- Why was Jesus born in a manger?
- What year was Jesus Christ born? When was Jesus born?
- **Wikipedia article** on O Little Town of Bethlehem (includes the story of how it came to be written)

O Little Town of Bethlehem
(Elvis)
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

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

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.

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

Christmas Journey

Read: Luke 2:1-7; Galatians 4:4-5

When the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son. —Galatians 4:4

How far is it from Nazareth to Bethlehem? If you're in Pennsylvania, it's about 9 miles and takes about 10 minutes by car. But if you're in Nazareth of Galilee, and you're traveling along with your pregnant wife, as Joseph was, it's about 80 miles to Bethlehem. That journey probably took Joseph and Mary about a week, and they didn't stay in a nice hotel when they got there. All Joseph could find was a stall in a stable, and that's where Mary delivered "her firstborn Son" (Luke 2:7).

But the journey for the infant Jesus was much farther than 80 miles. He left His place in heaven at God's right hand, came to earth, and accepted our humanity. Eventually, He was stretched out on a cross to die, and He was buried in a borrowed tomb. But the journey was not over. He conquered death, left the tomb, walked again among men, and ascended to heaven. Even that is not the

journey's end. Someday He will return as King of kings and Lord of lords.

As you take a Christmas journey this month, reflect on the journey Jesus made for us. He came from heaven to earth to die for us, making salvation available through His death on the cross and His glorious resurrection.

Praise God for that first Christmas journey!

When God stepped out of heaven above
And came down to this earth,
He clothed Himself in human flesh—
A Child of lowly birth.
—D. De Haan

Jesus came to earth for us so we could go to heaven with Him.

By David C. Egner (Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved)

Luke 2:5 in order to register along with Mary, who was engaged to him, and was with child.

NET He went to be registered with Mary, who was promised in marriage to him, and who was expecting a child.

GNT πογρ ψασθαι σ ν Μαρι μ τ μνηστευμ ν α τ , ο σ γκ .

NLT He took with him Mary, his fiancée, who was now obviously pregnant.

KJV To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child.

ESV to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child.

NIV He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child.

ASV to enrol himself with Mary, who was betrothed to him, being great with child.

CSB to be registered along with Mary, who was engaged to him and was pregnant.

- Dt 22:22-27 Mt 1:18,19
- Luke 2 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

MARY ENGAGED WITH CHILD

In order to - Term of purpose. Should always prompt the question "What purpose?" The answer in this case is obvious.

To register along with Mary, who was engaged (mnesteuo) **to him, and was with child - Mary** was **engaged** and **with child** or pregnant with Jesus not by Joseph but "by the Holy Spirit." (Mt 1:18, 19). This is the miraculous virgin birth. The verb **engaged** is also a subtle clue that the child is not Joseph's (pre-marital sex was not the norm in Israel at this time!).

MacArthur adds that "while Matthew 1:24 states that Joseph had already married her. There is no contradiction between the two accounts, however. First, it must be remembered that the distinction in Jewish culture between engagement and marriage was not as clear-cut as it is today. Engagement was a legally binding contract, though the physical union was not consummated. For example, to end their engagement, as he contemplated doing after discovering that she was pregnant, Joseph would have had to divorce Mary (Matt. 1:19. Note that Matthew in that same verse refers to Joseph as Mary's husband before they were married.) Since a covenant to be married had taken place, Matthew could properly refer to the couple as married. But since the marriage was not physically consummated until after Jesus' birth (Matt. 1:24-25), Luke could refer to them as engaged, since they were conducting their relationship as appropriate to the betrothal period." (See Luke Commentary)

Engaged (3423)(**mnesteuo** from **mnaomai** = to remember) in the active voice means to woo and win for marriage, to ask in marriage, to pledge to marry. **Mnesteuo** is used only in the passive voice in the NT and means to be promised in marriage, to be betrothed, to become engaged. **Mnesteuo i**s used in the NT only in Mt 1:18 (betrothed), Lk 1:27 and Lk 2:5. As used in by the NT writers **mnesteuo** described a legally binding agreement, unlike the sense of of engagement as used today.**Mnesteuo** is used 8x in

7v in the Septuagint to translate the Hebrew verb for betroth (aras) - Deut. 20:7; Deut. 22:23; Deut. 22:25; Deut. 22:27; Deut. 22:28; Hos. 2:19-20 (3 uses of mnesteuo)

Hosea 2:19-20 "I will **betroth** you to Me forever; Yes, I will **betroth** you to Me in righteousness and in justice, In lovingkindness and in compassion, And I will **betroth** you to Me in faithfulness. Then you will know the LORD.

> **MacArthur** writes that **three** uses of "the term (**Ed**: Hebrew = aras) emphasizes the intensity of God's restoring love for the nation. In that day, Israel will no longer be thought of as a prostitute. Israel brings nothing to the marriage; God makes all the promises and provides all the dowry. These verses are recited by every orthodox Jew as he places the phylacteries on his hand and forehead (cf. Dt 11:18). The regeneration/conversion of the nation is much like that of an individual (cf. 2Co 5:16–19, **Ed**: Zechariah alludes to that conversion in Zech 12:10 and Paul in Ro 11:26-note - see also "Will all Israel be saved in the end times?").

Zodhiates has an informative discussion of **mnesteuo** - It is related to the verb used for "**remember**" because it was a ceremony which was to be remembered when a person was espoused or committed to another for marriage (Sept.: Deut. 22:23, 25, 27, 28). The betrothal ceremony perpetuated in a conventional fashion the recollection of the time when a woman was purchased from her family (Deut. 20:7). When a woman was designated (Ex. 21:8, 9) by the head of her family as the future wife of another man, the prospective bridegroom paid a certain sum of money (or service as in the case of Jacob). A contract, which was inviolable, was then entered into (Gen. 34:12; Ex. 22:17). Until the time of the actual marriage, the bride–to–be remained in her own family. It was not permissible to betroth her to any other man except by action amounting to divorce, and any violation of the rights established by the betrothal was as serious as if the two persons had been ceremonially married (Deut. 22:23, 24). In the OT, it is impossible to say with precision just how soon the wedding followed betrothal. In later times, in the case of a virgin, it was after the lapse of a year, and at least thirty days in the case of a widow. So, too, it is impossible to describe with any great precision the betrothal ceremony, but it certainly included the payment of a particular sum (1 Sam. 18:25) and the making of a betrothal contract (Ezek. 16:8) by the prospective bridegroom. The money payment belonged originally to the family of the woman, but gradually came to belong in part or wholly to the woman herself. The first advances might come from the family of either party. There is no clear evidence that the young woman had any right of appeal as to her family's choice. The bridegroom himself did not conduct the negotiations, but the matter was in the hands of a third party such as his parents or some trusted servant or friend.

After the exile, the custom of the earlier period seems to have continued, although with certain modifications. The payment to the bride's father on the part of the prospective groom had been increasingly regarded as the property, at least in part, of the bride. Such a payment during this period was often supplemented by a dowry in the true sense. No consent of the girl was demanded, nor do we know of the recognition of any legal age of consent, unless, as in somewhat later times, it was not expected that boys would marry before the age of eighteen or girls before twelve. In Talmudic times, there was a distinct tendency to combine the betrothal with the wedding. Today the Jews seem to combine the two ceremonies.

Probably the ceremony of betrothal in NT times involved the following acts:

- First, a contract drawn up by the parents or by the friend of the bridegroom.
- Second, the meeting of the two families concerned, with other witnesses, at which time the groom gave the bride jewelry (Gen. 24:53) and declared his intention to observe the terms of the contract already arranged.
- Third, the payment of the mōhar (4119 - Ed Note: Gesenius Definition מֹהַר m. a price paid for a wife to her parents, Genesis 34:12; Exodus 22:16; 1 Samuel 18:25. Different from this is the use of the Arab. مَهْرٌ i.e. a spousal gift promised to the future wife, and the Latin dos, i.e. the gift given by the parents to their daughter who is about to be married.) by the prospective bridegroom. This occurred during a ceremony at which a priest may have been present.

The status of the man and woman was now, as in Hebrew times, practically the same as that of married persons, although it was generally customary for the wedding ceremony proper to be celebrated at a later date. As in the older times, separation of betrothed persons demanded a divorce, and there seems to have been no taboo in their living together as man and wife previous to the wedding ceremony. The children of such a union would be regarded as legitimate. Insofar as the virgin Mary and Joseph are concerned, the use of the verb mnēsteúomai, to betroth (Matt. 1:18; Luke 1:27; 2:5), indicates a betrothal ceremony. There is no mention, however, of a subsequent wedding ceremony. It was during this period of betrothal that the angel appeared to Mary (Matt. 1:18). It is clearly stated, however, that the angel appeared to announce to Mary her conception by the Holy Spirit before she had sexual relations with Joseph. The same angel also appeared to Joseph to tell him of the supernatural conception of his betrothed, Mary (Matt. 1:24; see Luke 1:26ff.). (Zodhiates' Word Study Dictionary of the NT - This resource is recommended and in my opinion is superior to **BDAG** because it is so much more readable - you can also borrow a copy of The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament)

The Jewish writer **Alfred Edersheim** adds this note on **betrothal**:

We read in the Gospel that, when the Virgin-mother "was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily" (Matt. 1:18, 19). The narrative implies a distinction between **betrothal** and **marriage**—Joseph being at the time betrothed, but not actually married to the Virgin-mother. Even in the Old Testament a distinction is made between betrothal and marriage. The former was marked by a bridal present (or Mohar, Gen. 34:12; Ex. 22:17; 1 Sam. 18:25), with which the father, however, would in certain circumstances dispense. From the moment of her betrothal a woman was treated as if she were actually married. The Union could not be dissolved, except by regular divorce; breach of faithfulness was regarded as adultery; and the property of the woman became virtually that of her betrothed, unless he had expressly renounced it (Kidd. 9. 1). But even in that case he was her natural heir. It is impossible here to enter into the various legal details, as, for example, about property or money which might come to a woman after betrothal or marriage. The law adjudicated this to the husband, yet with many restrictions, and with infinite delicacy towards the woman, as if reluctant to put in force the rights of the stronger (Kidd. 8. 1, etc.). From the Mishnah (Bab. B. 10. 4) we also learn that there were regular Shitre Erusin, or writings of betrothal, drawn up by the authorities (the costs being paid by the bridegroom). These stipulated the mutual obligations, the dowry, and all other points on which the parties had agreed. The Shitre Erusin were different from the regular Chethubah (literally, writing), or marriage contract, without which the Rabbis regarded a marriage as merely legalised concubinage (Cheth. 5. 1). The Chethubah provided a settlement of at least two hundred denars for a maiden, and one hundred denars for a widow, while the priestly council at Jerusalem fixed four hundred denars for a priest's daughter. Of course these sums indicate only the legal minimum, and might be increased indefinitely at pleasure, though opinions differ whether any larger sums might be legally exacted, if matters did not go beyond betrothal. The form at present in use among the Jews sets forth, that the bridegroom weds his bride "according to the law of Moses and of Israel;" that he promises "to please, to honour, to nourish, and to care for her, as is the manner of the men of Israel," adding thereto the woman's consent, the document being signed by two witnesses. In all probability this was substantially the form in olden times. In Jerusalem and in Galilee—where it was said that men in their choice had regard to "a fair degree," while in the rest of Judæa they looked a good deal after money—widows had the right of residence in their husband's house secured to them. (Mothers, Daughters, and Wives in Israel)

QUESTION - . When were Joseph and Mary considered married?

ANSWER - There are three passages of Scripture that pertain specifically to the time ofJoseph and Mary's betrothal, the consummation of their marriage, and the birth of Jesus: Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 1:26-56; Luke 2:1-7. Each passage reveals something about their relationship as well as the cultural mores of that time.

In Bible times, Jewish marriage customs regarding a couple's engagement were far different and much more stringent than those we are familiar with today, especially in the West. Marriages were arranged by the parents of the bride and groom and often without even consulting the couple to be married. A contract was prepared in which the groom's parents paid a bride price. Such a contract was immediately deemed binding, with the couple considered married even though the actual ceremony and consummation of the marriage would not occur for as long as a year afterwards. The time between was a sort of testing of fidelity with the couple having little, if any, contact with each other.

It was during this betrothal period that the angel Gabriel visited Mary and told her of her impending pregnancy. It's no small wonder that Mary was so inquisitive of the angel; she was still a virgin and would know no man sexually for several months, maybe as long as a year or more (Matthew 1:18; Luke 1:34).

Joseph soon became aware of Mary's pregnancy, and this no doubt was cause for consternation on his part: "Because Joseph her husband was a righteous man and did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly" (Matthew 1:19). Jewish custom allowed that they be considered as husband and wife, though the marriage had not yet been consummated. The point is being made that Joseph and Mary had experienced no sexual contact with each other, as verse 18 "before they came together" points out. So, Joseph was in a quandary. Jewish law provided that his betrothed, because of her unfaithfulness, could be placed before the elders for judgment and stoned to death. But he was thinking to just put her away quietly without public knowledge. Betrothals or marriage engagements in those ancient times were binding and could only be terminated by an official divorce decree.

It was then that the angel appeared to Joseph in a dream (Matthew 1:20-25) and explained to him that all this was bringing about the fulfillment of prophecy that a virgin would bear a child who was to be the Savior (Isaiah 7:14), and "he [Joseph] did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. But he had no union with her until she gave birth to a son.

And he gave him the name Jesus."

Luke 2:1-7 also confirms the idea that Joseph and Mary, though betrothed, were considered as husband and wife by Jewish customs even though the actual marriage ceremony had not been fully effectuated. So, Joseph and Mary were actually legally married before the birth of Jesus though their marriage was not consummated physically until after His birth. GotQuestions.org

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QUESTION - What were common marriage customs in Bible times?

ANSWER - While there were many different cultures throughout the world in Bible times, the Bible itself mostly follows God's chosen people, the Israelites, through the coming of the Messiah. Therefore, this article will focus on Jewish marriage customs.

Marriages in Bible times were not made for love, per se, but for the mutual benefit of both families involved. Jewish marriages were usually arranged by the fathers of the bride and groom and would begin with a betrothal, or engagement. The bride's and groom's feelings on the marriage were not usually taken into consideration, and it was possible that the bride and groom had never met before the betrothal. Betrothals could even be agreed upon when the couple was very young. In these cases, the engagement would stand until the bride and groom were old enough to marry.

Contrary to the practice of many other cultures, in which the bride's father would pay the groom's family a dowry, in Jewish culture the groom's father paid a bride price, or *mohar*, to the bride's family in order to negotiate the betrothal and, in essence, "purchase" the bride. The groom would also give a gift to the bride called a *mattan*, which became a part of the property the bride would bring into the marriage. These gifts were not always monetary; they may have been property or even services provided to the bride's family. A good father was expected to share the *mohar* with his daughter or give it over to her entirely.

A Jewish betrothal was an important part of the marriage process and was as binding as marriage itself. Those initiating the betrothal and witnesses to the event would likely sign a marriage contract called a *ketubah*. Therefore, if one or both parties wished to end the betrothal, they would be required to get a divorce. We see this in the case of Mary and Joseph, who were pledged to be married; when Mary was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit, Joseph considered divorcing Mary quietly to protect her reputation (Matthew 1:18–19). However, after an angel visited Joseph in the night, Joseph decided to continue their betrothal. As a betrothed couple, Mary and Joseph were essentially husband and wife, and they later married (verse 24), although they did not consummate the marriage until after Jesus was born (verse 25).

It was a common custom for the bride to join the groom's father's household, rather than the groom and the bride establishing their own household. So, if the bride and groom were of a marriageable age, the groom would return to his father's house after the betrothal to prepare a bridal chamber. This process traditionally took a year or more (the length of time being dictated by the groom's father). When the place was complete, the groom would return and fetch his bride. The bride would not know the day or hour of her husband-to-be's return, so the groom's arrival was usually announced with a trumpet call and a shout so the bride had some forewarning.

Before the ceremony, which was attended by a select few (most likely family), the bride would take part in a ritual cleansing. After the ceremony, the couple would attend a wedding feast in their honor. It was customary for a wedding feast to include a much larger crowd than the ceremony itself, and it was a great celebration provided by the groom's family. Jesus Himself attended a wedding feast in Cana, where He performed His first miracle of turning water into wine. At this marriage feast, the groom's family had run out of wine, which could have damaged their reputation. So Jesus' mother, Mary, appealed to Him for help on behalf of the family. Jesus responded by turning the water into even better wine than the family had served previously. (For a full account of the wedding at Cana, see John 2:1–12.)

In His time on earth, Jesus often used Jewish marriage customs as a beautiful allegory of God's relationship with the church, His "bride." Jesus purchased believers with His blood, shed on the cross for the forgiveness of sins (Acts 20:28; 1 Corinthians 6:19–20; 11:25). He is currently preparing a place for us (John 14:3), and at a future time no one knows (Matthew 24:36) He will return for His bride with a trumpet call and a shout (1 Thessalonians 4:16–17). The dead in Christ and those alive in Him will be taken to heaven, where they will be joined forever with the Lord (Revelation 19:7) and take part in the marriage feast of the Lamb (verse 9).GotQuestions.org

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Related Articles:

- Why is the Virgin Birth so important?
- What does the Bible say about the virgin Mary?
- What is the Immaculate Conception?

Rich Cathers - God knows how God knows how to get you where you need to be. He used the pagan ruler of the world to move Joseph and Mary. There are times when we wonder why things are forcing us to go in directions that are uncomfortable. It wasn't a great time for Mary to be traveling. Yet perhaps God might be at work to get us to where we need to be. (Romans 8:28NKJV) And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.

Illustration -IN THE 1870s Horatio Spafford was a successful Chicago lawyer and a close friend of evangelist Dwight L. Moody. Spafford had invested heavily in real estate, but the Chicago fire of 1871 wiped out his holdings. His son had died shortly before the disaster. Spafford and his family desperately needed a rest so in 1873 he planned a trip to Europe with his wife and four daughters. While in Great Britain he also hoped to help Moody and Sankey with their evangelistic tour. Last minute business caused Spafford to delay his departure, but he sent his wife and four daughters on the S.S. Ville Du Havre as scheduled, promising to follow in a few days. On November 22 the ship was struck by the English ship Lochearn, and it sank in twelve minutes. Several days later the survivors landed at Cardiff, Wales, and Mrs. Spafford cabled her husband the brief message, "Saved alone. What shall I do?"

When Horatio Spafford made the ocean crossing to meet his grieving wife, he sailed near the place where his four daughters had sunk to the ocean depths. There, in the midst of his sorrow, he wrote these unforgettable words that have brought solace to so many in grief:

When peace, like a river, attendeth my way,
When sorrows like sea billows roll,
Whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to say,
It is well, it is well, with my soul.

Though Satan should buffet, though trials should come,
Let this blessed assurance control,
That Christ hath regarded my helpless estate,
And hath shed His own blood for my soul.

The story doesn't end with the writing of a hymn. Spafford belonged to a Presbyterian church, and they considered the tragedies that his family had gone through as some sort of divine punishment from God. Spafford disagreed. He formed his own group called "The Overcomers" and in 1881 set out for Jerusalem. They would form what would be known as "The American Colony" in Jerusalem. For the next seventy years, this group would be used to relieve the suffering of all those living in Jerusalem – Jews, Muslims, and Christians, through the running of soup kitchens, hospitals, orphanages, and other charitable ventures. When WWI hit Palestine, they were an important source of aid and were trusted by all sides of the conflict. This group that had 70 years of healthy, productive, compassionate ministry, was birthed by a man who had endured great pain. Beloved, God knows how to get you where you need to be. When things don't make sense or seem out of control, God knows all about it. You can trust Him. Just think of Joseph getting his summons to report to Bethelehem… (Sermon)

Mattoon - There is an important lesson here. It was a difficult journey, but the Lord wanted them in Bethlehem. The lesson is the fact that sometimes being where the Lord wants you to be may require hardship, difficulty, inconvenience, and expense. In my own life, I knew God wanted me to preach, but going to Bible college and seminary was not easy. It was difficult, hard, inconvenient, and expensive. In following His leading, however, I was at the right place at the right time in 1975, and met a young lady named Linda Matthews, whom I married in 1977, and has been at my side ever since. There may be difficulty on God's path for your life, but there are blessings too.

Luke 2:6 While they were there, the days were completed for her to give birth.

NET While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child.

GNT γ νετο δ ν τ ε ναι α το ς κε πλ σθησαν α μ ραι το τεκε ν α τ ν,

NLT And while they were there, the time came for her baby to be born.

KJV And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered.

ESV And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth.

NIV While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born,

ASV And it came to pass, while they were there, the days were fulfilled that she should be delivered.

CSB While they were there, the time came for her to give birth.

- Luke 2 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

MARY NOW
"FULL TERM"

While they were there - (Greek = And it happened that while) **While** Joseph and Mary were at Bethlehem. Here we see another evidence of the providence of God orchestrating all the events in the fullness of time (Gal 4:4+) and the perfect fulfillment of OT prophecy.

Lenski - The statement as made by Luke conveys the thought that without any planning on the part of Joseph or of Mary her time came just after they had been in Bethlehem for a time.

David Guzik has an interesting comment - We often think that Mary was close to delivery when they made this journey, but this may not have been the case at all. Joseph may have been anxious to get her out of Nazareth to avoid the pressure of scandal. Luke tells us that it was while they were in Bethlehem, that while they were there, the days were completed for her to be delivered. i. According to the Roman law, Mary didn't have to go with Joseph for the tax census; but it made sense for her to go with Joseph, especially because she was in the latter stages of a controversial pregnancy – surely the subject of much gossip in Nazareth. "It is possible that he used the emperor's order as a means of removing Mary from possible gossip and emotional stress in her own village. He had already accepted her as his wife (Matthew 1:24), but apparently continued in betrothal (Luke 2:5), pledged to be married, till after the birth." (Liefeld)

The days were completed (pimplemi) **for her to give birth** (tikto) - The most profound event in the history of the world other that the crucifixion and resurrection is described by Luke in straightforward even understated manner! We do not know how long the couple had been in Bethlehem or whether they had already registered for the taxation rolls. Obviously, Joseph and Mary knew the time was nigh from the size of her tummy and would realize that it would not be wise to travel back to Nazareth with Jesus' birth so imminent. As **Spurgeon** says "Now hath heavenly glory wedded earthly poverty; and, henceforth, let no man dare to despise the poor and needy, since the son of the Highest is born in a stable, and cradled in a manger. How low the King of glory stoops, and how gloriously he uplifts the lowly to share his glory!" (Luke Exposition) (**Ed**: cp Mk 10:45, Php 2:5-11+)

Completed (fulfilled) (4092)(**pimplemi** from the obsolete **pláō** = to fill) to fill, to make full, to complete. Here pimplemi is used of time fulfilled or completed (Lk 1:57, 2:6 = pregnancy completed, compare Lk 1:23 = days of priestly service ended, Lk 2:21-22, Lk 21:22).

Give birth (5088)(**tikto**) means to bring forth, to bear, to give birth. Used **literally** of child birth (Mt 1:21, 23; Lk 2:6,7, 11; Jn 16:21; Gal 4:27; Rev 12:2, 4, 5) **Tikto** is used **metaphorically**, of the earth produce, bring forth, yield (Heb 6.7), of the evil consequence of indulging one's lust, which brings forth, causes, produces or "gives birth" to sin (Jas 1.15+) It is interesting that when "lust has conceived, it **gives birth** to sin" and sin kills but Mary bore a Son Who would take upon Him sin on the Cross and would defeat sin and reverse sin's "death sentence" for all who believe in Him. In short, His birth would reverse the curse of Genesis 3!

> **Gilbrant** - From the time of Homer (Eighth Century B.C.) on, **tiktō** was used with a variety of meanings. Sometimes it was used of "breeding" animals, other times of "begetting" (by the father) or "bearing" (by the mother) children. Furthermore, it referred to the earth "producing" fruit. Finally, it meant "to generate" or "to produce" (metaphorically) something (Liddell-Scott). Most of the time the **Septuagint** translators followed the secular Greek usage of tiktō except that, when referring to children, it is normally used only of the mother. As a participle, "the one who bears," tiktō is practically equivalent to "mother" in the Septuagint (Moulton-Milligan). Gennaō (1074) is largely used for the act of fathering a child. The Septuagint uses tiktō some 215 times, almost always to translate yāladh, "to bear." (See Bauer, "Birth," Colin Brown, 1:186). Once it is used for hārâh, "conceive" (Hosea 2:5), and once for mālaṭ, "give birth" (Isaiah 66:7). Elsewhere in the Septuagint the variant form ektiktō refers to producing fruit from the earth (Isaiah 55:10). On several occasions the word is used metaphorically, to express how something is brought forth. Numbers 11:12 and Isaiah 66:8 both speak of a nation being "brought forth" while Psalm 7:14 says, "He hath conceived mischief, and brought forth (tiktō) falsehood." **The New Testament** follows closely the Septuagintal usage of the word. Here tiktō is used only of the woman's role in childbearing. For instance, Matthew and Luke use gennaō to speak of the conception of Jesus (Matthew 1:20; Luke 1:35) but tiktō to speak of the actual birth process (Matthew 1:21; Luke 2:7). Hence the New Testament use of yāladh continues to be dependent on the subject. When the subject is female it means "to bear" as in childbirth; with a male subject it means "to bring forth." If the king is the subject the definition is enhanced to mean "to bring forth as a coregent"—a common practice in Old Testament times. Thus the claim that Christ is not preexistent according to Psalm 2 is unfounded. Only two New Testament passages use tiktō to describe anything but human birth. Hebrews 6:7 speaks of the land which drinks in the rain and "produces a crop" (NIV). Finally, James 1:15 uses the word metaphorically when it says, "After

desire has conceived, it gives birth (tiktō) to sin" (NIV). Interestingly, tiktō is never used of spiritual birth. (Complete Biblical Library Greek-English Dictionary)

Tikto - 19x in 17v - bear(4), birth(1), born(2), brings forth(1), gave birth(5), give birth(4), gives birth(1), labor(1).

Matthew 1:21 "She will **bear** a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins."
Matthew 1:23 "BEHOLD, THE VIRGIN SHALL BE WITH CHILD AND SHALL **BEAR** A SON, AND THEY SHALL CALL HIS NAME IMMANUEL," which translated means, "GOD WITH US."
Matthew 1:25 but kept her a virgin until she **gave birth** to a Son; and he called His name Jesus.
Matthew 2:2 "Where is He who **has been born** King of the Jews? For we saw His star in the east and have come to worship Him."

Luke 1:31 "And behold, you will conceive in your womb and **bear** a son, and you shall name Him Jesus.
Luke 1:57 Now the time had come for Elizabeth to **give birth**, and she **gave birth** to a son.
Luke 2:6 While they were there, the days were completed for her to **give birth**.
Luke 2:7 And she **gave birth** to her firstborn son; and she wrapped Him in cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.
Luke 2:11 for today in the city of David there **has been born** for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.

John 16:21 "Whenever a woman is in labor she has pain, because her hour has come; but when she **gives birth** to the child, she no longer remembers the anguish because of the joy that a child **has been born** into the world.

Galatians 4:27 For it is written, "REJOICE, BARREN WOMAN WHO DOES NOT **BEAR**; BREAK FORTH AND SHOUT, YOU WHO ARE NOT IN LABOR; FOR MORE NUMEROUS ARE THE CHILDREN OF THE DESOLATE THAN OF THE ONE WHO HAS A HUSBAND."

Hebrews 6:7+ For ground that drinks the rain which often falls on it and **brings forth** vegetation useful to those for whose sake it is also tilled, receives a blessing from God;

James 1:15+ Then when lust has conceived, it **gives birth** to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death.

Revelation 12:2+ and she (NATION OF ISRAEL) was with child; and she *cried out, being in labor and in pain to **give birth.**

Revelation 12:4+ And his tail swept away a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. And the dragon stood before (E.G., KING HEROD'S ATTEMPTS TO KILL JESUS) the woman (ISRAEL) who was about to give birth (TO JESUS), so that when she gave birth he might devour her child.

Revelation 12:5+ And she (ISRAEL BUT INDIVIDUALLY MARY) **gave birth** to a son, a male child, Who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron (THIS IS UNEQUIVOCALLY JESUS CHRIST); and her child was caught up to God (HIS ASCENSION AFTER HIS CRUCIFIXION AND RESURRECTION) and to His throne.

Revelation 12:13+ And when the dragon saw that he was thrown down to the earth, he persecuted the woman (ISRAEL) who **gave birth** to the male child.

> **Tikto** is used in over 200 verses in the Septuagint - Here is a sample of uses - Gen. 3:16; Gen. 4:1; Gen. 4:2; Gen. 4:17; Gen. 4:20; Gen. 4:22; Gen. 4:25; Gen. 16:1; Gen. 16:2; Gen. 16:11; Gen. 16:15; Gen. 16:16; Gen. 17:17; Gen. 17:19; Gen. 17:21; Gen. 18:13; Gen. 19:37; Gen. 19:38; Gen. 20:17; Gen. 21:2; Gen. 21:3; Gen. 21:7; Gen. 22:20; Gen. 22:23; Gen. 22:24; Gen. 24:15; Gen. 24:24; Gen. 24:36; Gen. 24:47; Gen. 25:2
>
> > Note the first use in Ge 3:16+ - To the woman He said, "I will greatly multiply Your pain in childbirth, In pain you **will bring forth** children; Yet your desire will be for your husband, And he will rule over you."

Luke 2:7 And she gave birth to her firstborn son; and she wrapped Him in cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

> NET And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in strips of cloth and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.
>
> GNT κα τεκεν τ ν υ ν α τ ς τ ν πρωτ τοκον, κα σπαργ νωσεν α τ ν κα ν κλινεν α τ ν ν φ τν , δι τι ο κ ν α το ς τ πος ν τ καταλ ματι.
>
> NLT She gave birth to her first child, a son. She wrapped him snugly in strips of cloth and laid him in a

manger, because there was no lodging available for them.

KJV And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.

ESV And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

NIV and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

ASV And she brought forth her firstborn son; and she wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

CSB Then she gave birth to her firstborn Son, and she wrapped Him snugly in cloth and laid Him in a feeding trough-- because there was no room for them at the lodging place.

- **she**: Isa 7:14 Mt 1:25 Ga 4:4
- **wrapped**: Lu 2:11,12 Ps 22:6 Isa 53:2,3 Mt 8:20 13:55 Joh 1:14 2Co 8:9
- **the inn**: Lu 10:34 Ge 42:27 43:21 Ex 4:24
- Luke 2 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

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ROOM IN A MANGER
NO ROOM IN THE INN

And she gave birth (tikto) **to her firstborn** (prototokos) **son** - As Darby said "He began in a manger, and ended on the cross, and along the way had no where to lay His head." **First-born** indicates that Mary had other children, despite the Roman Catholic dogma of the perpetual virginity of Mary. (Is perpetual virginity is Biblical). Matthew 1:25 says that Joseph "kept her a virgin **UNTIL** she gave birth to a Son." The time phrase **UNTIL** strongly implies that she was a virgin up to the time of Christ's birth, but that after that time they had normal marital relations. And Scripture confirms this for we know Jesus had siblings ((Mt. 12:46–47; Mt 13:55–56; Acts 1:14 Jn 2:12, Jn 7:3, 5, 10). Notice Luke uses first-born not **first begotten** (monogenes) which would refer to an only child (cf Lk 7:12, Lk 8:42, Lk 9:38). Jesus was not an only childDid Jesus have brothers and sisters Notice Jesus Who is God is now born as Man and so is called Mary's **Son**, emphasizing His humanity. Jesus' birth speaks of His amazing humility - no angels flying around (at least none recorded), no heavenly chorales or trumpets, no voice from Heaven declaring "This is My beloved Son." Jesus steps from eternity into time in the most humble setting imaginable.

Kent Hughes - If we imagine that Jesus was born in a freshly swept, county fair stable, we miss the whole point. It was wretched—scandalous! There was sweat and pain and blood and cries as Mary reached up to the heavens for help. The earth was cold and hard. The smell of birth mixed with the stench of manure and acrid straw made a contemptible bouquet. Trembling carpenter's hands, clumsy with fear, grasped God's Son slippery with blood—the baby's limbs waving helplessly as if falling through space—his face grimacing as he gasped in the cold and his cry pierced the night....No child born into the world that day seemed to have lower prospects. The Son of God was born into the world not as a prince but as a pauper. We must never forget that this is where Christianity began, and where it always begins—with a sense of need, a graced sense of one's insufficiency. Christ, himself setting the example, comes to the needy. He is born only in those who are "poor in spirit." (See Luke (2 volumes in 1 / ESV Edition): That You May Know the Truth)

Scientist **J. Robert Oppenheimer** once said, "The best way to send an idea is to wrap it up in a person!" He wasn't speaking of Luke 2, but his comment is spot on! The "idea" of the Gospel was wrapped up in the Person of this little Baby!

J Vernon McGee - It is wonderful to see a little baby come into the world, and your heart goes out to him; there is a sympathy that goes from you to him. That is the way God entered the world. He could have entered—as He will when He comes to earth the second time—in power and great glory. Instead, He came in the weakest way possible, as a baby. George Macdonald put it this way

They all were looking for a King
To slay their foes and lift them high:
Thou cam'st, a little baby thing
That made a woman cry.

That is the way the Saviour came into the world. He did not lay aside His deity; He laid aside His glory. There should have been

more than just a few shepherds and angels to welcome Him—all of creation should have been there. Instead of collecting taxes, that fellow Caesar should have been in Bethlehem to worship Him. Jesus Christ could have forced him to do that very thing, but He did not. He laid aside, not His deity, but His prerogatives of deity. He came a little baby thing. (See context Thru the Bible)

Brian Bell - So we have Royalty clothed in rags; Majesty emerging in the midst of the mundane; Eternity stepping into time; And the most prominent event of all human history being noticed by no one but…a handful of outcasts. (**ED**: As noted below most commentaries write that shepherds were considered "outcasts" by the rabbis.) (Luke 2:1 -7 The Bethlehem Miracle)

And she wrapped (sparganoo; swaddled) **Him in cloths**, **and laid Him in a manger** (phatne) - The **cloths** were long strips used keep the limbs straight, as well as provide warmth and protection. There were no royal baby clothes for Jesus to wear! The mention of a **manger** has led many to conclude Jesus was actually born in a stable. But that is not what the text says. Luke only says Mary **laid Him in a manger** which was a feeding trough, something that could be found inside of or outside of a stable. A tradition from the middle ages says Jesus was born in a cave, but this is also conjecture. Despite popular Christmas card pictures, the surroundings were dark and dirty. Everything pointed to obscurity, poverty, and even rejection. Luke showed the King of kings born into poor and humble circumstances—born as a human, born to serve. Jesus Himself testified "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many." (Mk 10:45, cf Mt 20:28)

> **Out of the ivory palaces,**
> Into a world of woe,
> Only His great, eternal love
> Made my Savior go.

Henry Morris observes that "Many years later, that same body would be "wrapped...in a linen cloth, and laid...in a tomb cut into the rock, where no one had ever lain." (Luke 23:53)." "And he took it down and **wrapped it in a linen cloth**, and laid Him in a tomb cut into the rock, where no one had ever lain." Swaddled at His birth, wrapped at His death! Jesus was born to die! **Constable** adds that "The Jews also wrapped their dead in strips of cloth, as they did their infants. Thus a birth was a reminder of the death that would inevitably follow one day."

Wikipedia on swaddling - "**Swaddling** is an age-old practice of wrapping infants in blankets or similar cloths so that movement of the limbs is tightly restricted. **Swaddling bands** were often used to further restrict the infant. Swaddling fell out of favor in the 17th century."

Criswell - "**Swaddling clothes**" were narrow strips of cloth wrapped around an infant. That Christ was born and placed "in a manger" led to the tradition that He was born in a stable. Early tradition indicates that He was born in a cave, which may have been used as a stable.

Mattoon - The rank of the child was indicated by the splendor and costliness of these bands. Children of wealthy parents would wrap the child with white linen and gold bands. They would also use expensive purple cloth, fastened with a broach. The infant was wrapped firm and tight. It looked like a little mummy. Arms, hands, and feet could not be seen. A band was also wrapped under the baby's chin and across its forehead. The wrappings protected the baby but also gave it a sense of security. The confinement is similar to what it faced in the womb of its mother.

J C Ryle - [Wrapped Him in swaddling clothes.] On this expression, the Fathers, and most Romish writers, have built the idea that our Lord's birth was a childbirth without labor or pain. Such an idea is, to say the least, an unprofitable conjecture. There is nothing mentioned here which a mother, in Mary's position, in an Eastern climate, might not have done for herself without aid. There is no need of imagining and inventing miraculous circumstances in our Lord's incarnation, beside those which are fully revealed. (Luke 2)

J Vernon McGee - Dr. Luke gets right down to the little human details in this passage. He is saying that Mary put swaddling clothes on this little child—baby clothes and diapers on the Son of God! How perfectly human He was—God manifest in the flesh! (See context Thru the Bible)

Robert Stein - The irony of the most important event in history taking place in a manger should not be lost sight of; it reveals how God elevates the lowly and humble and rejects the proud and mighty of this world. Compare Phil 2:6–7. For Luke this theme of reversal was of major importance. **(NAC)**

James Freeman on **Swaddling clothes** - **1. The "swaddling clothes" were bandages which were tightly wrapped around a new-born child.** The rank of the child was indicated by the splendor and costliness of these bands. A fine white shawl, tied with a golden band, was sometimes used for the purpose; at other times a small purple scarf fastened with a brooch. The poor used broad fillets of common cloth. The practice is still followed in the East. Miss Rogers, an English lady, who had opportunities far beyond ordinary travelers for observing the domestic life of the Eastern people, describes the appearance of an infant thus bandaged: "The

infant I held in my arms was so bound in swaddling-clothes that it was perfectly firm and solid, arid looked like a mummy. It had a band under its chin and across its forehead and a little, quilted silken cap on its head with tiny coins of gold sewed to it. 'the outer covering of this little figure was of crimson and white striped silk; no sign of arms or legs, hands or feet, could be seen" (Domestic Life in Palestine, p. 28). This was in Jaffa. Another infant which she saw in Bethlehem is thus described: "I took the little creature in my arms. His body was stiff and unyielding, so tightly was it swathed with white and purple linen. His hands and feet were quite confined, and his head was bound with a small, soft red shawl, which passed under his chin and across his forehead in small folds" (p. 62). This custom is referred to in Job 38:9; Lamentations 2:22; Ezekiel 16:4; Luke 2:12.

2. There is a dispute as to the precise meaning of the word φὐτνη here and in Lk 2:12, 16 rendered "manger," and in Luke 13:15, rendered "stall." Some authorities give it the one meaning, and some the other; while others, as our translators, attach both meanings to the word. It is the Septuagint rendering for the Hebrew ebus in Job 39:9, and in Isaiah 1:3; a word which, in our version, is translated "crib." The location of the manger or the stall is also a point of discussion; whether it was connected with the stable belonging to the inn, or with some other stable in the neighborhood, as, for instance, in some cave nearby. Caves, we know, were used for dwellings (see note on Genesis 19:30, #18) and are so used at this day, and also for stables. The discussion is interesting, but is not pertinent to the object of this book. It is proper, however, to remark, that in many rude houses horses and cattle are stabled in the court, while the family are provided for in apartments raised on a platform of stone some two feet from the level of the court. The food of the animals is placed on this platform, and sometimes there are hollow places in the stone which serve the purpose of mangers. See further in the description of the inn in the next paragraph.

3. The Eastern "inn," or caravanserai, bears no resemblance to the inns with which we are acquainted. There are various kinds of these Oriental inns, some being merely small, rude resting-places, such as are mentioned in the note on Jeremiah 9:2 (#540), while others are capacious and comparatively comfortable. Such an inn presents, at a distance, the appearance of a fortress, being a quadrangular building about a hundred yards long on each side of the square, having its wall about twenty feet high. An arched gateway, surmounted by a tower, opens into a large open court, surrounded by a platform, on the level of which are the travelers' rooms. These rooms are not furnished, each traveler being expected to provide for himself everything but actual shelter. He must carry his own bedding, provisions, and cooking utensils. In case of sickness the porter in attendance may minister to his wants. See Luke 10:34, 35. The horses, camels, and baggage are placed in the extensive court, in the center of which is a fountain. Sometimes, however, there are stables formed of covered avenues, extending between the rear wall of the lodging-rooms and the external wall of the caravanserai, the entrance being at the corners of the quadrangle. These stables are on a level with the court, and thus below the level of the platform on which are the travelers' apartments. This platform, however, projects into the stable, thus forming a ledge or bench above the stable floor. On this ledge the cattle can, if they wish, rest the nosebags of haircloth which contain their food. Dr. Kitto thinks that it was in such a stable as this that our Lord was born. See Daily Bible Readings, vol. 7, p. 63. (Scroll to page 1004 in Manners and Customs)

QUESTION - What does it mean that baby Jesus was wrapped in swaddling clothes?

ANSWER - Swaddling clothes are cloths and bands used in the practice of swaddling, or essentially "wrapping" an infant tightly in cloth. The idea behind swaddling is that it helps the baby transition from the womb (a very snug place) to the outside world. Swaddling clothes are still used today, but with some modifications. In general, swaddling has been proved to help infants sleep better, to prevent them from scratching themselves, and to reduce the risk of SIDS. In ancient times, like today, a swaddled infant was safe if wrapped and watched properly. Many cultures still practice swaddling today. The biblical passage that refers to swaddling clothes is Luke 2: "And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn" (Luke 2:7ESV). We can assume from the fact that she swaddled the baby Jesus that Mary was an attentive and loving mother. The angel who spoke to the shepherds on the hillside mentions swaddling clothes as part of the sign to the shepherds that they had found the Messiah (Luke 2:12).

There are some interesting theories about Luke's detail of Jesus' swaddling clothes. Some have postulated that the swaddling clothes were a foreshadowing—a prophetic reference—of Jesus' burial cloths. The Greek word sparganoo is the root word used in the phrase "swaddling clothes," and it means "to clothe in strips of cloth." But this word sparganoo is never used in the New Testament to refer to burial cloth. In the descriptions in the Gospels of Jesus' burial, we see variations on the phrase "wrapped in linen cloth," and different Greek words are used for the binding. The swaddling clothes *could* prefigure Jesus' burial (the Magis' gift of myrrh in Matthew 2:11 is a clearer bit of foreshadowing), but the link can't be proved linguistically. When the Son of God came into our world, He was entrusted to responsible, loving parents who sought to meet His every need. Baby Jesus was wrapped in swaddling clothes according to the custom of the day, an action that showed the tender care and affection of His mother. - Gotquestions.org

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Because there was no room for them in the inn (kataluma) - **Because** (dioti) - Always pause to ponder terms of explanation (as with "for") asking at least one question "What is the writer explaining?" Sometimes the answer not as straightforward as in this

context which clearly is explaining why Jesus had to be laid in a manger. So many had returned to Bethlehem for the census, the small city was overflowing with people. There was **no room** for Mary and Joseph in the inn, which forced them to take refuge in the only place available—a shelter for animals. (Although the Bible never mentions animals being present at the birth of Christ, Luke does say that the baby Jesus was laid in a manger—and the presence of a manger strongly implies the presence of animals.) **NET Note** adds that "There is no drama in how this is told. There is no search for a variety of places to stay or a heartless innkeeper. The innkeeper is not a villain figure in Luke's record! (Such items are later, non-biblical embellishments.) Bethlehem was not large and there was simply no other place to stay. The humble surroundings of the birth are ironic in view of the birth's significance." I recommend Spurgeon's Sermon "No Room for Christ in the Inn" - Luke 2:7.

> **THOUGHT** - "This happened in a public place, with other travelers and residents. “Men were trafficking, and little children playing, and woman gossiping beside the well – and lo! The kingdom of heaven was among them.” (Morrison) i. “That there was no room in the inn was symbolic of what was to happen to Jesus. The only place where there was room for him was on a cross.” (Barclay)" (David Guzik)

> **THOUGHT** - The problem of "**no room**" is symbolic of the problem that man has faced since Jesus was born. Most of mankind, throughout history, has had "no room" for the Lord Jesus Christ. People have no room for Christ because they are full of themselves, full of their own will, full of their own cares, and full of their own sinfulness. They feel they have no time or no need for the Lord. People may deny Christ and scorn Him. Yet, every time they write the date of the year, they are giving a witness to the fact of His birth in Bethlehem. Truly His birth was the most important and famous of all births. God wants access to us. He wants to come into our heart and fellowship with us through His Spirit. Few people, including some Christians, open the doors of their hearts to walk with God and have daily fellowship with Christ because they are seeking satisfaction in other areas. They are filled with other trivial things. Let me ask, "Have you crowded the Lord out of your life? Do you spend any time with Him? Do you really have a close relationship with Him? Are you accessible to the Lord? This is His plea and challenge to us all through the Bible. (Pr 23:26) (Mattoon)

Swindoll suggests "It is quite possible that a temporary khan orcaravansary (picture) was established in Bethlehem to supply lodging for the crowds. These large, walled, open-air courtyards were often seedy establishments run by shady characters, offering slightly better protection from robbery and the elements than sleeping on the street or in the open fields. More truck stop than motel, they were not the kind of place to give birth. See context Insights on Luke)

Wiersbe adds "a typical Eastern “caravansary,” was a two-story structure (the lower level was for animals) built around a courtyard where travelers could camp. Jesus must have been born in one of the cattle stalls; the feeding trough was His bed. See Phil. 2:1–11 and 2 Cor. 8:9." (See Wiersbe Bible Commentary)

Butler - The only available space for the child was in the animal trough attached to the wall that their room shared with the animals' quarters. The promised king came to his people but did not have enough power to secure a resting place for his birth (**Ed**: He had laid aside His divine prerogatives - Php 2:5-7). The descendants of David descended to a stable to find a place to lay the head of the King of kings. This is how God used earth's lowest to bring salvation from heaven's highest. (Holman New Testament Commentary - Luke:)

> **THOUGHT**- The word "no" (ouk) means absolutely none. It reminds me of my honeymoon when we went to the hotel we had planned to spend the night and the attendant said "Sorry, we do not have a reservation under that name and the hotel is completely booked!"

All praise to Thee, eternal Lord,
Clothed in a garb of flesh and blood;
Choosing a manger for a throne,
While worlds on worlds are Thine alone.
—Luther

> When Joseph found no room to lodge in Bethlehem, he lodged in a certain cave near the village. While they were there, Mary brought forth Christ, and laid Him in a manger.

> > **THOUGHT** - Is their not some divine irony that in a **feeding trough** for animals lay the very One Who would later "feed the world" declaring “I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me will not hunger, and he who believes in Me will never thirst...“I am the living bread that came down out of heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread also which I will give for the life of the world is My flesh.” (John 6:36, 51) Have you partaken of the Bread of Life, by grace through faith? If not, your destiny and doom is to remain "spiritually hungry" throughout eternity with no opportunity to satiate your soul's lack!

He was a humble workman, w/the tools with which he wrought,
And he built a common stable, or so it was he thought!

And he fashioned there a manger, Where the cattle could be fed,
Never thinking that the Savior, Would pillow there His head.

He had only built a stable, With a manger in the stall,
Yet it cradled there the Christ-child, Who is King & Lord of all!

So although our task be humble, Let us work each day with care;
For we may not know God's purpose, Or why He places us there.

For the manger that formed the cradle, Of our Lord & Savior here,
was built by a humble workman, in Bethlehem of Judea(r)
--Henry B Knox

Play **Away in the Manger** - Casting Crowns. Children's Choir (Another beautiful Christmas Carol)

Away in the Manger

Away in a manger no crib for a bed
The little Lord Jesus laid down His sweet head
The stars in the bright sky looked down where He lay
The little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.

The cattle are lowing the Baby awakes
But little Lord Jesus no crying He makes.
I love You Lord Jesus; look down from the sky
And stay by my side until morning is nigh.

Be near me Lord Jesus I ask You to stay
Close by me for ever, and love me, I pray.
Bless all the dear children in Your tender care,
And fit us for heaven, to live with You there.

First-born (firstborn) (4416) (**prototokos** from **protos** = first, foremost, in place order or time; rank dignity +**titko** = beget, to bear, bring forth) can mean **first-born chronologically** (Lk 2:7), but in most of the other NT uses refers primarily to position, rank, priority of position and emphasizes quality or kind, not time with the idea of "preeminence".

- What year was Jesus Christ born? When was Jesus born?
- What is a Christmas nativity?
- What is Mariology?
- What does the Bible say about the virgin Mary?
- What is the Assumption of Mary?
- Who is the Queen of Heaven?
- Is Mary the co-redemptrix / mediatrix?

Wrapped...in cloths (swaddled)(4683)(**sparganoo** from **spárganon** = a swathing or swaddling band) means to wrap in swaddling clothes. Swaddling clothes were narrow strips of cloth wrapped around an infant. These cloths were believed to protect its internal organs. This custom of wrapping infants is still practiced in many Mideastern countries. Only other NT use = Lk 2:12.

Manger (a feeding trough)(5336)(**phatne**) means a manger, a crib, a feeding trough (Liddell-Scott has "feed box" or "stall")See picture. Zodhiates - Some ancient writers believe that Jesus was born in a stable formed by nature and not constructed by man.

> **Gilbrant** - The Septuagint also uses the word to mean "**manger**" and in a transferred sense to indicate the room or area enclosed around the manger (Proverbs 14:4). Such mangers were often made of stones laid like blocks, then plastered over with a substance to make them waterproof. These feeding troughs could also be carved from a single block of stone or simply made of dried mud. The animals ate from them. Hezekiah had many such stalls. Actually, several references may be found (2 Chronicles 32:28; Job 6:5; 39:9; Isaiah 1:3; Joel 1:17; Habakkuk 3:17). One of the most pungent analogies in the Old Testament is in Isaiah: "The ox

knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider" (Isaiah 1:3). For a person or people to forget where they regularly receive nourishment tells of their inconsideration and lack of gratitude. New Testament Usage - The term appears three times in the birth narratives of the Lord Jesus Christ (Luke 2:7,12,16). It is possible that the idea refers only to the room where Jesus was born or to a feeding place out-of-doors. The Luke account typically stressed God's interest in the humble things of life. Jesus was laid in a manger upon birth. The angels gave this as a sign to the shepherds that they had found the newborn king of Israel. They would not have been allowed to visit Him in a palace. But they could come where possibly some of their own children had been laid. In a later reference Jesus told a story about an ox that fell into a ditch; He did so in response to questions about His healings on the Sabbath Day (Luke 13:15). (Complete Biblical Library Greek-English Dictionary)

Phatne - 4x all in Luke - Luke 2:7, 12, 2:16, Lk 13:15 = "his donkey from the **stall** "

Phatne - 7x in the Septuagint - pens, manger, storehouses, stalls

> 2 Chronicles 32:28 storehouses also for the produce of grain, wine and oil,**pens** for all kinds of cattle and sheepfolds for the flocks.
> Job 6:5 "Does the wild donkey bray over his grass, Or does the ox low over his **fodder**?
> Job 39:9 "Will the wild ox consent to serve you, Or will he spend the night at your **manger** (feeding trough)?
> Proverbs 14:4 Where no oxen are, the **manger** (feeding trough) is clean, But much revenue comes by the strength of the ox.
> Isaiah 1:3 "An ox knows its owner, And a donkey its master's **manger** (feeding trough), But Israel does not know, My people do not understand."
> Joel 1:17 The seeds shrivel under their clods; The **storehouses** are desolate, The barns are torn down, For the grain is dried up.
> Habakkuk 3:17 Though the fig tree should not blossom And there be no fruit on the vines, Though the yield of the olive should fail And the fields produce no food, Though the flock should be cut off from the fold And there be no cattle in the **stalls**,

Inn (2646)(**kataluma** from **kata** = intensifier + **luo** = to loose) means literally an unloosing of what was bound or a place of unyoking and thus a place of rest, hence a lodge or inn.. This was a locally recognized place to stay overnight while on a journey and could be either in the open air or in a building. **Kataluma** is used elsewhere only in Luke 22:11 and Mark 14:14 where it means **guest room** or dining room, referring to a room in someone's house made available to Jesus and His disciples to celebrate the Passover meal.

Zodhiates adds that **kataluma** "was so−called because of the ancient travelers who on arrival loosened their own belts or girdles, sandals, and the saddles or harnesses of their animals. In the ancient Greek writings, the place of entertainment is called katáluma, where animals and burdens are loosened. See Sept.: Ex. 4:24. Guests were highly regarded in biblical times (Jdg. 19:9, 15)." (Zodhiates' Word Study Dictionary of the NT - This resource is recommended and in my opinion is superior to **BDAG** because it is so much more readable - you can also borrow a copy of The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament)

NET Note - The Greek word **kataluma** is flexible, and usage in the LXX and NT refers to a variety of places for lodging (see **BDAG** 521 s.v.). Most likely Joseph and Mary sought lodging in the public accommodations in the city of Bethlehem (see J. Nolland, Luke [WBC], 1:105), which would have been crude shelters for people and animals. However, it has been suggested by various scholars that Joseph and Mary were staying with relatives in Bethlehem (e.g., borrow C. S. Keener, The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament, 194; B. Witherington, "Birth of Jesus," DJG, 69–70); if that were so the term would refer to the guest room in the relatives' house, which would have been filled beyond capacity with all the other relatives who had to journey to Bethlehem for the census.

Big Plans

Read: Luke 2:1-12

> You shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins. —Matthew 1:21

Two thousand years ago, there were no earthly plans for celebrating Jesus' birth. Quietly and unannounced, Joseph and Mary entered Bethlehem and searched for a place to spend the night.

It was a busy time in the Judean village, but the excitement had nothing to do with the upcoming birth. The crowds had gathered to take part in a census. They didn't know that Mary was about to deliver the Savior.

As the year 2000 approaches, the story has changed. There are serious discussions going on about how Bethlehem can get ready for the estimated 4 million tourists who will converge on the Israeli city during Christmas 2000. One estimate puts the price tag at $3.5 billion to prepare for the big day.

What a contrast to that first Christmas! It's almost as if people want to make up for missing His birth. Yet, a proper preparation has nothing to do with money or motels or shrines. It's a matter of the heart. If we want to honor Christ for who He is, we will put our complete faith in His death, burial, and resurrection.

You can make all the plans you want to, but the best way to celebrate the birth of the baby is by trusting Him as your Savior. By Dave Branon (Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved)

The Christmas season comes again.
Let all the earth with one accord
Rejoice that God has given to men
A Savior, who is Christ the Lord.
—Baker

You can't truly celebrate Christ's birth until you've invited Him into your heart.

QUESTION - Where Was Jesus born?-

ANSWER - The Bible chronicles Jesus Christ's birth in Matthew 1:18–25; 2:1–12; Luke 1:26–38; and 2:1–20. At the time of Mary's pregnancy, a decree by Caesar Augustus went out that "all the world should be registered" (Luke 2:1). This meant that every person in the Roman Territory was required to return to the city of their ancestors to be counted in a census.

Joseph lived in Nazareth at the time but needed to travel south to the region of Judea, "to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David" (Luke 2:4). Naturally, Joseph took his betrothed, Mary, to go with him to be counted as a member of his family. Thus, the young couple ended up in the small town of Bethlehem at the time of Jesus' birth.

This location aligns with the prophecy foretold by Micah, proclaiming that the Christ would be born in Bethlehem: "But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times" (Micah 5:2).

Because so many had returned to Bethlehem for the census, the small city was overflowing with people. There was no room for Mary and Joseph in the inn, which forced them to take refuge in the only place available—a shelter for animals. (Although the Bible never mentions animals being present at the birth of Christ, Luke does say that the baby Jesus was laid in a manger—and the presence of a manger strongly implies the presence of animals.)

Traditionally, the "inn" (kataluma) referred to in Luke 2:7 is thought to be a kind of commercial hotel. And the place where Mary and Joseph took shelter was a stable somewhere in the vicinity. However, we don't know for sure if that was the case, because the Greek word translated as "inn" (*kataluma*) can also be translated as "guest room." This translation would lead us to envision more of a private home filled with guests, plus a separate area used to house the family's animals.

Sometimes the place for animals was located on the lower level of a house, away from where the people lived. So, when Luke refers to "no room in the *kataluma*," he could have meant there was no room on the upper level, which was already full of sleeping visitors or family. Archaeological findings have also revealed homes that merely had a wall separating the front of the house from the back, where animals were kept safe. Both of these floor plans imply an indoor animal shelter connected to the house in some way. Regardless, there was a manger or feeding trough in the place where Christ was born, and that was used as a resting place for the newborn Jesus, as stated in Luke 2:7.

There is also a theory that the shelter in which Jesus was born was a place in the northern part of Bethlehem called Migdol Eder. This was a watchtower with a place underneath that shepherds used during the lambing season to shelter the newborn lambs that would later be used as sacrifices in the Jerusalem temple. The prophet Micah, who foretold Bethlehem as the place of the Messiah's birth, also mentions Migdol Eder: "As for you, watchtower of the flock [Hebrew, *Migdol Eder*], stronghold of Daughter Zion, the former dominion will be restored to you; kingship will come to Daughter Jerusalem" (Micah 4:8). This theory is used to explain why, when the heralding angels gave the sign that the baby would be "wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger," the shepherds seemed to know exactly where to look. And it would be apropos for the Messiah to be born in the same place where the sacrificial lambs were born.

Whether the actual location of Jesus' birth was an indoor animal shelter, a separate barn, or a tower used for lambing, the Bible is

clear that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was born in a humble setting in the town of Bethlehem.

Question: "Why was Jesus born in a manger?"

Answer: It is a common saying at Christmas time that Jesus Christ was "born in a manger." Of course, it wasn't possible for Him to actually be born *in* the manger, but that's where Mary laid Him after His birth (Luke 2:7). Although we are not sure of the exact location of where Jesus was born, we do know that it was near Bethlehem and that there was a manger, or feeding trough, there.

God promised the Savior's virgin birth immediately after mankind's first sin in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3:15). Hundreds of years later, the prophet Micah foretold the birth of Christ in the small town of Bethlehem: "But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times" (Micah 5:2). This prophecy was fulfilled when Jesus' earthly parents, Mary and Joseph, were called to Bethlehem for a census of the entire Roman territory (Luke 2:1–5). While they were in Bethlehem, the time came for Jesus to be born (Luke 2:6).

Because of the crowds that had come to Bethlehem, there was no room at the inn for Mary and Joseph (Luke 2:7). While tradition says that the inn was a sort of hotel, we don't know that for sure. In fact, the Greek word translated "inn" (*kataluma*) could be translated "guest room." This fact has led some to believe that Jesus may not have been born in a stable or barn, but in a house with a lower floor serving as a nighttime shelter for the families' animals. If that were the case, it wouldn't be surprising to find a manger located in that area of the house. When Luke states that there was no room in the *kataluma*, he could mean there was no room on the upper level, which would have been full of other people sleeping.

In any case, Jesus was born at night, in some sort of keeping-place for animals. After He was delivered, Mary His mother wrapped Him in cloths and laid Him in a manger (Luke 2:7). Later that same night, shepherds from nearby fields found Him just as the angels told them they would (Luke 2:10–12).

So, why was the Savior and King born in a place where animals were kept? And why was He then laid in the animals' food trough? Surely, God's Son deserved a high-profile birth in the most elegant of surroundings. But, instead, God's own Son made His appearance on earth in the lowliest of circumstances. This humble birth conveys an amazing message to creation: the transcendent God condescended to come to us. Instead of coming to earth as a pampered, privileged ruler, Jesus was born in meekness, as one of us. He is approachable, accessible, available—no palace gates bar the way to Him; no ring of guards prevents our approach. The King of kings came humbly, and His first bed was a manger.

Related Resources:

- Was Jesus actually born in September? Gotquestions.org
- Should Christians celebrate Christmas? Gotquestions.org
- What does it mean that baby Jesus was wrapped in swaddling clothes?
- What does the Bible say about the three wise men (Magi)? Gotquestions.org

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Bruce Barton - COMFORT ZONES The government forced Joseph to make a long trip just to pay his taxes. His fiance, who had to go with him, was going to have a baby any moment. But when they arrived in Bethlehem, they couldn't even find a place to stay. Doing God's will often takes people out of their comfort zones. Jesus' life began in poverty. Later, Jesus would stress to his disciples what it meant to have no place to lay one's head (Lk 9:58). Those who do God's will are not guaranteed comfortable lives. But they are promised that everything, even their discomfort, has meaning in God's plan. (See Luke LAC)

J C Ryle - Let us notice, secondly, the place where Christ was born. It was not at Nazareth of Galilee, where His mother, the Virgin Mary, lived. The prophet Micah had foretold that the event was to take place at Bethlehem. (Micah 5:2.) And so it came to pass. At Bethlehem Christ was born.

The overruling providence of God appears in this simple fact. He orders all things in heaven and earth. He turns the hearts of kings whithersoever He will. He overruled the time when Augustus decreed the taxing. He directed the enforcement of the decree in such a way, that Mary must needs be at Bethlehem when "the days were accomplished that she should be delivered." Little did the haughty Roman emperor, and his officer Cyrenius, think that they were only instruments in the hand of the God of Israel, and were only carrying out the eternal purposes of the King of kings. Little did they think that they were helping to lay the foundation of a kingdom, before which the empires of this world would all go down one day, and Roman idolatry pass away. The words of Isaiah, upon a like occasion, should be remembered, "He meaneth not so, neither doth his heart think so." (Isaiah 10:7.)

The heart of a believer should take comfort in the recollection of God's providential government of the world. A true Christian should never be greatly moved or disquieted by the conduct of the rulers of the earth. He should see with the eye of faith a hand overruling

all that they do to the praise and glory of God. He should regard every king and potentate,—an Augustus, a Cyrenius, a Darius, a Cyrus, a Sennacherib,—as a creature who, with all his power, can do nothing but what God allows, and nothing which is not carrying out God's will. And when the rulers of this world "set themselves against the Lord," he should take comfort in the words of Solomon, "There be higher than they." (Eccles. 5:8.)

Let us notice, lastly, the manner in which Christ was born. He was not born under the roof of His mother's house, but in a strange place, and at an "inn." When born, He was not laid in a carefully prepared cradle. He was "laid in a manger, because there was no room in the inn."

We see here the grace and condescension of Christ. Had He come to save mankind with royal majesty, surrounded by His Father's angels, it would have been an act of undeserved mercy. Had He chosen to dwell in a palace, with power and great authority, we should have had reason enough to wonder. But to become poor as the very poorest of mankind, and lowly as the very lowliest,—this is a love that passeth knowledge. It is unspeakable and unsearchable. Never let us forget that through this humiliation Jesus has purchased for us a title to glory. Through His life of suffering, as well as His death, He has obtained eternal redemption for us. All through His life He was poor for our sakes, from the hour of His birth to the hour of His death. And through His poverty we are made rich. (2 Cor. 8:9.)

Let us beware of despising the poor, because of their poverty. Their condition is one which the Son of God has sanctified and honored, by taking it voluntarily on Himself. God is no respecter of persons. He looks at the hearts of men, and not at their incomes. Let us never be ashamed of the cross of poverty, if God thinks fit to lay it upon us. To be godless and covetous is disgraceful, but it is no disgrace to be poor. A mean dwelling place, and coarse food, and a hard bed, are not pleasing to flesh and blood. But they are the portion which the Lord Jesus Himself willingly accepted from the day of His entrance into the world. Wealth ruins far more souls than poverty. When the love of money begins to creep over us, let us think of the manger at Bethlehem, and of Him who was laid in it. Such thoughts may deliver us from much harm. (Luke 2)

James Freeman - New Manners and Customs of the Bible - Swaddling clothes"—Manger—Inn

1. The cloths in which Jesus was wrapped were commonly referred to as "swaddling clothes." These were bandages that were tightly wrapped around a newborn child to hold its legs and arms still. The custom is still widely practiced in many countries. "Swaddling clothes" has also come to indicate restrictions imposed on the immature.

2. A manger is a feeding trough used for cattle, sheep, donkeys, or horses Archaeologists have discovered stone mangers in the horse stables of Ahab at Megiddo. They were cut out of limestone and were approximately three feet long, eighteen inches wide, and two feet deep. Other ancient mangers were made of masonry. Many Palestinian homes consisted of one large room that contained an elevated section and a lower section. The elevated section was the family's living quarters, while the lower section housed the family's animals. Usually a manger, in the form of a masonry box or a stone niche, was located in the lower section. Mangers were also put in cave stables or other stalls. The manger referred to in our text-verse may have been in a cave stable or other shelter. It is doubtful that inns, in the sense of public inns with a building, existed in Old Testament times. By the time of Christ, public inns could be found in Grecian and Roman lands. The Greek word for "inn" in the New Testament implies some type of stopping place for travelers. At times it refers to a public inn. Such an inn of the first century consisted primarily of a walled-in area with a well. A larger inn might have small rooms surrounding the court. People and animals stayed together. The primary services that could be depended upon were water for the family and animals and a place to spread a pallet. In addition to referring to a public inn or lodging place, the same Greek word, kataluma, used in our text-verse, at times refers simply to a guest room in a private home (Mark 14:14; Luke 22:11). The reference in Luke 10:34 is to a pandocheion or a public lodging-place, clearly a public place where the wounded could be fed and cared for by the innkeeper. (For more detail see Freeman's original description of **Swaddling clothes"—Manger—Inn**)

Vance Havner - No Room for Jesus Luke 2:1-7

AS Christmas day brings us around to the blessed story of the Savior's birth, it reminds us of a circumstance connected with that event which still is timely in its application. When Joseph and Mary came to Bethlehem, they were forced to put up in a stable "because there was no room for them in the inn" (Luke 2:7).

Today, amid this commercialized Christmas, this overworked headache of expensive giving, God's great gift, the first Christmas gift, stands often unrecognized. It is easy enough to sing Christmas carols and put on pageants, the tribute of our lips, but how many of us honestly face Christ Himself and His challenge of discipleship at any cost? There is room for many things today, room even for much about Jesus, but is there room for Him?

Let it be observed that so far as we know, this innkeeper may not have been unkind or discourteous to Joseph and Mary. I don't read

that he drove them away when they came to him. He may have been very polite and even expressed his regrets, but just the same, there was no room for them. So today, most people turn down the Lord because they are preoccupied. They have nothing against Him, they may even speak well of Him, but there is no room—their hearts and homes are filled with other things. So today, men have bought land and oxen and married wives and cannot entertain the Lord Jesus—their time and thoughts are already taken up with other things; maybe not bad things, but things too important for what they are worth.

This innkeeper may have said, "Come back tomorrow—some other day." So men say that at some "more convenient season" they will accept the Lord. They do not really mean to pass Him up, the house is just too full now—and after they have straightened up things a bit and made more room, then He will be welcomed. But days lengthen into weeks and months and years, and life has gone, and there has never been room enough for Jesus.

What other guests do you have in your heart and home that shut out Jesus? For certainly the reason why there is no room is because there are others in His place. Is there anybody or anything in all this universe important enough to take His place? Eternity lies ahead, and you had better admit the guest who can spend it with you. You will need Him out there! Remember the man who cleaned out his house but left it empty, and seven evil spirits returned. It is not even enough to clear out undesirable guests! If Jesus does not take the place of what goes out, one's latter state will be worse than the first. God cannot use an empty heart; a vacant life will soon be devil-filled.

I beg of you, on this Christmas day, do not make of it a hollow mockery by paying a wordy tribute to the Christ while you refuse Him your heart. It does no good to go to church and listen to cantatas if you have barred and bolted your heart against the Christ. Today He would graciously enter as Savior and Lord. One day He will come as Judge, and then you cannot escape Him. Be sure to put the Christ in Christmas!

A Baby Boy

Read: Luke 2:8-14

> [Mary] brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths. —Luke 2:7

The full-page advertisement in the newspaper caught my eye immediately. Near the top of the light-blue page was the silhouette of a star. In the center of the page were the words:

It’s a boy.

Luke 2:11 was printed across the bottom of the page: “Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; He is Christ the Lord” (niv).

This simple message—it’s a boy—proclaimed the indescribable gift of a Savior who came to earth as a baby. Why did He do it?

We needed God to send Jesus. Because of our sin, we were separated from a holy God (Rom. 3:23). A perfect Savior and mediator was needed to bring us back together. Only God could restore the relationship.

God wanted to send Jesus. He loved us so much that He gave His Son (John 3:16) so that our relationship could be restored. Jesus was the only One who could meet His demand for a perfect sacrifice—only He was sinless (Heb. 9:11-15). He willingly gave Himself on the cross. God accepted that sacrifice and raised Him from the dead.

Because of our need and His love, God the Father gave us the gift of Jesus the Son. Accept His gift today—it’s free. - Anne Cetas (Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved)

Rejoice, O soul, the debt is paid,
For all our sins on Christ were laid;
We’ve been redeemed, we’re justified—
And all because the Savior died.
—D. De Haan

Jesus died that we might live.

Room For Jesus

Read: Luke 2:1-7

> There was no room for them in the inn. —Luke 2:7

The words “there was no room for them in the inn” remind me of a family trip many years ago. We had been traveling all day, and I was trying to find a motel where we could spend the night. As we drove along the highway, our hopes were dashed time and again by the sight of No Vacancy signs. As a father, responsible for the well-being of my family, I was frustrated and discouraged.

Then I thought of Mary and Joseph. How much worse it must have been for them when they arrived in Bethlehem and found no rooms available! I can imagine Joseph pleading with the manager of the inn, telling him of Mary’s condition and their desperate need for a place where she could give birth to her child. But “there was no room for them in the inn.” So when Jesus was born, His mother “wrapped Him in swaddling cloths, and laid Him in a manger” (Lk. 2:7).

Today, 2,000 years later, millions of people have no room for Jesus. Although they participate enthusiastically in the festivities of the Christmas season, they keep Him out of their lives. The No Vacancy sign is there.

How about you? Is there room in your life for Christ? What better time than during this season to rededicate your life to Him or to receive Him as your Savior! - Richard DeHaan (Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved)

Have you any room for Jesus,
He who bore your load of sin?
As He knocks and asks admission,
Sinner, will you let Him in?
—Whittle

If Christ is kept on the outside,
there's something wrong on the inside.

A Gift For All Ages

Read: Luke 2:1-7

> She brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths. —Luke 2:7

In the early 19th century, a war-weary world was anxiously watching the march of Napoleon. All the while, babies were being born.

In 1809, midway between the battles of Trafalgar and Waterloo, William E. Gladstone was born in Liverpool, England; Alfred, Lord Tennyson in Somersby, England; Oliver Wendell Holmes in Cambridge, Massachusetts; Felix Mendelssohn in Hamburg, Germany; and Abraham Lincoln in Hodgenville, Kentucky. People’s minds were occupied with battles, not babies. Yet nearly 200 years later, is there the slightest doubt about which made the greater contribution to history—those battles or those babies?

So it was with the birth of Jesus. The Bethlehem crowds had no inkling that the Son of God was asleep in their little town. Only a few shepherds came to see Him, and they left glorifying God.

Oh, how we need to recapture some of the marvel and wonder of that infant child coming into the world! He came into this war-torn world of selfishness and sin for one purpose—to die as a sacrifice for our sins. The forgiveness He offers will satisfy the deepest need of our hearts. Truly, Jesus is a gift for all ages. Have you by faith received that gift? -- Dennis J. DeHaan (Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved)

He did not use a silvery box
Or paper green and red;
God laid His Christmas gift to me
Within a manger bed.
—Prentice

No gift is more needed by a dying world than the life-giving Savior.

A Gift Of Shelter

Read: Luke 2:1-7

> There was no room for them in the inn. —Luke 2:7

Life was tough for Datha and her family. At age 39, she had a heart attack and bypass surgery and learned that she had coronary artery disease. A year later, her 15-year-old daughter Heather became paralyzed as the result of a car accident. Datha quit her job to

take care of Heather, and the bills started piling up. Soon they would be facing eviction. Datha was so angry with God that she stopped praying.

Then came Christmas Eve 2004. A young girl knocked on Datha's door. The girl wished her a "Merry Christmas," gave her an envelope, and left quickly. Inside was a gift that would cover Datha's housing needs for the next year. The attached note read, "Please accept this gift in honor of the Man whose birthday we celebrate on this holy night. Long ago, His family also had a shelter problem."

Luke 2 tells the story of Joseph and Mary as they searched for a shelter for Mary to deliver her baby. They found a place with the animals. Later in His life, Jesus said of Himself, "The Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head" (Matt. 8:20).

Jesus understood Datha's troubles. He brought her hope and met her needs through others who contributed funds.

We can cast all our cares on Him (1 Peter 5:7). In Christ, we find shelter (Ps. 61:3-4). - Anne Cetas Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved)

God will take care of you still to the end;
O what a Father, Redeemer, and Friend!
Jesus will answer whenever you call;
He will take care of you: trust Him for all!
—Crosby

You do the casting, God will do the caring.

Luke 2:8 In the same region there were some shepherds staying out in the fields and keeping watch over their flock by night.

- Luke 2 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

SOME SHEPHERDS
WATCHING SHEEP

In the same region there were some shepherds (poimen) **staying out** (agrauleo) **in the fields and keeping** (phulasso) **watch** (phulake) **over their flock by night.** - The irony is that **shepherds** with no name given were to hear the announcement of the coming of the **Chief Shepherd** Whose Name would be above every name. Normally the birth of a prince would be announced to kings and other dignitaries, but this "princely" announcement was given to lowly **shepherds**, not to priests, rulers, kings, Pharisees nor Scribes, not to the great men of Israel but common shepherds, who as a class were actually considered as "outcasts" by the Jewish hierarchy!

> **THOUGHT** - Is this not a wonderful illustration of God's grace - His incredible favor bestowed on those who do not and could not ever merit His favor? In this sense these anonymous shepherds represent all mankind, for we are all undeserving and in desperate need of God's amazing grace! We, like these shepherds, are all so to speak "ceremonially unclean," our hearts and consciences rendered unclean by our many trespasses and sins.

Amazing Grace, How sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me
I once was lost, but now am found
T'was blind but now I see

T'was Grace that taught my heart to fear
And Grace, my fears relieved
How precious did that grace appear
The hour I first believed

This announcement, the most significant ever given to sinful men, was given to lowly, "unclean" shepherds which reminds me of Jesus' first beatitude "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." (Mt 5:3+).

Paul's words also come to mind "For consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble; but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things

of the world to shame the things which are strong, and the base things of the world and the despised, God has chosen, the things that are not, that He might nullify the things that are, that no man should boast before God. (1 Cor 1:26-29+).

> **Kostenberger** comments - Paul's words are a fitting commentary on the way God works in general, including the circumstances of the Messiah's birth. What is more, just as the worship of the **magi** pointed forward to Jesus's ethnically universal rule (encompassing both Jew and Gentile), the message to the shepherds points forward to an accessibility that depends not upon one's status (religious or socioeconomic), position, wealth, or prestige. The birth of this child was good news for ***all***! (The First Days of Jesus: The Story of the Incarnation)

And finally the words of James come to mind "Listen, my beloved brethren: did not God choose **the poor of this world** to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him?" (James 2:5+)

> **J C Ryle** - The want of money debars no one from spiritual privileges. The things of God's kingdom are often hid from the great and noble, and revealed to the poor. The busy labor of the hands need not prevent a man being favored with special communion with God. Moses was keeping sheep,—Gideon was threshing wheat,—Elisha was ploughing, when they were severally honored by direct calls and revelations from God. Let us resist the suggestion of Satan, that religion is not for the working man. The weak of the world are often called before the mighty. (1 Cor 1:26-29+). The last are often first, and the first last. (Luke 2)

And the message to **shepherds** (poimen) is especially fitting for Jesus Himself came as the **Good Shepherd** (John 10:14, cf the "Chief Shepherd" = 1 Peter 5:4+, "the Great Shepherd of the sheep" = Hebrews 13:20+) and also as the **Lamb of God** sacrificed for the sins of the world (John 1:29).

Vincent - There is a play upon the words: *watching watches*. There was near Bethlehem, on the road to Jerusalem, a tower known as **Migdal Eder**, or the watch-tower of the flock. Here was the station where shepherds watched the flocks destined for sacrifice in the temple. Animals straying from Jerusalem on any side, as far as from Jerusalem to Migdal Eder, were offered in sacrifice. It was a settled conviction among the Jews that the Messiah was to be born in Bethlehem, and equally that he was to be revealed from Migdal Eder. The beautiful significance of the revelation of the infant Christ to shepherds watching the flocks destined for sacrifice needs no comment.

ASSORTED COMMENTS ON SHEPHERDS

John MacArthur on **shepherds** (poimen) - The good news of the Savior's birth came first to a most unlikely group of people. Shepherds were near the bottom of the social ladder. They were uneducated and unskilled, increasingly viewed in the post-New Testament era as dishonest, unreliable, unsavory characters, so much so that they were not allowed to testify in court. Because sheep required care seven days a week, shepherds were unable to fully comply with the man-made Sabbath regulations developed by the Pharisees. As a result, they were viewed as being in continual violation of the religious laws, and hence ceremonially unclean. That is not to say, however, that being a shepherd was an illegitimate or disreputable occupation. Two of the greatest figures in Israel's history, Moses (Ex. 3:1) and David (1 Sam. 16:11–13), were shepherds at some point in their lives. Moreover, the Old Testament refers metaphorically to God as the "Shepherd of Israel" (Ps. 80:1; cf. 23:1; Isa. 40:11), while Jesus described Himself as the "good shepherd" (John 10:11, 14; cf. Heb. 13:20; 1 Peter 2:25; 5:4). Shepherds were, however, lowly, humble people; they certainly were not the ones who would be expected to receive the most significant announcement in history. That they were singled out to receive this great honor suggests that these shepherds were devout men, who believed in the true and living God. Such people are later described as those who were "looking for the consolation of Israel" (Lk 2:25) and the "redemption of Jerusalem" (Lk 2:38).(See context in Luke 1-24 MacArthur New Testament Commentary)

Kent Hughes - According to the **Mishnah**, shepherds were under a ban. They were regarded as thieves. (Quoting from TDNT, Vol 6, pp 488-491) The only people lower than shepherds at that particular time in Jewish history were lepers. God comes only to those who sense their need. He does not come to the self-sufficient. The gospel is for those who know they need Jesus! (Luke: That You May Know the Truth)

POSB - there was the unbelievable appearance of a real angel to **shepherds**. In the eyes of many, an angel would never appear to a shepherd. Shepherds would seldom be found praising and worshiping God; as a result they were looked upon as anything but worshippers. Their reputation was lowly at best, and religious people snubbed and ignored them. They were despised because they were unable to attend services and to keep the ceremonial laws of washing and cleansing. Their flocks just kept them too busy.

What a beautiful foretaste of the salvation to come: God gave the first message of His Son to common shepherds, those looked upon as sinners. The angel's appearance was that of splendor and glory. This was the Shekinah glory. The angel's message was one of reassurance and good news. He proclaimed the Messiah's birth and charged the shepherds to visit the child. He gave them a sign: they would find the babe lying in a manger. (See context Preacher's Outline & Sermon Bible-Luke)

Trent Butler - Luke quickly shifts scenes from the king lying where animals eat to burly men protecting animals in their natural homes. Shepherding had changed from a family business as in David's time (1 Sam. 16:11) to a despised occupation. Many shepherds were accused of robbery and using land they had no rights to. Shepherding was also a lonely occupation, particularly at night, as a shepherd stood his watch, making sure sleeping sheep did not wake up and wander and that prowling predators did not attack and devour the sheep. Only God would visit those in such a low occupation and raise them to witness to his salvation. Yet, shepherds had a tender side, counting the sheep constantly (Jer. 33:12-13), lifting the weak on their shoulders (see Isa. 40:11), and creating crude pens where the sheep could sleep (John 10:1). (Luke Holman New Testament Commentary)

Walter Lefield - There may be several reasons for the special role of the shepherds in the events of this unique night. Among the occupations, shepherding had a lowly place (SBK, 2:114). Shepherds were considered untrustworthy and their work made them ceremonially unclean. Thus the most obvious implication is that the gospel first came to the social outcasts of Jesus' day. This would accord with a recurring emphasis in Luke. Moreover, it may be significant that in the Lord's instructions to Nathan about giving David the covenant the Lord reminds David, who was to become Messiah's ancestor, that he was called from the shepherd's life (2Sam 7:8). Finally, in both testaments shepherds symbolize those who care for God's people, including the Lord himself (Ps 23:1; Isa 40:11; Jer 23:14; Heb 13:20; 1 Peter 2:25; 5:2). The shepherds of Luke 2 may, therefore, symbolize all the ordinary people who have joyfully received the gospel and have become in various ways pastors to others. (See context The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Luke-Acts)

NET Note is interesting - Some argue that shepherds were among the culturally despised, but the evidence for this view of shepherds is late, coming from 5th century Jewish materials. December 25 as the celebrated date of Jesus' birth arose around the time of Constantine (ca. A.D. 306–337), though it is mentioned in material from Hippolytus (A.D. 165–235). Some think that the reason for celebration on this date was that it coincided with the pagan Roman festival of **Saturnalia**, (ED: More in depth discussion Jesus' Birth in Bethlehem) and Christians could celebrate their own festival at this time without fear of persecution. On the basis of the statement that the shepherds were living out in the field, keeping guard over their flock at night it is often suggested that Jesus' birth took place in early spring, since it was only at lambing time that shepherds stood guard over their flocks in the field. This is not absolutely certain, however.

James S. Stewart observes "And is there not a world of meaning in the fact that it was very ordinary people, busy about very ordinary tasks, whose eyes first saw the glory of the coming of the Lord? It means, first, that the place of duty, however humble, is the place of vision. And it means, second, that it is the men who have kept to the deep, simple pieties of life and have not lost the child heart to whom the gates of the Kingdom most readily open." (Quoted in Believer's Bible Commentary)

Bob Utley - The rabbis considered them to be religious outcasts and their testimony was not admissible in court. This was because they lived with the sheep and could not keep all the rules and regulations of the rabbis. There may be some symbolic connection with David's being a shepherd in this same area. The Messiah's birth was announced first to Jewish outcasts!

Wiersbe adds "Shepherds are not easily fooled. They are practical men of the world who have little to do with fantasy. If they said that they saw angels and went and found the Messiah, then you could believe them. God selected hardworking men to be the first witnesses that His Son had come into the world." (Scroll to page 143 in The Bible Exposition Commentary)

Brian Bell - Q: Who do you think were… (1) The 1st Hearers of the Christmas Gospel! (2). The 1st Believers of the Christmas Gospel! (3). The 1st Preachers of the Christmas Gospel! Answer = The Shepherds!

The Shepherds Reputation!

- Bible Almanac – "Shepherds were distrusted in Jesus' day, as being a wild bunch."
- James Boice – "This rural nomadic folk were a despised class in the 1st cent. Also, they were considered unreliable & therefore were not even allowed to give testimony in the law courts."
- The Egyptians – "Every shepherd is an abomination to the Egyptians." (Ge 46:34) [Joseph wouldn't even eat w/his brothers]
- Others described them as, "a meditative class of men, accustomed to the sweet silence of nature, apart from the bustle & stir of cities, invited to quiet communion w/their own hearts."
- Shepherds were the 1st profession mentioned in the bible, "Abel was a keeper of sheep." (Gen.4:2)
- Interesting this 1st shepherd was the 1st blood sacrifice!
- Christ, later called the Good Shepherd, who leaves the 99 to find the

- Here, we have these shepherds leaving their sheep to locate this One Lamb! (i.e. of God)
- Q: Is there any other profession that would be more excited about a Lamb being born?
- And so, the 1st Tidings of Great Joy was brought to "Shaggy Shepherds!"

The Shepherds Reverence!

- It was a momentary fear!
- They were gravely aware of the great gulf between God & man.
- Signs indicate divine intervention into history.
- But none is more dramatic than the angels' announcement to the shepherds of Jesus' birth.

Lenski adds "The question is still asked skeptically as to why these shepherds should have been selected for the angel's announcement. The answer is as simple to the believer as it ever was: because God found them the kind of people to whom he could communicate such news." (See The Interpretation of St. Luke's Gospel)

Kostenberger on **shepherds** - Because of their work, shepherds were almost always ceremonially unclean, and, although Luke makes no mention of it, later Jewish texts indicate that shepherds were generally distrusted and viewed negatively. Most likely, the revelation to shepherds parallels and reinforces the lowly circumstances of the birth and the manger with no room in normal human habitation. On the back end of the story of Jesus, compare the fact that the first witnesses to the risen Jesus were women who likewise would have had a comparatively lower status in first-century Palestinian society (Lk 23:55, 24:1-5, 10, Jn 20:11-14, 15, 16). (The First Days of Jesus: The Story of the Incarnation)

Constable - Throughout the Old Testament God used shepherds as symbols of those who cared for His people (Ps. 23:1; Isa. 40:11; Jer. 23:1-4; et al.). Consequently these shepherds represent all people of lowly origin and reputation who receive the gospel by God's grace and proclaim it joyfully to others. The idea that these shepherds were raising sheep that the people would offer as Passover sacrifices in a few months is possible but not capable of verification. They would have been out in the fields with their sheep at night if the winter weather was mild, as it apparently was. (Expository Notes)

Marvin Vincent - Luke's Gospel is the gospel of the poor and lowly. This revelation to the shepherds acquires additional meaning as we remember that shepherds, as a class, were under the Rabbinic ban, because of their necessary isolation from religious ordinances, and their manner of life, which rendered strict legal observance well nigh impossible.

Spurgeon - These men were probably poor and illiterate, but that did not hinder God from revealing himself to them, nor prevent the coming of his Son to them. They were engaged in their ordinary calling, "keeping watch over their flock by night," when this great blessing came to them. Seldom does such a blessing as this come to idlers. It was not while they were gadding abroad, and wasting their time, but while they kept watch over their flock that "the angel of the Lord came upon them." First one angel led the way, and then a multitude of the heavenly host followed and these poor men, perhaps troubled with the common superstition of the Jews that the appearance of God, or any supernatural visitation, would always be followed by death, "were sore afraid." (Luke Exposition)

David Guzik - Many have said that a late December date is impossible, because shepherds would not have been out at night at that time of year. Nevertheless, warm winters are not unknown in Judea, which has a climate remarkably similar to Southern California. (Enduring Word Commentary)

Leon Morris says the rabbinic writings speak of sheep being pastured between Jerusalem and Bethlehem in February - (TNTC-Luke)

Steven Cole - Have you ever considered why the text does not read (Luke 2:8), "Now there were in the same region scribes and Pharisees, keeping watch over their scrolls and religious rituals"? Nor does it say, "There were in the same region kings and princes keeping watch at the palace." God chose to reveal the birth of the Savior to simple shepherds who were going about their job. Why shepherds? That God chose simple shepherds to be the first to know of the birth of the Savior is even more strange by human standards because in Israel, shepherding was a lowly task. Shepherds had not been schooled in the law and thus were considered ignorant. Their work made them ceremonially unclean. According to one Jewish treatise, shepherds were not trustworthy enough to be used as witnesses. According to another, help was not to be offered to shepherds and heathen (see Godet, Luke [I. K. Funk & Co., 1881], p. 81). So why did God choose shepherds as the first ones to receive the angels' revelation concerning the Messiah's birth? In the first place, God chose shepherds to show that...The gospel is for the simple, not for the sophisticated. God puts His cookies on the bottom shelf. Because of that, the sophisticated and scholarly sometimes miss the truth of it. They're looking too high; it's beneath them to stoop to the lowest shelf, and so they miss what God offers freely to all. If it were any other way, men could boast before God. If the gospel were some complicated philosophy that required a high I.Q. and years of study to grasp, then those who had attained it could congratulate themselves on how much more intelligent they were than the rest of the population. Those who were illiterate or not as intellectually gifted as others could never hope to qualify for salvation. But the beauty of the good news

about Christ is that it was first announced to lowly shepherds. They probably couldn't read and write. They weren't leadership material. But God's love in Christ extended to them. The danger is that we will miss the gospel because it is so simple (1 Cor. 1:26-31)....In the second place, God chose shepherds as the first to receive the good news because...The gospel involved the sacrifice of the Lamb of God. We do not know the exact date of Jesus' birth, but a December date is reasonable (Harold Hoehner, Chronological Aspects cf the Life cf Christ [Zondervan, 1977], pp. 25-27.) It is probable that the very sheep these men were tending in the fields that night were being prepared for slaughter at the Passover in Jerusalem a few months later. Thus it is symbolic that the shepherds who were watching the Passover lambs would be invited to Bethlehem to view the Passover Lamb of God (1 Cor 5:7), provided for the salvation of the world. The Bible teaches that the wages of sin is death (Rom. 6:23), eternal separation from God. A holy God cannot accept sinners in His presence unless their sin has been paid for. If He did, He would not be just. In His love for us, God sent His own Son, born sinless through the miracle of the virgin birth, to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Just as when the Jews were delivered from Egypt, and were spared from the angel of death if they had the blood of the Passover lamb on their doorposts, so every person who applies the blood of Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, to his life will be saved from God's judgment. So God revealed His good news to shepherds because (A.) the gospel is for the simple, not the sophisticated; and (B.) the gospel involved the sacrifice of the Lamb of God. C. The gospel provided us with a Good Shepherd and calls us to shepherd others. (Luke 2:8-20 The Simplicity Of Christmas)

QUESTION - What was a shepherd in the Bible?

ANSWER - A shepherd during the time of the Old Testament was often, but not always, a child. Whatever his age, the shepherd's job was to protect his flock and guide them to good pastures with plenty of food and slow-moving, easily accessible water. If fed grass of poor quality, the sheep would be malnourished. If the water moved too quickly, the sheep would be too afraid to drink from it. Guiding the flock of sheep to a good location was an extremely important task for a shepherd because good pastures kept his flock healthy.

A shepherd typically carried a few items with him to aid him in his task of caring for the sheep. First, he would have a rod. The rod was a sturdy stick with a knob at one end. Sometimes the knob even had nails in it to make it a better weapon. The shepherd used his rod to protect his sheep from wild animals or other threats. The shepherd also carried a long staff. The staff was used as a walking stick for the shepherd, who also used it to maneuver sheep when needed. For further protection, shepherds often carried a sling, comprised of a leather pouch on a string. Placing a stone in the pouch, a skilled shepherd could fling rocky projectiles over a good distance in order to scare off or wound wild animals.

During biblical times, families in the Middle East relied upon sheep to provide food, wool, and sheepskin. Because sheep were so valuable, shepherds would stay with the flock to protect them day and night. Frequently, the youngest boy in the family served as a shepherd until he grew older and could do harder manual labor. David was a shepherd for his family, and he often used references to shepherding in the book of Psalms. One of the most well-known psalms, Psalm 23, describes the Lord as the Great Shepherd:

> "The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing.
> He makes me lie down in green pastures,
> he leads me beside quiet waters,
> he refreshes my soul.
> He guides me along the right paths
> for his name's sake.
> Even though I walk
> through the darkest valley,
> I will fear no evil,
> for you are with me;
> your rod and your staff,
> they comfort me.
>
> "You prepare a table before me
> in the presence of my enemies.
> You anoint my head with oil;
> my cup overflows.
> Surely your goodness and love will follow me
> all the days of my life,
> and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever."

Notable shepherds in the Old Testament, besides David, are Abel, Moses, Amos, and, for a time at least, Zechariah. In the New Testament, shepherds near Bethlehem are the ones chosen to witness the heavenly announcement of Christ's birth. And Jesus

claims to be the Good Shepherd who truly cares for His sheep—so much so that He lays down His life for them (John 10:1–16).

Just as shepherds guarded their sheep and cared for them day and night, so does God care for us. Even when life gets difficult, God protects us, guides us, and never leaves us. We can trust that God is the perfect Shepherd. GotQuestions.org

Related Resources:

- What does it mean that the Lord is my Shepherd (Psalm 23)? | GotQuestions.org
- What did Jesus mean when He said, "I am the good Shepherd?" | GotQuestions.org
- How is Jesus the "True Shepherd" in John 10:1-5? | GotQuestions.org
- What are some Bible verses about shepherds? | GotQuestions.org

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Shepherds (4166)(**poimen** **A T Robertson** says poimen is from a root meaning to protect) (See verb **poimaino** = to shepherd) literally describes one who cares for a flock. One who herds, feeds, and tends a flock. A herdsman. A sheep herder. The main responsibility of the shepherd was to keep the flock intact, to protect and to provide for the sheep.

Staying out (only NT use)(63)(**agrauleo** from **agros** = field + **aulizomai** = remain in the fields, especially at night, from **aule** = a sheepfold, enclosed space exposed to open air) means to live out of doors, stay out in the open air, under the open sky, dwelling (present tense - continually) in the field.

Keeping watch (present tense = continually)("watching watches") (5442)(**phulasso** means to watch, to carry out the function as a military guard or sentinel (cp Acts 23:35, 28:16), to keep watch, to have one's eye upon lest one escape, to guard to keep safe (from being snatched away, from being lost). The NT uses phulasso of guarding truth (eg, 1Ti 5:21, 6:20, 2Ti 1:14-note) **Phulasso** is the verb used to describe the shepherds "**keeping watch** (phulasso) over their flock by night (Lk 2:8), which congers up the image of savage wolves seeking to devour the helpless sheep. Elsewhere we read of the Good Shepherd, the Great Shepherd Who keeps watch over His sheep. The verb **phulasso** is accompanied by the related noun (5438) **phulake** which refers to the act of keeping watch, guarding (Lxx - Nu 1:53; 3:7, 28) and the combined phrase *phulassontes phulakas* = guard a guarding, keep watch, do guard duty. Sheep were kept out in the fields during the day. In the evening they were moved into sheepfolds, where the shepherds could take turns keeping watch over their flock during the night. Inside the fold the sheep could more easily be guarded from predators and thieves.

Watch (5438)(**phulake** from **phulasso** = to guard, watch) means a guarding (the act of guarding or keeping watch - Lk 2:8, Nu 1:53, 3:7, 28) or guard (the person doing the watching - Acts 12:10) , a prison as a place where someone is guarded (Mt 5:25, 14:3, 10, 18:30, 25:36, 39, 43, etc).

Marvin Vincent - Keeping watch (phulassontes phulakas). **Phulake** is sometimes used of a watch as a measure of time, as in Matt. 14:25; Mark 6:48; Luke 12:38. So possibly here. See Rev. in margin, night-watches.

O Holy Night
(sung by Josh Groban)

O holy night, the stars are brightly shining,
It is the night of the dear Saviour's birth;
Long lay the world in sin and error pining,
'Till he appeared and the soul felt its worth.
A thrill of hope the weary world rejoices,
For yonder breaks a new and glorious morn;

Chorus
Fall on your knees, Oh hear the angel voices!
O night divine! O night when Christ was born.
O night, O holy night, O night divine.

2. Led by the light of Faith serenely beaming;
With glowing hearts by his cradle we stand:
So, led by light of a star sweetly gleaming,
Here come the wise men from Orient land,
The King of Kings lay thus in lowly manger,
In all our trials born to be our friend;

Chorus
He knows our need, To our weakness no stranger!
Behold your King! Before Him lowly bend!
Behold your King! your King! before him bend!

3. Truly He taught us to love one another;
His law is Love and His gospel is Peace;
Chains shall he break, for the slave is our brother,
And in his name all oppression shall cease,
Sweet hymns of joy in grateful Chorus raise we;
Let all within us praise his Holy name!

Chorus
Christ is the Lord, then ever! ever praise we!
His pow'r and glory, evermore proclaim!
His pow'r and glory, evermore proclaim!

What Christmas is All About - By David McCasland Fifty years ago *A Charlie Brown Christmas* was first broadcast on American television. Some network executives thought it would be ignored, while others worried that quoting the Bible would offend viewers. Some wanted its creator, Charles Schulz, to omit the Christmas story, but Schulz insisted it stay in. The program was an immediate success and has been rebroadcast every year since 1965.

When Charlie Brown, the frustrated director of the children's Christmas play, is discouraged by the commercial spirit of the holiday season, he asks if anyone can tell him the real meaning of Christmas. Linus recites Luke 2:8-14 including the words, "For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men" (Lk 2:11-14KJV). Then Linus says, "That's what Christmas is all about, Charlie Brown."

During this season filled with our own doubts and dreams, it's good to ponder afresh God's great love expressed in the familiar story of Joseph, Mary, the baby Jesus, and the angels who announced the Savior's birth. (Our Daily Bread. Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved)

That's what Christmas is all about.

Father in heaven, as we approach Christmas, may we grasp in a deeper way Your amazing gift to us.

God broke into human history to offer us the gift of salvation!

Luke 2:9 And an angel of the Lord suddenly stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them; and they were terribly frightened.

- **an angel of the Lord suddenly stood:** Lu 1:11,28 Jdg 6:11,12 Mt 1:20 Ac 27:23 1Ti 3:16
- **and the glory of the Lord:** Ex 16:7,10 40:34,35 1Ki 8:11 Isa 6:3 35:2 40:5 60:1 Eze 3:23 Joh 12:41 2Co 3:18 4:6 Rev 18:1
- **and they:** Lu 1:12 Isa 6:4,5 Ac 22:6-9 26:13,14 Heb 12:21 Rev 20:11
- Luke 2 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

> NET Luke 2:9 An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were absolutely terrified.

Abraham Bloemaert (Manner of) - Announcement to the shepherds

SHEPHERDS SUDDENLY SEE
THE GLORY OF GOD

Fall on your knees, Oh hear the angel voices!
O night divine! O night when Christ was born.

O night, O holy night, O night divine.

> **THOUGHT -** When was the last time you fell on your knees in wonder, awe and adoration? Or perhaps a better question is have you ever fallen on your knees before Jesus, the King of kings? If not, may God's Spirit supernaturally touch your heart with the truth of the Good News that Christ was born and Christ has died for you personally that you might live with Him forever and ever. Amen.

And an angel (aggelos/angelos) **of the Lord** (kurios) **suddenly stood before** (ephistemi) **them** - **An angel of the Lord** is **not** THE Angel of the LORD (a Christophany in the OT) but AN angel, a messenger from God to simple men, who proclaimed to them the incarnation of Jesus, the Old Testament Angel of the LORD! Unlike Lk 1:11, 19, 26+ the angel is not identified by name (only Gabriel and Michael are named of the good angels). Recall it was night (Lk 2:8) and suddenly the glory of the Lord shone all around these shepherds. This was at first a single unnamed **angel** (see aggelos/angelos, cf the angel named Gabriel in Lk 1:19, 26+) who would make the greatest announcement ever made to this sinful world! Two sudden shepherd sights - first an angelic solo (Lk 2:9), then an angelic choir (Lk 2:13)!

> **Suddenly** is a frequent "time phrase" in Luke's writings. Here are all of Dr Luke's uses of **suddenly** in the NAS - It makes for an interesting study! -- Lk. 2:9; Lk. 2:13; Lk. 9:39; Lk. 21:34; Lk. 24:4; Acts 2:2; Acts 9:3; Acts 12:7; Acts 16:26; Acts 22:6; Acts 28:6

Butler - Shift the spotlight once more from earth's lowly shepherds enduring a dark night to heaven's most glorious messenger. With the angel came God's glory, his shining majesty, the side of God humans can see and to which they can respond in confession, worship, and praise (see Isa. 60:1-3). As with Zechariah (Lk 1:12-13) and Mary (Lk 1:29-30), gazing at God's glorious angel terrified the shepherds. (Luke Holman New Testament Commentary)

Warren Wiersbe comments "How amazed the angels must have been when they saw the Creator born as a creature, the Word coming as a speechless baby. The best commentary on this is 2 Corinthians 8:9 ("For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich."), and the best response from our hearts is wonder and worship. "Great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh" (1 Ti 3:16). ((Scroll to page 143 in The Bible Exposition Commentary))

And the glory (doxa) **of the Lord** (kurios) **shone around** (perilampo) **them** - In this passage the **glory** points toward the visible and manifest divine presence. One is reminded of John's description which all believers will one day be privileged to behold "And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine on it, for the **glory of God** has illumined it, and its lamp is the Lamb." (Rev 21:23+). **Kostenberger** points out that in contrast to the glorious manifestation to the shepherds "Luke describes the fear-inspiring appearance of the angel Gabriel to Zacharia and Mary with more subtlety (Lk 1:11+, Lk 1:28+), while the shepherds were enveloped with the powerfully and brilliantly visible glory of God (Ibid)

Gene Brooks - **The glory** (doxa) **of the Lord shone round about them.** This is the same Glory that appeared to Abraham in Ur (Acts 7:2), the same Glory as Moses encountered on Mount Sinai (Exod. 31), the same Glory as in the Tabernacle (Exod. 40:34-35), the same Glory as appeared at the dedication of Solomon's Temple (1 Kings 8:11), the same Glory as Ezekiel saw depart the Temple (Ezek 10:4, 18-19; 11:22-23). Now for more than 500 years the nation of Israel had been without a visible sign of God's presence among His people. Now the Glory for which Israel had so long waited had been revealed to humble, believing shepherds in the field, not unbelieving priests in the temple. (Sermon Notes)

And they were terribly frightened (phobeo) - Fallen finite men are always frightened by the sight of the normally invisible spiritual realm! **NET Note** comments that the Greek phrase (phobeo phobos megas) literally reads "*they feared a great fear*" which is a Semitic idiom which intensifies the main idea, in this case their fear."

As **MacArthur** says "Fear was the normal response whenever anyone in Scripture either encountered an angel (cf. Dan. 8:15-18; 10:7-9, 16-17; Matt. 28:2-4; Luke 1:12, 26-30) or saw the glory of God manifest (Isa. 6:1-5; Ezek. 1:28; 3:23; Matt. 17:5-6; Mark 4:41; 5:33; Acts 9:4; Rev. 1:17). Those who experience the presence of the holy God are acutely aware of their sinfulness. Isaiah cried out, "Woe is me, for I am ruined! Because I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts" (Isa. 6:5), and Peter exclaimed after witnessing a miracle performed by the Lord, "Go away from me Lord, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!" (Luke 5:8)." (See context in Luke Commentary)

Spurgeon adds that **"**For such is the condition, even of gracious souls, that the near approach of the divine glory begets in them trembling and alarm. Oh, how wondrously changed shall we be when we are able to bear even the glories of heaven! (1 John 3:2+, Php 3:20+, 1 Cor 15:51-52) Have you ever thought of this, dear friends? The beloved apostle, John, saw Christ in his glory, and he wrote, "**When I saw him, I fell at his feet, as dead**" (Rev 1:17+) and these shepherds, even at the sight of '**the angel of the Lord,**" "were sore afraid." You and I, beloved, must undergo a marvelous change before we shall be able to be at home with God in his glory; but that change shall, through his abundant grace, take place ere long. (Luke Exposition)

Suddenly stood ("stood in front of")(2186)(**ephistemi** from **epi** = upon, by, near + **histemi** = stand) means literally to stand by, upon or over and conveys the sense of to be at hand, be present. **It is generally used of any sudden unexpected appearance** for example of a person coming suddenly upon another (Luke 2:9; 24:4; Acts 4:1; Acts 12:7, confront - Lk 20:1). The coming eschatological day (Second Coming in Lk 21:34+).

> Paul uses **ephistemi** in his graphic description of the sure and sudden coming of the **Day of the Lord -** "For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night. 3 While they are saying, "Peace and safety!" **then destruction will come upon them suddenly like labor pains upon a woman with child, and they will not escape.** 4 But you, brethren, are not in darkness, that the day would overtake you like a thief; 5 for you are all sons of light and sons of day. We are not of night nor of darkness." (1 Th 5:2-5+).

> At the end of Luke's Gospel, Lk 24:4-5, **ephistemi** is used to announce that Jesus was alive. So not only was **ephistemi** used when the angel announced His birth but when the angels announced His victory over death. - "While they were perplexed about this, behold, two men (SURELY ANGELS) **suddenly stood** near them in dazzling clothing; 5 and as the women were terrified and bowed their faces to the ground, the men said to them, "Why do you seek the living One among the dead?"

Glory (1391)(**doxa** rom **dokeo** = to think) in simple terms means to give a proper opinion or estimate of something and thus the **glory** of God expresses all that He is in His Being and in His nature, character, power and acts. He is glorified when He is allowed to be seen as He really is which is exactly what this angel did! To be where God is will be glory. To be what God intended will be glory. To do what God purposed will be glory. **Glory** refers to the majesty and splendor accompanying God's presence (cf Ex 16:7; 24:17; Psalm 63:2; Isaiah 40:5).

> **Glory of the Lord** - this phrase occurs 38x in 37v most of the occurrences being in the Old Testament - the manifestation of God's presence among His people. **Utley** observes that "This phrase is often used in the Septuagint to denote the glorious personal presence of YHWH (cf. Exod. 16:7, 10; 24:16; 40:34–38; Num. 16:19)." Exod. 16:7; Exod. 16:10; Exod. 24:16; Exod. 24:17; Exod. 40:34; Exod. 40:35; Lev. 9:6; Lev. 9:23; Num. 14:10; Num. 14:21; Num. 16:19; Num. 16:42; Num. 20:6; 1 Ki. 8:11; 2 Chr. 5:14; 2 Chr. 7:1; 2 Chr. 7:2; 2 Chr. 7:3; Ps. 104:31; Ps. 138:5; Isa. 35:2; Isa. 40:5; Isa. 58:8; Isa. 60:1; Ezek. 1:28; Ezek. 3:12; Ezek. 3:23; Ezek. 10:4; Ezek. 10:18; Ezek. 11:23; Ezek. 43:4; Ezek. 43:5; Ezek. 44:4; Hab. 2:14; Lk. 2:9; 2 Co. 3:18; 2 Co. 8:19

Shone around (4034)(**perilampo** from **peri** = about + **lampo** = to shine) means to shine around someone, here in L 2:9 around the angel of the Lord. In the only other use (none in Lxx) in Acts 26:13 **perilampo** describes the risen Lord's appearance to Saul on the Road to Damascus "at midday, O King, I saw on the way a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, **shining all around** me and those who were journeying with me."

Frightened (5399)(**phobeo**) means to cause fear to be aroused and so to be alarmed, intimidated by something awe-inspiring. Put yourself in their place and just imagination your reaction to this sight! And if you do not know Jesus the Christ as your personal Savior and Lord, you have cause to be terribly frightened for one day you will see Him and you will bow your knee to Him and you He will tell you to depart to the everlasting fires of Hell because you rejected His loving offer, the free gift of salvation by grace through faith. Today is your day of salvation! Do not procrastinate for you may not have a "tomorrow!"

> BEHOLD, HE IS COMING WITH THE CLOUDS, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him; and all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him. So it is to be. Amen. (Revelation 1:7+)

> For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, 10 so that at the name of Jesus **EVERY KNEE WILL BOW,** of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Php 2:9-11+)

JUST AS YOU ARE - The greatest event in history had just occurred! The Messiah had been born! For ages the Jews had waited for this, and when it finally happened, the announcement came to humble shepherds. The good news about Jesus is that he comes to all types of people, including the plain, the ordinary, and the outcasts of society. He comes to anyone with a heart humble enough to accept him. Whoever you are, whatever you do, you can have Jesus in your life. Don't think that you need extraordinary qualifications—Jesus accepts you as you are. - Life Application Bible Commentary – Luke.

O Holy Night

Read: Luke 2:1-14

> On earth peace, goodwill toward men. —Luke 2:14

According to tradition, a Christmas song once brought peace to a battlefield. It happened on Christmas Eve during the Franco-German War (1870-1871) as the two sides faced each other in their trenches.

A French soldier jumped up and began singing “O Holy Night.” The surprised German soldiers did not fire. Instead, one of them stepped forward to sing “From Heaven Above To Earth I Come.”

For a brief time at least, peace on earth prevailed and goodwill was shared among men whose job it was to kill each other.

Think about the words of “O Holy Night” and see how they can bring hostilities to a halt. “Long lay the world in sin and error pining.” Who knows about the world’s ills better than soldiers who are facing the consequences of war, killing, and death?

“A thrill of hope” is what those men needed in the darkness of that winter night. Hope is what “the dear Savior’s birth” provides. Because of Him the “weary world rejoices.”

Even though we may not be engaged in physical combat, we all face the battles of everyday life. We can let the peace of that holy night—the night of our dear Savior’s birth—reign in our hearts the whole year through. By Dave Branon (Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved)

O holy night! The stars are brightly shining,
It is the night of the dear Savior's birth;
Long lay the world in sin and error pining,
Till He appeared and the soul felt its worth.
—Dwight

God gave us His Son to give us His peace.

Preparation And Expectation

Read: Luke 2:8-12; 21:25-28

> An angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them. —Luke 2:9

When our children were young, we observed Advent (the time beginning on the fourth Sunday before Christmas through Christmas Eve) by making a wreath and lighting candles each night after supper. We sang a carol and read a short Bible passage about the birth of Christ. This was a special time of preparing our hearts to celebrate Christmas.

But Advent is more than that. When Christians first started practicing it in the fourth century, they viewed it not only as preparation for celebrating Jesus’ birth but also as a time of looking forward to His second coming. They found hope and cheer in the sure promise of His return.

The gospel of Luke describes “the glory of the Lord” that shone around the shepherds when the angel announced the Savior’s birth (2:9). Luke also records Jesus’ promise that He will return “with power and great glory” (21:27). These two events frame the purpose for which the Son of God came into the world.

In Latin advent means “a coming.” The weeks before Christmas can be a wonderful season of repentance and expectation as we celebrate our Lord’s first advent in Bethlehem and anticipate His second advent when He returns in glory. Christ has come! Christ is coming again! By David C. McCasland (Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved)

The first time Jesus came to earth,
Humble was His story;
But He has promised to return
With power and great glory.
—Sper

Christ has come! Christ is coming again!

Ordinary Days

Read: Luke 2:8-20

Behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them. —Luke 2:9

Writer Anita Brechbill observed in God's Revivalist magazine that "Most often the Word of the Lord comes to a soul in the ordinary duties of life." She cites the examples of Zacharias performing his duties as a priest, and the shepherds watching their flocks. They were at work as usual with no idea that they were about to receive a message from God.

Luke describes the ordinary days when these men received their message from God: "While [Zacharias] was serving as priest before God in the order of his division, . . . an angel of the Lord appeared to him" (Lk 1:8,11). While the shepherds were "living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night . . . an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them" (Lk 2:8-9).

Oswald Chambers in My Utmost for His Highest said: "Jesus rarely comes where we expect Him; He appears where we least expect Him, and always in the most illogical situations. The only way a worker can keep true to God is by being ready for the Lord's surprise visits."

On this ordinary day, the Lord may have a word of encouragement, guidance, or instruction for us, if we're listening and ready to obey. By David C. McCasland (Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved)

I wonder what I did for God today:
How many times did I once pause and pray?
But I must find and serve Him in these ways,
For life is made of ordinary days.
—Macbeth

God speaks to those who are quiet before Him.

The Shepherds - By David Roper The angel bypassed Jerusalem, the religious center of Israel. He didn't go to Herodium, Herod's villa near Bethlehem. He appeared instead to a band of shepherds tending their flocks (Luke 2:8-9).

Back then no one thought God would be interested in shepherds, or that shepherds would be interested in God. Shepherds were notoriously irreligious, ranked by the rabbis with prostitutes and other "habitual sinners." They were outcasts, barred from the synagogue and polite society. They assumed that God would never accept them, and they feared Him.

But God spoke to them. I think He knew that these shepherds, like so many people who appear indifferent to spiritual things, were quietly longing for God.

All of us have a longing for something more. And no matter how hard we try to appear self-sufficient, sooner or later we run out of something essential—love, money, time, or life. Isolation, loneliness, and fear of death lead us to acknowledge our need for a Savior. But where can we find Him?

The angel's words to the shepherds were simple and direct: "There is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord" (Luke 2:11). You can find Him too. (Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved)

Come to Bethlehem and see
Him whose birth the angels sing;
Come, adore on bended knee
Christ the Lord, the newborn King. —Anon.

God's gift to a dying world is the life-giving Savior.

Luke 2:10 But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which will be for all the people;

NET But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid! Listen carefully, for I proclaim to you good news that brings great joy to all the people:

GNT κα ε πεν α το ς γγελος, M φοβε σθε, δο γ ρ ε αγγελ ζομαι μ ν χαρ ν μεγ λην τις σται παντ τ λα ,

NLT but the angel reassured them. "Don't be afraid!" he said. "I bring you good news that will bring great joy to all people.

KJV And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

ESV And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people.

NIV But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people.

ASV And the angel said unto them, Be not afraid; for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all the people:

CSB But the angel said to them, "Don't be afraid, for look, I proclaim to you good news of great joy that will be for all the people:

- **Do not be afraid**: Lu 1:13,30 Da 10:11,12,19 Mt 28:5 Rev 1:17,18
- **I bring**: Lu 1:19 8:1 Isa 40:9 41:27 52:7 61:1 Ac 13:32 Ro 10:15
- **Which**: Lu 2:31,32 24:47 Ge 12:3 Ps 67:1,2 98:2,3 Isa 49:6 52:10 Mt 28:18 Mk 1:15 16:15 Ro 15:9-12 Eph 3:8 Col 1:23
- Luke 2 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

DO NOT BE AFRAID!
"I EVANGELIZE TO YOU GREAT JOY"

J C Ryle observes - WE read, in these verses, how the birth of the Lord Jesus was first announced to the children of men. The birth of a king's son is generally made an occasion of public revelling and rejoicing. The announcement of the birth of the Prince of Peace was made privately, at midnight, and without anything of worldly pomp and ostentation. (Luke 2)

But the angel (aggelos/angelos) **said to them, "Do not be afraid"** - The angel commands them **Do not be afraid** using the verb phobeo in the present imperative with a negative which means to stop fearing, or don't begin (but they had begun to fear!) (similar commands in Lk 1:13+, Lk 1:30+). **Wiersbe** observes that "**Fear not**!" is one of the key themes of the Christmas story (Luke 1:13, 30, 74; and see Mt. 1:20)." **MacArthur** adds that "God says to His people, as He did to Abraham, '**Do not fear**" (Ge 26:24; cf. Jdg. 6:23; Isa. 43:1, 5; 44:2; Jer. 46:27-28; Lam. 3:57; Dan. 10:12, 19; Mt. 14:27; 17:7; 28:5, 10; Lk 5:10; 12:32; Rev. 1:17). (Ibid) **John Butler** explains they did not have **be afraid** because the "Gospel is coming, **good news**. The Gospel elicits joy, not fear. Joy is the inward feeling of happiness and contentment that bursts forth in rejoicing and praise. Joy comes not just to lowly shepherds or isolated parents far from home. Joy comes to all people. In the most unlikely place amid the most unlikely spectators, God brushed aside the world's fears and provided the world reason for joy (cf. Isa. 9:3). Joy centers not in something you earn or possess. Joy comes from God's gift, a tiny baby in a feed trough. But what a baby!" **Lenski** adds that "The fright that came upon the shepherds as poor mortal men who came in contact with the Lord's glory and his angels in the dead of night is to cease, for it is blessing, yea, the absolute, supreme blessing for mortal man that is thus revealed to these shepherds. The gospel for sinners must always begin with "fear not," for it removes sin and fear. The angel justifies the command with **for** (**gar**) and exclaims at the greatness of this justification with **behold** (idou). But he states first the effect and then the cause, first the joy and then the birth that produces the joy." (The Interpretation of St Luke's Gospel)

> **THOUGHT** - The angel told them to not be afraid. What a blessing it is to be told to not be afraid. However, the comfort of that news depends upon the source of the person who is making this statement. Men often tell us to not be afraid, when we, in fact, have plenty to fear. For example, Franklin Delano Roosevelt in his first inaugural address as President of the United States made the famous statement, "We have nothing to fear but fear itself." Even today people quote this sentence and think this was a great statement, but it was phony, for at that time in world history we had plenty to fear in the United States.
>
> • In Germany, Adolph Hitler and the Nazis were coming into power.
> • In Russia, Joseph Stalin and communism were gaining much power.
> • In Japan, Hideki Tojo was moving up the ranks.
> • Mussolini had a grip on Italy.
>
> Millions of Americans and people of other nations, would die as a result of these four men, but Roosevelt said that we had nothing to fear but fear itself. So you cannot always trust men when they tell you to not be afraid, but you can trust Heaven. (Ron Mattoon)

Brian Bell - Long before PBS (Public Broadcasting Services) we have the 1st Public announcement of the good news of Jesus'

birth. The Shepherds Real Good News! (Lk 1:10-12) And it's keynote? - JOY! To ALL people – even shepherds!!! There's good news for all of us!

J C Ryle on **I bring you good news** - We need not wonder at these words. The spiritual darkness which had covered the earth for four thousand years, was about to be rolled away. The way to pardon and peace with God was about to be thrown open to all mankind. The head of Satan was about to be bruised (Ge 3:15+). Liberty was about to be proclaimed to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind (Lk 4:18+). The mighty truth was about to be proclaimed that God could be just, and yet, for Christ's sake, justify the ungodly (Ro 3:26+). Salvation was no longer to be seen through types and figures, but openly, and face to face (cf Col 2:16,17+). The knowledge of God was no longer to be confined to the Jews, but to be offered to the whole Gentile world. The days of heathenism were numbered. The first stone of God's kingdom was about to be set up. If this was not "**good tidings**," there never were tidings that deserved the name! (Luke 2)

Warren Wiersbe - Literally the angel said, "I announce to you good news, a great joy which shall be to all the people." He used the word which means "to preach the Good News," a word Luke uses often in both his Gospel and in the Book of Acts. We see here Luke's emphasis on a worldwide Gospel: the Good News is for everybody, not just the Jews. What was the Good News? Not that God had sent a soldier or a judge or a reformer, but that He had sent a Saviour to meet man's greatest need. It was a message of peace to a world that had known much war. The famous "**Pax Romana**" (**ED**: SEE Roman peace) had been in effect since 27 b.c. but the absence of war doesn't guarantee the presence of peace. The Stoic philosopher Epictetus said, "*While the emperor may give peace from war on land and sea, he is unable to give peace from passion* (ED: strong and barely controllable emotion), *grief, and envy. He cannot give peace of heart for which man yearns more than even for outward peace*." The Jewish word **shalom** (peace) means much more than a truce in the battles of life. It means well-being, health, prosperity, security, soundness, and completeness. It has to do more with *character* than *circumstances*. Life was difficult at that time just as it is today. Taxes were high, unemployment was high, morals were slipping lower, and the military state was in control. Roman law, Greek philosophy, and even Jewish religion could not meet the needs of men's hearts. **Then, God sent His Son!** (Scroll to page 144 in The Bible Exposition Commentary) (Bold added)

For Behold (idou) **I bring you good news** (euaggelizo/euangelizo) **of great joy** (chara) **-** **For** (gar) is a term of explanation which begs the question "What is the angel of the Lord explaining?" The angelic messenger says in essence "*I evangelize to you a great joy*". Or one could render it "I proclaim or announce the gospel [good news] of great joy to you," or "I gospel great joy to you."

> **THOUGHT** - What a privilege this messenger had to tell about the advent of the Messiah! We have the privilege of sharing the good news with the world, and angels cannot take our place. And so we see in Acts that the good news of personal salvation was not announced to men by angels but by other men (Compare the angel addressing Cornelius in Acts 10:3-7+ and Peter being the one actually proclaiming the Gospel in Acts 11:13-14+). So God's pattern in the church age is for saved men to speak the Gospel to the unsaved. Are you taking advantage of this once in a lifetime opportunity to proclaim the Good News? When we get to Heaven there will be no need. Sow the Gospel seeds while it is still called today (Jn 9:4).

MacArthur - His message was not one of judgment, but rather that "the Father has sent the Son to be the Savior of the world" (1 John 4:14). ... The good news of the gospel is that the saving God sent the Savior to redeem sinners.(Ibid)

Good news (euaggelizo/euangelizo) in its original sense could be used to refer to a declaration of any kind of good news, but in the NT it refers especially to the glad tidings of the coming kingdom of God and of salvation obtained through Jesus Christ's death, burial and resurrection. The angel Gabriel in Luke 1:19+ speaking to Zacharias declares "I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God; and I have been sent to speak to you, and to **bring** you this **good news**. (that he would have a son, John the Baptist)." In this context euaggelizo does not specifically refer to the proclamation of the gospel of salvation.

Lenski sees euaggelizo/euangelizo in this context as speaking of good news in general - The verb **euaggelizo** is used in the same sense as it was in Lk 1:19 (see below) with reference to the bringing of good tidings *irrespective of the contents of the tidings*. In this case we may, of course, say that they constitute the Gospel, but the verb itself is not yet used in the specific sense of *preaching the gospel*. (See The Interpretation of St. Luke's Gospel)

Kostenberger writes - The angel quickly provided the content of this gospel, announcement, or proclamation that would provide great joy to all the people: "For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord." In this case, the "gospel" was a proclamation of the birth of Jesus that very day along with a clear indication of his identity as Savior, Christ, and Lord —all significant titles. (IN OTHER WORDS THIS GOSPEL WAS NOT A CLEAR PROCLAMATION OF THE ACTUAL CONTENT OF THE GOSPEL AS IN 1 Cor 15:1-7+) (The First Days of Jesus: The Story of the Incarnation)

> **THOUGHT** - Hendriksen adds this note on the phrase **great joy** - Gaiety, hilarity, festivity, mirth, laughter, in one measure or another these are found in many places throughout the world. But great joy, the "joy

unspeakable and full of glory" (1 Peter 1:8) is the portion of God's children, of them alone. This joy is deeply rooted. It satisfies, lasts, and even keeps on increasing, to God's glory. (Luke New Testament Commentary)

Which will be for all the people - "To all the people," which has the noun laos, is generally used as a designation for the Jewish people and was meant and understood only in this sense: "to all Israel"; but to all Israel because God was now fulfilling his great promise to Abraham and to Israel (Lk 1:55), a promise, indeed, to Israel alone, yet one that would extend salvation to all nations through the Seed of Abraham. The future estai, is prophetic to indicate the coming spread of the Gospel as the bearer of this great joy to **all the people**. (Lenski) **Kostenberger** agrees adding that "**People**" (Greek laos) at this point likely points to the people of Israel, but the larger narrative of Luke-Acts indicates that God's people will expand to include all people regardless of nationality. James makes this point at the end of the Jerusalem council: "Simeon has related how God first visited the Gentiles, to take from them a people [laos] for his name." As we saw in the hymns of Mary and Zechariah, the shepherds would have understood the angel to be speaking at this point in a more limited fashion about all the people of Israel. (The First Days of Jesus: The Story of the Incarnation)

John MacArthur on **all the people** - The good news the angel proclaimed is for all the people. **Laos** (people) refers first to Israel (Lk 1:68; 7:16; 19:47; 21:23; 22:66; 23:5, 14), since "salvation is from the Jews" (John 4:22; cf. Ro 1:16). But the promise of salvation is not for them only. Praising God after seeing the baby Jesus in the temple, Simeon said, "For my eyes have seen Your salvation, which You have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light of revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of Your people Israel" (Lk 2:30-32). Significantly, laos in Lk 2:31 is plural, while it is singular in Lk 2:32. Simeon's words reflect the truth expressed in Isaiah's prophecy (Isaiah 60:1-3 = "Nations will come to your light"; cf. Isa 9:2; 42:6; 49:6-9; 51:4) The good news of salvation, having been proclaimed first to Israel, is now proclaimed throughout the world (Matt. 28:19-20). (See context Luke Commentary)

Steven Cole - The good news about Christ the Savior is for all people, but especially the common person. Have you ever considered why the story does not say, "Now there were in the same region scribes and Pharisees, keeping watch over their scrolls and religious rituals"? Or, "There were kings and princes keeping watch over their treasures at the palace." God chose to reveal the birth of the Savior to simple shepherds who were going about their duties. Why shepherds? God chose shepherds to show that …

(1) The good news is for all people, not just for the elite. As Paul told the Corinthians, "Consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble; but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong, and the base things of the world and the despised, God has chosen, the things that are not, that He might nullify the things that are, that no man should boast before God" (1 Cor. 1:26–29). If the gospel were some complicated philosophy that required years of graduate study and a high I.Q. to grasp, then those who attained it would boast of their intelligence. If the gospel required sums of money or high social standing to attain, there would be no hope for the poor and lowly. But the beauty of the good news is that even an uneducated, illiterate tribal man in the jungle can understand that he is a sinner and the Jesus Christ is God's Savior, and by God's grace, he can believe and be saved.

(2) The good news involved the sacrifice of the Lamb of God. It is likely that the very sheep these men were tending in the fields that night were being prepared for slaughter at the Passover in Jerusalem. Thus it is symbolic that the shepherds who were watching the Passover lambs would be invited to Bethlehem to view the Lamb of God who would be slain for sinners. In His perfect justice, God has declared that the wages of sin is death. But in His love and mercy, God provided the very penalty His justice demanded. The entire Jewish sacrificial system pointed ahead to Jesus Christ, the perfect sin-bearer, who offered Himself as the acceptable substitute for sinners. If you trust in Him as your sin-bearer, God transfers your guilt to Him and His perfect righteousness to you.

(3) The good news provided us with a Good Shepherd. God has always had a special place in His heart for shepherds. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were shepherds. King David was called from tending the sheep to shepherd God's people. David was a type of his promised descendant, who would reign on David's throne, who said of Himself, "I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep" (John 10:11). If you will trust in Jesus as your Savior, He will become your Good Shepherd, who will care for you as no other can. He knows your deepest needs. He will protect you from wolves and thieves who would destroy your soul. He came to give His sheep abundant life (John 10:10–13). So God revealed His Savior to these simple shepherds to show us that His good news is for common people. It involved the sacrifice of the Lamb of God. It provides us with Jesus as our Good Shepherd.

The good news about Christ the Savior is historically true. It is based on His unique Person. It reaches the common person (The Best News in the World Luke 2:1-20)

The angel (32)(**aggelos/angelos** [*gg* in Greek is pronounced *ng*] possibly from **ago** = to bring) literally means a messenger (one who bears a message - Lk 1:11, 2:9, etc or does an errand). Most of the NT uses refer to heavenly angels (messengers) who are supernatural, transcendent beings with power to carry out various tasks. All uses of **aggelos** that refer to angels are masculine gender (the feminine form of aggelos does not occur.) **Vine** writes that **aggelos** refer to "an order of created beings, superior to man, Heb 2:7; Ps. 8:5, belonging to Heaven, Mt. 24:36; Mark 12:25, and to God, Luke 12:8, and engaged in His service, Ps 103:20. **Angels** are spirits, Heb. 1:14, i.e., they have not material bodies as men have; they are either human in form, or can assume the human form when necessary, cp. Luke 24:4, with Lk 24:23, Acts 10:3 with Acts 10:30."

Behold (2400)(**idou**) is the second person singular aorist middle imperative of eidon which means to see, perceive, look at. In the NT **idou** is used as a demonstrative particle that draws attention to what follows.**Idou** in the **middle voice** means "you yourself look, see, perceive!" The **aorist imperative** is a command emphasizing "Do it now! Don't delay!" **Spurgeon** reminds us that "**Behold** is a word of wonder; it is intended to excite admiration. Wherever you see it hung out in Scripture, it is like an ancient sign-board, signifying that there are rich wares within, or like the hands which solid readers have observed in the margin of the older Puritanic books, drawing attention to something particularly worthy of observation." I would add, **behold** is like a divine highlighter, a divine underlining of an especially striking or important text. It says in effect "Listen up, all ye who would be wise in the ways of Jehovah!"

I bring good news (I evangelize to you) (2097) (**euaggelizo/euangelizo** from **eu** = good, well + **aggéllo** = proclaim, tell; English = evangelize) means to announce good news concerning something. **Euaggelizo** was often used in the Septuagint for preaching a glad or joyful message (cf. 1Sam. 31:9; 2 Sa 1:20; 4:10). This verb is rooted in Isaiah's announcement of an end-time salvation

> Isaiah 52:7 How lovely on the mountains Are the feet of him who**brings good news** (Lxx = euaggelizo), Who announces peace (Lxx = eirene) And **brings good news** (Lxx = euaggelizo) of happiness, Who announces salvation (Lxx =soteria), And says to Zion, "Your God reigns!"
>
> Isaiah 61:1+ The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, Because the LORD has anointed me To**bring good news** (Lxx = euaggelizo) to the afflicted; He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to captives And freedom to prisoners;
>
> All the NT uses of **euaggelizo** - Note prominence in the writings of Luke and only once in the other 3 Gospels - Matt. 11:5; Lk. 1:19; Lk. 2:10; Lk. 3:18; Lk. 4:18; Lk. 4:43; Lk. 7:22; Lk. 8:1; Lk. 9:6; Lk. 16:16; Lk. 20:1; Acts 5:42; Acts 8:4; Acts 8:12; Acts 8:25; Acts 8:35; Acts 8:40; Acts 10:36; Acts 11:20; Acts 13:32; Acts 14:7; Acts 14:15; Acts 14:21; Acts 15:35; Acts 16:10; Acts 17:18; Rom. 1:15; Rom. 10:15; Rom. 15:20; 1 Co. 1:17; 1 Co. 9:16; 1 Co. 9:18; 1 Co. 15:1; 1 Co. 15:2; 2 Co. 10:16; 2 Co. 11:7; Gal. 1:8; Gal. 1:9; Gal. 1:11; Gal. 1:16; Gal. 1:23; Gal. 4:13; Eph. 2:17; Eph. 3:8; 1 Thess. 3:6; Heb. 4:2; Heb. 4:6; 1 Pet. 1:12; 1 Pet. 1:25; 1 Pet. 4:6; Rev. 10:7; Rev. 14:6
>
> All uses of **euaggelizo** in the Septuagint - 1 Sam. 31:9; 2 Sam. 1:20; 2 Sam. 4:10; 2 Sam. 18:19; 2 Sam. 18:20; 2 Sam. 18:26; 2 Sam. 18:31; 1 Ki. 1:42; 1 Chr. 10:9; Ps. 40:9; Ps. 68:11; Ps. 96:2; Isa. 40:9; Isa. 52:7; Isa. 60:6; Isa. 61:1; Jer. 20:15; Joel 2:32; Nah. 1:15;

Great (**megas**) - earlier *megas* fear or *great* fear, now *great* joy! Is this not what "Good News" brings to our hearts? One moment we have great fear of death, but then someone shares the Gospel with us, and we receive it and our great fear is turned to great joy. O yes, we still have (or should have) a holy fear of the Lord, but it is no longer the fear of eternal punishment or banishment! Now, as believers, it is a fear, that we might displease, even hurt (cf Ezek 6:9) the One Who has called us His children. **Lenski** - The "great joy" is the antidote for the "great fear."

Joy (5479)(**chara**) is a feeling of inner gladness, delight or rejoicing. Joy is a feeling of inner gladness, delight or rejoicing**Joy** in the NT is virtually always used to signify a feeling of "happiness" that is based on spiritual realities, and (take careful note of this next thought), independent of what "happens"). **Joy** is an inner gladness; a deep seated pleasure birthed and energized by the Holy Spirit (Acts 13:52+, Ro 14:17+, Gal 5:22+, 1 Th 1:6+). It is a depth of assurance and confidence energized by the Holy Spirit that ignites a cheerful heart. And it is a cheerful heart that leads to cheerful behavior which in turn gives a proper opinion to the lost (and saved) world of the reality of the unseen God, God the Father (Mt 5:16+). **Joy** is not an experience that comes from favorable circumstances but is God's gift to believers. Are you living in the "sunshine" (Sonshine) of His joy? **Joy** is the deep-down sense of well-being that abides in the heart of the person who knows all is well between himself and his God (Corollary - Unconfessed sin will steal that joy in a "split second!" Run to 1 John 1:9+, Pr 28:13+). There is a chorus from an old spiritual song that is apropos - "**Happiness happens, but joy abides**." Luke's uses of chara - Lk. 1:14; Lk. 2:10; Lk. 8:13; Lk. 10:17; Lk. 15:7; Lk. 15:10; Lk. 24:41; Lk. 24:52; Acts 8:8; Acts 12:14; Acts 13:52; Acts 15:3. What is fascinating is that there is not only **joy** on earth but also **joy** in Heaven and both have to do with the Good News in some way, Luke recording

"I tell you that in the same way, there will be more **joy** in heaven over one sinner who repents (IMPLICIT IS THIS SINNER HEARD THE GOOD NEWS PROCLAIMED) than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.....In the same way, I tell you, there is **joy** in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents." (Lk. 15:7, 10+)

This joy is special for it is the gift of those who accept God's gift of eternal life in Christ. And so Peter writes

"and though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, **you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible** and full of glory." (1 Pe 1:8+)

Serious Fear

Read: Luke 2:8-20

Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy. —Luke 2:10

After weeks of preparation by the children's choir, the night had finally arrived for our annual Christmas musical in 1983. The costumed children began filing into the auditorium when suddenly we heard a ruckus at the back door. My wife and I turned to look and saw our own little Matt. Sobbing loudly and with a look of sheer terror on his face, he had a death grip on the door handle. He refused to enter the auditorium. After much negotiating, the director finally told him he didn't have to go on stage. Instead, Matt sat with us, and soon his fears began to subside.

Although we don't usually identify Christmas as a time of fear, there was plenty of it on the night of Christ's birth. Luke says, "Behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid" (Luke 2:9). The sight of the angelic messenger was more than the shepherds could process. But the angel reassured them: "Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people" (Lk 2:10).

In a world full of fear, we need to remember that Jesus came to be the Prince of Peace (Isa. 9:6). We desperately need His peace. As we look to Him, He will ease our fears and calm our hearts. By Bill Crowder (Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved)

Hail, the heaven-born Prince of Peace!
Hail the Sun of righteousness!
Light and life to all He brings,
Risen with healing in His wings.
—Wesley

God incarnate is the end of fear. —F. B. Meyer
(**ED**: BUT **NEVER** THE END OF REVERENTIAL FEAR - See Rev 19:5+)

Joy

Read: Luke 2:8-12

> I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. —Luke 2:10

After Adam and Eve disobeyed God, joy was lost. God expelled them from their garden home to prevent something worse from happening. If they had eaten from the tree of life after eating from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, they would have lived forever in their misery.

Life outside the garden was not easy. Adam and Eve had to work hard for their food. The reality of death was everywhere, and animals preyed on one another. Even worse, the couple's firstborn son murdered his younger brother. What could be worse? Sin had pierced their lives, and the couple could not stop joy from draining out.

But God had a plan to restore joy. Joy was lost in the Garden when death came, but joy returned through birth—the birth of God's own Son. "I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people" (Luke 2:10). Jesus grew up to heal the sick, give sight to the blind, and raise the dead. But this was just a taste of things to come. God entered our world, experienced our sorrow, and conquered death, giving us hope that He will keep His promise to end pain, and eliminate sorrow and death (John 11:25-26; 1 Cor. 15:3-4; Rev. 21:4). No wonder Christmas is the season of joy! By Julie Ackerman Link (Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved)

Have you felt the joy of the shepherds,
Who were first to behold the sight

Of that holy Child of Mary,
On that wonderful Christmas night?
—Brill

The joy of Christmas is Jesus.

The Gift Of Joy

Read: Luke 2:8-20

> Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. —Luke 2:10

During the Christmas season it's easy to be swept along by the flood of frenzied gift-buying. Our motive may be commendable—we want to show our love for family and friends. We may even argue that the exchange of expensive presents reflects God's gift to us of His Son and is a way to spread yuletide joy.

According to author Bill McKibben, though, we may be robbing ourselves and others of deeper and longer-lasting joy. When the giving is over, we find that the gifts didn't bring the sought-after satisfaction.

McKibben and some of his friends began to encourage others to limit their total holiday spending to a fraction of what they had spent in previous years. By taking the emphasis off gift-giving, they believe they will be able to concentrate more on the real reason for Christmas and to enjoy the season.

When the angel of the Lord appeared to the shepherds outside Bethlehem, he told them, "I bring you good tidings of great joy" (Luke 2:10). The news that brings "great joy" even today is that the Savior has been born (v.11).

Have we lost sight of what's really at the heart of Christmas? Let's take time this season to focus on God's gift to us, and to share that joy-producing news with others. By Vernon Grounds (Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved)

Joy to the world! The Lord is come!
Let earth receive her King;
Let every heart prepare Him room,
And heaven and nature sing.
—Watts

The joy of Christmas is Jesus.

Christingle

Read: 1 John 1:1-7

> That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world. —John 1:9

In the Czech Republic and other places, the Christmas celebration includes "Christingles." A Christingle is an orange, representing the world, with a candle placed in the top of it to symbolize Christ the light of the world. A red ribbon encircles the orange, symbolizing the blood of Jesus. Four toothpicks with dried fruits are placed through the ribbon into the sides of the orange, representing the fruits of the earth.

> (**ED THOUGHT**: As I read this devotional the **four toothpicks** brought to mind the four wounds in His hands and feet, plus one in His side, so that when combined with the **red ribbon**, we have picture of His redemption provided on the Cross, the very purpose for which He came to earth!)

This simple visual aid vividly represents the purpose behind Christ's coming—to bring light into the darkness and to redeem a broken world by shedding His blood.

In John's account of Christ's life, the disciple describes Jesus as the Light of the world. He wrote of Christ: "That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world" (John 1:9). Not only did Christ the Light come to penetrate our world's darkness, but He is also "The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (v.29).

Think of it! The baby of Bethlehem became the living, risen Christ who has rescued us from our sin. And so John instructs us to "walk in the light as He is in the light" (1 John 1:7). May all who have experienced His rescue find in Jesus the peace of walking in His light. By Bill Crowder | (Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights

reserved)

Yet in thy dark streets shineth
The everlasting Light;
The hopes and fears of all the years
Are met in Thee tonight.
—Brooks

The newborn Christ-child became the Light of the world and the Lamb of God

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CHRISTMAS SPIRIT - If you're a **local TV news anchor**, Christmas is a chance to talk about "those less fortunate" and the Holiday Spirit. The best one recently is about drive-through Starbucks in places like Nashville, TN, Palm Desert, CA, and Fort Lauderdale where a patron arrives at the window and says, "I want to pay for my coffee and also the coffee of the person in the car behind me"–even though he didn't know the person in the next car. And then the next person did the same thing for the car behind *him*, and so on and so on, and the chain was unbroken for 200 cars, and all the Starbucks employees were misty-eyed about the people who ordered $34 worth of coffee and found out it was paid for, even though the person in front of them only got a tall latte with sprinkles. And this was all presented as a story about The Christmas Spirit.

No Fear

Read: Luke 2:8–20

> The angel said to them, "Do not be afraid." Luke 2:10

Nearly every time an angel appears in the Bible, the first words he says are, "Do not be afraid" (Dan. 10:12, 19; Matt. 28:5; Rev. 1:17). Little wonder. When the supernatural makes contact with planet Earth, it usually leaves the human observers flat on their faces in catatonic fear. But Luke tells of God making an appearance on earth in a form that does not frighten. In Jesus, born in a barn and laid in a feeding trough, God finds at last a mode of approach that we need not fear. What could be less scary than a newborn baby?

Puzzled skeptics stalked Jesus throughout His ministry. How could a baby in Bethlehem, a carpenter's son, be the Messiah from God? But a group of shepherds in a field had no doubt about who He was, for they heard the message of good news straight from a choir of angels (2:8–14).

In Jesus, God comes close to us.

Why did God take on human form? The Bible gives many reasons, some densely theological and some quite practical; but the scene of Jesus as an adolescent lecturing rabbis in the temple gives one clue (v. 46). For the first time, ordinary people could hold a conversation, a debate, with God in visible form. Jesus could talk to anyone—His parents, a rabbi, a poor widow—without first having to announce, "Don't be afraid." By Philip Yancey

In Jesus, God comes close to us.
I'm humbled, Lord, that You would come near to me. But I'm grateful. Thank You.
For further study read Is Jesus God?

God incarnate is the end of fear. —F. B. Meyer
(**ED**: BUT **NEVER** THE END OF REVERENTIAL FEAR - See Rev 19:5+)

INSIGHT While the writers of Matthew, Mark, and John had direct contact with Jesus, Luke was written by a historian after a great amount of research. The others begin simply by diving into the story of Jesus. In the introduction to Luke's gospel, he begins by giving the reader reason to trust what he or she is about to read. (See Luke 1:1–4.) (Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved)

ILLUSTRATION - A wealthy English family once invited friends to spend some time at their beautiful estate. The happy gathering was almost plunged into a terrible tragedy on the first day. When the children went swimming, one of them got into deep water and was drowning. Fortunately, the gardener heard the others screaming and plunged into the pool to rescue the helpless victim. That youngster was Winston Churchill. His parents, deeply grateful to the gardener, asked what they could do to rewlard him. He hesitated, then said, "I wish my son could go to college someday and become a doctor." "We'll pay his way," replied Churchill's parents.

Years later when Sir Winston was prime minister of England, he was stricken with pneumonia. Greatly concerned, the king

summoned the best physician who could be found to the bedside of the ailing leader. That doctor was Sir Alexander Fleming, the developer of penicillin. He was also the son of that gardener who had saved Winston from drowning as a boy! Later Churchill said, "Rarely, has one man owed his life twice to the same person."

Application - What do we owe to our Lord? Certainly we ought to share what we know about the Savior all the time and especially at Christmas.

Good News For All

Read: Luke 2:1-10

> Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. —Luke 2:10

The angel who announced the birth of Jesus to the shepherds said that he came to them with “good tidings of great joy” (Lk. 2:10). Many people today hear these words about “great joy” but don’t understand them. They relish the season as they decorate their homes, shop in cheerful malls, attend festive parties, and exchange gifts with the ones they love. But after all the excitement subsides, they feel empty and joyless.

Others don’t like the season at all. Many have no money for gifts or decorations. Some have no friends with whom to celebrate. The atmosphere of cheer around them actually deepens their feelings of sadness.

The problem with both groups is that they wrongly identify the “great joy” of which the angel spoke. It is found not in the superficial fun but in the deeper meaning of the season. When Jesus was born, God became a man so that He could save us from our sins and give us the joyful prospect of eternity in heaven. That’s the true reason for joy. The shepherds went back to the cold nights and loneliness of their vocation, but they were “glorifying and praising God” (v.20).

The real meaning of Christmas is indeed “good tidings of great joy . . . to all people” (v.10). By Herbert Vander Lugt (Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved)

Joyful, all ye nations, rise,
Join the triumph of the skies;
With the angelic hosts proclaim,
"Christ is born in Bethlehem."
—Wesley

Jesus puts the joy into Christmas.

One Silent Night

Read: Luke 2:1-14

> Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. —Luke 2:10

Simon had emigrated from the Netherlands to the United States. His wife, Kay, and all three of their children had been born in the US. Then Jenny married Roberto from Panama. Bill married Vania from Portugal. And Lucas married Bora from South Korea.

On Christmas Eve, as the family gathered for a celebration, they began singing “Silent Night” in their native tongues—a sweet sound indeed for the Lord of the earth to hear as they celebrated the birth of His Son.

Two thousand years ago, the silence of a quiet night ended abruptly when an angel told the shepherds a baby had been born: “Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people” (Luke 2:10). Then a multitude of angels began praising God, saying, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men!” (v.14). Christ the Lord, the Savior of the world, was born!

God’s gracious gift, His Son, which was announced on that long-ago silent night, is still available to everyone—“every tribe and nation” (Titus 2:11-14; Rev. 5:9-10). “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life” (John 3:16). By Cindy Hess Kasper (Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved)

Silent night! holy night! Shepherds quake at the sight;
Glories stream from heaven afar,
Heavenly hosts sing Alleluia—
Christ the Savior is born! Christ the Savior is born!

—Mohr

Heaven's choir came down to sing when heaven's King came down to save.

Luke 2:11 for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.

NET Today your Savior is born in the city of David. He is Christ the Lord.

GNT τι τ χθη μ ν σ μερον σωτ ρ ς στιν Χριστ ς κ ριος ν π λει Δαυ δ.

NLT The Savior-- yes, the Messiah, the Lord-- has been born today in Bethlehem, the city of David!

KJV For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

ESV For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.

NIV Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord.

ASV for there is born to you this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord.

CSB Today a Savior, who is **Messiah** the Lord, was born for you in the city of David.

- **there has been born for you**: Lu 1:69 Isa 9:6 Mt 1:21 Ga 4:4,5 2Ti 1:9,10 Tit 2:10-14 3:4-7 1Jn 4:14
- **in the city of David**: Lu 2:4 Mt 1:21
- **Who is Christ**: Lu 2:26 1:43 20:41,42 Ge 3:15 49:10 Ps 2:2 Da 9:24-26 Mt 1:16 16:16 Joh 1:41,45 6:69 7:25-27,41 20:31 Ac 2:36 17:3 1Jn 5:1
- **the Lord** Lu 1:43 20:42-44 Ac 10:36 1Co 15:47 Php 2:11 3:8 Col 2:6
- Luke 2 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

Luke 1:69+ And has raised up a **horn of salvation** for us In the house of David His servant–

Luke 1:43+ "And how has it happened to me, that the mother of my **Lord** would come to me?

Isaiah 9:6+ For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.

JESUS BORN:
SAVIOR (2) CHRIST (3) LORD

Jamieson writes "Every word here contains transporting intelligence from heaven."

For (hoti) - The subordinating conjunction hoti means that, because, since. **Lenski** says "We regard **for** (hoti) as **epexegetical**, as stating, not the reason for the great joy, but the contents of the angel's announcement: "that there was born to you," etc. The Greek states the simple past fact as such, "was born"; we prefer a reference to the present time, "has been born" (i.e., just recently) or even "is born".

Today - The waiting is over. The fullness of time has come. The Messiah had arrived. This very day God "invaded" earth, Deity took on Humanity. The fullness of time had arrived, Paul writing "But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law." (Gal 4:4+).

"**Christ the Lord has come to earth**."
-- Charles Wesley

NET Note adds that "the Greek word for **today** (semeron) occurs eleven times in the Gospel of Luke (Lk 2:11; 4:21; 5:26; 12:28; 13:32–33; 19:5, 9; 22:34, 61; 23:43) and nine times in Acts (Acts 4:9; Acts 13:33; Acts 19:40; Acts 20:26; Acts 22:3; Acts 24:21; Acts 26:2; Acts 26:29; Acts 27:33). Its use, especially in passages such as Luke 2:11 , 4:21, 5:26; 19:5, 9, signifies the dawning of the era of Messianic salvation and the fulfillment of the plan of God." Indeed, out of eternity past God entered time so that He might offer the gift of life now and in eternity future to all who come to their senses and recognize that "Today is the day of salvation!" (cf 2 Cor 6:2+)

In the city of David - The **city of David** is Bethlehem. **Swindoll** notes that "Bethlehem was not formally called this. In fact, most

people would have considered Jerusalem the **city of David**. But the shepherds would have recognized the angel's reference in connection with their hometown hero." **R C H Lenski** feels that this name **city of David** "is vastly more significant to the shepherds than "in Bethlehem" would have been, for the king's name and his ancient home recall all the Messianic promises made to David. While it modifies the emphatic verb at the head of the sentence the phrase, which is placed entirely at the end, is equally emphatic. *Born is the Savior, Christ, and Lord in David's city.*" Finally, **Kostenberger** adds that "the angel indicated the Davidic nature of this Messiah by explicit reference to the "**city of David**." According to the angel's gospel, this newly born Savior was the long-awaited **Davidic Messiah** (**ED**: "Son of David" was a known messianic title in first century - Mt 21:9, 15, 22:42, cf demon's cry "Jesus, Son of David" - Lk 18:38-39+) who would rescue God's people and rule over them." (The Story of the Incarnation) As **Ralph W. Sockman** said "The *hinge* of history is on the door of a Bethlehem stable."

> **City of David** in NASB - 2 Sam. 5:7; 2 Sam. 5:9; 2 Sam. 6:10; 2 Sam. 6:12; 2 Sam. 6:16; 1 Ki. 2:10; 1 Ki. 3:1; 1 Ki. 8:1; 1 Ki. 9:24; 1 Ki. 14:31; 1 Ki. 15:8; 1 Ki. 15:24; 2 Ki. 8:24; 2 Ki. 9:28; 2 Ki. 12:21; 2 Ki. 14:20; 2 Ki. 15:7; 2 Ki. 15:38; 2 Ki. 16:20; 1 Chr. 11:5; 1 Chr. 11:7; 1 Chr. 13:13; 1 Chr. 15:1; 1 Chr. 15:29; 2 Chr. 5:2; 2 Chr. 8:11; 2 Chr. 12:16; 2 Chr. 14:1; 2 Chr. 16:14; 2 Chr. 21:1; 2 Chr. 21:20; 2 Chr. 24:16; 2 Chr. 24:25; 2 Chr. 27:9; 2 Chr. 32:5; 2 Chr. 32:30; 2 Chr. 33:14; Neh. 3:15; Neh. 12:37; Isa. 22:9; Lk. 2:4; Lk. 2:11

There has been born (tikto) **for you a Savior** (soter)**, Who is Christ** (Christos) **the Lord** (kurios) - This name "**Savior**" summarizes Luke's previous description "To give to His people the knowledge of salvation by the forgiveness of their sins." (Lk 1:77+) Note the phrase **for you**, for you poor, lowly, despised shepherds, not for Caesar, not for King Herod, not for the high priest (although of course He would be the Savior of even the high and mighty if they become low and humble and contrite as described in Isaiah 57:15!)

"The Baby in the manger of Bethlehem
is none other than the Lord God in human flesh!"
-- Steven Cole

Steven Cole observes that the "angel said that this human baby was also "**a Savior, Who is Christ the Lord**" A **Savior**, not a Judge; One who would deliver His people, not destroy them. For the angel to call this baby "**the Lord**" meant that the baby was over the angel. "**Lord**" is tantamount to Jehovah God. It is the same word used in Lk 2:9, where it says that the glory of the Lord shone around the shepherds. The same word is used in Lk 2:23 in reference to "the Law of the Lord," and "holy to the Lord." If, in Lk 2:11, the word means something different than the same word used in Lk 2:9, 23, surely Luke would have noted this. The baby in the manger of Bethlehem is none other than the Lord God in human flesh! " (Sermon)

Spurgeon writes that this "anointed Saviour has full power to save, for He "is Christ the Lord;" and therefore He is able to save unto the uttermost all that come unto God by Him. (Heb 7:25KJV+)" (Luke Exposition)

> **THOUGHT** - Do not miss the phrase **for you** - **You** is in the plural. Yes, Jesus came to the shepherds, to Israel, but also to redeem all humanity and **for you** dear reader. This personalizes this Good News of a Savior who in the crib had open arms just as He did on the Cross! God so loved the world that He sent His only begotten Son to be born **for you**, for any and all who will call upon the Name Jesus,**Savior**, **Christ**, **Lord**! (cf Acts 4:12+) Have you called upon His Name? (Ro 10:12,13+) Is He your Savior, your Lord? Have you by grace placed your faith in Him, in His atoning sacrifice **for you** (to pay the penalty for all your sins, past, present, future) on the Cross, so that now you are enabled by His Spirit to walk in newness of life, in "resurrection life?" (cf Ro 6:2-7+).

They all were looking for a King
To slay their foes and lift them high:
Thou cam'st, a little baby thing
That made a woman cry.

THE SAVIOR

In a touch of irony we note that the people under Rome's rule came to call the emperor **Savior** (see below) but Christians took the word and used it of **Jesus Christ**. Indeed, Jesus' very Name is essentially a synonym for **Savior** because **Jesus** (Iesous - "Jehovah Saves") means "He will save His people from their sins." (Mt 1:21+) Mary herself declared "**And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior**." (Lk 1:47+) And notice that Mary refers to God as **my Savior** clearly indicating that she understood she was a sinner like all men and women in Adam (Ro 5:12+) and thus was in need of so great a salvation (Heb 2:3+) from so great a **Savior**! Note too that this news brought joy to Mary's heart (she **rejoiced**) just as the angel had promised to the shepherds (Lk 2:10+)! When one's eyes are opened by the Spirit to recognize our need for a Savior and then to recognize that Savior, the result is joy! (Have you experienced that joy?) Mary had called God her **Savior** and now the angels give God's title of **Savior** to this Baby (cf Lk 1:69+)

Lenski adds that "**Savior** (soter)**,** like the words "to save" and "salvation," refers to the mighty act of rescue and its result, the condition of safety that follows. **Savior** on an angel's lips recalls all that is said in the Old Testament about salvation as it is attributed to God and thus leaves far behind the pagan use of this title for the emperors (**ED**: WHO WERE OFTEN CALLED "SOTER" OR SAVIOR!). Even in later years **Savior** on a Christian's lips differed so immensely from any imperial **Savior** title that the two were hardly ever compared in the Christian's consciousness." (The Interpretation of St. Luke's Gospel)

Paul clearly linked **God** and **Savior** in Titus 2:13+ writing that believers are "looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great **God and Savior**, Christ Jesus." (Are you looking for Him daily? It could be TODAY! cf 1Jn 2:28+).

"We don't need another advisor, a reformer, or a committee, but a Savior."
-- David Guzik

Kostenberger comments that "The angel's pronouncement bears some striking similarities to the way in which Augustus and other Roman emperors were discussed and worshiped in the imperial cult. Consider these statements from the 9 BC Priene Calendar Inscription:

> Since Providence (**ED NOTE**: Providence or Providentia was personified as a proper goddess in her own right by Macrobius, a Neoplatonic Roman author, who wrote in defense of paganism about 400 CE.), which has ordered all things and is deeply interested in our life, has set in most perfect order by giving us Augustus, whom she filled with virtue that he might benefit humankind, sending him as a **savior** [soter], both for us and for our descendants, that he might end war and arrange all things, and since he, Caesar, by his appearance (excelled even our anticipations), surpassing all previous benefactors, and not even leaving to posterity any hope of surpassing what he has done, and since the birthday of the god Augustus was the beginning of the good tidings [euangelion; gospel, good news] for the world that came by reason of him. Providence had sent the "god" Augustus to be the savior of the Roman world, and his birth was the beginning of the **Gospel** (good news)."

Such rhetoric pervaded the political and religious language of the first century. In contrast, the angel announced the gospel of God's Son, Jesus, Who would be the true Savior of the world. (The First Days of Jesus: The Story of the Incarnation) (See more counterfeits below)

JESUS IS THE MESSIAH:
THE ANOINTED ONE

Christ the Lord - This specific title surprisingly is only here in the NT. The angel clearly tells them the Messiah has come and He is Lord or God. Many Jewish writers who believed a Messiah was coming did not consider Him to be divine. Wrong! Now remember these were Jewish shepherds and likely, as with all Jews in Israel, were looking for the "**Messiah**,"(See also Messiah - Anointed One) to come and be their Deliverer, especially from the Roman oppression. Thus the angelic designation of **Christ** (corresponding to Messiah) would likely have been very significant to these shepherds (see messianic expectations).

CHRIST IS LORD

Christ the Lord - The name **Lord** (kurios) has already been used by Luke 16 times in chapter 1 to refer to God or Yahweh (Lk. 1:6; Lk. 1:9; Lk. 1:11; Lk. 1:15; Lk. 1:16; Lk. 1:17; Lk. 1:25; Lk. 1:28; Lk. 1:32; Lk. 1:38; Lk. 1:45; Lk. 1:46; Lk. 1:58; Lk. 1:66; Lk. 1:68; Lk. 1:76) and here the angel gives the same title to this newborn Babe, a helpless infant not sitting on a throne but lying in a trough!The implication is clear. This is not just any baby, but is God clothed in flesh and blood, the God-Man, fully God and fully Man. See Wayne Grudem's Outline of Jesus' Humanity In the Incarnation, the infinite God both became finite man and remained infinite God, now come as Savior, Christ, and Lord! Paul's words are apropos...

> By common confession, great is the mystery of godliness: He who was revealed in the flesh, Was vindicated in the Spirit, Seen by angels, Proclaimed among the nations, Believed on in the world, Taken up in glory. (1 Timothy 3:16+)

It is notable that Peter made a proclamation similar to the angel when he stood before the Jewish audience and declared "Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both **Lord and Christ**–this Jesus whom you crucified." (Acts 2:36+) And in Acts 2:37+ for the impact of Peter's proclamation of Jesus as '**Lord and Christ**" Luke recording that "Now when they heard this, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brethren, what shall we do?

Savior, **Christ** and **Lord** are used together by Paul in his letter to the Philippians "For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a **Savior**, the **Lord** Jesus **Christ**; (Php 3:20+) Butler comments that"**The Lord** is the title Luke uses most often for Jesus. This title refers to the holy, unspeakable personal name of God himself. This baby in the manger was God himself (cf. Lk 1:32,35), with all power and all authority under heaven. Bow in obedience to the baby of Bethlehem. You will easily find him, the only baby wrapped up like an infant but lying in the trough where animals eat. (Ibid) It is notable that **Mary** had already heard the Baby called "**Lord**" while He was still in her womb declaring total allegiance - "Behold, the bondslave of the **Lord**; may it be done to me according to your word." (Lk 1:38+). Likewise, Elizabeth, the mother of John the Baptist, exclaimed "And how has it happened to me, that the mother of my **Lord** would come to me?" (Lk. 1:43+) Jesus was recognized as **Lord** even before He was born!

Savior (4990)(**soter** from **sozo** = rescue from peril > from **saos** = safe; delivered) refers to the agent of salvation or deliverance, the one who rescues, delivers, saves and preserves and in the case of Jesus, specifically rescue and deliverance from sin's penalty, sin's power and in glory from sin's presence and sin's pleasure (Heb 11:25)! As alluded to above, anyone who saves or delivers can be called a deliverer or rescuer (a soter). The Greco-Roman world commonly spoke about the various mythological, imaginary gods as "***saviors***," so the first non-Jewish readers of Luke would have understood the term "**Savior**" most likely against that background. But keep in mind the angel also linked this baby as not only **Savior** but as **Christ** (Messiah) and **Lord** which would clearly help distinguish Him from the pagan gods and pagan rulers. Certainly none of them were ever designated as Christ or Messiah! **Butler** says that Jesus as **Savior** or Deliverer "will follow in the biblical tradition of deliverers (Jdg. 3:9,15; Neh. 9:27; Isa. 19:20; cf. Acts 5:31; Acts 13:23). A troubled, powerless people will find a hero able to overcome the enemy." But tragically most of the Jews failed to recognize and receive Jesus as their personal Savior (Jn 1:11+), for they were looking for a political or military "savior."

The **Exegetical Dictionary** notes that "In secular Greek usage the gods are **deliverers** both as helpers of human beings and as protectors of collective entities (e.g., cities); this is the case with Zeus, Apollo, Poseidon, the Dioscuri Castor and Pollux, Heracles, Asclepius as the helper of the sick, and Serapis; it is true also for philosophers (Dio Chrysostom Or. 32.8) and statesmen (Thucydides v.11.1; Plutarch Cor. 11, also in inscriptions and elsewhere). In the Hellenistic ruler cult "theos soter" (god our savior) is attested in writings and inscriptions as a title of the Ptolemies and Seleucids. Inscriptions in the eastern part of the Empire called Pompey "Soter and Founder," Caesar "Soter of the World," and Augustus "Soter of Humankind." Hadrian had the title "Soter of the Kosmos" (Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament)

As alluded to above, Greeks used **soter** as a title of divinities such as Asclepius, the god of healing. Soter was used by the mystery religions to refer to their divinities. At an early date **soter** was used as a title of honor for deserving men, e.g., Epicurus (300BC) was called "soter" by his followers. As discussed below, soter was used as a designation of the "deified" ruler, e.g., Ptolemy I Soter (323-285BC).

> **Soter** in the OT - The God was a Savior was not a new concept, but was rooted in the Old Testament - Deut. 32:15; Jdg. 3:9; Jdg. 3:15; Jdg. 12:3; 1 Sam. 10:19; Neh. 9:27; Est. 5:1; Est. 8:12; Ps. 24:5; Ps. 25:5; Ps. 27:1; Ps. 27:9; Ps. 62:2; Ps. 62:6; Ps. 65:5; Ps. 79:9; Ps. 95:1; Isa. 12:2; Isa. 17:10; Isa. 45:15; Isa. 45:21; Isa. 62:11; Mic. 7:7; Hab. 3:18 In the following OT passages salvation is translated in the Septuagint with soter.
>
> Psalm 27:1 A Psalm of David. The LORD is my light and **my salvation** (Lxx = soter = Savior); Whom shall I fear? The LORD is the defense of my life; Whom shall I dread?
>
> Psalm 62:2 He only is my rock and my **salvation** (Lxx = soter = Savior), My stronghold; I shall not be greatly shaken.
>
> Psalm 79:9 Help us, O God of our salvation (Lxx = soter = Savior), for the glory of Your name; And deliver us and forgive our sins for Your name's sake.
>
> Psalm 95:1 O come, let us sing for joy to the LORD, Let us shout joyfully to the rock of our salvation (Lxx = soter = Savior). Isaiah 45:15 Truly, You are a God Who hides Himself, O God of Israel, **Savior** (Lxx = soter)!
>
> Isaiah 45:21 "Declare and set forth your case; Indeed, let them consult together. Who has announced this from of old? Who has long since declared it? Is it not I, the LORD? And there is no other God besides Me, A righteous God and a **Savior** (Lxx = soter); There is none except Me.
>
> Isaiah 62:2 Behold, the LORD has proclaimed to the end of the earth, Say to the daughter of Zion, "Lo, your **salvation** (Lxx = soter = Savior) comes; Behold His reward is with Him, and His recompense before Him."
>
> **Comment** - A clear Messianic prophecy, partially fulfilled at His incarnation (cf Lk 2:11) but fully fulfilled at His coronation!
>
> Micah 7:7+ But as for me, I will watch expectantly for the LORD; I will wait for the God of my **salvation** (Lxx =

soter = Savior). My God will hear me.

Habakkuk 3:18+ Yet I will exult in the LORD, I will rejoice in the God of my **salvation** (Lxx = soter = Savior).

Christ (5547)(**Christos** from **chrio** = to rub or anoint, consecrate to an office) means one who has been anointed, symbolizing appointment to a task. The majority of the NT uses refer to Jesus (exceptions = "false Christs" - Mt 24:24, Mk 13:22). The Messiah had come to sit on the throne of David and deliver Israel from oppression, not from the Romans but from sin and Satan. Sadly they wanted the former and were blind to the latter! **BDAG** says **Christos** is the "Fulfiller of Israelite expectation of a deliverer, the Anointed One, the Messiah, the Christ."

The corresponding OT term is **anointed** or **mashiach/masiyah** (from **mashach** = to smear, anoint) a masculine noun which can function as an adjective (as in Lev 4:3,5, 16) and is used several times to prophetically picture the Messiah, the Christ (1 Sa 2:10, 35), such as in the Book of Daniel

> "So you are to **know and discern** (NOTE TWO VERBS REFERRING TO KNOWLEDGE - THE CLEAR IMPLICATION IS THAT THE JEWS COULD HAVE AND SHOULD HAVE KNOWN THE **SPECIFIC TIME** WHEN MESSIAH WAS TO COME TO ISRAEL BUT SADLY MOST DID NOT RECOGNIZE THE TIME OF THEIR VISITATION - Lk 19:44+) that from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until **Messiah** (**mashiach/masiyah**) the Prince there will be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks (= 483 YEARS); it will be built again, with plaza and moat, even in times of distress. "Then after the sixty-two weeks the **Messiah** (**mashiach/masiyah**) will be cut off (CRUCIFIXION) and have nothing, and the people (ROMANS) of the prince who is to come (ANTICHRIST) will destroy the city and the sanctuary. And its end will come with a flood; even to the end there will be war; desolations are determined. (Daniel 9:25-26+)

In the OT, priests, prophets and kings were anointed and all these offices were fulfilled in "the Mashiach," the Messiah, Christ Jesus (**King** = Rev 17:14, Rev 19:16, Lk 1:32-33, **Priest** = Heb 3:1, 1 Ti 2:5, **Prophet** = Heb 1:1-2). In fact in the Septuagint **mashiach** is translated in most of the 38 uses with the adjective **Christos** . Our English word **Messiah** is a transliteration of the Hebrew **mashiach/masiyah**. In the Old Testament and Early Jewish Background "**Anointed**" (**mashiach/masiyah**) carries several senses and all have to do with installing a person in an office in a way that the person will be regarded as accredited by Yahweh. Even a pagan king such as Cyrus was qualified as the Lord's anointed (Isaiah 45:1) to execute a divinely appointed task. The usual application of the term **anointed** was to God's representatives within the covenant people. Prophets such as Elisha were set apart in this way (1 Kings 19:16 where anoint in Lxx = chrio).

The New Jewish Encyclopedia defines the **MESSIAH** as "a modified form of the Hebrew word **mashiach** meaning '**anointed**,' applied in the Bible to a person appointed for special function, such as High Priest or King. Later the term Messiah came to express the belief that a Redeemer, that is a divinely appointed individual, will in the end bring salvation to the Jewish people and to the entire human race" (p.317).

The Dictionary Of Jewish Lore And Legend encapsulates the term **MESSIAH** a bit more succinctly: "The anointed king of the House of David of Bethlehem who will be sent by God to inaugurate the final redemption in the end of days" (p.132).

Related Resources:

- Messiah - messias
- Messiah - Anointed One
- The Messiah - The Anointed One - similar but more notes
- The Jewish Tradition of Two Messiahs
- Do the narratives of Jesus' birth contradict each other?
- What is a Christmas nativity?

Lord (Master, Owner)(2962)(**kurios** from **kuros** = might or power) conveys the sense of a supreme one, one who is sovereign and possesses absolute authority, absolute ownership and uncontested power. **Kurios** is used of the one to whom a person or thing belonged, about which he has the power of deciding, the one who is the master or disposer of a thing (Mk 7:28). Note it is not correct to say we are to make Jesus "Lord" of our lives! He is Lord, period! In 1 Cor 12:3 the confession enabled by the Holy Spirit is that "**Jesus is Lord.**" Paul says "that if you confess with your mouth **Jesus as Lord**, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved." (Ro 10:9). In the Septuagint, kurios is used repeatedly to designate the sacred tetragrammaton YHWH (Jehovah), the personal name for God. In fact the word kurios is used almost 7000 times in the Old Testament and about 747 times in the New Testament!

Kurios is used in the Septuagint rendering of the Messianic psalm, Ps 110:1 to translate the Hebrew '

> A Psalm of David. (DAVID SPEAKING) The LORD (Yahweh) says to my **Lord** ('Adonay - Lxx = kurios)(DAVID'S LORD

MESSIAH): “Sit at My right hand Until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet.”

Lord is not merely a name that composes a title, but signifies a call to action so that every saint should willingly, reverently bow down to Jesus Christ as Lord. If Christ is our **Lord**, we are to live under Him, consciously, continually submitting our wills to him as His loyal, loving bondservants ("love slaves"), always seeking first His Kingdom and His righteousness (Mt 6:33+). According to this practical working "definition" beloved we all need to ask ourselves "Is Jesus Christ my **Lord**?". "Do I arise each day, acknowledge this is the day the **Lord** hath made?" (Ps 118:24+) "Do I surrender my will to His will as I begin each day?" (cf Ro 12:1+, Ro 12:2+) And by the way, we don't "make Jesus Lord." Jesus IS **Lord**, regardless of our response to His Lordship! Beloved, don't misunderstand. None of us have "arrived" in this area of Jesus as Lord of our lives. And it is precisely for that reason that Peter commands us to continually "**grow** (present imperative) in the grace (unmerited favor, power to live the supernatural, abundant life in Christ enabled by His Spirit) and knowledge (not just intellectual but transformational) of our **Lord** and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen." (2 Pe 3:18+) So do not be discouraged. Don't "throw in the towel" as they say. Keep on keeping on, pressing (continually = present tense) "on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus." (Php 3:14+)

David Gooding - The gospel is that centuries ago God started a great movement in history with Abraham and his seed and then with David, a movement which was every bit as literal and historical as the rise of the Roman Empire; and that Jesus the Messiah and Saviour is the culmination of that historical movement, come to fulfil all the promises made to and through David.

It was therefore indispensably necessary for this royal family tradition to be maintained at the birth of Jesus, and one feature of it in particular. The prophet Micah had predicted that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem (see Micah 5:2+); in Bethlehem, therefore, Jesus must be born. Notice at once how our two stories together emphasize the place where Jesus was in fact born: in the city of David, in Bethlehem, in a manger (see Luke 2:4, 7, 11–12, 15–16); but notice next that the chief concern of 2:1–7 (Story 6) is to explain how he came to be born there.

It was not Joseph or Mary who arranged it in order to lend credibility, when the day should come, to Jesus’ claim to be David’s Son. **Divine providence so ordered things that it was the supreme organizing genius of the ancient world who arranged for Jesus to be born in Bethlehem.** Caesar Augustus ordered a census. The organizing principle of the census was that every man must return to the city from which his family sprang in order to be registered. Joseph belonged to the house and line of David and he therefore had to go to David’s city. He could not avoid maintaining the family tradition: the census compelled him. Of course Augustus knew nothing about this effect of the census, and the last thing he or his vassal Herod would have done would be to strengthen the credentials of a messianic claimant to the throne of Israel. For Augustus the taking of censuses was one of the ways he employed to get control over the various parts of his empire. But—and here is the irony of the thing—in the process, as he thought, of tightening his grip on his huge empire, he so organized things that Jesus, Son of Mary, Son of David, Son of God, destined to sit on the throne of Israel and of the world, was born in the city of David, his royal ancestor. Fulfilling, all unknowingly, the prophecy of Micah, he established this particular detail in the claim of Jesus to be the Messiah.

It is a most interesting example of God’s providential government of the world of men. When John the Baptist was conceived, God turned back the processes of nature. When our Lord was conceived there was introduced into nature something which nature had never known before and which nature by herself could never have produced. But when God’s Son and destined ruler of the kings of the earth entered the world of men, there was apparently no interference with men’s will or freedom of action whatsoever. Augustus had his own completely adequate reasons for his action and he did exactly what he wanted to do. Yet he did what, had he known, he would not have wished to do: he established the claim of the royal Son of David. He did in fact what had been predetermined by the counsel and foreknowledge of God. See context in According to Luke: The Third Gospel’s Ordered Historical Narrative)

THE COUNTERFEIT "SAVIOR" - CAESAR AUGUSTUS -

The Priene Inscription (written 9 BC) -- “The most divine Caesar…we should consider equal to the Beginning of all things…for when everything was falling into disorder and tending toward dissolution, he restored it once more and gave the whole world a new aspect; Caesar…the common good Fortune of all…The Beginning of life and vitality…All the cities unanimously adopt the birthday of the divine Caesar as the new beginning of the year…Whereas the Providence which has regulated our whole existence…has brought our life to the climax of perfection in giving to us the emperor Augustus…who being sent to us and our descendants as **Savior**, has put an end to war and has set all things in order; and whereas, having become God manifest, Caesar has fulfilled all the hopes of earlier times…the birthday of the God Augustus has been for the whole world the beginning of **good news** (ED: "gospel") concerning him.”

Horace, Odes 4.15, published 13 BC - “Thine age, O Caesar, has brought back fertile crops to the fields,…**has wiped away our sins** and revived the ancient virtues,…and the fame and majesty of our empire were spread from the sun’s bed in the west to the

east. As long as Caesar is the guardian of the state, neither civil dissension nor violence shall banish peace."

An inscription dedicated to Caesar Augustus from Halicarnassus dated after 2 B.C. reads: ""Since the eternal and deathless nature of the universe has perfected its immense benefits to mankind in granting us as a supreme benefit, for our happiness and welfare, Caesar Augustus, Father of his own Fatherland, divine Rome, Zeus Paternal, and **Savior of the whole human race**, in whom Providence has not only fulfilled but even surpassed the prayers of all men: land and sea are at peace, cities flourish under the reign of law, in mutual harmony and prosperity; each is at the very acme of fortune and abounding in wealth; all mankind is filled with glad hopes for the future, and with contentment over the present; [it is fitting to honor the god] with public games and with statues, with sacrifices and with hymns." [Source: British Museum Inscriptions, 894, Cf. P. Wendland, HRK, p. 410, no. 9]

One Silent Night

Read: Luke 2:1-14

> Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. —Luke 2:10

Simon had emigrated from the Netherlands to the United States. His wife, Kay, and all three of their children had been born in the US. Then Jenny married Roberto from Panama. Bill married Vania from Portugal. And Lucas married Bora from South Korea.

On Christmas Eve, as the family gathered for a celebration, they began singing "Silent Night" in their native tongues—a sweet sound indeed for the Lord of the earth to hear as they celebrated the birth of His Son.

Two thousand years ago, the silence of a quiet night ended abruptly when an angel told the shepherds a baby had been born: "Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people" (Luke 2:10). Then a multitude of angels began praising God, saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men!" (v.14). Christ the Lord, the Savior of the world, was born!

God's gracious gift, His Son, which was announced on that long-ago silent night, is still available to everyone—"every tribe and nation" (Titus 2:11-14; Rev. 5:9-10). "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

Silent night! holy night! Shepherds quake at the sight;
Glories stream from heaven afar,
Heavenly hosts sing Alleluia—
Christ the Savior is born! Christ the Savior is born!
—Mohr

Heaven's choir came down to sing when heaven's King came down to save.

By Cindy Hess Kasper (Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved)

ILLUSTRATION- In 1971, Ray Tomlinson was experimenting with ways people and computers could interact. When he sent a message from his computer through a network to a different unit in his office, he had sent the first e-mail. Now decades later, more than a billion e-mails are sent every day. Many contain important news from family and friends, but others may carry unwanted advertising or a destructive virus. A basic rule governing e-mail use is: "Don't open it unless you trust the sender." God has sent us a message in the Person of His Son, and we can trust the Sender. In the Old Testament, God spoke to His people through the prophets and many rejected God's Word. But it was all leading to this: "God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds" (Heb. 1:1-2).

"Where's The Baby Jesus?"

Read: Luke 2:1-12

> There is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. —Luke 2:11

It seems to happen earlier each year. Stores put up Christmas decorations. Newspaper ads announce "the perfect Christmas gift." Toy commercials punctuate television shows. Christmas music fills the air. Before you know it, there are banquets to attend, parties you can't miss, gifts to wrap, family gatherings to plan, baking to be done, and a host of other activities that manage to crowd out the real meaning of Christmas.

Delores Van Belkum told me a story about her young grandson that drives home the point. His mother and father had used a simple manger scene to tell Justin about Mary, Joseph, and the baby Jesus. They wanted him to know that the Child born in Bethlehem was someone very special. As the holiday approached, Justin went on a shopping trip with his mother and grandmother. One salesperson showed him a sparkling display of Santas, toys, and decorations. He was fascinated. But he spoke words that far surpassed his years when he looked up and said, “But where’s the baby Jesus?”

This Christmas, let’s keep foremost in our minds the reason for the celebration—the birth of God’s Son. Then, as people listen to our words and observe our activities, they won’t ask, “Where’s the baby Jesus?” By David C. Egner | (Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved)

Invite Him in this Christmas,
This Savior from above;
The gift He seeks you need not wrap—
He only wants your love.
—Berg

Beware of keeping Christmas but losing Christ.

Changing History

Read: Luke 2:1-14

> There is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. —Luke 2:11

Today when we can make international cell-phone calls, send worldwide e-mail, and download images from space on our computers, it’s difficult to imagine the impact of one small satellite the size of a basketball. But on October 4, 1957, the Soviet Union’s launching of Sputnik I, the world’s first artificial satellite, ushered in the modern Space Age and changed the course of history. Nations rushed to catch up, technological development accelerated, and fear alternated with hope about the meaning of it all for humanity.

But events that alter the present and the future sometimes occur in obscurity. That was true of the birth of Jesus—just one baby, born to an ordinary couple in a small town. But it changed the course of history. The words of an angel spoken to shepherds began to spread: “There is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord” (Luke 2:11). Nineteen centuries later, Phillips Brooks wrote of Bethlehem, “The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.”

When we open our lives to Christ the Lord and acknowledge Him as our Savior, the course of our future history is changed for time and eternity. These “good tidings of great joy” (v.10) are for everyone, everywhere. By David C. McCasland (Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved)

The turning point in history
Occurred one night in Bethlehem;
And shepherds spread the glorious news
The angel had announced to them.
—Hess

The hinge of history is found on the door of a Bethlehem stable.

The Meaning of a Name

Read: Matthew 1:18-25

> You are to give him the name Jesus. Matthew 1:21

According to a New York Times article, children in many African countries are often named after a famous visitor, special event, or circumstance that was meaningful to the parents. When doctors told the parents of one child that they could not cure the infant’s illness and only God knew if he would live, the parents named their child Godknows. Another man said he was named Enough, because his mother had 13 children and he was the last one! There’s a reason for everyone’s name, and in some cases it also conveys a special meaning.

Before Jesus was born, an angel of the Lord told Joseph, “[Mary] will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins” (Matt. 1:21). Jesus is the Greek form of Joshua, which means “the Lord saves.” In that day and culture, many children would have been named Jesus, but only one came into this world to die so that all who receive

Him might live eternally, forgiven and freed from the power of sin.

In Jesus we see God's loving purpose & boundless #grace.

Charles Wesley wrote these words we often sing as Christmas nears: “Come, Thou long-expected Jesus, born to set Thy people free; from our fears and sins release us; let us find our rest in Thee.”

Jesus came to turn our darkness into light, to transform our despair into hope, and to save us from our sins.

Heavenly Father, in Jesus we see Your loving purpose and boundless grace. We humbly acknowledge Your Son as the One who came to save us from our sins. By David C. McCasland (Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved)

Jesus’ name and mission are the same—He came to save us.

INSIGHT Joseph is a popular biblical name. The first Joseph in the Bible is Jacob’s son who, after being sold into slavery by his brothers, rose to great influence in Egypt (Gen. 37–50). Two other Josephs are mentioned in the Old Testament period: a musician (1 Chron. 25:2, 9) and one in the lineage of Christ (see Luke 3:24, 30). In the New Testament we begin with the earthly father of Jesus (Luke 2; Matt. 1). Next is Joseph of Arimathea, who assisted in Jesus’ burial (Matt. 27:57). Finally, we read of Joseph Barsabbas (Acts 1:23), who was considered to fill Judas’ vacated apostolic office; and Joseph the encourager, better known as Barnabas (Acts 4:36). (Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved)

Celebrate The Baby

Read: Luke 2:8-14

> There is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. —Luke 2:11

Why do we celebrate Jesus’ birthday so differently from other birthdays? When it’s time to honor historical figures who have a day set aside for them, we don’t think about them as babies. We don’t have pictures of cute little Abe Lincoln in his log cabin in Kentucky. No, we remember him for his contributions as an adult.

For Jesus, though, it is proper that today we celebrate Him as a child. Think about it. When He was born, shepherds came to honor Him (Lk. 2:15-16). Later, wisemen brought Him gifts (Mt. 2:8-12). These people had no idea what Christ would eventually accomplish. But they were right in doing what they did, because Jesus’ birth was the most remarkable event in human history.

Jesus as a baby was remarkable because He was God in human form. He was the Creator of the universe visiting this planet. Never shrink from celebrating this baby at Christmas. Marvel at His incarnation, and stand in awe of a wiggly baby who had created His worshipers. Then step back in wonder, for the story gets even better. This divine baby grew into a perfect man who willingly died for your sins and mine.

Celebrate the baby, but trust the Savior. That’s how to make Christmas complete. By Dave Branon (Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved)

How wonderful that we on Christmas morn,
Though centuries have passed since Christ was born,
May worship still the Living Lord of men,
Our Savior, Jesus, Babe of Bethlehem.
—Hutchings

A wise man today will bow not only at the manger but also at the cross.

EXCURSUS ON FIRST CENTURY MESSIANIC EXPECTATIONS

- Source: Andreas Kostenberger and Stewart Alexander's - The First Days of Jesus: The Story of the Incarnation

Was every first-century Jew sitting on the edge of his or her seat, waiting and longing for the coming of God’s Messiah? It’s hard to determine the exact extent of messianic expectation among average Jews at this time. Certainly many Jews were quite content with

the status quo and had no desire to see everything turned upside down, particularly those with some degree of political or religious power in the Sanhedrin (the ruling Jewish council), such as members of the Sadducees (Jerusalem's leading aristocracy). We can reasonably assume that, in contrast to the economic, political, and religious elite, many ordinary people cherished some form of messianic expectation. This assessment is supported by evidence in Jewish literature, records of failed messianic movements, and the revolt that led to the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in AD 70. Grounded in the above-mentioned Old Testament prophetic texts, this hope intensified over centuries of non-fulfillment and oppression by other nations and godless rulers. Widespread expectation centered on a political Davidic messiah who would overthrow Roman rule, destroy the enemies of Israel, and establish peace and prosperity in an independent Jewish state. Messianic expectation filled the Palestinian air throughout the first century; all that was needed was a spark, or, as we see with the hindsight of history, the birth of a royal child.

JEWISH MESSIANIC EXPECTATIONS PRECEDING JESUS' BIRTH - First-century Palestinian Judaism was characterized by intense longing for God to deliver his people based on Old Testament promises. The Gospels bear witness to this expectation, but they are not alone. The desperate yearning of an oppressed people finds expression in many other texts from the same period. Messianic expectations in Second Temple Judaism were both diverse and pervasive. We cite several primary sources below to serve as a resource that gives you access to some of the most important Jewish texts from this period. This small sampling of Jewish texts attests to messianic expectations in the literature of this period. These significant texts bear witness to active expectations that God would act through his agents to fulfill his promises around the time of Jesus's birth. The Gospel infancy narratives echo this same expectation and proclaim boldly that Jesus fulfilled all these hopes and dreams. The first Christians did not invent these expectations or foist messianic interpretations on Old Testament texts; such expectations were widespread during the centuries preceding Jesus's birth and the century following it.

Psalms of Solomon 17:21–18:9

The text from the Psalms of Solomon is representative of the kind of messianic expectation presupposed in the Gospel narratives and can be dated confidently to between 70 and 45 BC (it was not written by the biblical Solomon).

> See, Lord, and raise up for them their king,
> the son of David, to rule over your servant Israel
> in the time known to you, O God.
> Undergird him with the strength to destroy the unrighteous rulers,
> to purge Jerusalem from gentiles
> who trample her to destruction;
> in wisdom and in righteousness to drive out
> the sinners from the inheritance;
> to smash the arrogance of sinners
> like a potter's jar;
> To shatter all their substance with an iron rod;
> to destroy the unlawful nations with the word of his mouth;
> At his warning the nations will flee from his presence;
> and he will condemn sinners by the thoughts of their hearts....

(Kostenberger's quote is much longer and is followed by other non-Biblical records that spoke of a messianic expectation. See The First Days of Jesus)

...This brief overview of some of the chief primary sources related to Jewish messianic hopes illustrates the diverse expectations present within Judaism during the time of Jesus. Despite the diversity, several elements unify the texts. The most significant unifying theme was the belief that God would indeed act through his Messiah to establish his kingdom in the last days. The earliest Christians declared Jesus to be this Messiah based upon their reading of the Old Testament in light of Jesus's life, miracles, teaching, and, most importantly, resurrection. Jewish messianic expectations were not finally crushed in Palestine until the Jewish revolt under Simon Bar Kokhba in the years AD 132–135. Simon chose the name Bar Kokhba ("son of a star") to connect himself with the messianic prophecy in Numbers 24:17 that a star would arise out of Jacob. Akiva ben Joseph, a famous rabbi during the time of the Bar Kokhba revolt, apparently endorsed him as the long-awaited Messiah, and some at the time described Simon Bar Kokhba's brief rule of two and a half years as the era of the redemption of Israel. The massive devastation that followed Rome's decisive response effectively ended Jewish messianic expectation and gave rise to rabbinic Judaism. (See context in The First Days of Jesus: The Story of the Incarnation)

Joy for All - By David McCasland - On the final day of a Christian publishing conference in Singapore, 280 participants from 50 countries gathered in the outdoor plaza of a hotel for a group photo. From the second-floor balcony, the photographer took many shots from different angles before finally saying, "We're through." A voice from the crowd shouted with relief, "Well, joy to the world!"

Immediately, someone replied by singing, “The Lord is come.” Others began to join in. Soon the entire group was singing the familiar carol in beautiful harmony. It was a moving display of unity and joy that I will never forget.

In Luke’s account of the Christmas story, an angel announced the birth of Jesus to a group of shepherds saying, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord” (Luke 2:10–11).

The good news of Jesus’s birth is a source of joy for all people.

The joy was not for a few people, but for all. “For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son” (John 3:16).

As we share the life-changing message of Jesus with others, we join the worldwide chorus in proclaiming “the glories of His righteousness and wonders of His love.”

“Joy to the world, the Lord is come!”

Father, give us eyes to see people of all nations as recipients of Your grace and joy.

The good news of Jesus’s birth is a source of joy for all people. Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved)

Something Happened Here

Read: Luke 2:8-20

> There is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. —Luke 2:11

Christians are divided in their thinking about Christmas. Some want to give up on it and hand it over to the department stores. Others want to salvage it and use it to say something important about the birth of Jesus to a weary secular world. I, for one, would like to take my place with the second group.

Years ago an old pioneer journeyed westward across the great plains until he came to an abrupt halt at the edge of the Grand Canyon. He gawked at the sight before him—a vast chasm 1 mile deep, 18 miles across, and stretching out of sight. He gasped, “Something must have happened here!”

At the Christmas season, anyone who stops to look and listen must ask some questions about what the hustle and noise is all about. A thoughtful man or woman, seeing the lights, the decorations, the festivities, and the religious services might also conclude, “Something must have happened here!”

Of course, something did happen. We need to tell the world about it. God has visited our planet. His Son Jesus Christ came to reveal God and to die for our sin (Jn. 1:1-14).

It’s the best news ever. God became one with us that we might live forever with Him. Merry Christmas!

Beyond all else this day should be
A day of holiest memory,
When all the world should joyfully
See Christ the Lord in Christmas.
—Anon.

God came to live with us that we might live with Him.

By Haddon W. Robinson (Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved)

A Joyous Celebration

Read: Matthew 1:18-25

> Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. —Luke 2:10

When God shows His goodness, He loves to see us respond with joy. For example, when God brought the Israelites back from captivity, He told them to hold a festival to commemorate the rebuilding of the temple and the walls of Jerusalem (Nehemiah 8). And celebrate they did!

If God wanted the Israelites to rejoice because of His goodness, would He condemn us for a festive spirit at Christmas? Was not the angel's message to the shepherds one of "good tidings of great joy"? (Luke 2:10).

It's true that the Bible does not tell us to celebrate Jesus' birthday. We don't even know the exact date, and much about the season has a pagan background. But that doesn't make it wrong to celebrate if Christ is kept uppermost in our lives. We don't think of mistletoe, holly, and evergreens as being pagan any more than we associate Sunday and Monday with the worship of the sun and the moon gods after which these days are named. Just because unbelievers abuse Christmastime doesn't mean that we can't enjoy the holiday.

Keep Christ central. Celebrate His birth. Sing carols. Gather for family fun. Even make shopping an occasion for remembering God's goodness. When we love Jesus and put Him first, He blesses our festivities.

Joyful, all ye nations, rise,
Join the triumph of the skies;
With the angelic hosts proclaim,
Christ is born in Bethlehem.
—Wesley

We can enjoy Christmas because we know the joy of Christ.

By Herbert Vander Lugt | (Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved)

The Seventh Stanza

Read: Luke 2:8-14

> Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. Luke 2:11

In the summer of 1861, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's wife, Frances, died tragically in a fire. That first Christmas without her, he wrote in his diary, "How inexpressibly sad are the holidays." The next year was no better, as he recorded, " 'A merry Christmas,' say the children, but that is no more for me."

In 1863, as the American Civil War was dragging on, Longfellow's son joined the army against his father's wishes and was critically injured. On Christmas Day that year, as church bells announced the arrival of another painful Christmas, Longfellow picked up his pen and began to write, "I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day."

God makes everything new.

The poem begins pleasantly, lyrically, but then takes a dark turn. The violent imagery of the pivotal fourth verse ill suits a Christmas carol. "Accursed" cannons "thundered," mocking the message of peace. By the fifth and sixth verses, Longfellow's desolation is nearly complete. "It was as if an earthquake rent the hearth-stones of a continent," he wrote. The poet nearly gave up: "And in despair I bowed my head; 'There is no peace on earth,' I said."

But then, from the depths of that bleak Christmas day, Longfellow heard the irrepressible sound of hope. And he wrote this seventh stanza.

Then pealed the bells more loud and deep: "God is not dead, nor doth He sleep! The wrong shall fail, the right prevail, with peace on earth, good-will to men!"

The war raged on and so did memories of his personal tragedies, but it could not stop Christmas. The Messiah is born! He promises, "I am making everything new!" (Rev. 21:5). By Tim Gustafson |

Immanuel—God with us!

INSIGHT It is likely that the shepherds in Luke 2 were not just ordinary shepherds. Because the shepherds' fields of Bethlehem were so close to Jerusalem, many scholars believe that these were temple shepherds who raised the sheep that would be used at the temple sacrifice. If so, this announcement becomes an anticipation of the proclamation of John the Baptist when he first saw Jesus: "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29). These sheep destined for sacrifice would be replaced by God's perfect Lamb—His one and only Son. (Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved)

Luke 2:12 "This will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."

NET This will be a sign for you: You will find a baby wrapped in strips of cloth and lying in a manger."

GNT κα το το μ ν τ σημε ον, ε ρ σετε βρ φος σπαργανωμ νον κα κε μενον ν φ τν .

NLT And you will recognize him by this sign: You will find a baby wrapped snugly in strips of cloth, lying in a manger."

KJV And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

ESV And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger."

NIV This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."

ASV And this is the sign unto you: Ye shall find a babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, and lying in a manger.

CSB This will be the sign for you: You will find a baby wrapped snugly in cloth and lying in a feeding trough."

- Ex 3:12 1 Sa 10:2-7 Ps 22:6 Isa 53:1,2
- Luke 2 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

THE SIGN:
MESSIAH IN A MANGER

This will be a sign (semeion cf Lk 2:34+) **for you: you will find** (heurisko) **baby** (brephos) **wrapped** (sparganoo) **in cloths and lying** (keimai) **in a manger** (phatne) - Notice the **sign** was not a palace, or a throne or a halo over His head or a glow from His body, for Jesus was born as would be any baby. It was nothing mystical - no halo over His head, etc. It was simply a "sign," the purpose of a sign being to point the way (in this case to the One Who was Himself "the Way..." Jn 14:6). In that night to find a baby wrapped in cloths would not actually be the sign, but to find such a baby in a **manger** would have been unique and thus it would have been a clear **sign**. Under normal circumstances, one would not expect to find a newborn in an animal feeding trough. This **sign** is something they would be able to see that was unique even as Elizabeth's pregnancy (which would have been visible at 6 months) served as a visible "**sign**" for Mary in Lk 1:36+. As Spurgeon says this "sign" would not be "in marble halls, wrapped in purple and fine linen, and welcomed by the great and mighty of earth, nay, this greatest of all princes is born amid the poverty of our ordinary manhood. He is One chosen out of the people, the people's Saviour, and a manger receives the people's King."

Spurgeon goes on to say regarding **This will be a sign for you** "is the ensign of the Christ of God even unto this day. There are some, who are constantly bringing discredit upon religion by their pompous ritual and gorgeous ceremonies, and it is buried beneath the weight of their sensuous worship, but the living Christ is still found in simple, lowly guise, "*wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.*" (Luke Exposition)

Leon Morris has an interesting comment - In Bethlehem that night there might be one or two babies wrapped in swaddling clothes, but surely only one lying in a manger. (**ED**: WHY? BECAUSE GOD SAID IT WOULD A SIGN AND NOT A "MULTIPLE CHOICE!" GOD IS NOT THE GOD OF CONFUSION! 1Co 14:33+) (Borrow The Gospel according to St. Luke : an introduction and commentary)

John Phillips - When the wise men came, they were guided by a star. The humble shepherds were directed to a stable. Signs had been given often enough in olden times-seas turned to blood, the sun standing still, the shadow on the sundial halting and moving backward contrary to nature-such signs as had been seen before would be doubly appropriate now. But no! A Babe, wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger! Who but God would have thought of such a sign? (See context in Exploring the Gospel of Luke)

Bruce Barton - The shepherds were not told to look in a palace or in a wealthy home—indeed, they would not have gotten past the gates if they had. But they could go to the poor stable, receive acceptance from a poor couple, and discover the miracle baby. (See context Life Application New Testament Commentary)

Jesus had a most humble beginning in keeping with David's prophetic words in Psalm 22:1-31

> But **I am a worm** and not a man, A reproach of men and despised by the people. (Ps 22:6)
>
> **Comment**: Warren Wiersbe (Bible Exposition Commentary: Old Testament) adds that Psalm 22:6 is surely a description that applies "to our Savior. "**I am a worm and not a man**" is a **forgotten "I AM" statement** that

speaks of how little value the leaders of Israel and the Roman officials placed on Jesus of **Nazareth**. A WORM is a creature of the ground, helpless, frail, and unwanted....As mysterious as is the figure of the King of glory (Ps 24:7-10) condescending to become like a mere WORM, the picture is even more profound when we examine the original language. The Hebrew word for WORM is **TOLA**, which most scholars associate with a CRIMSON WORM (Coccus Ilicis) that in ancient times was crushed to procure its blood-red SCARLET dye (Hebrew for "scarlet" is same word TOLA), the SCARLET dye used to adorn the "ten curtains" of the Tabernacle (Ex 26:1), "the screen for the (one) doorway of the" Tabernacle (Ex 26:36, cp "I am the door" Jn 10:9), the Veil separating the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies (Ex 26:31, cp Jesus' cry with a loud voice, yielding up His Spirit and the Veil of the temple tearing from top to bottom, opening "a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His [torn] flesh" - Mt 27:50-51, Heb 10:19-20) and the beautiful garments of the high priest (Ex 28:5-6, Jesus became our "merciful and faithful high priest" Heb 2:17). Indeed, how deep is the mystery of these OT uses of **TOLA** which depict a WORM in Ps 22:6 and in 33 OT passages (most in Exodus) depict the blood-red SCARLET material which foreshadowed the Messiah, even His work of redemption on the Cross! (Note - It is also notable that tola is figuratively used as symbol of one who is insignificant in Isaiah 41:14 and Job 25:6. How much more incredible that Jesus referred to Himself as a "tola!") And little did the Roman soldiers comprehend the deep significance of the SCARLET robe they placed on Christ, mocking Him with their cry "Hail, King of the Jews" (Mt 27:28-29)! And so we see the Holy One of Israel Who was "made for a little while lower than the angels" (Heb 2:9), then even lower than man, and yes finally made like a mere TOLA, a helpless "crimson worm," a WORM that was crushed beneath the load of our sin, "having become a curse for us." (Gal 3:13) "Well might the sun in darkness hide, And shut His glories in, When Christ, the mighty Maker died, For man the creature's sin." (I. Watts) And so it should not surprise us to see the Spirit use the Hebrew word TOLA to picture our SIN! In Isaiah 1:18 Jehovah gives the universal invitation "Come now, and let us reason together. Though your sins are as scarlet, they will be as white as snow. Though they are red like CRIMSON (Hebrew = TOLA!), they will be like wool." In a display of God's amazing, mysterious grace, the Spirit chose the same Hebrew word (TOLA) to depict MESSIAH and SIN! Indeed Paul explains this deep mystery, writing that the Father "made Him Who knew no sin to be SIN on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." (2Cor 5:21) When Christ was crushed by the weight of our sins, like a crushed crimson worm (TOLA), He shed His blood, that our sins might be covered by His crimson flow and we might be forever clothed in Christ's "garments of salvation, wrapped with His robe of righteousness." (Isaiah 61:10). These deep truths recall the original words of Isaac Watts' hymn "Alas! and did my Savior bleed, And did my Sovereign die! Would He devote that sacred head, For such a WORM as I?" And the answer is a resounding "Yes!" His crimson blood for our crimson sin, that we might be washed whiter than snow! "Hallelujah What a Savior! Thank You God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. Amen" (Click for full article - Psalm 22:6 - I Am A Worm)

How Deep the Father's Love for Us
by Stuart Townend

How deep the Father's love for us, how vast beyond all measure
That He should give His Only Son, to make a wretch His treasure
How great the pain of searing loss, the Father turned His face away
As wounds which mar the Chosen One, bring many sons to glory

Behold the Man upon a cross, my sin upon His shoulders
Ashamed, I hear my mocking voice call out among the scoffers
It was my sin that held Him there until it was accomplished
His dying breath has brought me life; I know that "It is Finished!"

I will not boast in anything: no gifts, no power, no wisdom
But I will boast in Jesus Christ; His death and resurrection
Why should I gain from His reward? I cannot give an answer
But this I know with all my heart: His wounds have paid my ransom

Steven Cole - How simple and yet how sublime is God's means of salvation! Who would have thought that Messiah would be born as a baby, and in such humble circumstances, at that! I would have thought that God would send His Savior as a full-grown man, a mighty warrior riding on a white stallion. Or if He were to be born as a baby, I would have looked in the palace, expecting to see the infant wrapped in fine purple, lying in an ivory and gold cradle, attended by servants. Many would have stumbled over the angel's directions (Luke 2:12): "You will find a baby wrapped in cloths, and lying in a manger"-a feeding trough! It smelled like any barn.

Contrary to many artists' conceptions, there was no halo over the baby's head. Contrary to the children's Christmas carol, the baby did cry. There were no photographers from the Jerusalem Post; no TV news crews; no dignitaries from the Temple. Just a plainly dressed carpenter and his young wife from the hick town of **Nazareth**. It wasn't quite the way you would expect God to launch His Messiah into this world! (Luke 2:8-20 The Simplicity Of Christmas)

You will find (heurisko) **a baby** (brephos) **wrapped** (sparganoo) **in cloths and lying** (keimai cf Lu 2:34+) **in a manger** (phatne). - The angel does not say "wait till you meet Mary or Joseph, or see the cute little barn animals." The focus is on the babe…and Him only!" (Bell) Notice the dramatic contrast of the exalted titles Savior, Christ, Lord given to one in such a humble setting. As Paul would later write "Jesus "**emptied Himself**, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. Being found (IN LUKE 2 BY THE SHEPHERDS) in appearance as a man (IN A MANGER!), He **humbled Himself** by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross." (Php 2:7-8+)

J Vernon McGee points out that "Again Dr. Luke is emphasizing His humanity. He came into this world as a human being. He is touched with the feeling of our infirmities. God knows about mankind. He knows you, and He knows me. He understands us because He came into this world a human being. This also means that we can know something about God, because He took upon Himself our humanity." (See context Thru the Bible: The Gospels - Luke)

Martin Luther - The mystery of the humanity of Christ, that He sunk Himself into our flesh, is beyond all human understanding." **Brian Bell** adds that Luther "called the ***Incarnation*** - "***en-flesh-ment***" God is willing to make any accommodations to have fellowship with us. Like, becoming human. (Ed: I have heard Chuck Swindoll say "Since I'm a chili lover, I sometimes describe His incarnation by saying He was "***God con carne***.")

Illustration: A hospital patient was in an accident and is left with the sense of smell only. Her mother wanted to communicate her presence, so used a perfume the girl would remember as her mom's. Now the perfume is not the mother's essential nature, but is an extension of her real self to communicate on the girl's level. God also is not essentially a body, but He became human. He extended Himself to communicate on our level so we could respond. (Brian Bell - The Christmas Gospel)

You will find (heurisko) - Note the "**will**" ("will" occurs over 200x in Luke and often conveys the sense of a prophecy - of course you need to check the context to make sure it expresses future tense). In short, this statement is a prophetic promise from the angel! And God's prophecies are always fulfilled! The shepherds had the sure prophetic promise from God through His angelic messenger that **you will find** Jesus!

> **THOUGHT** - That was true then and it is true now! If you are lost spiritually and want to find Jesus and eternal life, God will lead someone to speak the Gospel to you. God will lose none of those who are His children! Are you "lost?" Do you even know what "lost" means in a spiritual sense? Simply put, if you are "lost" spiritually today, you will be lost eternally! You "must be found" by the Spirit of Jesus and the Gospel of Jesus, Who Himself testified "**For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost**" (Lk 19:10+). "There is salvation in no one else; for there is no other Name (OTHER THAN JESUS) under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved." (Acts 4:12+) "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved...." (Acts 16:31+)

Related Resource: Given the importance (and the mystery) of the Humanity of Jesus Christ you might consider listening to **3 excellent lectures from Dr Wayne Grudem.** You could print out the accompanying outline to take notes. All three lectures will give you an excellent overview of the Humanity of Jesus Christ.

- Online Systematic Theology - Wayne Grudem - The Person of Christ - **scroll to page 455** (this is his actual book on systematic theology and not just notes)
- Lecture 1 - The Person of Christ - Mp3
- Lecture 2 - The Person of Christ - Mp3
- Lecture 3 - The Person of Christ - Mp3
- Outline of the Person of Christ - 4 pages

Brian Bill - Angels appear in more than half of the books of the Bible, with over 300 total references. They have three primary responsibilities.

1. **They magnify God.** The number one job of angels is to adore God. Nehemiah 9:6: "You give life to everything, and the multitudes of heaven worship you." According to Job 38:7, at creation "the morning stars sang together and all the angels shouted for joy."

2. **They are messengers of God.** The word “angel,” as used in the Bible, literally means messenger. Their job is to do what God sends them to do. Angel messengers basically convey two types of messages. Sometimes it’s good news like announcing the birth of Christ. That Christmas carol “Hark, the Herald Angels Sing” captures the fact that angels “herald” or proclaim. But, other times they bring bad news. When they serve in this capacity, they are not cute and cuddly cherub dolls that we put on top of our Christmas trees. 2 Thessalonians 1:7: “This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels.” The Book of Revelation is full of avenging angels and it is anything but pretty.

3. **They minister to people**. Hebrews 1:14 puts it best: “Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?” Most of the time angels are not seen; they minister invisibly behind the scenes. And yet, on occasion, they break into our world, appearing for a short time to accomplish a specific purpose. The Bible mentions that when they do appear, they often look just like humans. Listen to Hebrews 13:2: “Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some people have entertained angels without knowing it.”

It is impossible to read the Christmas story without understanding a little about angels because it begins and ends with them. The Incarnation is so incredible and so earth shaking that only the angels could be entrusted by God to be the appropriate messengers. No earthly channels of communication could be relied upon to get this amazing message out because no human person could possibly be persuasive enough. One interesting point to be made is that if you were to look at all the major events in the Bible, there is no other occurrence that has as many messages from so many angelic messengers. Yancey refers to a concept called, “thin places,” where the natural and supernatural worlds come together at their narrowest, with only a thin veil between them (“Rumors of another World,” Page 45). As we read the Christmas story, there are many of these thin places, particularly when messengers from the angelic world make an appearance into our world. I’d like us to look at how four Christmas characters responded to these angelic encounters. (See full sermon Luke 2:9-14 The Angels' Plea for Peace)

Sign (4592)(**semeion** a sign is something that serves as a pointer to aid perception or insight. In the NT a sign speaks of a token which has behind it a particular message to be conveyed. A sign directs attention away from its unusual nature to the meaning and the significance it points to. It speaks of outward compelling proof of divine authority. In John a sign is generally a "miraculous sign" that points to some deeper spiritual significance in connection with the event (Jn 2:11, 18). Semeion describes a miracle whose purpose is that of attesting the claims of the one performing the miracle to be true.

> **Semeion** in NT (mainly Gospels and Acts) - Matt. 12:38; Matt. 12:39; Matt. 16:1; Matt. 16:3; Matt. 16:4; Matt. 24:3; Matt. 24:24; Matt. 24:30; Matt. 26:48; Mk. 8:11; Mk. 8:12; Mk. 13:4; Mk. 13:22; Mk. 16:17; Mk. 16:20; Lk. 2:12; Lk. 2:34; Lk. 11:16; Lk. 11:29; Lk. 11:30; Lk. 21:7; Lk. 21:11; Lk. 21:25; Lk. 23:8; Jn. 2:11; Jn. 2:18; Jn. 2:23; Jn. 3:2; Jn. 4:48; Jn. 4:54; Jn. 6:2; Jn. 6:14; Jn. 6:26; Jn. 6:30; Jn. 7:31; Jn. 9:16; Jn. 10:41; Jn. 11:47; Jn. 12:18; Jn. 12:37; Jn. 20:30; Acts 2:19; Acts 2:22; Acts 2:43; Acts 4:16; Acts 4:22; Acts 4:30; Acts 5:12; Acts 6:8; Acts 7:36; Acts 8:6; Acts 8:13; Acts 14:3; Acts 15:12; Rom. 4:11; Rom. 15:19; 1 Co. 1:22; 1 Co. 14:22; 2 Co. 12:12; 2 Thess. 2:9; 2 Thess. 3:17; Heb. 2:4; Rev. 12:1; Rev. 12:3; Rev. 13:13; Rev. 13:14; Rev. 15:1; Rev. 16:14; Rev. 19:20

> **Wayne Detzler** on **semeion** - Early in its use this word meant a visible sign which someone saw. For instance, when Constantine was embroiled in battle he saw the sign of a cross and the words, "In this sign conquer." This turned him to Christianity, and he granted toleration to the Christians in 313. So first of all semeion meant a real or imagined visible sign. Later it came to mean the intervention of the deities in our world. This is the meaning which the Bible attaches to miracles, when God breaks into the natural world to accomplish some special feat. (Borrow a copy of this book - strictly speaking it is not a lexicon but has very interesting discussions of selected Greek words - New Testament words in today's language).

> **Gene Brooks on significance of the sign** - Herein lies the significance of the sign. The sign the angel gave was that the Babe -- wrapped in swaddling cloths and placed in a hollowed out, stone manger -- has the appearance of One wrapped for burial and placed on a stone slab in a tomb. The same Mary who, certainly with help from a midwife and a man named Joseph, helped dress that baby boy in swaddling cloths on Christmas night was the same one who, after the Crucifixion, with help from other women and a man named Joseph, helped dress the body of the Lord in strips of burial cloth and place him in a hollowed out stone enclosure in a tomb. The sign points to Jesus' purpose in life. It points to his death as a sacrifice for all mankind. (Luke 2:1-20 - The Birth of Jesus)

Find (2147)(**heurisko**) means to find after searching and so to discover (cf Mt 7:7) BDAB - (1) to come upon something either through purposeful search or accidentally, (2). to discover intellectually through reflection, observation, examination, or investigation, find, discover. Luke uses heurisko later in Chapter 2 of Joseph and Mary losing and finding Jesus (Lk. 2:45, 46+)

> **Luke's** frequent uses of **heurisko** - Lk. 1:30 = "you have found favor with God."; Lk. 2:12; Lk. 2:45; Lk. 2:46; Lk. 4:17; Lk. 5:19; Lk. 6:7; Lk. 7:9; Lk. 7:10; Lk. 8:35; Lk. 9:12; Lk. 9:36; Lk. 11:9; Lk. 11:10; Lk. 11:24; Lk. 11:25; Lk. 12:37; Lk. 12:38; Lk. 12:43;

Lk. 13:6; Lk. 13:7; Lk. 15:4; Lk. 15:5; Lk. 15:6; Lk. 15:8; Lk. 15:9; Lk. 15:24; Lk. 15:32; Lk. 17:18; Lk. 18:8; Lk. 19:30; Lk. 19:32; Lk. 19:48; Lk. 22:13; Lk. 22:45; Lk. 23:2; Lk. 23:4; Lk. 23:14; Lk. 23:22; Lk. 24:2; Lk. 24:3; Lk. 24:23; Lk. 24:24; Lk. 24:33; Acts 4:21; Acts 5:10; Acts 5:22; Acts 5:23; Acts 5:39; Acts 7:11; Acts 7:46; Acts 8:40; Acts 9:2; Acts 9:33; Acts 10:27; Acts 11:26; Acts 12:19; Acts 13:6; Acts 13:22; Acts 13:28; Acts 17:6; Acts 17:23; Acts 17:27; Acts 18:2; Acts 19:1; Acts 19:19; Acts 21:2; Acts 23:9; Acts 23:29; Acts 24:5; Acts 24:12; Acts 24:18; Acts 24:20; Acts 27:6; Acts 27:28; Acts 28:14

Baby (1025) **brephos** is used most often in the NT of a literal baby whether unborn or born or newly born. Some contexts signify a young child. (1) The babe in the womb, Lat. foetus. Unborn child, babe, fetus (Lk 1.41); (2) newborn child, infant, baby, a very small child (Lk 2.12); (3) childhood (2Ti 3.15); (4) metaphorically, of a new or immature Christian (1Pe 2.2)

> **Brephos - 5/8 NT uses by Luke** - Lk. 1:41; Lk. 1:44; Lk. 2:12; Lk. 2:16; Lk. 18:15; Acts 7:19; 2 Tim. 3:15; 1 Pet. 2:2

Lying (appointed, destined) (2749) (**keimai**) means literally to be in a recumbent position, to lie down, to be laid down. The root meaning refers to lying down or reclining and came to be used of an official appointment and sometimes of destiny. In the military **keimai** was used of a special assignment, such as guard duty or defense of a strategic position - the soldier was placed (set) on duty.

Figuratively, **keimai** means appointed (determined or decided upon) or **destined** (cf Lu 2:34+ and Php 1:16+ where we see that Paul was **divinely appointed** for the defense of the gospel). **Destined** means intended or chosen for a particular purpose or end. The idea is that God "sets (lays down)" something for a particular purpose. In context this usage of **keimai** affirms God's sovereignty and ultimate control of all things.

> **Uses of Keimai by Luke** - Lk. 2:12; Lk. 2:16; Lk. 2:34; Lk. 3:9; Lk. 12:19; Lk. 23:53

The Shepherds

Read: Luke 2:8-20

> You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger. —Luke 2:12

The angel bypassed Jerusalem, the religious center of Israel. He didn't go to Herodium, Herod's villa near Bethlehem. He appeared instead to a band of shepherds tending their flocks (Luke 2:8-9).

Back then no one thought God would be interested in shepherds, or that shepherds would be interested in God. Shepherds were notoriously irreligious, ranked by the rabbis with prostitutes and other "habitual sinners." They were outcasts, barred from the synagogue and polite society. They assumed that God would never accept them, and they feared Him.

But God spoke to them. I think He knew that these shepherds, like so many people who appear indifferent to spiritual things, were quietly longing for God.

All of us have a longing for something more. And no matter how hard we try to appear self-sufficient, sooner or later we run out of something essential—love, money, time, or life. Isolation, loneliness, and fear of death lead us to acknowledge our need for a Savior. But where can we find Him?

The angel's words to the shepherds were simple and direct: "There is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord" (Luke 2:11). You can find Him too. By David H. Roper (Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved)

Come to Bethlehem and see
Him whose birth the angels sing;
Come, adore on bended knee
Christ the Lord, the newborn King.
—Anon.

God's gift to a dying world is the life-giving Savior.

Luke 2:13 And suddenly there appeared with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying,

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> NET Suddenly a vast, heavenly army appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,

GNT κα ξα φνης γ νετο σ ν τ γγ λ πλ θος στρατι ς ο ραν ου α νο ντων τ ν θε ν κα λεγ ντων,

NLT Suddenly, the angel was joined by a vast host of others-- the armies of heaven-- praising God and saying,

KJV And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,

ESV And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying,

NIV Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,

ASV And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,

CSB Suddenly there was a multitude of the heavenly host with the angel, praising God and saying:

- **multitude**: Ge 28:12 32:1,2 1Ki 22:19 Job 38:7 Ps 68:17 103:20,21 148:2 Isa 6:2,3 Eze 3:12 Da 7:10 Lu 15:10 Eph 3:10 Heb 1:14 1Pe 1:12 Rev 5:11
- Luke 2 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

AN ANGELIC ARMY'S ANTHEM OF PRAISE

And suddenly (exaiphnes) **there appeared with the angel** (aggelos/angelos) **a multitude** (plethos) **of the heavenly host** (stratia - see note) **praising** (aineo) **God and saying -** Keep the context in mind, for it had been over 400 years since the Jews had received a word from God and thus undoubtedly that long since the glory of God had appeared in such manifest, special form (cf His general glory in Ps 19:1-2). **Suddenly** often describes the unexpected nature of God's acts, especially eschatological events (e.g., Mal. 3:1+). In this case a solitary angel was suddenly joined by a multitude of theheavenly host. What a sight for these simple shepherds who were considered ceremonially unclean by religious men, but who now were being serenaded by God's angelic "choir!" God's ways are mind-boggling! Suddenly the hillside and the sky had become the shepherd's "church!"

Host is is literally army and as Bengel quips "Here the *army* announces *peace*!" Constable adds that "the term "heavenly host" is of Old Testament derivation and here refers to a band of angels (cf. 1 Kings 22:19; 2 Chron. 33:3, 5; Jer. 8:2; 19:13; Zeph. 1:5)....Frequently God waits to act a long time but then acts **suddenly**, as here (cf. Mark 13:36; Acts 2:2; 9:3; 1 Th. 5:3). The sudden appearance of the other angels represents God's sudden action in providing a Savior."

POSB on **the heavenly host** - An army of angels, "ten thousand times ten thousand" (Da 7:10; cp. Ps 68:17). God either gave the shepherds a special sight into the spiritual world and dimension or caused the spiritual dimension to appear to physical sight. (See context Preacher's Outline & Sermon Bible-Luke)

Godet on **the heavenly host** - The troop of angels issues forth from the depths of that invisible world which surrounds us on every side.

Warren Wiersbe on **glory to God** - The angels praised God at Creation (Job 38:7), and now they praised Him at the beginning of the new creation. The whole purpose of the plan of salvation is "**glory to God**" (see Eph. 1:6, 12, 14+). God's glory had dwelt in the tabernacle (Ex. 40:34) and in the temple (2 Chr 7:1-3), but had departed because of the nation's sin (1 Sa. 4:21; Ezek 8:4; 9:3; 10:4, 18; 11:22-23) (**ED**: see Glory of God chart which depicts the progressive departure of His glory from the Temple in Jerusalem as described in Ezekiel 8-10). Now God's **glory** was returning to earth in the person of His Son (John 1:14+), announced by the glorious angelic army. That lowly Bethlehem manger was transformed in a sense into a holy of holies because Jesus was there! (Scroll to page 144 in The Bible Exposition Commentary)

J C Ryle writes "Let us mark who they were that first praised God, when Christ was born. They were angels, and not men,—angels who had never sinned, and needed no Saviour,—angels who had not fallen, and required no redeemer, and no atoning blood. The first hymn to the honor of “God manifest in the flesh,” was sung by “a multitude of the heavenly host.” Let us note this fact. It is full of deep spiritual lessons. It shows us what good servants the angels are. All that their heavenly Master does pleases and interests them.—It shows us what clear knowledge they have (**ED**: AND A COROLLARY THOUGHT - THE CLEARER THE KNOWLEDGE WE HAVE, THE MORE IMMEDIATE WILL BE OUR OBEDIENCE TO HIS COMMAND). They know what misery sin has brought into creation. They know the blessedness of heaven, and the privilege of an open door into it.—Above all, it shows us the deep love and compassion which the angels feel towards poor lost man. They rejoice in the glorious prospect of many souls being saved, and many brands plucked from the burning (ED: EVEN THOUGH THEY DO NOT FULLY UNDERSTAND THIS PROFOUND TRUTH - see 1 Pe 1:12+). Let us strive to be more like-minded with the angels. Our spiritual ignorance and deadness appear most painfully in our inability to enter into the joy which we see them here expressing. Surely if we hope to dwell with them forever in heaven, we ought to share something of their feelings while we are here upon earth. **Let us seek a more deep sense of the sinfulness and**

misery of sin, and then we shall have a more deep sense of thankfulness for redemption. (Luke 2)

Heaven's choir came down to sing
When heaven's King came down to save.

Praising God - The word **Hallelujah** means "Praise the Lord."

> **THOUGHT** - Today you may not be able to identify with this angelic choir. You are a believer and circumstances are such that they have all but stifled your desire to be **praising God**. If that's the case, remember you need not fear any condemnation from God (Ro 8:1+). He desires the best for you and the best is when we are lost in adoration and praise of Jesus Christ the Lord. **So if you want your downcast heart to be stimulated and stirred by the Holy Spirit to praise God today, take 5 minutes and listen carefully to the words of this incredible version of Hallelujah sung by a young Irish school girl and choir at the school for special needs children** (You will agree they are the ones who are wonderfully "special" as you listen carefully to the words of this rendition!). I will bet your eyes are not dry at the end and you will want to shout "**Hallelujah**!" Did you catch that line *"it was just as the angels said*?" (at about 2 minutes) and near the end these words..
>
> I know You came to rescue me,
> This Baby Boy Who has grown to be,
> A Man Who'll one day die for me and you.
> My sins were driving nails in You,
> That rugged Cross was my cross too,
> So every breath is filled with "Hallelujah."
> Hallelujah, Hallelujah!
> Hallelujah, Hallelujah!
> Hallelujah, Hallelujah!

Kostenberger writes "While it boggles the mind how the Creator of the universe can be born as a crying baby in a small Jewish village to a young girl and his adoptive father, a construction worker, John invites us to embrace this mystery and to affirm it by faith. As Charles Wesley wrote in his famous hymn, "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing," the invitation still stands: "veiled in flesh the Godhead see, hail th' incarnate deity." Will you join your voice to throngs who praise God for the mystery of the Word made flesh?"

Hark! The herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King;
Peace on earth, and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled!"
Joyful, all ye nations rise,
Join the triumph of the skies;
With th'angelic host proclaim,
"Christ is born in Bethlehem!"

Refrain:
Hark! the herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King!"

Christ, by highest Heav'n adored;
Christ the everlasting Lord;
Late in time, behold Him come,
Offspring of a virgin's womb.
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see;
Hail th'incarnate Deity,
Pleased with us in flesh to dwell,
Jesus our Emmanuel.

Hail the heav'nly Prince of Peace!
Hail the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life to all He brings,
Ris'n with healing in His wings.
Mild He lays His glory by,

Born that man no more may die;
Born to raise the sons of earth,
Born to give them second birth.

Come, Desire of nations, come,
Fix in us Thy humble home;
Rise, the woman's conqu'ring Seed,
Bruise in us the serpent's head.
Now display Thy saving pow'r,
Ruined nature now restore;
Now in mystic union join
Thine to ours, and ours to Thine.

Adam's likeness, Lord, efface,
Stamp Thine image in its place:
Second Adam from above,
Reinstate us in Thy love.
Let us Thee, though lost, regain,
Thee, the Life, the inner man:
Oh, to all Thyself impart,
Formed in each believing heart.

Suddenly (1810)(**exaiphnes** from **e k** = of + **aíphnes** = suddenly) means happening unexpectedly, quickly without warning, unexpectedly, at once. Referring to the unexpected nature of Christ's Second Coming (Mk 13:36). Luke describes the sudden appearance of that "a light (the radiant Redeemer!) from heaven flashed around" Saul of Taursus (Acts 9:3+, Acts 22:6).

Exaiphnes - 5x - Mk. 13:36; Lk. 2:13; Lk. 9:39; Acts 9:3; Acts 22:6.

Mark 13:36 in case he should come **suddenly** and find you asleep.
Luke 2:13 And **suddenly** there appeared with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying,
Luke 9:39+ and a spirit seizes him, and he **suddenly** screams, and it throws him into a convulsion with foaming at the mouth; and only with difficulty does it leave him, mauling him as it leaves.
Acts 9:3 As he was traveling, it happened that he was approaching Damascus, and **suddenly** a light from heaven flashed around him;
Acts 22:6 "But it happened that as I was on my way, approaching Damascus about noontime, a very bright light **suddenly** flashed from heaven all around me,

Exaiphnes - 8v in the **Septuagint** - Job 1:19; Pr. 24:22; Isa. 47:9 = "these two things will come on you **suddenly** in one day"; Jer. 6:26; Jer. 15:8 = "I will **suddenly** bring down on her Anguish and dismay"; Mic. 2:3; Hab. 2:7-note = ""Will not your creditors rise up **suddenly**"; **Exaiphnes** is used in a clear messianic prophecy by Malachi who records God's sure word of promise...

"**Behold**, I am going to send My messenger (JOHN THE BAPTIST Mt 3:1-2), and he will clear the way before Me. And the Lord, Whom you seek, will suddenly come to His Temple (Lk 2:21-24+); and **the Messenger of the covenant** (MESSIAH), in Whom you delight, behold, He is coming," says the LORD of hosts. (Malachi 3:1+)

Multitude (throng)(4128) (**plethos**) stresses a large number. In this case how many angels Luke does not say, but given the fact that this was the very Creator of the angels who had been born it may well have been every created angel giving praise! Whatever the number, it was an angelic sight for the ages! And consider this beloved -- we will be able to speak with these shepherds some day in Heaven and ask them to recount their once in a lifetime experience.

Host (4756)(**stratia** from **stratós** = an army) means army in classical Greek (of Pharaoh's army in Lxx of Ex 14:4, 9, 17). In Luke 2:13 it refers to an "army of angels." In Acts 7:42 it refers to an "army" of stars which Israel worshiped. **TDNT** says the root word is "**stratos**, denoting a camp or army, the first derivative is **strateuo**, "to undertake a campaign," "to serve in the army." We then find **strateia**, meaning "campaign" or "military service." Also found is **stratia** for "army" or superterrestrial "host." **Friberg** has "of heavenly bodies, as the stars, etc. that were worshiped as symbols of celestial powers - supernatural spirit-beings." **Louw-Nida** also has "supernatural powers." Used in the Septuagint of idol worship (2 Chr. 33:3, 5; Jer. 7:18, 8:2, 19:13; Zeph. 1:5).

In the only other NT use Stephen is reviewing the OT history of Israel (especially her unfaithfulness) pointing out to his unbelieving Jewish audience how Israel turned from God and to idolatry - "But God turned away and delivered them up to serve the **host** of heaven; as it is written in the book of the prophets, 'IT WAS NOT TO ME THAT YOU OFFERED VICTIMS AND

SACRIFICES FORTY YEARS IN THE WILDERNESS, WAS IT, O HOUSE OF ISRAEL? (Acts 7:42+)

Praising (present tense = continually)(134)(**aineo**) is an expression of approval, commendation, admiration, awe, worship in extolling God. In the NT this verb is fittingly used only of God! In the Septuagint the first use is found in Genesis 49:8 "Judah, your brothers will praise you. Your hand will be on the neck of your enemies, your father's sons will bow down before you." The **NET Note** says "There is a wordplay here; the name Judah (yehudah) sounds in Hebrew like the verb translated praise (yodukha). The wordplay serves to draw attention to the statement as having special significance." Ultimately this speaks of the Messiah, the Lion of the Tribe of Judah! **Aineo** is used mainly by Luke in the NT and surprisingly there are no other uses in the Gospels! I love Luke's first two uses of aineo -

> And suddenly there appeared with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host **praising** God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased." (Lk. 2:13-14)

> The shepherds went back, glorifying and **praising** God for all that they had heard and seen, just as had been told them.(Lk. 2:20)

And in the last use of **aineo** in Scripture you and I and all these first Jewish disciples will be given a wonderful command

> And a voice came from the throne, saying, "**Give praise** (present imperative = command for us to make this our eternal practice!!!) to our God, all you His bond-servants, you who fear Him, the small and the great." (Rev 19:5+ - O Happy Day - the original vesion! Sing along as you imagine that soon coming day!!!) It is as if the church begins and ends praising God and then continues praising Him forever and ever. Amen!

> The angels and shepherds praised God at the birth of Christ (Lk 2:13, 20), and the pilgrim crowds did so at Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem (Lk 19:37+). The Gospel closes with the disciples blessing God in the Temple (Lk 24:53 - different verb eulogeo). The new Christian community praised God, and the man healed in the Temple offered praise (Acts 2:47+; Acts 3:3–9+).

Related Resources:

- Jehovah Sabaoth, LORD of hosts (of armies)
- Jehovah Sabaoth: Pt2)

QUESTION - What are the heavenly hosts?

ANSWER - On the night that Jesus was born, an angel announced the good news to the shepherds in the fields of Bethlehem. "Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel" and joined in praise to God (Luke 2:13). Most hymnals include "The Doxology," one of the great hymns of the faith, and that song includes the line "Praise him above, ye heavenly host." In both of these contexts, the heavenly hosts are God's holy angels who dwell in God's presence.

Basically, the word *host* refers to a great number of individuals or to an army. Modified by the word *heavenly*, *hosts* becomes a great number of angelic beings forming a celestial army under God's command. There is a suggestion of rank and orderliness, of companies and divisions within that heavenly army. The heavenly hosts were created by God and are controlled by God.

One of God's names is "LORD of hosts," which occurs often in the Old Testament. In Hebrew, it is *Yahweh Sabaoth*, meaning "Lord of the heavenly armies" or "God of the heavenly hosts." The NIV translates the name as "LORD Almighty." See 1 Samuel 1:3; Psalm 24:10; Isaiah 22:14; Jeremiah 2:19; Amos 4:13; Haggai 2:9; Zechariah 8:6; and Malachi 2:16.

There are places in Scripture where the heavenly hosts include fallen angels, such as in 1 Kings 22:19. The prophet Micaiah relates a vision of God's throne room, where he saw "the whole heavenly host" standing on God's right and left (HCSB). One of these beings in the divine presence is a "deceiving spirit" (verse 22), so the term *heavenly hosts* can refer broadly to all angelic beings, holy and unholy.

Psalm 148:2 equates the parallel terms *angels* and *heavenly hosts*: "Praise him, all his angels; praise him, all his heavenly hosts." Psalm 103:19–21 gives further information: "The Lord has established his throne in heaven, and his kingdom rules over all. Praise the Lord, you his angels, you mighty ones who do his bidding, who obey his word. Praise the Lord, all his heavenly hosts, you his servants who do his will." In this passage, the psalmist praises God for the extent of divine authority—there is no part of creation that is not under God's rule; His throne is "established." The heavenly hosts (the angels) praise the Lord; they are, in fact, God's servants who are at His beck and call. They dutifully obey God's commands, carry out His bidding, and acquiesce to His will.

As believers, we will someday inhabit heaven with God and the heavenly hosts. According to Hebrews 12:22, we have been called

to the place where dwell “thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly.” When Jesus returns to earth to establish His kingdom, “the armies of heaven [will be] following him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean” (Revelation 19:14). In this context, the heavenly hosts are all those who inhabit heaven at that time: the redeemed of the church age, Old Testament believers, martyrs of the tribulation, and angels. The angelic army will be augmented by humans redeemed by the blood of the Lamb. We will not become angels, but we will be with them in glory. GotQuestions.org

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Luke 2:14 "Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased."

KJV Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men. (**NOTE WHAT IS MISSING**!)

NET "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among people with whom he is pleased!"

GNT Δ ξα ν ψ στοις θε κα π γ ς ε ρ νη ν νθρ ποις ε δοκ ας.

NLT "Glory to God in highest heaven, and peace on earth to those with whom God is pleased."

ESV "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!"

NIV "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests."

ASV Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace among men in whom he is well pleased.

CSB Glory to God in the highest heaven, and peace on earth to people He favors!

- **Glory**: Lu 19:38 Ps 69:34,35 85:9-12 96:11-13 Isa 44:23 49:13 Jn 17:4 Eph 1:6 3:20,21 Php 2:11 Rev 5:13
- **and**: Lu 1:79 Isa 9:6,7 57:19 Jer 23:5,6 Mic 5:5 Zec 6:12,13 Jn 14:27 Ac 10:36 Ro 5:1 2Co 5:18-20 Eph 2:14-18 Col 1:20 Heb 13:20,21
- **good will** (with whom He is pleased): John 3:16 Eph 2:4,7 2Th 2:16 Titus 3:4-7 1Jn 4:9,10
- Luke 2 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Abraham Hondius - Adoration of the shepherds.

AN ANGELIC DOXOLOGY
GLORIA IN EXCELSIS DEO!

Heaven’s choir came down to sing when heaven’s King came down to save.

Glory to God in the highest (hupsistos) - Note the order - always glory to God first an order that should never be reversed! This one-verse hymn has been titled the **Gloria in Excelsis Deo** (Latin for "glory to God in the highest"). Glory to God, the God of glory (Ps 29:3 Acts 7:2). Note the two aspects of this great doxology relate to heaven and to earth respectively.

> **THOUGHT** - Play Vivaldi's **Gloria in Excelsis Deo** ("Glory to God in the highest") (or here is a 30 minute version!!!) if you need something to wake you up to the Glory of Lord. Beloved, make no mistake about it! We will see and sing **Gloria in Excelsis Deo** with the angelic hosts! O God let us live with this blessed hope imprinted indelibly in our minds so that we might order our steps along the highway of holiness. In Jesus' Name. Amen. If you want an encore you might play **Handel's Hallelujah Chorus**!

Ryle on **glory to God in the highest** - Now is come the highest degree of glory to God, by the appearing of His Son Jesus Christ in the world. He by His life and death on the cross will glorify God’s attributes,—justice, holiness, mercy, and wisdom,—as they never were glorified before. Creation glorified God, but not so much as redemption. (Luke 2)

David Guzik - The contrast between the angelic glory and the humble Jesus must have seemed extreme. God loves to put His glory in unlikely packages so His glory is more clearly displayed (2 Corinthians 4:7+).

Jesus took our place
so that we might receive His peace.

And on earth peace (eirene) **among men with whom He is pleased** (eudokía) - NIV is good = "to men on whom his favor rests." It is not the good will of men but the good will of God, God's favor on His people. As John Phillips says "God announced an amnesty and made an offer of peace to a lost world."

“Let God have all the glory, so we may have the peace.”

-- John Trapp

Trites writes that "The NLT's translation is to be preferred to the KJV's familiar "good will toward men," which is based on later and inferior manuscripts. The NLT reading is supported by excellent textual evidence." (Cornerstone Bible Commentary)

KJV translation says "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." Do you see how this might be misleading? God's peace is only bestowed on those who believe, for they are the only ones who can please Him. Hebrews 11:6+ says "And without faith it is impossible to **please** Him, for he who comes to God must **believe** that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him."

Ryle on **peace** - "Peace on earth!" the song goes on. Now is come to earth the peace of God which passeth all understanding,—the perfect peace between a holy God and sinful man, which Christ was to purchase with His own blood,—the peace which is offered freely to all mankind,—the peace which, once admitted into the heart, makes men live at peace one with another, and will one day overspread the whole world. (Luke 2)

Brian Bell asks on earth Peace"for whom? Christmas does not bring peace to all. (NIV) "on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests". The key that unlocks the treasure chest of God's peace is "faith in the promises of God."Ro 15:13ESV "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope." (The Christmas Gospel)

True peace is not the absence of war;
it is the presence of God.
— Loveless

Only in Christ can true peace be realized.
Without Christ - NO peace!
With Christ - KNOW peace!

Butler - Angels recognize the worth and weight of God's presence and praise him for it. God gains **glory**. People get peace. God is in heaven; people, on earth. All this happens because God's favor, His **good will**, his choice rests on people. (Luke Holman New Testament Commentary)

Kent Hughes - The Christmas message of this passage should make us sing year-round. The substance of the angels' song is instructive. It was first upward as they glorified God in "the highest" heavens, and then it was outward as it pronounced "on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests"—peace, wholeness, well-being for those who have been favored by God's grace. Has God worked in your heart? Are you the object of his good pleasure? Then you have a song to sing, for the best part is yours. (Preaching the Word – Luke, Volume I: That You May Know the Truth)

Kostenberger - Later in Luke's Gospel, Jesus himself echoes the thought of the second line of the hymn (**And on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased**) in a prayer to God. "In that same hour he rejoiced in the Holy Spirit and said, 'I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will [eudokia].' " (Lk 10:22) The angels announced peace upon those with whom God was pleased, and Jesus thanked God that it was his pleasure to hide truth from the wise and reveal it to children. This revealed truth consisted of knowledge of the Son. (Lk 10:22 = "All things have been handed over to Me by My Father, and no one knows who the Son is except the Father, and who the Father is except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son wills to reveal Him.") God's pleasure and peace rest on those to whom the truth of Jesus's identity is revealed, his identity as Savior, Christ, and Lord.

NET Note - Most witnesses have en anthropois eudokia ("good will among people") instead of en anthropois eudokias, "among people with whom he is pleased"), a reading attested by a* A B* D W. Most of the Itala witnesses and some other versional witnesses reflect a Greek text which has the genitive euvdokias but drops the preposition en. Not only is the genitive reading better attested, but it is more difficult than the nominative. "**The meaning seems to be, not that divine peace can be bestowed only where human good will is already present, but that at the birth of the Saviour God's peace rests on those whom he has chosen in accord with his good pleasure**" (TCGNT 111).

MacArthur adds that "The peace of which the angels spoke is only for men **with whom God is pleased.** That does not, of course, mean that He gives salvation to **those** who please Him by their good works, since salvation is "not as a result of works, so that no one may boast" (Eph. 2:9). The Greek text literally reads, "men of His good pleasure." As Marshall explains, "The phrase means 'those upon whom God's will/favour rests', and expresses the thought of God's free choice of those whom he wills to favour and save" (The Gospel of Luke, The New International Greek Testament Commentary [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978], 112). Salvation peace belongs to those to whom God is pleased to give it; it is not a reward for those who have good will, but a gracious gift to those who are the objects of God's good will. (Ibid)

Highest (5310)(**hupsistos** superlative of **hupsos** = height from **hupsi** = high, aloft) in a spatial sense means the highest (highest places). Figuratively of the highest possible status. In view of God's superior rank and power it is an appropriate descriptive Name of God. He is the Most High which also emphasizes His dwelling is in the highest heavens far exalted above all other things. Hupsistos is used in the plural in the phrase **"in the highest"** (in the "highest" regions, the abode of God) as in Hosanna **in the highest** (Mt 21:9, Mk 11:10, Lk 2:14, Lk 19:38)

The adjective **hupsistos** is used in the Septuagint to translate the Hebrew Name of God **El Elyon --** "And Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; now he was a priest of God **Most High** (hupsistos)." (Ge 14:18, 19, 20, 22, cp Nu 24:16 in connection with Balaam) And it is not surprising, that where there is **truth**, there is usually a **counterfeit** - thus the Greeks called Zeus *hupsistos*, the "highest" to be distinguished from their lesser false gods!

> **Hupsistos in Luke** - Matt. 21:9; Mk. 5:7; Mk. 11:10; Lk. 1:32; Lk. 1:35; Lk. 1:76; Lk. 2:14; Lk. 6:35; Lk. 8:28; Lk. 19:38; Acts 7:48; Acts 16:17; Heb. 7:1

Peace (1515)(**eirene** from verb **eiro** = to join or bind together that which has been separated) literally pictures the binding or joining together again of that which had been separated or divided and thus setting at one again, a meaning convey by the common expression of one “having it all together”. It follows that peace is the opposite of division or dissension.

> **Wiersbe** adds "The Jewish word **shalom** (peace) means much more than a truce in the battles of life. It means well-being, health, prosperity, security, soundness, and completeness. It has to do more with character than circumstances. Life was difficult at that time just as it is today. Taxes were high, unemployment was high, morals were slipping lower, and the military state was in control. Roman law, Greek philosophy, and even Jewish religion could not meet the needs of men’s hearts. Then, God sent His Son!" (Scroll to page 144 in The Bible Exposition Commentary)

> **Eirene in Luke and Acts** - Lk. 1:79; Lk. 2:14; Lk. 2:29; Lk. 7:50; Lk. 8:48; Lk. 10:5; Lk. 10:6; Lk. 11:21; Lk. 12:51; Lk. 14:32; Lk. 19:38; Lk. 19:42; Lk. 24:36; Jn. 14:27; Jn. 16:33; Jn. 20:19; Jn. 20:21; Jn. 20:26; Acts 7:26; Acts 9:31; Acts 10:36; Acts 12:20; Acts 15:33; Acts 16:36; Acts 24:2

Pleased (2107)(**eudokía** from **eu** = well, well off + **dokeo** = to seem, to think, to have an opinion) means good will or pleasure. Eudokia speak sof that which pleases. Of course, ultimately the only way for an unholy sinner to be pleasing to the Holy God is to be clothed in the garments of salvation, dressed in the perfect, God pleasing righteousness of Christ. The only other use in Luke is Lk 10:21 = "for this way was **well-pleasing** in Your sight."

A Prize for Peace - Alfred Nobel made a fortune from the invention of dynamite, which changed the course of warfare. Perhaps because of the horrors that wars inflicted with the use of dynamite, he made a provision in his will for a prize to be given annually to those who work to promote peace. Today it’s called the Nobel Peace Prize. God’s expression of peace to the world was His Son. When Jesus was born, the angels’ clear, unmistakable message to the shepherds was “on earth peace, goodwill toward men” (Luke 2:14).

ILLUSTRATION

Scientists report that noise has a definite effect on our working efficiency. Noise increases the pulse,quickens the blood pressure,and upsets the normal rhythm of the heart. Spiritual noise has just as bad an effect on spiritual life. The man who is occupied with the things that keep him from hearing the voice of God in his heart is spiritually frustrated. It is impossible for those who are spiritually noisy to have true peace of mind, peace of heart, and peace of soul! This is why God has said, "Be still, and know that I am God;" (Psalms 46:10). - Donald Grey Barnhouse, Let Me Illustrate (Fleming H. Revell, 1967), p. 49.

Application - Peace in an "in" word today. Some people use the word without any knowledge of how a person really gains a lasting peace. We have been given peach from the Lord and we need to speak Peace every where we go.

Peace On Earth?

Read: Luke 2:8-14

> Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. —John 14:27

I wouldn’t want to pick a fight with a sky full of angels, but I must admit that I’ve always wondered about the promise of peace the angelic host made to the shepherds in the fields outside Bethlehem. For the last 2,000 years, peace on our planet has been at best a rare commodity. Wars continue to ravage innocent lives, domestic violence is a growing calamity, divorce rates soar, churches split, and peace in our restless and wayward hearts seems to be an elusive dream.

Where is the promised peace? Actually, on reflection, we can see that Jesus brought all that is needed for peace in our world. He taught the principles of peace, calling for people to love their neighbors as they love themselves. And as He was leaving this planet, He promised, “Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you” (John 14:27). He told us to turn the other cheek, go the extra mile, forgive offenses, reject greed, tolerate each other’s weaknesses, live to serve and love one another as He has loved us.

It seems that in large part, peace is up to us. Paul verifies that in Romans 12:18, “As much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men.” This Christmas, let’s make peace our gift to the world in which we live as we reflect the Prince of Peace. By Joe Stowell (Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved)

We know at times there will be strife;
On this we must agree—
When conflict drops into our lives,
We’ll solve it peacefully.
—Fasick

When we experience peace with God,
we can share His peace with others.

A Ukrainian Christmas

Read: Luke 2:6-14

> “Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased.” —Luke 2:14

The people of Ukraine include many wonderful elements in their observance of Christmas. Sometimes wisps of hay are placed on the dinner table as a reminder of the Bethlehem manger. Another portion of their celebration echoes the events of the night when the Savior entered the world. A Christmas prayer is offered and then the father in the household offers the greeting, “Christ is born!” The family then responds, “Let us glorify Him!”

These words draw my mind to the appearance of the angels in the sky over Bethlehem on the night Christ was born. The angel of the Lord declared, “For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord” (Luke 2:11). The heavenly host responded, ““Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased.” (v.14).

Those twin messages give such depth of meaning to this wonderful time of year. The Savior has come bringing forgiveness and hope—and He is deserving of all the worship we can give Him.

May all who know the wonder of His gift of eternal life join with the voices of that angelic host declaring, “Glory to God in the highest!”By Bill Crowder

With th’angelic hosts proclaim,
“Christ is born in Bethlehem!”
Hark! the herald angels sing,
“Glory to the newborn King!”
—Wesley

The spectacular glory of God’s love for us was revealed in the coming of Jesus.

INSIGHT Luke’s telling of the birth of Christ includes the shepherds, who lived apart from society in their lowly occupation, and the angels, who announced to those shepherds the arrival of the Messiah (Lk 2:9-14). From the humble to the heavenly, the contrast of shepherds and angels pictures the journey of the Son who came from the highest place to be the Lamb of God. (Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved)

Now Is The Time

Read: Luke 2:8-20

> Glory to God in the highest! —Luke 2:14

During our church’s Christmas celebration, I watched the choir members assemble in front of the congregation while the music director rifled through papers on a slim black stand. The instruments began, and the singers launched into a well-known song that started with these words: “Come, now is the time to worship.”

Although I expected to hear a time-honored Christmas carol, I smiled at the appropriate choice of music. Earlier that week I had

been reading Luke's account of Jesus' birth, and I noticed that the first Christmas lacked our modern-day parties, gifts, and feasting —but it did include worship.

After the angel announced Jesus' birth to some wide-eyed shepherds, a chorus of angels began "praising God and saying: 'Glory to God in the highest!'" (Luke 2:13-14). The shepherds responded by running to Bethlehem where they found the newborn King lying in a barnyard bassinet. They returned to their fields "glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen" (v.20). Coming face to face with the Son inspired the shepherds to worship the Father.

Today, consider your response to Jesus' arrival on earth. Is there room for worship in your heart on this day that celebrates His birth?By Jennifer Benson Schuldt (Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved)

Grant us, Father, hearts of worship
At this time of Jesus' birth;
We would see anew His glory
Shine throughout this sin-cursed earth.
—D. De Haan

Heaven's choir came down to sing when heaven's King came down to save.

What Christmas Is All About

Read: Luke 2:8-14

> There were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. Luke 2:8

Fifty years ago A Charlie Brown Christmas was first broadcast on American television. Some network executives thought it would be ignored, while others worried that quoting the Bible would offend viewers. Some wanted its creator, Charles Schulz, to omit the Christmas story, but Schulz insisted it stay in. The program was an immediate success and has been rebroadcast every year since 1965.

When Charlie Brown, the frustrated director of the children's Christmas play, is discouraged by the commercial spirit of the holiday season, he asks if anyone can tell him the real meaning of Christmas. Linus recites Luke 2:8-14 including the words, "For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men" (vv. 11-14 kjv). Then Linus says, "That's what Christmas is all about, Charlie Brown."

During this season filled with our own doubts and dreams, it's good to ponder afresh God's great love expressed in the familiar story of Joseph, Mary, the baby Jesus, and the angels who announced the Savior's birth.

That's what Christmas is all about.

Father in heaven, as we approach Christmas, may we grasp in a deeper way Your amazing gift to us.

God broke into human history to offer us the gift of salvation!

By David C. McCasland | (Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved)

INSIGHT - Two angels are named in the Bible: archangels Michael (Dan. 10:13; Jude 9; Rev. 12:7) and Gabriel (Dan. 8:16; 9:21; Luke 1:19, 26). Angels appeared a number of times in connection with Christ's birth. Gabriel appeared to Zacharias (Luke 1:11–20) and then to Mary, announcing that she would become the mother of the Messiah (v. 26). An unnamed angel, which most scholars believe was Gabriel, appeared three times in dreams to Joseph (Matt. 1:20; 2:13, 19). Gabriel also announced the birth of Jesus to the shepherds and, joined by a "multitude of the heavenly host," declared glory to God (2:8–14).

The Promise Of Peace

Read: Luke 2:8-15

> Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. —2 Peter 1:2

At Christmastime we love to hear the angelic message of peace on earth. But the message that's repeated in songs and sermons

needs to be heard and heeded every day of the year. We continually hear reports of tragedies around the globe. And we may be troubled by personal problems and crises. We long for and pray for peace.

The Bible provides an answer to that plea for peace. To start with, the apostle Paul assured us in Romans 5:1 that it is possible to have peace with God. Yes, we disobedient and sinful creatures can enter into a state of reconciliation with God through faith in His Son Jesus (v.11).

We can enjoy emotional peace as we cast our cares on the Savior (Philippians 4:6-7; 1 Peter 5:7). There is also the possibility of interpersonal peace. In Romans 12:18, Paul urged believers, “As much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men.” Peace with others can become a reality. Best of all, we can anticipate global peace when our Savior, the Prince of Peace, returns.

By our prayers and by our example, let us be peacemakers who help to fulfill the angelic message: “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men!” (Luke 2:14). By Vernon Grounds (Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved)

Peace, perfect peace, in this dark world of sin?
The blood of Jesus whispers peace within;
Peace, perfect peace, our future all unknown?
Jesus, we know, and He is on the throne.
—Bickersteth

Only the Prince of Peace can bring lasting peace.

Parallel Universes

Read: Luke 2:1-7

> Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men! —Luke 2:14

Every so often I catch myself wondering about the whole grand scheme of faith. I stand in an airport, for example, watching important-looking people in business suits, briefcases clutched to their sides, as they pause at an espresso bar before scurrying off to another concourse. Do any of them ever think about God? I wonder.

Christians share an odd belief in parallel universes. One universe consists of glass and steel and wool clothes and leather briefcases and the smell of freshly ground coffee. The other consists of angels and spiritual forces and somewhere-out-there places called heaven and hell. We palpably inhabit the material world; it takes faith to consider oneself a citizen of the other, invisible world.

Christmas turns the tables and hints at the struggle involved when the Lord of both worlds descends to live by the rules of the one. In Bethlehem, the two worlds came together, realigned. What Jesus went on to accomplish on planet Earth made it possible for God someday to resolve all disharmonies in both worlds. No wonder a choir of angels broke out in spontaneous song, disturbing not only a few shepherds but the entire universe (Luke 2:13-14).By Philip Yancey (Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved)

Once from the realms of infinite glory,
Down to the depths of our ruin and loss,
Jesus came, seeking—O Love’s sweet story—
Came to the manger, the shame, and the cross.
—Strickland

The key word of Christmas is “Immanuel”— God with us!

Luke 2:15 When the angels had gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds began saying to one another, "Let us go straight to Bethlehem then, and see this thing that has happened which the Lord has made known to us."

> NET When the angels left them and went back to heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, that the Lord has made known to us."
>
> GNT Κα γ νετο ς π λθον π α τ ν ε ς τ ν ο ραν ν ο γγελοι, ο ποιμ νες λ λουν πρ ς λλ λους, Δι λθωμεν δ ως Βηθλ εμ κα δωμεν τ μα το το τ γεγον ς κ ριος γν ρισεν μ ν.
>
> NLT When the angels had returned to heaven, the shepherds said to each other, "Let's go to Bethlehem! Let's

see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about."

KJV And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us.

ESV When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us."

NIV When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about."

ASV And it came to pass, when the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing that is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us.

CSB When the angels had left them and returned to heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go straight to Bethlehem and see what has happened, which the Lord has made known to us."

- **into**: Lu 24:51 2Ki 2:1,11 1Pe 3:22
- **Let**: Ex 3:3 Ps 111:2 Mt 2:1,2,9-11 12:42 Jn 20:1-10
- Luke 2 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

SHEPHERDS SEEK TO SEE SAVIOR

When the angels (aggelos/angelos) **had gone away from them into heaven** - While they had departed visibly into a very real place called Heaven, a place all followers of Christ will also one day enter. When we die we will be absent from our body and present with the Lord (2 Cor 5:6-8+, Php 1:21-24+). No delays! No limbo! No purgatory. No soul sleep. Instant entrance into the same Heaven to which these angels returned, into the presence of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

We may not have visible angels today but we can be certain they also "appear" for our aid. The writer of Hebrews says (referring to angels) asks a rhetorical question - "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent out to render service for the sake of those who will inherit salvation?" (Heb 1:14+).

Lenski - Luke's words read as if the angels, surrounded by heavenly light, receded upward until they were hid from sight. (SeeThe Interpretation of St. Luke's Gospel)

Holman NT Commentary - Angelic presence does not last forever. Angels leave. People must respond. How would shepherds respond—these tough men whose theological education came from the heavens and meadows rather than the synagogue and its rabbis? No quibbling or quarreling! Rather, they made an immediate decision—to go to Bethlehem to see what God had reported to them. They wanted to be part of the work God was doing in his world. They saw God's work in the face of a baby lying in a manger. What audacity that God would use society's lowest occupations and its most meager resources to begin his awesome work of salvation.

The shepherds (poimen) **began saying to one another** - **Began saying** is in the imperfect tense which pictures them beginning to speak to each other, over and over, finally concluding it was time to quit *talking* and start *walking*, a good pattern for all saints to emulate! While the angels offered a heavenly response (Luke 2:8-14). Now the shepherds offer an earthly response (Luke 2:15-20)!

> **THOUGHT**- The good news always calls for a response. Not responding to the good news when you hear it is in fact a response. Apathy or seeming "neutrality" will not suffice, but will take one straight to eternal destruction!

Let us go straight (dierchomai) **to Bethlehem then, and see this thing** (rhema) **that has happened which the Lord** (kurios) **has made known** (gnorizo) **to us** - NLT = "Let's go to Bethlehem!" Note their sense of urgency! Would we all be so eager to see Jesus each new morn! There are two subjunctives (Let us go...and see) are **hortative**. Let's see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about." Notice their immediate reaction to **go straight to Bethlehem**.

> **A T Robertson** says **this thing** (rhema) is "A Hebraistic and vernacular use of rhema (**something said**) as **something done**."

As **Spurgeon** says "Good news is not to be kept to ourselves. When we have ascertained its truth we are to tell it to others, and we are especially to tell the goodness of salvation. Tell it, O ye who know it in your own hearts by blessed experience! Tell it, though it

will sometimes be with broken accents in the feebleness of your flesh yet even then tell it in the ardor of your heart's affection, and God will bless your testimony, and others will learn the good news through you." (Luke Exposition)

Notice their statement **which the Lord has made known to us** which shows they accepted what the angel had spoken as fully authoritative. They do not express any doubts or reservations.

In the Greek text there is a particle (**de**) which follows "**let us go**" and is not translated here by the NAS but can mean now (it is possible the NAS uses the word "straight" to convey the same thought of urgency). In fact **Friberg** says "de" is an "intensive particle....adding a note of urgency to commands and exhortations." **Robertson** agrees noting that "**de**" in this context is "a particle of urgency." Lenski adds "We have no English word for the urgent particle **de** which indicates that the shepherds could not wait, so we use "at once" partially to convey the sense.

NET Note on **the Lord has made known to us -** Note how although angels delivered the message, it was ***the Lord*** whose message is ***made known***, coming through them.

To Bethlehem ("the city of David" - Lk 2:11+) See map. Luke does not tell us specifically where they were when the angels made the announcement to them, but it must have been relatively close. See also map of Jesus' birth and flight to Egypt, described only by Matthew (cf Mt 2:13-22, 20, 21,22, 23)

"The Christ Who was born into the world must be born in your heart."
-- R Kent Hughes

Kent Hughes - It is not enough to hear about Jesus. It is not enough to peek in the manger and say, "Oh, how nice. What a lovely scene. It gives me such good feelings." The truth is, even if Christ were born in Bethlehem a thousand times but not within you, you would be eternally lost. The Christ who was born into the world must be born in your heart. Religious sentiment, even at Christmastime, without the living Christ is a yellow brick road to darkness. The Holy Spirit included this story in the Holy Scriptures so we would not miss the point: the real Savior of the world was not Caesar Augustus, nor will it be any great world leader. The Savior of the world is Jesus, the Son of God Who came to earth veiled in Mary's flesh, was born in human flesh, lived in the flesh, died in the flesh, was resurrected in that flesh, and now lives in the same glorified flesh at the right hand of the Father (**ED**: cf Rev 5:6+ where "slain" = perfect tense = His eternal appearance!) (See context in Luke: That You May Know the Truth)

In this world of sin,
Where meek souls will
Receive him still
The dear Christ enters in.
-- Phillips Brooks

Go straight (1330)(**dierchomai** from **dia** = through + **erchomai** = come, go) means to go through, to pass through, to move through an area. The preposition dia means through and implies that the shepherds had to pass **through** some territory before the arrived at Bethlehem.

Lord (2962)(**kurios** from **kuros** = might or power, related to kuroo = to give authority) primarily means the possessor, master, the one who is sovereign, possesses absolute authority, absolute ownership and uncontested power. In this context God demonstrates His sovereignty (complete control) over the details of His Son's birth, for the shepherds found all just as the angelic envoy had foretold to them.

> Kurios in Luke - Lk. 1:6; Lk. 1:9; Lk. 1:11; Lk. 1:15; Lk. 1:16; Lk. 1:17; Lk. 1:25; Lk. 1:28; Lk. 1:32; Lk. 1:38; Lk. 1:43; Lk. 1:45; Lk. 1:46; Lk. 1:58; Lk. 1:66; Lk. 1:68; Lk. 1:76; Lk. 2:9; Lk. 2:11; Lk. 2:15; Lk. 2:22; Lk. 2:23; Lk. 2:24; Lk. 2:26; Lk. 2:39; Lk. 3:4; Lk. 4:8; Lk. 4:12; Lk. 4:18; Lk. 4:19; Lk. 5:8; Lk. 5:12; Lk. 5:17; Lk. 6:5; Lk. 6:46; Lk. 7:6; Lk. 7:13; Lk. 7:19; Lk. 9:54; Lk. 9:59; Lk. 9:61; Lk. 10:1; Lk. 10:2; Lk. 10:17; Lk. 10:21; Lk. 10:27; Lk. 10:39; Lk. 10:40; Lk. 10:41; Lk. 11:1; Lk. 11:39; Lk. 12:36; Lk. 12:37; Lk. 12:41; Lk. 12:42; Lk. 12:43; Lk. 12:45; Lk. 12:46; Lk. 12:47; Lk. 13:8; Lk. 13:15; Lk. 13:23; Lk. 13:25; Lk. 13:35; Lk. 14:21; Lk. 14:22; Lk. 14:23; Lk. 16:3; Lk. 16:5; Lk. 16:8; Lk. 16:13; Lk. 17:5; Lk. 17:6; Lk. 17:37; Lk. 18:6; Lk. 18:41; Lk. 19:8; Lk. 19:16; Lk. 19:18; Lk. 19:20; Lk. 19:25; Lk. 19:31; Lk. 19:33; Lk. 19:34; Lk. 19:38; Lk. 20:13; Lk. 20:15; Lk. 20:37; Lk. 20:42; Lk. 20:44; Lk. 22:33; Lk. 22:38; Lk. 22:49; Lk. 22:61; Lk. 24:3; Lk. 24:34;

Has made known (1107) (**gnorizo** from **ginosko** = acquire information by whatever means but often with the implication of personal involvement or experience) means to cause information to be known by someone (make known, reveal, point out, explain, cause information to be known by someone), communicating things before unknown or reasserting things already known (Jn 15:15, Acts 7:13). **Gnorizo** is used especially of something unknowable by natural means but communicated by divine initiative as in the present

passage (cf Eph 1:9).

The Smells Of The Stable

Read: Luke 2:15-20

> They shall call His name Immanuel, which is translated, “God with us.” —Matthew 1:23

A stable? What a place to give birth to the Messiah! The smells and sounds of a barnyard were our Savior’s first human experience. Like other babies, He may even have cried at the sounds of the animals and the strangers parading around His temporary crib.

If so, they would have been the first of many tears. Jesus would come to know human loss and sorrow, the doubts his brothers and family had about Him, and the pain His mother experienced as she saw Him tortured and killed.

All these hardships—and so much more—awaited the baby trying to sleep that first night. Yet from His very first moments, Jesus was “God with us” (Matt. 1:23), and He knew what it meant to be human. This would continue for over three decades, ending at His death on the cross.

Because of His love for you and me, Jesus became fully human. And being human allows Him to identify with us. Never again can we say that no one understands us. Jesus does.

May the Light that entered the world that night cast its brilliance into the deepest corners of our souls this Christmas, giving us the peace on Earth of which the angels spoke so long ago.By Randy Kilgore

Father, help our hearts to know the
love of Christ and to honor Him
with our unyielding devotion in
this and every season. We love You.

Jesus understands.

INSIGHT The role of shepherd is one of the oldest occupations named in the Bible (Gen. 4:2). Shepherds were deemed irreligious and irreverent, because in taking their flock into the wilderness to find pasture, they could not perform their religious duties at the temple. And being in contact with animals (and dead sheep), they were considered “unclean.” That God would announce the birth of the Savior of the world to a group of shepherds is consistent with Jesus’ mission to save the poor and exalt the lowly (Luke 1:51-53; 4:18). It is interesting that Jesus is both the Lamb of God (John 1:29) and the Good Shepherd (10:11). (Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved)

The Child

Read: Luke 2:8-20

> Let us now go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has come to pass, which the Lord has made known to us.
> —Luke 2:15

Some years ago my wife and I took our grandchildren to the Festival of the Trees, a local event in which businesses and organizations decorate Christmas trees, competing with one another in various categories. The display is magnificent.

We were enchanted by the grandeur of the trees as we moved from one to another, pointing and exclaiming. But one of our grandchildren, Melissa, soon lost interest—until she came to a small manger scene. There she paused, transfixed. Nothing else mattered. She was captivated by the baby.

We tried our best to urge her on because we wanted to see the rest of the trees. But she lingered, wanting to get closer in spite of the ribbon stretched around the cradle to keep people away.

Finally, she agreed to leave, though reluctantly, looking back over her shoulder to get a glimpse of the manger through the trees. And as we were leaving the building, she asked once more to “see the baby.” We returned to the display and waited while she gazed at the Christ-child.

As Melissa adored the infant, I marveled at her simplicity. Unlike her, I often fail to see Christ for the trees. “Make me a child again,” I prayed, “at least for tonight.”

God opened His heart to the world when Jesus was born.

By David H. Roper (Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved)

Luke 2:16 So they came in a hurry and found their way to Mary and Joseph, and the baby as He lay in the manger.

- **in a hurry**: Lu 1:39 Ec 9:10
- **found**: Lu 2:7,12 19:32 22:13
- Luke 2 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Adoration of the Shepherds (Gerard Van Honthorst)

SHEPHERD'S SPEEDY RESPONSE TO THE DIVINE WORD

So they came in a hurry (speudo) - Don't miss their reaction! No hesitation. No procrastination, like "We need to pray about this!" or "Perhaps we should seek the counsel of the wise rabbis!" No, they heard the divine revelation, they accepted it as a divine sign and they hastened to view the Divine Redeemer!

> **THOUGHT** - That should be our response when we read the Word of Truth and sense the Spirit of Truth "speaking" to our heart regarding some action we are to take in accord with the Word we have just read. God does not stutter! Are you in humility hearing and heeding like these lowly shepherds? Then you will be blessed! (Jas 1:21,22, 25+)
>
> **THOUGHT 2**- "*They hurried off and found*…." The obedience of faith brings blessed results. Contrast what happens when skepticism asserts itself (Gen. 3:6, 8–21, 24; 2 Kings 2:15–18; Luke 1:20–22; John 20:24, 25, 29). (Hendriksen) (See Spurgeon's sermon The Obedience of Faith)

Warren Wiersbe - Certainly they arranged for others to care for their flocks while they hastened to Bethlehem (**ED**: YES POSSIBLY, BUT COULD GOD HAVE KEPT THE SHEEP TOGETHER AND SAFE WHILE HIS ANGELS WERE ON MISSION FOR HIM?). Halford Luccock called this "the first Christmas rush," but it was certainly different from the Christmas rushes we see today! (Scroll to page 144 in The Bible Exposition Commentary)

Constable on the shepherds **came in a hurry** - Contrast the attitude of the religious leaders (IN JERUSALEM WHEN QUERIED BY KING HEROD) who, though they heard of Messiah's birth in Bethlehem, did not bother to check it out (Mt. 2:5). Luke did not break the feeling of excitement and swift action in the narrative by describing how the shepherds located the manger. In Luke's account there is no mention of the star that appeared to the wise men."

> "Gathering together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he (KING HEROD) inquired (imperfect tense = over and over) of them where the **Messiah** was to be born. They said to him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for this is what has been written by the prophet: 'AND YOU, BETHLEHEM, LAND OF JUDAH, ARE BY NO MEANS LEAST AMONG THE LEADERS OF JUDAH; FOR OUT OF YOU SHALL COME FORTH A RULER WHO WILL SHEPHERD MY PEOPLE ISRAEL.'" (Mt 2:4-6+)
>
> **THOUGHT** - The religious leaders recognized the OT had clearly spoken of a literal, personal Messiah to be born in Bethlehem, but they refused to receive Him as their Messiah (Jn 1:11+), in contrast to the simple shepherds who had seen Him in the manger and went away witnessing of Him and glorifying and praising God! It is fascinating and tragic that "religious" people are often the very ones who refuse to accept the fact that faith in Jesus the Messiah is the only way to God and eternal life in His Kingdom! I encounter this response frequently when I am witnessing to someone who place more credence in their "holy church" than in the Holy One of Israel! Too often religion deceives and blinds one to the truth of God's Word and the need for relationship instead of religion! It's like an influenza shot in the Fall, which prevents the person from getting the "real disease!"

J C Ryle - Let us mark, ere we leave the passage, the prompt obedience to the heavenly vision displayed by the shepherds. We see in them no doubts, or questionings, or hesitation. Strange and improbable as the tidings might seem, they at once act upon them. They went to Bethlehem in haste. They found everything exactly as it had been told them. Their simple faith received a rich reward. They had the mighty privilege of being the first of all mankind, after Mary and Joseph, who saw with believing eyes the new-born Messiah. They soon returned, "glorifying and praising God" for what they had seen. May our spirit be like theirs! May we ever believe implicitly, act promptly, and wait for nothing, when the path of duty is clear! So doing, we shall have a reward like that of the

shepherds. The journey that is began in faith, will generally end in praise. (Luke 2)

And found (aneurisko) **their way to Mary and Joseph, and the baby as He lay in the manger**(phatne) - This congers up an interesting question - What do they do with their sheep? Who watched over the sheep? We see here that these shepherds placed far more value on the message they had heard then they did on the possessions they possessed! Do I? Do we? In a sense, the shepherds give us an illustration of death to self. And as the verb **aneurisko** below indicates they did not go directly to the manger but did find it after some searching. Recall the "sign" for which they were searching -- **this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.** Notice the verb "**find**" (heurisko) in Lk 2:12+ indicates to find after searching.

David Guzik comments that "This was a strange sight, and the specific sign they were told to look for. They no longer heard or saw angels, but they had the abiding encounter with Jesus. Angels may go, but Jesus remains."

John Calvin has an interesting comment writing that "This was a revolting sight, and was sufficient of itself to produce an aversion to Christ. For what could be more improbable than to believe that he was the King of the whole people, who was deemed unworthy to be ranked with the lowest of the multitude?"

William Barclay writes that "It is a lovely thought that the shepherds who looked after the Temple lambs (THIS IS CONJECTURE BUT CERTAINLY POSSIBLE) were the first to see the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world (Jn 1:29+)." (Luke 2)

Brian Bell - Isn't it funny that the wise men were directed by God, but then got lost, and had to stop and ask for directions in Jerusalem (Mt 2:1,2+) But, the Shepherds never lost their way! It often happens while shepherds find Christ, wise men often miss him! So, Faith led their steps to Bethlehem, to the stable, to the manger! (Sermon)

He lay in the manger - The child was found just as the angel had prophesied in Lk 2:12. = "This will be **a sign** for you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." "Lying in the manger" was only the sign, and this sign verified the truth of all that the angel had said about this child, and all that the host of angels had sung about his birth. (Lenski)

The crib of Christ brought God to man.
The cross of Christ brings man to God.

> **THOUGHT** - After seeing the glory of the angelic hosts, what a stark contrast to now view the Creator of those angelic hosts with no brilliant rays of glory, no crown on his head, but with just the wrinkled skin of a newborn Baby (I used to deliver babies and they usually looked "wrinkled"!) This small Baby in a **feeding trough** was confirmation of the angel's message. The shepherds believed it, therefore they would spread the good news (Lk 2:17-18) and they would worship the good God Who gave such good news (Lk 2:20)! I have noticed that in the time after I have had the privilege of sharing the Good News of great joy of Jesus with others, I often find myself exhilarated and filled with joy, much like the shepherds experienced (cf Lk 2:10). And my joy is independent of whether they received the truth or not. We are like farmers casting seed (cf Eccl 11:1, Ps 126:5-6, Da 12:3+) and only the Spirit can bear the fruit of regeneration (Jn 3:3-8+, Jn 6:63).

Hurry (made haste)(4692)(**speudo**) means to do something quickly, to hasten (cf Acts 22:16). To cause something to happen soon or come into being by exercising special effort (2 Peter 3:12-note) **BDAG** adds that speudo "in the Greco-Roman world a mark of civic excellence."

> **Luke's** uses of **speudo** - Lk. 2:16; Lk. 19:5; Lk. 19:6; Acts 20:16; Acts 22:18

> **Gilbrant** - The excitement that surrounded the shepherds' response is seen in speusantes, "with haste." A message of this importance must not be taken lightly, but it must be acted on immediately and without hesitation. The results of their response were just as the angel had foretold. The presence of the article in tē phatnē suggests that the baby and the manger they found were none other than the very baby and manger described by the splendid messenger. We can only imagine the sense of wonder the shepherds felt at seeing this one who was the Messiah resting in a feeding trough for livestock. The image of the Christ being born in a holding pen for cattle and being first visited by the outcasts of society was quite different than the popular expectations of the Messiah who would come as a powerful political/religious leader to deliver Israel from the oppression of Rome. It was not to the religious aristocracy that the birth of the Messiah was told, but it was to those in humble circumstances. (Complete Biblical Library Commentary)

Found (429)(**aneurisko** from **aná** = an emphatic + **heurísko** = to find) means they found by diligent seeking. God had spoken through the angel and they would be diligent to confirm the message. A good pattern to follow! The only other use of this verb in the NT is Acts 21:4 where it signifies the idea of searching with finding presupposed = "After **looking** up (NET = "located") the disciples, we stayed there seven days; and they kept telling Paul through the Spirit not to set foot in Jerusalem." **Robertson** on **aneurisko** - The compound **ana** suggests a search before finding.

Luke 2:17 When they had seen this, they made known the statement which had been told them about this Child.

NET When they saw him, they related what they had been told about this child,

GNT δ ντες δ γν ρισαν περ το ματος το λαληθ ντος α το ς περ το παιδ ου το του.

NLT After seeing him, the shepherds told everyone what had happened and what the angel had said to them about this child.

KJV And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child.

ESV And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child.

NIV When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child,

ASV And when they saw it, they made known concerning the saying which was spoken to them about this child.

CSB After seeing them, they reported the message they were told about this child,

- Lu 2:38 Lk 8:39 Ps 16:9,10 66:16 71:17,18 Mal 3:16
- Jn 1:41-46 4:28,29
- Luke 2 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

SHEPHERD EVANGELISTS GIVE EYE WITNESS REPORT

When they had seen this - Seeing was believing. The angelic message confirmed, now they were God's "angels" so to speak (angels means messengers)! They saw, they shared. They were the first to bear witness to the Savior of the world. Who but God would choose such lowly ambassadors for His lofty Word of good news? Do not ever feel you are so poor, or uneducated, etc, that the Almighty cannot use you just as He did these lowly shepherds!

Wiersbe observes that "For some reason, shepherds were not permitted to testify in court, but God used some humble shepherds to be the first human witnesses that prophecy had been fulfilled and the Messiah had been born. The angels have never experienced the grace of God, so they can't bear witness as we can. Telling others about the Saviour is a solemn obligation as well as a great privilege, and we who are believers must be faithful." (Scroll to page 144 in The Bible Exposition Commentary)

> **THOUGHT** - Wiersbe's comment begs a simple question - When was the last time you told someone about Jesus Who will return not as a Child but as the King of kings?

They made known (gnorizo) - They met Jesus in a crib, and based on their belief in the word from the angel, they spread the news that He was the **Savior**, **Christ** and **Lord**! They were the first NT evangelists! They had a missionary focus. We are all called to be missionaries the moment we exit the doors of the church on Sunday! The fields are white unto harvest beloved! Don't miss the harvest! The shepherd's speaking about Jesus is a good model for all of us once we have seen Him with the eyes of faith. How can we keep such good news to ourselves when most of the world is spiritually dead, without hope, helplessly enslaved by their sins and on a fast track to eternal damnation? The shepherds were like the apostles in Acts who explained "we cannot stop speaking about what we have seen and heard." (Acts 4:20+)

> **TECHNICAL NOTE** - Note that the less accepted manuscripts have a different verb (1232)(**diagnorizo** from **diá** = denoting separation + **gnorizo** = to know) means to know by distinguishing, to give an exact report.

Holman NT Commentary - Seeing the baby Jesus was not enough for the shepherds. They had to share the story. Everyone they met heard from them about angelic visits, angelic songs of praise, and a trip to a manger to find the baby of God's glory. Most important, they shared what **had been told them about this child.** The fact of the child was news. The function of the child was Gospel. Shepherds found in a manger the Savior, the Messiah, the Lord Himself. They let everyone in hearing distance know.

TELL IT OUT!

The statement (rhema) **which had been told them about this Child** (paidion) - NLT - "what had happened and what the angel had

said to them about this child." In other words they passed on the Good News they had received. Don't miss this -- what did they make known? Did they focus on their spectacular angelic encounter? No, like Paul years later, they proclaimed the Christ, the Messiah, the one "has been born for you a **Savior**, who is **Christ** the **Lord**." (Lk 2:10+) (Paul would later add "and Him crucified." 1 Cor 2:2, cf 1 Cor 1:23)

The statement (4487)(**rhema** from verb **rheo** = to speak - to say, speak or utter definite words) refers to the spoken word, especially a word as uttered by a living voice. **Laleo** is another word translated *speak* but it refers only to uttering a sound whereas ***rheo*** refers to uttering a definite intelligible word. **Rhema** refers to any sound produced by the voice which has a definite meaning. It focuses upon the content of the communication. For example in Luke we read "And they understood none of these things, and this **saying** (rhema) was hidden from them, and they did not comprehend the things that were said. (Luke 18:34)"

> **Rhema** is used 6x in Luke 2 - Lk 2:17 ("they made known the **statement**"), Lk 2:19 ("Mary treasured all **these things**"), Lk 2:29 (according to Your **word**), Lk 2:50 ("they did not understand the **statement**"), Lk 2:51 (His mother treasured all **these things** in her heart). **A T Robertson** says **this thing** (rhema) is "A Hebraistic and vernacular use of rhema (**something said**) as **something done**."
>
> All of **Luke's** uses of **rhema** - Lk. 1:37; Lk. 1:38; Lk. 1:65; Lk. 2:15; Lk. 2:17; Lk. 2:19; Lk. 2:29; Lk. 2:50; Lk. 2:51; Lk. 3:2; Lk. 5:5; Lk. 7:1; Lk. 9:45; Lk. 18:34; Lk. 20:26; Lk. 24:8; Lk. 24:11; Acts 2:14; Acts 5:20; Acts 5:32; Acts 6:11; Acts 10:22; Acts 10:37; Acts 10:44; Acts 11:14; Acts 11:16; Acts 13:42; Acts 16:38; Acts 26:25; Acts 28:25

Child (3813)(**paidion** diminutive of **pais** = child) is a little child of either sex, ranging from an infant (Mt 19:13, 14; Mk 10:13-15; Lk 18:16, 17, etc) to children who are older (Mt 11:16; Mt 14:21; 15:38; 18:2-5, etc) **Paidion** is used repeatedly of the infant Jesus in Matthew (Mt 2:8-9, 11, 13-14, 20-21+)

Bruce Barton - SPREAD THE WORD - What a birth announcement! The shepherds were terrified, but their fear turned to joy as the angels announced the Messiah's birth. First the shepherds ran to see the baby; then they spread the word. Jesus is your Messiah, your Savior. Praise for God and gratitude for what he has done should motivate you to witness to others. Have you discovered a Lord so wonderful that you can't help sharing your joy with your friends? (LAC)

The Big News (ED: DON'T MISS THE BIG NEWS!)

> For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given. —Isaiah 9:6

In December 1903, after many attempts, the Wright brothers were successful in getting their "flying machine" off the ground. Thrilled, they telegraphed this message to their sister Katherine: "*We have actually flown 120 feet. Will be home for Christmas.*" Katherine hurried to the editor of the local newspaper and showed him the message. He glanced at it and said, "*How nice. The boys will be home for Christmas.*" **He totally missed the big news-man had flown!** Many people today make a similar mistake when they hear the word **Christmas**. They don't think of Jesus and His miraculous birth. Instead, they think of family gatherings, festive meals, decorations, and gifts. To them, Christmas brings nostalgia and memories of childhood. Now, all this celebration isn't wrong. But if that's all that Christmas means to us, we are missing its true significance. The real meaning of this special day is summed up in the words of the angel to the shepherds on that night long ago:

> **"I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord**" (Luke 2:10-11).

That's the big news of Christmas!

One day has left its mark in time
For all mankind to see;
It is the day when Christ was born-
That day made history.
-D. De Haan

Don't celebrate Christmas without inviting the Guest of honor.

By Richard DeHaan (Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved)

Luke 2:18 And all who heard it wondered at the things which were told them by the shepherds.

- **wondered**: Lu 2:33,47 1:65,66 4:36 5:9,10 Isa 8:18
- Luke 2 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

AWE STRUCK
WITH AMAZEMENT!

And all who heard it wondered (thaumazo) - Note that nothing is said about the hearers seeking out the child to substantiate the claim of the shepherds, but only that they **wondered** about what they heard. There is no evidence that they responded as did the shepherds who hastened to see the sight. O my, so close but yet so far. How many today are amazed and **wonder** at Jesus and that something was different about this Man but they never go further then He is a "good Man." They never seek to find Him in the Gospels. They never witness His "empty tomb" which separates Christianity from every other world religion. (1 Cor 15:17). **MacArthur** adds "From the very beginning the life and ministry of Jesus Christ caused people to marvel and be amazed. Unfortunately then, as now, much of that amazement produced not commitment, but merely curiosity. When the shepherds heard the good news of the Savior's birth, they immediately sought Him out. But all that is said of those to whom they witnessed is that they wondered. After their initial amazement wore off, most of them probably just went on with their lives as if nothing had happened."

John Trapp "God, to show that he respected not persons, revealed this grand mystery to the shepherds and the wise men; the one poor, the other rich; the one learned, the other unlearned; the one Jews, the other Gentiles; the one near, the other far off." (Luke 2)

Utley has an interesting comment on **all who heard it** - To whom does the "**all**" refer? It could be the people and visitors in Bethlehem or, because of the proximity of Jerusalem and the importance and source of the message, it may refer to the religious leaders in Jerusalem. However, notice that we do not hear of the message again anywhere else in the NT. Possibly the bias of the Jewish leadership against shepherds caused them to discredit the whole account.

At the things (rhema) **which were told them by the shepherds** (poimen) - The shepherds surely told them of the angelic encounter and the Adonai encounter. It is wonderful that they wondered, but sad that the hearers did not seem to know their own OT Scriptures which had prophesied that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2+)!

Wiersbe comments - These shepherds are good examples for us to imitate today. They received by faith the message God sent them and then responded with immediate obedience. After finding the Baby, they reported the good news to others, "glorifying and praising God." *They took the place of the angels!* (Luke 2:13-14) Then they humbly returned to their duties, new men going back to the same old job.For some reason, shepherds were not permitted to testify in court, but God used some humble shepherds to be the first human witnesses that prophecy had been fulfilled and the Messiah had been born. The angels have never experienced the grace of God, so they can't bear witness as we can. Telling others about the Saviour is a solemn obligation as well as a great privilege, and we who are believers must be faithful. (Scroll to page 144 in The Bible Exposition Commentary)

No more let sins and sorrows grow,
Nor thorns infest the ground;
He comes to make His blessings flow
Far as the curse is found.
—Watts

Keeping Christ out of Christmas is as futile as holding back the ocean's tide.

Wondered (were amazed, bewildered, stunned) (2296)(**thaumazo** from **thauma** [from **thaomai** = to wonder] = wonder, admiration) means to wonder, marvel, be struck with admiration or astonishment. **Thaumazo** describes the human response when confronted by divine revelation in some form (Mt 9.33) and describes incredulous surprise. And is this reaction not still what we see in our day where men wonder but too often conclude that it is just a "fairy tale" that God could become a Man to save men from their sins!

MacArthur comments that "Wonderment at the mysteries of Christ's words and works is one of the threads that runs through Luke's gospel. Cf. Lk 2:19, 33, 47, 48; 1:21, 63; 4:22, 36; 5:9; 8:25; 9:43–45; 11:14; 20:26; 24:12, 41." (MacArthur Study Bible)

> **Thaumazo** is a favorite verb of Luke (18/43 NT uses are by Luke) - Lk. 1:21; Lk. 1:63; Lk. 2:18; Lk. 2:33; Lk. 4:22; Lk. 7:9; Lk. 8:25; Lk. 9:43; Lk. 11:14; Lk. 11:38; Lk. 20:26; Lk. 24:12; Lk. 24:41; Acts 2:7; Acts 3:12; Acts 4:13; Acts 7:31; Acts 13:41
>
> In fact it is appropriate that most (30) of the 43 uses of **thaumazo** are used in reference to Jesus, even once by Jesus Himself (Mk 6:6) - Matt. 8:10; Matt. 8:27; Matt. 9:33; Matt. 15:31; Matt. 21:20; Matt. 22:22; Matt. 27:14; Mk. 5:20; Mk. 6:6; Mk. 15:5; Mk. 15:44; Lk. 1:21; Lk. 1:63; Lk. 2:18; Lk. 2:33; Lk. 4:22; Lk. 7:9; Lk. 8:25; Lk. 9:43; Lk. 11:14; Lk. 11:38; Lk. 20:26; Lk. 24:12; Lk. 24:41; Jn. 3:7; Jn. 4:27; Jn. 5:20; Jn. 5:28; Jn. 7:15; Jn. 7:21; Acts 2:7; Acts 3:12; Acts 4:13; Acts 7:31; Acts 13:41; Gal. 1:6; 2 Thess. 1:10; 1 Jn. 3:13; Jude 1:16; Rev. 13:3; Rev. 17:6; Rev. 17:7; Rev. 17:8

Luke 2:19 But Mary treasured all these things, pondering them in her heart.

NET But Mary treasured up all these words, pondering in her heart what they might mean.

GNT δ Μαρι μ π ντα συνετ ρει τ ματα τα τα συμβ λλουσα ν τ καρδ α τ ς.

NLT but Mary kept all these things in her heart and thought about them often.

KJV But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart.

ESV But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart.

NIV But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart.

ASV But Mary kept all these sayings, pondering them in her heart.

CSB But Mary was treasuring up all these things in her heart and meditating on them.

- Lu 2:51 1:66 9:43,44 Ge 37:11 1Sa 21:12 Pr 4:4 Ho 14:9
- Luke 2 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

MARY'S MEDITATION

But Mary treasured (suntereo) **all these things, pondering** (sumballo) **them in her heart** - **But Mary** is a term of contrast which introduces a different reaction in Mary. This is the third response to the angelic announcement. Ponder means to reflect deeply on a subject, sometimes followed by on or over (pondered on/over) to give thorough or deep consideration to the things that had transpired including what the shepherds had related about the angelic announcement and the choir of heavenly hosts! Mary had a lot to think about as she gazed into the face of her tiny child. Gabriel had told her that the little boy would reign forever (Lk 1:31–33) and the shepherds reported the angel's words that He is the **Savior**, the **Christ**, the **Lord** (Lk 2:11).

Treasured is in the Imperfect tense pictures Mary bringing these thoughts to mind again and again, over and over. Luke 2:51 repeats that after finding Jesus in the Temple and hearing His explanation, Mary "**treasured** all these things in her heart" but the verb in Lk 2:51 is diatereo which in context speaks of words to carefully remembered.

(1) Luke 2:20 - Shepherds - responded by glorifying and praising God after finding the Baby Jesus.

(2) Luke 2:18 - All who heard the shepherds - responded with wonder. However Luke gives no indication that those people acted on what they heard. Certainly "wonder" is not the same as glorifying and praising God.

(3) Luke 2:19 - Mary treasured all these things, pondering them in her heart.

> **THOUGHT** - "The shepherds responded with praise, worship, and witness; the people who heard their report responded with amazement; and Mary responded with quiet reflection. How will you respond to the good news of the birth of Jesus, the Savior, the Christ, the Lord?" (Kostenberger)

Trent Butler comments that Mary "had incubated amazement for nine months. Now she incubated experiences in her mind, experiences that gradually became treasured memories, each showing something new and different about her son, each confirming Gabriel's promise of greatness for this Son of David and Son of the Most High. Surely nothing was impossible with God (Lk 1:30-37). (Luke Holman New Testament Commentary)

David Guzik comments that "Mary's reaction was different than either the shepherds or those who heard them. She calmly took it all in and meditated over it in her heart, seeking to understand the deep meaning of it all."The wonder of the many was a transient emotion (aorist), this recollecting and brooding of Mary was an abiding habit (imperfect)." (Bruce). Mary had good reason to meditate. What brought her to Bethlehem? A Roman emperor's great decree and perhaps gossiping tongues in Nazareth. God works through all kinds of people and all kinds of events to accomplish His plan.

Robert Stein observes that the fact that Mary was pondering these things "along with Luke 2:51 indicates that Mary did not fully understand the implications of all that happened to her."

Luke includes more than one reference to Mary's puzzlement and ponderings about these amazing witnesses concerning Jesus (Lk 1:29; 2:48, 50).

Spurgeon on **pondering them in her heart -** (Mary) Weighed them, estimated them at their right value. Mary laid these things up

in store, and pondered them, giving them their due weight and value. Oh, that we did the same with every truth that we learn! The best of coffers to lay up anything in is the **heart**. Happy are those who, like Mary, store up the things of Christ, not in their brain though that would make them orthodox; but in their **heart**, for that will bring them salvation. (Luke Exposition)

A T Robertson adds "Brooding with a mother's high hopes and joy, Mary would go over each detail: Gabriel, the shepherds, and compare sayings with the facts."

Treasured (4933)(**suntereo** from **sun/syn** = with + **tereo** = guard, keep) means to keep closely together, keep close, preserve. Here Mary reflects deeply and carefully the words of the shepherds, keeping them in her mind, safely storing them up (so to speak). In Mark 6:20, used of the protection of John the Baptist from Herodias. In Mt. 9:17 (and Lk 5:38 only in the Textus Receptus), used of the preservation of wineskins.

Suntereo - 6x in 6v in the Septuagint - Proverbs 15:4 , Ezek 18:19, Dan 3:23, 30, 4:26, 4:28.

Pondering (4820)(**sumballo** from **sún** = together, with + **bállō** = to cast) literally means to throw together, placing together or bringing together for comparing and weighing facts. Then the idea is "to converse, to carry on a discussion," or "to consider carefully and draw conclusions" about a certain matter. Here it speaks of Mary pondering these things in her heart, giving them careful thought, thinking seriously about them.

POSB - Mary—Humility—Trust: there was the awe-stricken, pondering mother. This is a beautiful picture of a humble, trusting heart. Mary had been told that her child was of God, truly of God. Above all others she knew that the Messiah, the very Son of God, had now come. She had been through so much: pregnant, yet unmarried; the possibility of being found out and of rumors heaped upon rumors; the discussions with Joseph and with her parents; the long trip from Nazareth; the exhaustion of giving birth without help in a smelly stable; the visit of some rough-hewn shepherds with an amazing story of the heavenly host's proclaiming the praises of God. Mary was tired, as weary and exhausted as a person could be. So much had happened, and she was at the very center of it all. No one could even begin to know the thoughts that had filled her mind for nine months, nor could anyone know the feelings and emotions of the experience. The wonder, the amazement, the astounding reality was too much to talk about. All she could do was continue in the humble sweetness that had so characterized her over the past months. She merely bowed once again in humble adoration to God and quietly entrusted all these things into God's keeping. She said nothing, only pondered in her heart what was happening. (See context Preacher's Outline & Sermon Bible-Luke)

Take Time To Ponder

Read: Luke 2:8-19

Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart. —Luke 2:19

Parents love to remember the developmental milestones of their children. They will record in a baby book when their little ones first roll over, then crawl, and take their first steps. Often they will take photographs and save baby clothing to bring back the memories of those precious experiences.

According to Luke 2:19, Mary, the mother of Jesus, kept a baby book of sorts—in her heart. She treasured the promises that had been given about her Son and "pondered them." The Greek word for "ponder" means "placing together for comparison." Mary had heard of great things concerning her Son from angels and shepherds (1:32; 2:17-18). As His life unfolded, she would compare those promises with how her Son acted to fulfill them.

Our faith will be strengthened and we will be encouraged when we meditate on what the Scriptures say about God and compare it with the way He works in our own lives (John 14:21). He is a God who answers prayer (1 John 5:14-15), comforts us in our suffering (2 Cor. 1:3-4), and provides for our needs (Phil. 4:19).

When we take time to ponder, we will see the faithfulness of our great God.

Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth,
Thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide,
Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow—
Blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside!
—Chisholm

God gives by promise that we may take by faith.

By Dennis Fisher (Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved)

Letdown

Read: Luke 2:8-20 | Bible in a Year: Haggai 1-2; Revelation 17

Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart. Then the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God. —Luke 2:19-20

The night of Jesus' birth was exciting for Mary and Joseph. There before their eyes was the miracle Baby whose coming into the world had been announced by an angel. The shepherds too were excited when they saw and heard "a multitude of the heavenly host praising God" and heralding His birth (Luke 2:13).

But it wouldn't be long before Mary and Joseph would face the ordinary tasks of caring for a new baby and all the accompanying responsibilities. The shepherds would be back on the hillside tending their sheep. All the elements were in place for an emotional letdown, which often follows an emotional high.

I don't believe they experienced any "after-Christmas blues," however. Mary didn't quickly forget all that had happened, and the shepherds couldn't easily forget what they had heard and seen (vv.19-20). The angelic message had proven true, and their lives were filled with new hope and anticipation.

There's no reason for an after-Christmas letdown. We have the full story. Jesus came to die for our sins, then conquered death for us by rising from the grave. We have more truth to ponder and more reason to glorify God than Mary and the shepherds did.

Life's ebb and flow that moves our hearts
From heights of joy to feelings low
Cannot exhaust God's matchless grace
Nor stem that never-ending flow.
—D. De Haan

Feeling let down today? Try looking up.

By Herbert Vander Lugt (Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved)

If Christmas Isn't Merry

Read: Luke 2:21-35

> Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart. —Luke 2:19

One Christmas I saw a cartoon that showed a boy gazing into a store window at a sign that read:

Have The Best Christmas Ever!

Thoughtfully, he said, "It's pretty hard to top the first one."

Years ago my husband and I had an experience that drew our attention to that first Christmas. In mid-December, I gave birth prematurely to a much-wanted son. As our "Tiny Tim" struggled for life, he was rushed to another hospital. Then, miles away from us, he died all alone. Christmas that year was not jolly but grievous.

In our grief, however, God gave us a moving glimpse of His original Christmas. We saw that God also experienced empty arms, but in a much greater way. His baby Son had been born to die—a death that would bring eternal life to us all. Like Mary, we cherished and pondered these thoughts in our hearts. Slowly, the unhappiness that had threatened to diminish the meaning of Christmas enlarged it instead. In time, that Christmas became the most meaningful one we've ever had.

Once again, Christmas this year will be unavoidably sad for many people, perhaps for you. Take heart! Christmas needn't be merry to be meaningful. It's the Christ of Christmas we celebrate, not Christmas itself. Ponder Him!

Come with the spirit and heart of a child—
It matters not what we share,
For Christmas isn't Christmas at all
Unless the Christ-child is there.

—Anon.

To put meaning into your Christmas, give Christ first place.

By Joanie Yoder (Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved)

Luke 2:20 The shepherds went back, glorifying and praising God for all that they had heard and seen, just as had been told them.

- Lu 18:43 19:37,38 1Ch 29:10-12 Ps 72:17-19 106:48 107:8,15,21 Isa 29:19 Ac 2:46,47 11:18
- Luke 2 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

SHEPHERDS RETURNED WITH A SONG IN THEIR HEART

The shepherds (poimen) **went back** (hupostrepho)**, glorifying** (doxazo) **and praising** (aineo) **God** - What irony, for in the religious center Jerusalem the leaders did not truly worship God, but here in the fields outside Bethlehem were the common, non-religious shepherds worshipping God! There is another observation and it is a sad one -- even thought the shepherds had spread the message of Messiah, Luke records that the shepherds alone were praising God. No one else is seen seeking or praising the Savior! What's wrong with this picture? Don't we see the same thing today! God had fulfilled His promise through the angel and this caused the shepherds to worship God. This is what the angelic host had been doing. Now it is the shepherds. One day soon, it will be **angels and men glorifying God** for so great a gift of the Gospel of our salvation (of course the angels cannot understand what it truly, fully means, having never experienced it 1 Pe 1:12b). John gives us a preview of this picture in Heaven when we are gathered together with all the redeemed of the Lord...

> And a voice came from the throne, saying, "**Give praise to our God, all you His bond-servants** (THIS IS US BELOVED!), you who fear Him, the small and the great." 6 Then I heard something like the voice of a great multitude and like the sound of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, saying, "**Hallelujah! For the Lord our God, the Almighty, reigns.**(Rev 19:5, 6+)

POSB adds "The shepherds were praising God for what they had heard and seen. God had spoken to them and they had received the message. They obeyed God's instructions to seek out the Messiah; therefore, they had been privileged to see the Messiah. They had reason to praise God. (How many hear and see, yet never respond and never praise God?)" (See context Preacher's Outline & Sermon Bible-Luke)

MacArthur comments "Their hopes and longings that the Redeemer would come had been realized, and their lives were marked by a newfound attitude of praise and worship. That same attitude characterizes all who know and love the Lord Jesus Christ (cf. Ps. 22:26; 30:4; 33:1; 34:1; 100:4; Acts 16:25; Heb. 13:15), whom Paul describes as "the true circumcision, who worship in the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:3)." (See context in Luke Commentary)

John Calvin comments that "Their (SHEPHERDS) zeal in glorifying and praising God is an implied reproof of our indolence, or rather of our ingratitude. If the cradle of Christ had such an effect upon them, as to make them rise from the stable and the manger to Heaven, how much more powerful ought the death and resurrection of Christ to be in raising us to God?" (AMEN OR "O MY!") (Luke 2:15-21)

Seen and heard - Both senses stirred by the sight and sound of an infant in a manger! Today we cannot see Him, but one day soon we will see Him. In the meantime we can "hear" Him as we read His Word with a clean conscience and spirits sensitive to the Spirit's impressions and teachings as we dwell on the Word.

Just as had been told them - God's Word was confirmed and stimulated His praises as it always should. When we read the Word of Truth (and pray the Word) and then see it transpire and bear supernatural fruit in our life, our reaction should be to break out in the giving of glory and praise to our Great God! This principle is true from Genesis 1:1 to Revelation 22:21, God 's promises are always perfectly and completely fulfilled. I love Joshua's testimony to the trustworthiness of our Great God shortly before he died...

> "Now **behold**, today I am going the way of all the earth, and you know in all your hearts and in all your souls that **NOT ONE** word of **ALL** the good words which the LORD your God spoke concerning you has failed; **ALL** have been fulfilled for you, **NOT ONE** of them has failed. (Joshua 23:14)(How wonderful if we could all have such a testimony with our last breath!)

Butler - Shepherds came. They saw what God told them to expect. They proclaimed their findings to all who would listen. They

turned back toward their jobs, a new song of praise in their hearts. What God had said, God had done. They returned to the sheep, never to be heard of again, but never to be forgotten. (Luke Holman New Testament Commentary)

Gilbrant - Characteristically Luke notes that the shepherds "returned, glorifying and praising God." Luke can be described as the Gospel of praise, for the author records the praise of people for God's mighty works where the other Gospel writers do not (e.g., Luke 1:46-55, 68-79; 2:14, 29-32; 5:25, 26; 7:16; 13:13; 17:15; 18:43; 19:37; 24:53; Acts 2:47; 3:8, 9). Consistently this Gospel emphasizes that the appropriate response to God's saving acts is always prayer and praise (see 17:11-21). Another major Lucan theme contained in verse 20 is that of witnessing. "That which ye see and hear" is a reference to witnessing which is repeated throughout Luke and Acts (e.g., Luke 7:22; Acts 2:33). (Complete Biblical Library)

Went back (5290)(**hupostrepho** from **hupo** = under + **strepho** = to turn, to change) means to turn back from or to return (go back to a location).

> **Hupostrepho** is used in 35v with most uses by Luke - Lk. 1:56; Lk. 2:20; Lk. 2:43; Lk. 2:45; Lk. 4:1; Lk. 4:14; Lk. 7:10; Lk. 8:37; Lk. 8:39; Lk. 8:40; Lk. 9:10; Lk. 10:17; Lk. 11:24; Lk. 17:15; Lk. 17:18; Lk. 19:12; Lk. 23:48; Lk. 23:56; Lk. 24:9; Lk. 24:33; Lk. 24:52; Acts 1:12; Acts 8:25; Acts 8:28; Acts 12:25; Acts 13:13; Acts 13:34; Acts 14:21; Acts 20:3; Acts 21:6; Acts 22:17; Acts 23:32; Gal. 1:17; Heb. 7:1; 2 Pet. 2:21

Glorifying (1392)(**doxazo** from **doxa** = glory) has a secular meaning of to think, suppose, be of opinion, (Aeschylus, Sophocles, Xenophon, Plato, Thucydides) but generally is not used in this sense in Scripture. **Doxazo** means to praise, honor or magnify (Mt 5:16; 6:2; Lk 5:25f; Ac 11:18; Ro 11:13; 1 Cor 12:26; 1 Pt 4:16) and to clothe in splendor, glorify (John 8:54; 13:31f; 17:1, 4; 21:19; 2 Cor 3:10; 1 Pt 1:8; of life after death John 12:16, 23; Ac 3:13; Ro 8:30) **Doxazo** and **aineo** (praising) are both in the **present tense** (continuously - can't you see them now!) and **active voice** meaning it was the continual choice of their will to to make God glorious (of course He is glorious intrinsically and needs nothing added to His glory - this was more for the shepherds and anyone who they might have encountered) by bestowing honor, praise, and admiration on God.

> **Luke's** uses of **doxazo** - Lk. 2:20; Lk. 4:15; Lk. 5:25; Lk. 5:26; Lk. 7:16; Lk. 13:13; Lk. 17:15; Lk. 18:43; Lk. 23:47; Acts 3:13; Acts 4:21; Acts 11:18; Acts 13:48; Acts 21:20;
>
> **Glorifying God** - 10x in 10v Mk. 2:12; Lk. 5:25; Lk. 5:26; Lk. 7:16; Lk. 13:13; Lk. 17:15; Lk. 18:43; Acts 4:21; Acts 21:20; Gal. 1:24
>
> **Glory to God** - 4x in 4v Lk. 2:14; Lk. 17:18; Jn. 9:24; Rom. 4:20

TELLING ALL YOU KNOW

These shepherds told everyone who would listen all that they had heard and seen. Often people who try to tell all that they know are politely avoided. It can be boring to listen to someone who never stops to take a breath.

But in the shepherds' case, people listened, because:

- Shepherds were not supposed to know much, and these shepherds had startling information.
- The message was revolutionary, breathtaking, and transformative. It changed listeners' lives.
- The shepherds spoke from the heart, and their words connected to the deepest needs of others.

When you tell about Jesus, start with what you know best: your life experience. Tell the story of God in your life. You don't need to embellish, but don't hold back either. Your words will change many, and God will use you to change the world. (Bruce Barton)

Moment Of Grace

Read: Luke 2:13-20

> Then the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told them. —Luke 2:20

Every year, I enjoy listening to the BBC's worldwide live radio broadcast of the Christmas Eve service from King's College Chapel in Cambridge, England. This Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols combines Scripture readings, prayers, and choral music in a moving service of worship. One year, I was struck by the announcer's description of the congregation leaving the magnificent chapel, saying they were "stepping out of this moment of grace and back into the real world."

Wasn't it that way on the first Christmas? The shepherds heard an angel announce the birth of the Savior, Christ the Lord (Luke 2:11), followed by a "multitude of the heavenly host praising God" (Lk 2:13-14). After they found Mary, Joseph, and the Baby in Bethlehem, the shepherds couldn't help telling others about this Child (Lk 2:17). "The shepherds went back to work, glorifying and praising God for everything that they had heard and seen, which had happened just as they had been told" (Lk 2:20 Phillips).

They had been changed by their “moment of grace.” As they stepped back into their real world, they carried the good news about Jesus in their hearts and voices.

May we too take God’s grace into the real world this Christmas and every day of the new year.

May the grace that we encounter
At this time of Christmas cheer
Not be true just in this season
But remain throughout the year.
—Sper

Take the joy of Christmas with you every day.

By David C. McCasland (Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved)

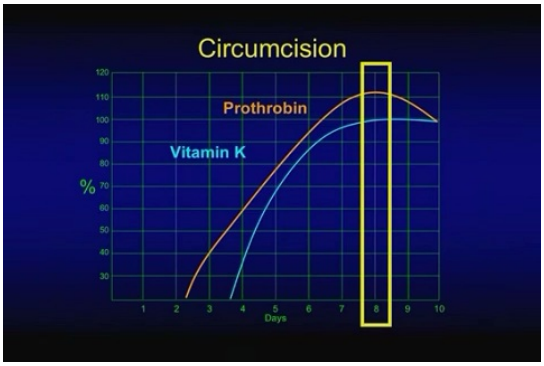
Luke 2:21 And when eight days had passed, before His circumcision, His name was then called Jesus, the name given by the angel before He was conceived in the womb.

> NET At the end of eight days, when he was circumcised, he was named Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb.
>
> GNT Κα τε πλ σθησαν μ ραι κτ το περιτεμε ν α τ ν κα κλ θη τ νομα α το ησο ς, τ κληθ ν π το γγ λου πρ το συλλημφθ ναι α τ ν ν τ κοιλ .
>
> NLT Eight days later, when the baby was circumcised, he was named Jesus, the name given him by the angel even before he was conceived.
>
> KJV And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the child, his name was called JESUS, which was so named of the angel before he was conceived in the womb.
>
> ESV And at the end of eight days, when he was circumcised, he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb.
>
> NIV On the eighth day, when it was time to circumcise him, he was named Jesus, the name the angel had given him before he had been conceived.
>
> ASV And when eight days were fulfilled for circumcising him, his name was called JESUS, which was so called by the angel before he was conceived in the womb.
>
> CSB When the eight days were completed for His circumcision, He was named Jesus-- the name given by the angel before He was conceived.

- **eight**: Lu 1:59 Ge 17:12 Lev 12:3 Mt 3:15 Ga 4:4,5 Php 2:8
- **his name was:** Lu 1:31 Mt 1:21,25
- Luke 2 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

> Genesis 17:7-12 “I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your descendants after you. 8 “I will give to you and to your descendants after you, the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.” 9 God said further to Abraham, “Now as for you, you shall keep My covenant, you and your descendants after you throughout their generations. 10 “This is My covenant, which you shall keep, between Me and you and your descendants after you: **every male among you shall be circumcised**. 11 “And you shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskin, and it shall be the sign of the covenant between Me and you. 12 “And every male among you who is eight days old shall be circumcised throughout your generations, a servant who is born in the house or who is bought with money from any foreigner, who is not of your descendants.



JEHOVAH IS SALVATION
FULFILLS THE LAW

Why did Jesus need to be circumcised? It was the Law in Leviticus 12:3+. Jesus later declared “Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to abolish but to fulfill (every jot and tittle - Mt 5:18KJV)." (Mt 5:17+) And in Matthew Jesus declared to John when he hesitated to baptize Jesus “Permit it at this time; for in this way it is fitting for us **to fulfill all righteousness**.” Then he *permitted Him." (Mt 3:15+)

And when eight days had passed: (See graph of the clotting factors, the "Y" coordinate being days) Joseph and Mary were like Zacharias and Elizabeth , "both righteous in the sight of God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and requirements of the Lord." (Lk 1:6). And so the obeyed Genesis 17:12 which prescribed "**every male among you who is eight days old shall be circumcised throughout your generations.**" From the graph above note that the levels of the **Vitamin K** dependent coagulation factors are decreased to 30-60% of normal adult levels at birth (poor placental transfer, low hepatic store, low content of breast milk, lack of intestinal flora) and in absence of Vitamin K administration (which is now routinely administered to newborns), the levels drop by another 50% reaching their nadir at day 2 or 3 then gradually increasing over the next few days. The classic case of **Hemorrhagic Disease of the Newborn** presents at 1-7 days with GI tract bleeding, bruising, etc. Is God's Word inspired? He knew exactly when circumcision would be safe! In fact the One being circumcised is the Creator of the coagulation system that kept Him from bleeding after circumcision. Indeed "**great is the mystery of godliness**: He who was revealed in the flesh, Was vindicated in the Spirit, Beheld by angels, Proclaimed among the nations, Believed on in the world, Taken up in glory." (1 Ti 3:16+).

John MacArthur explains that "God instituted circumcision for three purposes. First, along with the other dietary and sanitary regulations prescribed in the law, circumcision had health benefits. As the sign of the Abrahamic covenant, circumcision was also the mark of Israel’s national identity. Finally, circumcision was a spiritual object lesson of the need for cleansing from the depravity of sin, which is passed to each succeeding generation through procreation. Circumcision was a physical symbol of the spiritual cleansing of the heart that takes place at salvation (cf. Dt. 10:16; 30:6; Jer. 4:4). But why was Jesus circumcised, since He was sinless (Isa. 53:9; John 8:46; 2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 4:15; 1 Peter 2:22; 1 John 3:5) and did not need to have His heart cleansed? The answer lies in understanding that He came to fulfill the law. In the words of the apostle Paul, Jesus was “born of a woman, born under the Law” (Gal. 4:4). Like His baptism, Jesus’ circumcision served to “fulfill all righteousness” (Matt. 3:15). He could say with David, “I delight to do Your will, O my God; Your Law is within my heart” (Ps. 40:8), and He alone kept God’s law perfectly throughout His life. Only because He did so could His righteousness be credited to believers. At the cross God treated Jesus as if He had lived their sinful lives. He is, therefore, able to treat them as if they had lived Jesus’ perfectly righteous life." (See Luke Commentary)

David Guzik - The circumcision and purification ceremonies were necessary as a reminder that we are all born in sin (Psalm 51:5). Jesus could have been excused because He was not born in sin. Yet, we see Him even as a baby, identifying with sinners, as He also later did at His baptism and on the cross.

Before His circumcision (peritemno) - So He was named and then circumcised. So Luke seems to place emphasis on His naming more so than on His circumcision, although the two are certainly connected. As **Hendriksen** says "Submission to circumcision was an element in the Savior’s required obedience, and without this obedience he could not be truly Jesus, that is, Savior." (BNTC-Luke) The circumcision was performed locally, not at the Temple as were the other Jewish legal rituals ("Mary’s purification after forty days and buying back the firstborn male child was done according to later rabbinical traditions on the thirty-first day." - Utley) that the parents kept (Lk 2:23-24). Jesus was ‘born under the Law , to redeem those who were under the law’ (Gal. 4:4) and was thus subjected to the requirements of the Law and thus He was circumcised as any other Jewish male baby. Jesus received His Name at His circumcision, just as did His forerunner John the Baptist, Luke recording "And it happened that on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child, and they were going to call him Zacharias, after his father." (Lk 1:59+)

Utley on **circumcision** - This was practiced by all of Israel's neighbors except the Philistines (Greek Aegean people). For most cultures it was usually a rite of passage into manhood, but not for Israel (it was instead an initiation rite into the covenant People). It was a sign of a special faith relationship with YHWH (Ge. 17:9–14). Each Patriarch circumcised his own sons (i.e. acted as priest for his own family). Robert Girdlestone, Synonyms of the Old Testament, p. 214, says the rite of circumcision connected the rite of blood-shedding with the act of circumcision. Blood was connected to covenant forming (cf. Ge. 15:17), covenant breaking (cf. Gen. 2:17), and covenant redemption (cf. Isa. 53). (The Gospel According to Luke)

Hendriksen addresses an issue some have raised about Jesus' circumcision - The **question** will be asked, however, "But does not the need for circumcision or excision symbolize that there was sin to be 'cut away'? Yet, this child was sinless. See Isa. 53:9b; John 8:46; 2 Cor. 5:21. Is it not true then that he was exactly the one, the only one, who did not need 'a new heart'?" See Ezek. 36:26; Rom. 2:29. **The answer is**: he had entered the world in order to remove the sins of his people. It was their guilt that rested on him. It was that sin which had to be removed. See Isa. 53:4–6, 8, 10–12. The task of Jesus, as the last Adam, was to keep the law which the first Adam had failed to keep. He came into the world to bear the law's curse, thus delivering his people from it. Besides, for Jesus too circumcision was, in a sense, a sign and seal of the righteousness of faith (Rom. 4:11). Perfect trust in his heavenly Father, and the obedience which that trust implies, was the pathway to victory for himself as Savior and for those whom the Father had given him, considered as those to be saved. It was thus that he was to accomplish fully the work which the Father had given him to do (John 17:4). In his willingness to submit to circumcision we see the Savior's passive obedience; in his insistence that he be baptized, his active obedience. (Luke New Testament Commentary)

Jewish believer **Arnold Fruchtenbaum** offers these thoughts on Jesus' circumcision - Circumcision was commanded under TWO of the covenants of the Old Testament. The Abrahamic Covenant - obligatory for Jews, as a sign of Jewishness. The Mosaic Covenant - obligatory for Jews and Gentiles who converted to Judaism, as a sign of submission to the Law. Jesus was circumcised under both covenants, but upon Jesus' death the Mosaic Covenant came to an end (Heb 8:13+, Ro 10:4+). However, the Abrahamic Covenant still stands. Circumcision as a sign of Jewishness is still in effect.The Abrahamic Covenant is to set the Chosen People apart from the nations around them. It is an ongoing, eternal covenant. (From Fruchtenbaum's notes on "Life of Messiah" Class 4 - The Introduction of the King.")

The rite of circumcision, as a sign of the Abrahamic Covenant (Ge 17:9-14), is known also to be of significant health benefit to the male. Its performance on the "eighth day" is also now known to be the optimum time for it to be done, in terms of the child's most rapid recovery from the operation. The coagulants in the blood of an infant normally reach their optimum effectiveness eight days after birth. Because circumcision was a Jewish law, the infant Jesus experienced it.

Wiersbe - Note that the word ***law*** is used five times in Luke 2:21-40. Though He came to deliver His people from the bondage of the Law, Jesus was "made under the Law" and obeyed its commands (Gal. 4:1-7). He did not come to destroy the Law but to fulfill it (Matt. 5:17-18). Jesus' parents obeyed the Law first by having the child circumcised when He was eight days old. This was the sign and seal of the covenant that God made with Abraham (Gen. 17), and it was required of every Jewish male who wanted to practice the faith. The Jews were proud to be God's covenant people, and they scornfully called the Gentiles "the uncircumcision" (Eph. 2:11-12). It is unfortunate that circumcision became an empty ritual for many Jews, because it proclaimed an important spiritual truth (Dt. 10:15-20; Ro 2:28-29 ED: See circumcision of the heart). "*His circumcision was His first suffering for us,*" said the late Donald Grey Barnhouse, a Philadelphia minister and author. It symbolized the work the Saviour did on the cross in dealing with our sin nature (Gal. 6:15; Phil. 3:1-3; Col. 2:10-11). In obedience to the Lord, Mary and Joseph gave Him the name ***Jesus,*** which means "Jehovah is salvation" (Matt. 1:21). (Scroll to page 144 in The Bible Exposition Commentary)

His name was then called Jesus (Iesous: Hebrew Yeshua), **the name given by the angel** (aggelos/angelos) **before He was conceived** (sullambano) **in the womb** (koilia) - As discussed above, the giving of the name was apparently a part of the ceremony of circumcision as it parallels the actions with John the Baptist (Lk 1:59–66+). Don't miss the unusual way He got His Name - like John the Baptist, Jesus was named by God His Father, even **before** He was conceived (Lk 1:31+)! And notice also that this Name was so important that God made sure He gave the Name to both Joseph (Mt 1:21+) and Mary (Lk 1:31+)!

Luke 1:31+ - "And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and **you shall name Him Jesus.**

Mt 1:21+ "And she will bear a Son; and you shall call His name **Jesus**, for (THIS EXPLAINS THE MEANING OF HIS NAME JESUS) it is He who will save His people from their sins."

What a beautiful Name it is
What a beautiful Name it is
The Name of Jesus Christ my King

Spurgeon - Although the old law ends with Christ, it is very instructive to notice that He came under the law, and conformed to all its appointments. Jesus, therefore, had to be circumcised. In Him the law was fulfilled in every point, even to the jots and tittles; nothing was omitted. Behold, how perfect is the righteousness which He wrought out for His people! (Luke Exposition)

J C Ryle - THE first point which demands our attention in this passage, is **the obedience which our Lord rendered, as an infant, to the Jewish law**. We read of His being circumcised on the eighth day. It is the earliest fact which is recorded in His history. It is a mere waste of time to speculate, as some have done, about the reason why our Lord submitted to circumcision. We know that "in Him was no sin," either original or actual. (1 John 3:5.) His being circumcised was not meant in the least as an acknowledgment that there was any tendency to corruption in His heart. It was not a confession of inclination to evil, and of need of grace to mortify the deeds of His body. All this should be carefully borne in mind. Let it suffice us to remember that **our Lord's circumcision was a public testimony to Israel**, that according to the flesh He was a Jew, made of a Jewish woman, and "born under the Law" [**ED**: THE IDEA OF "UNDER" IS SUBJECT TO THE LAW - Gal. 4:4+, cf Heb 2:17-18+, Mt 5:17+) Without it He would not have fulfilled the law's requirements. Without it He could not have been recognized as the son of David, and the seed of Abraham. Let us remember, furthermore, that **circumcision** was absolutely necessary before our Lord could be heard as a teacher in Israel. Without it he would have had no place in any lawful Jewish assembly, and no right to any Jewish ordinance. Without it He would have been regarded by all Jews as nothing better than an **uncircumcised Gentile**, and an apostate from the faith of the fathers. **Let our Lord's submission to an ordinance which He did not need for Himself, be a lesson to us in our daily life.** Let us endure much, rather than increase the offence of the Gospel, or hinder in any way the cause of God. The words of St. Paul deserve frequent pondering;—"*Though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more, and unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews: to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law."—"I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some*." (1 Cor. 9:19–22+.) The man who wrote these words walked very closely in the footsteps of His crucified Master (Gal 2:20, 1Cor 11:1). (Luke 2)

POSB notes that - There were three legal ceremonies which Jesus underwent. (first was done locally, the latter two in the Temple)

> 1. **There was the ceremony of circumcision**
>
> 2.**There was the ceremony of purification.** This was a ceremony Mary had to go through. After the birth of a boy child a woman was considered unclean for forty days (eighty for a girl child). She could work around the home and engage in normal activities, but she could not take part in religious ceremonies. She was religiously, that is, ceremonially, unclean. After a woman's forty or eighty days were up, she was to make an offering in the temple (Leviticus 12:1-8).
>
> 3. **There was the ceremony of dedication to the Lord** (Luke 2:23; cp. Exodus 13:2, 12, 15; Leviticus 27:6; Numbers 18:15-16). A male child was presented (dedicated) in the temple when the family was close to Jerusalem. (See context Preacher's Outline & Sermon Bible-Luke)

William MacDonald - At least three different rituals are described in this passage:

> 1. First there was the circumcision of Jesus. This took place when He was eight days old. It was a token of the covenant that God made with Abraham. On this same day, the Child was named, according to Jewish custom. The angel had previously instructed Mary and Joseph to call Him JESUS.
>
> 2. The second ceremony was concerned with the purification of Mary. It took place forty days after the birth of Jesus (see Lev. 12:1–4). Ordinarily parents were supposed to bring a lamb for a burnt offering and a young pigeon or turtledove for a sin offering. But in the case of the poor, they were permitted to bring "a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons" (Lev. 12:6–8). The fact that Mary brought no lamb, but only two young pigeons is a reflection of the poverty into which Jesus was born.
>
> 3. The third ritual was the presentation of Jesus at the temple in Jerusalem. Originally, God had decreed that the firstborn sons belonged to Him; they were to form the priestly class (Ex. 13:2). Later, He set aside the tribe of Levi to serve as priests (Ex. 28:1, 2). Then the parents were permitted to "buy back" or "redeem" their firstborn son by the payment of five shekels. This they did when they dedicated him to the Lord. (See context in Believer's Bible Commentary)

Circumcision (4059)(**peritemno** from **perí** = around + **témno** = cut off - see also study of **peritome**) means literally to cut something off or away ("to cut off around"), signifying a removal of that which has been cut away.

> Luke is the only one use this word in the Gospels (Lk 1:59, cf Jn. 7:22; Acts 7:8; Acts 15:1; Acts 15:5; Acts 16:3; Acts 21:21)

Jesus (2424)(**Iesous**) is transliteration of the Greek **Iesous**, which in turn is the transliteration of the Hebrew name Jehoshua or Yeshua which means *Jehovah is help* or *Jehovah is salvation*. Stated another way the Greek **Iesous** corresponds to the OT Yehoshua which is contracted as Yeshua. **Iesous** was translated into Latin as **Jesus**.

Conceived (4815)(**sullambano** from **sun/syn** = together with + **lambáno** = to take, to seize) means literally to seize or take together and conveys the picture of clasping. **Sullambano** has several meanings depending on the context, the most common meaning being to arrest someone (7/16 uses) or take them into custody. To apprehend someone by virtue of a warrant from authority. The next most frequent use is to conceive (become pregnant) (5/16 uses) picking up on the basic meaning of clasping in a sexual sense.

> **Luke uses sullambano** 11/16 times - Lk. 1:24; Lk. 1:31; Lk. 1:36; Lk. 2:21; Lk. 5:7; Lk. 5:9; Lk. 22:54; Acts 1:16; Acts 12:3; Acts 23:27; Acts 26:21; Phil. 4:3; Jas. 1:15

Womb (2836) **koilia** from **koilos** = hollow) refers literally to a hollow space or cavity (although not used with this sense in Scripture) and then to (1) the belly (stomach), (2) the womb (uterus) and (3) (figuratively) the inner man or innermost being, which is almost synonymous with way the NT usually uses **heart** (kardia).

> Koila - 22v appetite(1), appetites(1), belly(1), innermost being(1), stomach(7), womb(11), wombs(1). Matt. 12:40; Matt. 15:17; Matt. 19:12; Mk. 7:19; Lk. 1:15; Lk. 1:41; Lk. 1:42; Lk. 1:44; Lk. 2:21; Lk. 11:27; Lk. 15:16; Lk. 23:29; Jn. 3:4; Jn. 7:38; Acts 3:2; Acts 14:8; Rom. 16:18; 1 Co. 6:13; Gal. 1:15; Phil. 3:19; Rev. 10:9; Rev. 10:10

Related Resource:

- Excursus on Circumcision - for the spiritual significance
- What does the Bible say about circumcision? What is the Christian view of circumcision?
- What is circumcision of the heart?

I know of a Name, A beautiful name
Jean Perry

I know of a Name,
A beautiful Name,
That angels bro't down to earth;
They whispered it low
One night long ago,
To a maiden of lowly birth.

Refrain:
That beautiful Name,
That beautiful Name,
From sin has power to free us!
That beautiful Name,
That wonderful Name,
That matchless name is Jesus!

2 I know of a Name,
A beautiful Name,
That unto a Babe was given;
The stars glittered bright
Thro'out that glad night,
And angels praised God in heav'n. [Refrain]

3 The One of that Name,
My Savior became,
My Savior of Calvary;
My sins nailed Him there,
My burdens He bare.
He suffered all this for me. [Refrain]

4 I love that blest Name,
That wonderful Name,
Made higher than all in heaven;
'Twas whispered, I know,
In my heart long ago,
To Jesus my life I've given. [Refrain]

Luke 2:22 And when the days for their purification according to the law of Moses were completed, they brought Him up to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord

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NET Now when the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, Joseph and Mary brought Jesus up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord

GNT Κα τε πλ σθησαν α μ ραι το καθαρισμο α τ ν κατ τ ν ν μον Μωϋσ ως, ν γαγον α τ ν ε ς ερoσ λυμα παραστ σαι τ κυρ ,

NLT Then it was time for their purification offering, as required by the law of Moses after the birth of a child; so his parents took him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord.

KJV And when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were accomplished, they brought him to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord;

ESV And when the time came for their purification according to the Law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord

NIV When the time of their purification according to the Law of Moses had been completed, Joseph and Mary took him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord

ASV And when the days of their purification according to the law of Moses were fulfilled, they brought him up to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord

CSB And when the days of their purification according to the law of Moses were finished, they brought Him up to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord

- Lev 12:2-6
- Luke 2 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

Exodus 34:19 "The first offspring from every womb belongs to Me, and all your male livestock, the first offspring from cattle and sheep.

Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus
ESV Global Study Bible

THE INCARNATE SON IS PRESENTED TO HIS FATHER

And when the days for their purification (katharismos) **according to the law of Moses were completed** (pimplemi): After the days for Mary's purification were completed and she was again permitted to enter the temple. After the birth of a boy child, a woman was considered unclean for forty days or eighty days if it was a girl infant. Mary could otherwise engage in normal activities, but she could not take part in any of the Jewish religious ceremonies because she was considered ceremonially unclean.

Note that three different aspects of the Old Testament Law are intertwined in these verses: The Law required that all male children be circumcised on the eighth day after birth in Lk 2:21, the Law requiring women wait 40 days after the birth of a son before presenting themselves in the temple for their purification in Lk 2:22 and the Law requiring that a mother and father present their firstborn son before the Lord to be "redeemed" by the offering of a sacrifice in Lk 1:23.

Fruchtenbaum - Luke 2:22 indicates that this happens 40 days after Jesus' birth, as required by the Law of Moses. For male babies it was 40 days, and for female babies it was 80 days.

Note the words **their purification** about which John Calvin writes "Let us now speak first of the purification. Luke makes it apply both to Mary and to Christ: for the pronoun of them, can have no reference whatever to Joseph."

Utley adds that "The PRONOUN "**their**" has bothered Bible students because it involves a sin offering for both the mother and the child. Jesus was born under the law (cf. Lk 2:21–22, 27; Gal. 4:4–5) and He was to fulfill all things (cf. Mt. 3:15)." **John Calvin** adds "Let us now speak first of the purification. Luke makes it apply both to Mary and to Christ: for the pronoun of them, can have no reference whatever to Joseph."

> **Alexander Whyte** addresses Utley's point - "For He who knew no sin, and who never was to know sin, was already in His circumcision made sin for us. He was not so much as eight days in this world till He began to be ***numbered with the transgressors***. Mary's firstborn son was a Lamb without blemish and without spot, but before He was a week old, He began to bear the sins of many… And as He began in the temple that day, so He continued every day to lead a life of pain, and shame, and bloodshedding, for us for our children, till He finished on the Cross the sin-atoning work His Father had given Him to do. And ever after that first day of His wounding of our transgressions, that Holy Thing bore in His body the marks of our redemption."

Fruchtenbaum on the purpose of Jesus' presentation - The **first purpose** was for the special ceremonial purification on the part of the mother. In Luke 2:24-25 we see that Mary offers a pair of turtle doves, one of which is for a sin offering and the other for a burnt offering. The fact that she offers the doves shows that Joseph and Mary are the poorest of the poor, for which this was allowable. This is in fulfillment of Isaiah 11:1, that Messiah will come from the stump of the house of Jesse, when the house of David is reduced to what it was in Jesse's day. Look at Isaiah 11:1. They were reduced to very humble circumstances. The **second purpose** in presenting the baby at the Temple is the redemption of the firstborn as commanded in the Mosaic Law. Ex 34:19 says ""The first offspring from every womb belongs to Me, and all your male livestock, the first offspring from cattle and sheep." Do you know why? The reason is for the purchase of every firstborn child of Israel, as God spared the firstborn of Israel in Egypt's deadliest plague. (cf Ex 13:2, 12, 13, 15).

Spurgeon - Our Saviour put Himself under the law for our sakes, and in every jot and tittle He observed it. So we are delivered from its dominion; for if Christ has fulfilled the law on our account, it has no more claim upon us. "Ye are not under the law, but under grace." (Ro 6:14) (Luke Exposition)

Spurgeon - Everything was done that was required by the Jewish law, you see. "When the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." (Gal 4:4) "Being found in fashion as a man," and a man under the Jewish law, Jesus and his parents were obedient to all its requirements. (Luke Exposition)

Constable - Under Mosaic Law, a woman became ritually unclean when she gave birth to a child (Lev. 12:2). The parents of a male child were to circumcise him on the eighth day after his birth (Lev. 12:3; cf. Gen. 17:12). The mother of a male offspring was unclean for 33 days following her son's circumcision (Lev. 12:4; cf. Lev. 12:5). On the fortieth day after her son's birth, the mother was to present a sin offering to the priest at the sanctuary to atone for her uncleanness (Lev. 12:6–7).

The Mosaic Law said mother of a male child was unclean for a total of 40 days. Mary gave birth to a son and thus was ceremonially unclean for 7 days. Then she stayed at home an additional 33 days making a total of 40 days, after which she presented a burnt offering and a sin offering for her cleansing.

> Lev 12:2+ "Speak to the sons of Israel, saying: 'When a woman gives birth and bears a male child, then she shall be unclean for seven days, as in the days of her menstruation she shall be unclean.
>
> > **John MacArthur** - The uncleanness in view here is ceremonial uncleanness, the first part of which lasted for seven days, like that of menstruation (Lev. 15:19). While she was unclean, a woman could not touch anything sacred or holy, nor could she go to the temple. Her ceremonial uncleanness tempered the natural joy of bringing a new life into the world (John 16:21) with the sober reality that the child, like its parents, was a sinner (Ps. 51:5). After a male child's circumcision on the eighth day, the mother was ceremonially unclean for another thirty-three days. (See context in The MacArthur New Testament Commentary)
>
> Lev 12:3 On the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised.
>
> Lev 12:4 'Then she shall remain in the blood of her purification for thirty-three days; she shall not touch any

consecrated thing, nor enter the sanctuary until the days of her purification are completed.

Lev 12:6 'When the days of her purification are completed (7 + 33 days = 40 days), for a son or for a daughter, she shall bring to the priest at the doorway of the tent of meeting a one year old lamb for a burnt offering and a young pigeon or a turtledove for a sin offering.

Lev 12:7 'Then he shall offer it before the LORD and make atonement for her, and she shall be cleansed from the flow of her blood. This is the law for her who bears a child, whether a male or a female.

Lev 12:8 'But if she cannot afford a lamb, then she shall take two turtledoves or two young pigeons, the one for a burnt offering and the other for a sin offering; and the priest shall make atonement for her, and she will be clean.'" (Lev 12:2, 4, 6, 8-note).

They brought Him up to Jerusalem to present (paristemi) **Him to the Lord** (kurios): Note "up to Jerusalem" normally is used because of Jerusalem's elevation. However in this case Bethlehem is located at an elevation of about 775 meters (2,543 ft) above sea level, 30 meters (98 ft) higher than nearby Jerusalem, so the "up" is not used as it usually is in the NT. In this case the point may be that no place on earth was *spiritually* higher than Jerusalem, the Holy City. This godly couple was obedient to the Law of Moses.

> **THOUGHT** - It is the solemn duty and blessed privilege of parents to dedicate their children to the Lord. (Hendriksen)

Stein summarizes the events of Lk 2:22-24 - The "purification" contained three elements: Mary's purification (Lev 12:6–8), which involved a sacrifice being offered at the Nicanor Gate in the court of the women; the redemption of the firstborn son (Ex 13:1–2), which involved five shekels (Nu 3:47–48) and which Luke did not mention; and the consecration of the firstborn son (cf. 1 Sa 1:11, 22, 28). (See Luke: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition)

Wiersbe notes that Jesus' parents "also had to "redeem" the boy since He was Mary's firstborn (Ex. 13:1-12+). They had to pay five shekels (Nu 18:15–16+) to redeem the Redeemer Who would one day redeem us with His precious blood (1 Peter 1:18-19+). Their humble sacrifice would suggest that they were too poor to bring a lamb (2 Cor. 8:9). **But He was the Lamb!**" (Scroll to page 144 in The Bible Exposition Commentary)

Purification (2512)(**katharismos** from **katharizo** = to cleanse and our English word **catharsis** which Webster's defines as purification or purgation that brings about spiritual renewal or release from tension) describes the process of making clean, cleansing, purifying, freeing from filth. The NT uses refer to cleansing either from the "stain" of sin, an "inward contamination" (Heb 1:3, 2 Pe 1:9) or ritual cleansing as prescribed in the law of Moses (Mk 1:44, Lk 2:22, 5:14) or by Jewish customs (Jn 2:6). Note that these external Jewish rituals were always meant to point the practitioners to their need for internal cleansing, but sadly most of the Jews missed this deeper significance and practiced these laws mechanically, from their informed head, not a humble, broken heart!

Completed (4092)(**pimplemi** from the obsolete **pláō** = to fill) to fill, to make full, to complete.Most of the uses of this verb are by Luke (22/24) and most are used with in a figurative sense. Most describe persons filled with something (Spirit or an emotion) and are wholly affected, controlled or influenced by what fills them.

Time was filled up or completed - Lk 1:23+ and Lk 1:57+

Filled with the Holy Spirit (Lk 1:15+ = of John the Baptist while still in mother's womb, Lk 2:4+ = day of Pentecost, Acts 4:8+ = of Peter, Acts 4:31+ = the praying believers, Acts 9:17+ = of Paul, Acts 13:9+ = of Paul).

Filled with an emotion (Lk 4:28+, Lk 6:11+ = filled with rage, Lk 5:26+ = filled with fear, Acts 3:10+ = wonder and amazement, Acts 5:17+ = jealousy, Acts 13:45+ = Jews filled with jealousy, compare Acts 19:29+ = city filled with confusion). Of time fulfilled or completed (Lk 1:23+ = days of priestly service ended, Lk 1:57+, Lk 2:6+ = pregnancy completed, Lk 2:21-22+, Lk 21:22+. The important takeaway on this verb is to see that what fills a person controls the behavior and actions of that person. Obviously Spirit filling leads to good, godly behavior, but the other emotions noted above lead to sinful, ungodly behavior.

Present (3936)(**paristemi** from **para** = near, beside + **histemi** = place, set) literally means to place or set beside or near and hence to place at someone's disposal. **Paristemi** in the Septuagint was used as a technical term for priest's placing the offering on the altar. This act conveyed the general idea of surrendering or yielding up which Paul picks up on in Romans 12:1+ writing "Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to **present** (paristemi) your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship." What an "Offering" to present to the Lord! In Acts 1:3+ Jesus "**presented** Himself alive after His suffering (Which signifies God accepted His the offering of His body!)."

Paristemi as noted conveys the general idea of surrendering or yielding up. In the Old Testament a worshiper would present an

unblemished animal sacrifice to God as an expression of worship. Today, God doesn't want us to present dead sacrifices but to present ourselves to Him as living sacrifices. The OT Law demanded sacrifice. The Gospel of Grace invites us to consider the "mercies of God" in and respond accordingly. On the basis of what God has shown us He has done, we are not to look to the Law and respond because we MUST. Instead we look at all God has done in showing us mercies and we respond freely from a grateful heart.

Luke 2:23 (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, "EVERY firstborn MALE THAT OPENS THE WOMB SHALL BE CALLED HOLY TO THE LORD"),

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NET (just as it is written in the law of the Lord, "Every firstborn male will be set apart to the Lord"),

GNT καθ ς γ γραπται ν ν μ κυρ ου τι Π ν ρσεν διανο γον μ τραν γιον τ κυρ κληθ σεται,

NLT The law of the Lord says, "If a woman's first child is a boy, he must be dedicated to the LORD."

KJV (As it is written in the law of the Lord, Every male that openeth the womb shall be called holy to the Lord;)

ESV (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, "Every male who first opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord")

NIV (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, "Every firstborn male is to be consecrated to the Lord"),

ASV (as it is written in the law of the Lord, Every male that openeth the womb shall be called holy to the Lord),

CSB (just as it is written in the law of the Lord: Every firstborn male will be dedicated to the Lord)

NKJ (as it is written in the law of the Lord, "Every male who opens the womb shall be called holy to the LORD "),

NRS (as it is written in the law of the Lord, "Every firstborn male shall be designated as holy to the Lord"),

YLT as it hath been written in the Law of the Lord, -- 'Every male opening a womb shall be called holy to the Lord,'

- **Every**: Ex 13:2,12-15 22:29 34:19 Nu 3:13 8:16,17 18:15
- Luke 2 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

THE HOLY ONE OF ISRAEL
IS HOLY TO THE LORD!

As it is written in the Law of the Lord(kurios) **-** Joseph and Mary carefully followed and fulfilled what was **written in the Law of the Lord** (note here not called "Law of Moses" but "Law of the Lord").

(**As it is written**) Ex 13:1-2 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, "**Sanctify** (a command) (Heb = qadash; Lxx = hagiazo) to Me every firstborn, the first offspring of every womb among the sons of Israel, both of man and beast; it belongs to Me."

Ex 13:12 you shall devote to the LORD the first offspring of every womb, and the first offspring of every beast that you own; the males belong to the LORD.

NET Note on Exodus 13:12 - The unusual choice of words in this passage reflects the connection with the deliverance of the firstborn in the exodus when the Lord passed over the Israelites (Ex 12:12, 23). Here the Law said, "you will cause to pass over to Yahweh." The Hiphil perfect with the vav (w) provides the main clause after the temporal clauses. Yahweh here claimed the firstborn as his own. The remarkable thing about this is that Yahweh did not keep the firstborn that was dedicated to him, but allowed the child to be redeemed by his father. It was an acknowledgment that the life of the child belonged to God as the one redeemed from death, and that the child represented the family. Thus, the observance referred to the dedication of all the redeemed to God.

Expositor's Greek - the statement in Lk 2:23 implies that every first-born male child, as belonging to God, must be ransomed (Exodus 34:19, Numbers 18:15-16).

Marvin Vincent has an interesting observation on **the law of the Lord** - The word **law** occurs in this chapter five times; oftener than

in all the rest of this Gospel put together. Luke emphasizes the fact that Jesus" was made under the law" (Galatians 4:4), and accordingly elaborates the details of the fulfilment of the law by the parents of both John and Jesus.

EVERY firstborn MALE THAT OPENS (dianoigo) **THE WOMB SHALL BE CALLED HOLY TO THE LORD** (kurios) - **Utley** explains "This Jewish rite (cf. Ex 13:2, 12, 13, 15) was instituted at Passover (cf. Ex 12:1-51). The Levites as a group took the place of the firstborn as God's special servants. The price of redemption in Jesus' day was five shekels, which was given to any priest (cf. Nu 18:16). This was the normal price of a sacrificial lamb."

Hendriksen has a great comment on this verse - The presentation, to which verses 22 and 25 f. refer, included redemption, the payment of a ransom fee. **On this fortieth day the Redeemer was himself redeemed!** Strange as it may sound, the statement is true. Of course, he was not redeemed in the sense in which he was going to redeem his people, for he was, is, and ever will remain sinless, in fact the Fountain of all virtue. Yet, being his mother's firstborn son (Luke 2:7), and belonging to the tribe not of Levi but of Judah, he had to be exempted from official temple service by the payment of five shekels of silver (Exod. 13:1, 2, 11–15; Num. 3:11–13, 41, 44, 45, 47–51; 18:16). If the shekel is considered the equivalent of $0.64, the redemption price would amount to $3.20 or (at the exchange rate when this was written) £ 1.40. This may not seem much, but at that particular time how many days would an ordinary laborer have to work to earn it? The underlying idea of the redemption ritual was this: in the night of Israel's deliverance from "the house of bondage" all firstborn Egyptians were slain (Exod. 12:29). However, in God's holy sight not only the Egyptians but also the Israelites had forfeited their lives. In place of death God was willing to accept from the tribe of Levi lifelong service in the tabernacle or (later) temple, and from the firstborn of the other tribes five shekels, as a symbolic offering, a confession, as it were. Jesus too was under the sentence of death. He was born "under the law" (Gal. 4:4), and this in the sense not only of being under personal obligation to keep the law but also of being duty-bound—with a duty to which he voluntarily obligated himself—vicariously to bear the law's penalty and to satisfy its demand of perfect obedience. He had no personal guilt but had of his own free will taken upon himself the sin of the world (Isa. 53:4–6; John 1:29). Was the redemption fee paid at this time a symbol of the infinitely greater ransom to which the Savior was going to refer in saying, "The Son of man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life a ransom for many" (Matt. 20:28; Mark 10:45)? (Luke New Testament Commentary)

Gilbrant summarizes Luke 2:22-23 - These verses present two events—the purification of Mary and the presentation of the baby Jesus to the Lord. Clearly, the presentation is the more important of the two since the purification is mentioned primarily to state when Jesus' presentation in the temple took place. Luke emphasizes the piety of Jesus' parents in obeying and honoring God by observing the requirements of the Jewish law. The law of Moses demanded the purification of new mothers (Leviticus 12:1-8). If a woman gave birth to a son, she was ceremonially unclean for 7 days, and then she stayed at home an additional 33 days making a total of 40 days. (For the birth of a daughter the time of seclusion was extended to 80 days.) The dedication of Jesus was in fulfillment of Exodus 13:1ff. which is cited in part by Luke in Lk 2:23. Each firstborn male was considered holy, that is, dedicated to God for the special role of priest. The dedication was not a redemptive act which cleansed from sin but an act of setting someone aside for a special purpose. (See hagios in the *Greek-English Dictionary.)* Furthermore this practice of dedicating the firstborn son reminded the Jews that God had spared the firstborn Israelites at the Passover in Egypt and had delivered them all from slavery. Since God set aside the Levites for the priesthood (Numbers 3:12), the firstborn of other tribes were absolved of this responsibility by paying five shekels to a local priest (Exodus 13:2, 12-15; Leviticus 27:26, 27; Numbers 3:13; 8:17, 18; 18:15, 16). In this passage, however, Luke does not mention payment of the redemption money. Obviously Luke's main point is not Mary's purification or the payment of redemption money but the dedication of the child Jesus at the temple. Like the prophet Samuel, Jesus was given over to God's service (1 Samuel 1:22-24). Mary alluded to this in the "Magnificat" (Lk 1:46-55). Because of the miraculous events surrounding Jesus' birth, His parents recognized Jesus as the Messiah and dedicated Him to this service. (Complete Biblical Library)

Opens (1272) dianoigo from **dia** = through, between, used here as an intensive + **anoigo** = to open, remove that which obstructs) means to open completely that which was closed, literally male that opens the womb, i.e. firstborn son (Lu 2.23). Figuratively, of the eyes, ears, heart, or mind in enabling someone to perceive or understand open. Only 8v - Mk. 7:34; Lk. 2:23; Lk. 24:31; Lk. 24:32; Lk. 24:45; Acts 7:56; Acts 16:14; Acts 17:3

Luke 2:24 and to offer a sacrifice according to what was said in the Law of the Lord, "A PAIR OF TURTLEDOVES OR TWO YOUNG PIGEONS."

NET and to offer a sacrifice according to what is specified in the law of the Lord, a pair of doves or two young pigeons.

GNT κα το δο ναι θυσ αν κατ τ ε ρημ νον ν τ ν μ κυρ ου, ζε γος τρυγ νων δ ο νοσσο ς περιστερ ν.

NLT So they offered the sacrifice required in the law of the Lord-- "either a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons."

KJV And to offer a sacrifice according to that which is said in the law of the Lord, A pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons.

ESV and to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the Law of the Lord, "a pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons."

NIV and to offer a sacrifice in keeping with what is said in the Law of the Lord: "a pair of doves or two young pigeons."

ASV and to offer a sacrifice according to that which is said in the law of the Lord, A pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons.

CSB and to offer a sacrifice (according to what is stated in the law of the Lord: a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons).

NKJ and to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the law of the Lord, "A pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons."

NRS and they offered a sacrifice according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, "a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons."

YLT and to give a sacrifice, according to that said in the Law of the Lord, 'A pair of turtle-doves, or two young pigeons.'

- **A pair**: Lev 12:2,6-8 2Co 8:9
- Luke 2 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

Lev 12:2 — "Speak to the sons of Israel, saying: 'When a woman gives birth and bears a male child, then she shall be unclean for seven days, as in the days of her menstruation she shall be unclean.

Lev 12:6-8 — 'When the days of her purification are completed, for a son or for a daughter, she shall bring to the priest at the doorway of the tent of meeting a one year old lamb for a burnt offering and a young pigeon or a turtledove for a sin offering. 7 'Then he shall offer it before the LORD and make atonement for her, and she shall be cleansed from the flow of her blood. This is the law for her who bears a child, whether a male or a female. 8 'But if she cannot afford a lamb, then she shall take **two turtledoves** or two young pigeons, the one for a **burnt offering** and the other for a **sin offering**; and the priest shall make atonement for her, and she will be clean.'"

MARY MADE CEREMONIALLY CLEAN
FULFILLING THE LAW

And to offer a sacrifice according to what was said in the Law of the Lord(kurios)**, "A PAIR OF TURTLEDOVES OR TWO YOUNG PIGEONS.**: **And to offer** refers to Mary bring the offering after the 40 days of her purification. The bringing of two turtledoves or two young pigeons (one for a burnt offering [cf Lev 1:3+], the other for a sin offering [cf Lev 4:3, 8, 14, etc+]) by the mother to make atonement and to effect her cleansing became known as the "offering of the poor" and is what Mary brought (cf Lv 12:8+). This not only emphasizes the poverty of Mary and Joseph, but it also shows that Mary did not consider herself to be sinless. Having made her offering, Mary was once again ceremonially clean. Is this verse not an illustration of Paul's description of Christ in His humanity "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich." (2Co 8:9+) **Turtledoves** were "distinguished for having a plaintive and tender voice." (Barnes) Note that the parents kept the Law and in so doing assured that Jesus Himself might fulfill ever aspect of the Law so that He would later say "Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill." (Mt 5:17+)

Barnes - By Mary's making this offering she showed her poverty; and our Saviour, by coming in a state of poverty, has shown that it is not dishonorable to be poor. No station is dishonorable where "God" places us. He knows what is best for us, and he often makes a state of poverty an occasion of the highest blessings. If "with" poverty he grants us, as is often the case, peace, contentment, and religion, it is worth far more than all the

jewels of Golconda or the gold of Mexico. (Commentary)

MacArthur makes the interesting observation that Mary's offering of two birds "indicates that they had not yet seen the wise men (Mt. 2:11+), since the valuable gifts they brought would have allowed Joseph and Mary to afford a lamb for the sacrifice. That Mary offered a sin offering is consistent with the reality that she was a sinner in need of a Savior (cf. Lk 1:47+)." (See context Luke Commentary)

Hendriksen - If by reason of the season of the year turtledoves were unavailable—being migratory birds they could be purchased only from spring to fall—there were always plenty of pigeons. One could purchase two birds for less than a tenth of the amount demanded for a lamb plus a bird.

William Barclay - "The offering of the two pigeons instead of the lamb and the pigeon was technically called **The Offering of the Poor** … we see that it was into an ordinary home that Jesus was born." (Luke 2)

David Guzik makes a good point that their offering of the birds "suggests that this all happened before the wise men came from the east (Matthew 2:1-12+). Mary and Joseph would not have returned to Jerusalem after being warned by the angel (Matthew 2:13), and they would not have offered only two birds after receiving the rich gifts from the wise men (Matthew 2:11).

> **Marvin Vincent** - **The offering of the poor**. While the lamb would probably cost about one dollar and seventy-five cents, the doves would cost about sixteen cents. She would not bring the creatures themselves, but would drop the price into one of the thirteen trumpet-shaped chests in the Court of the Women. Young pigeons: lit., young ones of pigeons
>
> **Cambridge Bible** - The Law of Moses, with that thoughtful tenderness which characterises many of its provisions, allowed a poor mother to bring two turtledoves instead; and since turtledoves (being migratory) are not always procurable, and old pigeons are not easily caught, offered the alternative of "two young pigeons."

Spurgeon adds that their offering of **turtledoves or...pigeons** "proves the poverty of our Lord's parents. If they had been able to bring a costlier sacrifice, they should have done so. The law required the offering of a lamb for a burnt offering; but there was a gracious provision in the case of the poor mother: "If she be not able to bring a lamb, then she shall bring two turtles, or two young pigeons; the one for the burnt offering, and the other for a sin offering: and the priest shall make an atonement for her, and she shall be clean." Even in the case of a working-woman, the birth of her first-born son required from her a sacrifice; but it might be of the smallest kind: "A pair of turtle-doves, or two young pigeons." Think of your Lord himself redeemed by a sacrifice, a pair of doves offered in his stead! What a wonderful coming down to our condition and position was this!" (Luke Exposition)

MacArthur sums up this section - Joseph and Mary's obedience to the law of God shines forth throughout the narrative of Christ's birth. Giving Him the name Jesus in obedience to the angel's command (Matt. 1:21+), presenting Him in the temple, paying the fee required for a firstborn son, and Mary's scrupulous observance of the law of purification demonstrate that they, like Zacharias and Elizabeth, "were both righteous in the sight of God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and requirements of the Lord" (Luke 1:6). That righteousness validates their confirming testimony to their Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. (See context in Luke Commentary)

Moses records...

> Leviticus 12:2+ "Speak to the sons of Israel, saying: 'When a woman gives birth and bears a male child, then she shall be unclean for seven days, as in the days of her menstruation she shall be unclean. (**6-8**) 'When the days of her purification are completed, for a son or for a daughter, she shall bring to the priest at the doorway of the tent of meeting a one year old lamb for a burnt offering and a young pigeon or a turtledove for a sin offering. 7 'Then he shall offer it before the LORD and make atonement for her, and she shall be cleansed from the flow of her blood. This is the law for her who bears a child, whether a male or a female. 8'But if she cannot afford a lamb, then she shall take two turtledoves or two young pigeons, the one for a burnt offering and the other for a sin offering; and the priest shall make atonement for her, and she will be clean.'"

Rod Mattoon of the offering of this sacrifice - In the Old Testament, the firstborn was sanctified, set apart, and dedicated to the Lord for the priesthood since it was the firstborn that was spared by the blood on the doorpost when the Death Angel went through Egypt. This practice was changed later when the tribe of Levi became the tribe of the priest after the golden calf incident in Exodus 32. So instead of bringing the firstborn to be placed into the priesthood, each firstborn was to be presented to the Lord and a sacrifice made by the parents.

The sacrifice was to be a lamb for a burnt offering and a young pigeon for a sin offering. This was a somewhat expensive sacrifice, and so the law laid it down that if the parents could not afford the lamb they might bring another pigeon. The offering of the two

pigeons instead of the lamb and the pigeon was technically called The Offering of the Poor. It was the offering of the poor which Mary brought.

The family of Jesus knew the difficulties of making ends meet. Joseph and Mary could not afford the lamb, but in truth, they were bringing the Great Lamb of God to the Temple in the person of Jesus Christ who would be the Great Sacrifice for man's sins. His sacrifice would eliminate the need for any more sacrifices.

This dedication and presentation service at the Temple, called the right of purification, was held in the Court of Women. This court was open to both men and women. It was named this because the women could not go beyond this point in the Temple area. According to the Jewish Mishnah (Middoth 2,5), the Women's Court was just over 200 feet square between bounding lines. A patio type roof supported by columns ran against the walls of this court. Within these shaded areas and against the wall, the thirteen chests, or 'trumpets,' for charitable contributions were placed. These thirteen chests were narrow at the mouth and wide at the bottom, shaped like trumpets. They were carefully marked. Nine were for the receipt of what was legally due by worshipers. The other four trumpets were for strictly voluntary gifts.

Each mother brought, according to her means, a lamb, a pigeon, or a pair of turtle doves as a thank-offering to be presented to the Lord for the gift of a firstborn child or the money to purchase these sacrifices. The priests received the offering at the **Nicanor gate** (depiction, see Temple complex at time of Jesus), the greatest of all the gates of the Temple, made of fine Corinthian brass with carvings in gold and silver. This gate led into the inner courtyard of the Temple. In front of it there were 15 curved stairs.

This beautiful and significant presentation was performed in strict accordance with the customs of Mary's people and included a promise from the parents to train their child in the knowledge of the Lord. The mother's part of the service was called the **Purification**; the child's, the **Presentation**.

In the presentation part of the ceremony, the baby was presented to the priest with a small sum of money, equal to five shekels (about $2.50 in our money). Then the priest asked the question, "Which would you rather do--give up your firstborn son, or redeem him for five shekels?" "This is my firstborn," answered the father. "Take unto thee the five shekels due for his redemption." The rabbi repeated two short prayers, one for the law of redemption, one for the gift of the child. Then, placing his hands on the head of the child, he pronounced the blessing:

The Lord bless thee and preserve thee;
The Lord lift up His countenance upon thee
And give thee peace,
Length of days, years, and peace
Be gathered to thee.
God keep thee from all evil
And save thy soul

The fact that Mary and Joseph were presenting Jesus to the Lord brings us to a very important question. Have you presented yourself to the Lord? This is one of the challenges of Scripture - Romans 12:1+. ...Our Lord wants 100% commitment from us. There is a difference between involvement and commitment. When you look at a plate of ham and eggs, you know the chicken was involved, but the pig was committed. How does a person present their body as a living sacrifice? What does Paul mean? Let me illustrate the answer. (Treasures from the Scriptures)

ILLUSTRATIONS - John MacArthur shares the story of a Chinese Christian who was moved with compassion when his countrymen were taken to work as coolies in South African mines. In order to be able to witness to these men, this prominent old man sold himself to the mining company to work as a coolie for five years. He died there, still a slave, but not until he had won more than 200 men to Jesus Christ. He was truly a living sacrifice for the Lord.

In the mid-seventeenth century, a well-known Englishman was captured by Algerian pirates and made a slave too. While in slavery, he started a church. When his brother arranged his release, he refused his freedom, having vowed to remain a slave until he died in order to continue serving the church he started. Today a sign in an Algerian church bears his name. He too, was a living sacrifice for Christ.

On one of the old Roman coins was the figure of an ox, standing between a plow and an altar, with the inscription, "Ready for either." That is the attitude of the sold-out Christian who presents his body as a living sacrifice. He is ready for service and sacrifice. Are you ready and willing to live your life for the Lord Jesus Christ? How dedicated are you to the Lord? How close to you want to be to Him? (Treasures from Luke)

Luke 2:25 And there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; and this man was righteous and devout, looking for the consolation of Israel; and the Holy Spirit was upon him.

NAS (**1977 version**) And **behold**, (idou) there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; and this man was righteous and devout, looking for the consolation of Israel; and the Holy Spirit was upon him.

Comment: As discussed below the new translation of the NAS (1995) omits the word '**Behold**!"

NET Now there was a man in Jerusalem named Simeon who was righteous and devout, looking for the restoration of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him.

GNT Κα δο (idou) νθρωπος ν ν ερουσαλ μ νομα Συμε ν κα νθρωπος ο τος δ καιος κα ε λαβ ς προσδεχ μενος παρ κλησιν το σρα λ, κα πνε μα ν γιον π α τ ν·

NLT At that time there was a man in Jerusalem named Simeon. He was righteous and devout and was eagerly waiting for the Messiah to come and rescue Israel. The Holy Spirit was upon him

KJV And, **behold**, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon; and the same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was upon him.

ESV Now there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon, and this man was righteous and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him.

NIV Now there was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon, who was righteous and devout. He was waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him.

ASV And **behold**, there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; and this man was righteous and devout, looking for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Spirit was upon him.

CSB There was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon. This man was righteous and devout, looking forward to Israel's consolation, and the Holy Spirit was on him.

NKJ 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.

- **righteous** Lu 1:6 Ge 6:9 Job 1:1,8 Da 6:22,23 Mic 6:8 Ac 10:2,22 24:16 Tit 2:11-14
- **looking** Lu 2:38 Isa 25:9 Isa 40:1 Mk 15:43
- **Holy Spirit** Lu 1:41,67 Nu 11:25,29 2Pe 1:21
- Luke 2 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- Luke 2:25-35 The Gospel According to Simeon - Dr Steven Lawson - excellent

RIGHTEOUS AND DEVOUT:
WATCHING AND WAITING

And there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon - Literally "And **behold** (idou)." It is sad that virtually EVERY modern translation leaves out one very important word that is present in all the Greek texts. And what word is missing? The "attention grabbing" word "**BEHOLD**!" "The word **behold** is intended to convey a delighted sense of surprise and pleasure: 'Look at this—isn't it amazing!" (J Philip Arthur) Indeed, it was amazing to find a truly righteous man in Jerusalem, a city filled with countless self-righteous men! Describing Simeon Hendriksen says "With utmost circumspection such men take hold of the duties God has assigned to them. They are conscientious in their planning, aiming always to advance their own and their neighbors' welfare, to the glory of God." (BNTC-Luke)

Whose Name was Simeon - see James Smith's devotional on Simeon below. Some have speculated he was a priest but that is unlikely as Luke does not tell us. More likely he is a layman. **Simeon** was a Jewish man who was part of the believing remnant as shown by his attitude and actions of daily looking for the Messiah, Who was the Hope of Israel and all the world! Oh, to be a man like Simeon! Fill us Father with Thy Spirit that we might be longingly looking for our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen! Indeed, if God graciously answers affirmatively and the Spirit enables us to be daily looking for Him, we surely also will be empowered to be daily living for Him! Hallelujah! **Simeon** means God hears or God has heard or **listening**. Here in Luke he was not only the **listening one** but the **"looking one**," and as an old man he was one who recognized Jesus as the Messiah.

THOUGHT - Undoubtedly his name reflects the fact that he had been speaking to God and God heard his prayers. And God spoke to him telling him He would see the Messiah before he died. Oh, how many blessings we miss because we either fail to speak with God or become to busy to listen to God! God help us! Here in

Luke Simeon was not only the listening one but the "looking one," and as an old man he was one who recognized Jesus as the Messiah.

THOUGHT 2- Little is known about Simeon. The passage does not state that he was invested with any particular office; for example, that of priest. He was apparently what we today would call a “layman.” The church needs laymen as well as clergymen. (Hendriksen)

Wiersbe (page 145) - Simeon and Anna, like Zacharias and Elizabeth, were a part of the **faithful Jewish remnant** that eagerly looked for their Messiah

Then those who feared the LORD spoke to one another, and the LORD gave attention and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for those who fear the LORD and who esteem His name. (Mal. 3:16+)

And this man was righteous (dikaios) **and devout** (eulabes) - Simeon was described as **righteous** as were Mary’s husband Joseph (Mt. 1:19), Mary herself, Zacharias and Elizabeth (Luke 1:6+) and Joseph of Arimathea (Lk 23:50+). In our modern vernacular of the use of "**righteous**" we would say "Simeon was saved." Simeon was justified by grace through faith in the Messiah. **Righteous** is his character before God and men. **Devout** is his character before God with the idea of reverent and careful about his spiritual life. "He blended in his character his duty to man and his duty to God, he was just and devout." (Spurgeon) " While you can skim over these two words in a flash, they reflect a lifetime of cultivation. No one accidentally becomes righteous and devout. Simeon cultivated his walk with God." (Steven Cole) **Simeon** is a light in the land of Israel where most of the people are living in spiritual darkness, living profane, unconverted lives. They are led by the Pharisees and the Scribes, so that the blind are leading the blind! (cf Mt 15:13-14, Jn 9:40) And yet God always has His people, a **remnant of true believers** (that was true in Israel and it is true in America where many have joined a church but never joined themselves in a personal relationship to Jesus!) No matter how dark the world becomes, no matter how dark America becomes (and as of 2019 sadly it is happening rapidly!), God always preserves a godly remnant (cf 1 Cor 15:58+).

Devout describes his inner heart attitude of devotion to God while **righteous** (practical) describes his external pursuit of godliness.

THOUGHT - How could Simeon be **righteous** when the Righteous One Jesus Christ had not even been born much less crucified? Justification is by faith not works, so clearly Simeon was declared righteous because of his faith. The question is in what or who was his faith? As Paul states in Galatians he was saved (justified, declared righteous) the same way that Abraham was justified (Gal 3:6-note). In some way the Scriptures preached the Gospel to them just as the Scripture had preached the Gospel to Abraham (Ge 15:6+, Gal 3:8+)! Simeon had looked with eyes of faith (cp 2 Cor 5:7+) forward to the Cross, whereas believers today look back in faith to the same rugged Cross, both attaining justification by faith in Jesus. For related discussions of salvation of individuals before Christ was crucified, **see discussion** of how Phinehas was reckoned righteous in Psalm 106:31 and **discussion** of Abraham in Ge 15:6+ when "he believed in the LORD and He reckoned it to him as righteousness."

Spurgeon notes **"**This combination makes up a complete character, “just” towards man, “devout” towards God. There are many who think they are just, but their justness does not extend to their fellow-creatures, and they forget the claims of the Most High upon them. On the other hand, I have known men who have pretended to a vast amount of devotion, but who have never been just. Such persons are hypocrites, as the others are robbers of God; but he who is just and devout, just towards man and devout towards God, hath the character of a true man. Such was Simeon, “just and devout,” (Luke Exposition)

OLDER AND WISER - Although Simeon and Anna were very old (ED: NOTE THE TEXT NEVER SPECIFICALLY STATES HE WAS OLD BUT THAT HE WAS READY TO GO WHEN HE HAD SEEN MESSIAH!) , they had never lost their hope that they would see the Messiah. Led by the Holy Spirit, they were among the first to bear witness to Jesus. In the Jewish culture, elders were respected; thus, because of Simeon’s and Anna’s age, their prophecies carried extra weight. Contemporary society values youthfulness over wisdom, and potential contributions by the elderly are often ignored. Christians should reverse those values wherever they can. Encourage older people to share their wisdom and experience. Listen carefully when they speak. Offer them your friendship and help them find ways to continue to serve God. (See Luke)

Ryle - We see, in the case of Simeon, how God has a believing people even in the worst of places, and in the darkest times. Religion was at a very low ebb in Israel when Christ was born. The faith of Abraham was spoiled by the doctrines of Pharisees and Sadducees. The fine gold had become deplorably dim. Yet even then we find in the midst of Jerusalem a man “just and devout,”—a man “upon whom is the Holy Ghost.” It is a cheering thought that God never leaves Himself entirely without a witness. Small as His believing church may sometimes be, the gates of hell shall never completely prevail against it. The true church may be driven into the wilderness, and be a scattered little flock, but it never dies. There was a Lot in Sodom and an Obadiah in Ahab’s household, a

Daniel in Babylon and a Jeremiah in Zedekiah's court; and in the last days of the Jewish Congregation, when its iniquity was almost full, there were godly people, like Simeon, even in Jerusalem. True Christians, in every age, should remember this and take comfort. It is a truth which they are apt to forget, and in consequence to give way to despondency. "I only am left," said Elijah, "and they seek my life to take it away." But what said the answer of God to him, "Yet have I left me seven thousand in Israel." (1 Kings 19:14, 18.) Let us learn to be more hopeful. Let us believe that grace can live and flourish, even in the most unfavorable circumstances. There are more Simeons in the world than we suppose. (Luke 2)

Every Spirit-possessed one has the things of Christ revealed to him or her,
and will be led by the Spirit.
-- James Smith

Looking (prosdechomai) **for the consolation** (paraklesis) **of Israel** - **Simeon** was eagerly waiting and Luke's use of the present tense depicts his waiting as his daily, continual delight. His looking for the Messiah was his "default" attitude which surely affected his actions and his life choices. Are you daily looking for the Messiah? If this general attitude of patient, persistent expectation and anticipation pervaded the Body of Christ today, what difference might it make in our presentation of the Gospel? Remember that our life is preaching a message to the lost around every day. So this begs the question - "What is the Gospel according to me?" **Spurgeon** says "His devotion was not that of a blind devotee. He had eyes of expectation, he was expecting the Messiah to come, who is "the consolation of Israel." (Luke Exposition) **Wiersbe** (page 145) adds that the phrase "**The consolation of Israel**" means the messianic hope. One of the traditional Jewish prayers is, "**May I see the consolation of Israel**!" That prayer was answered for Simeon when he saw Jesus Christ in the temple. He was a man who was led by the Spirit of God, taught by the Word of God, and obedient to the will of God; and therefore he was privileged to see the salvation of God. How important it is for people to see God's salvation, Jesus Christ, before they see death." **Steven Cole** says that **consolation of Israel** "refers to the time prophesied by Isaiah (Isaiah 40:1–2) when God would comfort His people and remove their sins by sending His Anointed One, the Messiah."

The consolation (paraklesis) **of Israel** - In English the word **consolation** describes the comfort one feel when consoled in times of disappointment. Consolation is something (in this context SOMEONE) that gives comfort to those who are sad or disappointed. **Ryle** adds that "This was a name applied by the Jews to the Messiah. Lightfoot says, "the whole nation waited for the consolation of Israel; insomuch that there was nothing more common with them, than to swear by the desire which they had of seeing it." Criswell says **consolation of Israel** was "a standard rabbinic description of the messianic age (cf. Isa. 40-55)." We see this summed up in Isaiah 40:1 "Comfort (Lxx = parakaleo), O comfort My people (Lxx = parakaleo)," says your God."

Consolation(paraklesis) **of Israel** in this context refers to the Messiah and the hope that was associated with the Messiah's coming. In other words consolation was a Person. The "hope" was that He would restore Israel to her prominence among all the nations of the world. The NET Bible translation conveys this thought writing that Simeon was "looking for **the restoration of Israel**" (Lk 2:25NET) The **NET Note** adds that "The **restoration of Israel** refers to Simeon's hope that the Messiah would come and deliver the nation (Isa 40:1; 49:13; 51:3; 57:18; 61:2)."

The Believer's Study Bible - "**Consolation of Israel**" is a standard rabbinic description of the messianic age (cf. Isa. 40-55).

James Freeman on **Consolation of Israel** - **The Consolation** was a term used by the Jews of that period, and long after, to designate the Messiah. Lightfoot says that they were accustomed to swear by "**the Consolation**." When we are told in the text that Simeon was waiting for "**the Consolation of Israel,**" we are to understand that he was waiting for the Messiah. (Scroll to page 1006 in Manners and Customs)

Simeon's prevalent mindset (daily looking with expectation) reminds us of the very last question the 11 disciples ask Jesus just before His ascension in Acts " "Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1:6-click for a detailed discussion of the Jewish idea of **the kingdom**)

The great hymn writer **Charles Wesley** was surely thinking of the **Consolation of Israel** when he wrote his beautiful timeless hymn, Come Thou Long Expected Jesus. Note especially Wesley's words "Israel's strength and consolation. Hope of all the earth Thou art." (Play this great hymn).

Come, thou long expected Jesus,
born to set thy people free;
from our fears and sins release us,
let us find our rest in Thee.

Israel's Strength and Consolation,
Hope of all the earth Thou art;

Dear Desire of every nation,
Joy of every longing heart.

Born Thy people to deliver,
born a child and yet a King,
born to reign in us forever,
now Thy gracious kingdom bring.

By thine Own eternal spirit
rule in all our hearts Alone;
by Thine all sufficient merit,
raise us to Thy glorious throne.

And the Holy Spirit was upon him. - "It is very remarkable to notice how, in the course of three consecutive verses, the operation of that divine Spirit upon him is noted." (Alexander Maclaren) Note the preposition **UPON**, not **IN**. Prior to Pentecost the Spirit was most often described as being "upon" or "coming upon" an individual (see examples below), but after Pentecost, every believer has the Spirit **IN** them!

> **TECHNICAL NOTE** - I should note that John MacArthur feels that every OT believer had the Holy Spirit **IN** him or her. I hate to disagree with him, but I cannot fully agree, and Ps 51:11 seems hardly a passage on which to base one's OT doctrine of pneumatology (study of Spirit) upon. Clearly the Spirit was fully operative in the life of OT believers or how else could they have lived supernaturally, so in that sense it is somewhat of a moot point. In some way they clearly had access to Him. The excellent, Biblically based site Gotquestions.org has this related note - "The second aspect of the Spirit's work in the Old Testament is indwelling, or filling. Here is where the major difference between the Spirit's roles in the Old and New Testaments is apparent. The New Testament teaches the permanent indwelling of the Holy Spirit in believers (1 Corinthians 3:16-17; 6:19-20). When we place our faith in Christ for salvation, the Holy Spirit comes to live within us. The apostle Paul calls this permanent indwelling the "guarantee of our inheritance" (Ephesians 1:13-14). In contrast to this work in the New Testament, the indwelling in the Old Testament was selective and temporary. The Spirit "came upon" such Old Testament people as Joshua (Numbers 27:18), David (1 Samuel 16:12-13) and even Saul (1 Samuel 10:10). In the book of Judges, we see the Spirit "coming upon" the various judges whom God raised up to deliver Israel from their oppressors. The Holy Spirit came upon these individuals for specific tasks. The indwelling was a sign of God's favor upon that individual (in the case of David), and if God's favor left an individual, the Spirit would depart (e.g., in Saul's case in 1 Samuel 16:14). Finally, the Spirit "coming upon" an individual doesn't always indicate that person's spiritual condition (e.g., Saul, Samson, and many of the judges). So, while in the New Testament the Spirit only indwells believers and that indwelling is permanent, the Spirit came upon certain Old Testament individuals for a specific task, irrespective of their spiritual condition. Once the task was completed, the Spirit presumably departed from that person." (What was the role of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament? | GotQuestions.org)

This is one of seven direct references to the Holy Spirit in Dr Luke's first two chapters -

> Luke 1:15+ "For he (John the Baptist) will be great in the sight of the Lord; and he will drink no wine or liquor, and he will be filled with the **Holy Spirit** while yet in his mother's womb.
>
> Luke 1:35+ The angel answered and said to her (Mary), "The **Holy Spirit** will come **UPON** you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy Child shall be called the Son of God.
>
> Luke 1:41+ When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby (John the Forerunner) leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the **Holy Spirit**.
>
> Luke 1:67+ And his father Zacharias was filled with the **Holy Spirit**, and prophesied, saying:
>
> Luke 2:25 And there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; and this man was righteous and devout, looking for the consolation of Israel; and the **Holy Spirit** was **UPON** him.
>
> Luke 2:26 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.
>
> Luke 2:27 And he came in the **Spirit** into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to carry out for Him the custom of the Law,

J C Ryle - Let us not fail to note that this was before the death and ascension of Christ, and the outpouring of the Spirit on the day of

Pentecost. We must never forget that Old Testament saints were taught by the Holy Ghost, as really as believers after the Gospel was set up, though not in such full measure. (Luke 2)

So in just 2 chapters Luke teaches us a great deal about the Holy Spirit, Whom the modern church sadly seems to have largely forgotten, so that one modern writer (Francis Chan) was compelled to write a book entitled the "Forgotten God: Reversing Our Tragic Neglect of the Holy Spirit (this book is freely available at archive.org) ." You might want to take a break and read Chan's short but pithy book. So in the first two chapters we learn that the Holy Spirit fills us, comes upon us, is associated with dispensation of power, is associated with speaking forth the Word (prophesying - Lk 1:67), reveals truth previously hidden from men (Lk 2:26) and is the atmosphere in which a man walked and worked ("in the Spirit" Lk 2:27). Oh, how the modern church needs to grasp the breadth and length and height and depth of these basic truths about the Spirit of Jesus Christ. See article on "A Spirit Filled Church".

In Luke 24:49+ Jesus gives instructions to His disciples as He prepares to ascend back to His Father, declaring

> "And behold, I am sending forth **the promise of My Father UPON** you; but you are to stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high."
>
> **Comment** - "**The promise of My Father**" is of course the Holy Spirit Who would be poured out on the disciples at Pentecost, the day in which the Church was born (Acts 2:1-4+).

Righteous (1342)(**dikaios** from **dike** = right, just) defines that which is in accordance with high standards of rectitude. It is that which is in right relation to another and so in reference to persons defines the one who is morally and ethically righteous, upright or just. Luke uses this same adjective in the previous chapter to describe Zacharias and Elizabeth, parents of John the Baptist "They were both **righteous** (dikaios) in the sight of God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and requirements of the Lord. (Lk 1:6-see notes where God's passing "over the sins previously committed" as described in Ro 3:25+) **Righteous** could have two meanings and probably both are intended in this description of Simeon - (1) declared righteous by faith, justified by faith and/or (2) practical righteousness, manifesting a daily walk of holiness, growing in grace, exhibiting progressive sanctification. Simeon would have stood out in stark contrast to most of those in Israel who were pursuing a works righteousness, one which falls short of the glory of God (Ro 3:23+).

Devout (2126)(**eulabes** from **eu** = well + **lambano** = totake hold) means literally taking hold of well ("carefully and surely" - Thayer) and hence a circumspect or cautious person who takes hold of things carefully. He/she is.cautious, reverent, devout, pious. In the NT the idea is God-fearing. **Marvin Vincent** notes "As applied to morals and religion, it emphasizes the element of circumspection, a cautious, careful observance of divine law; and is thus peculiarly expressive of Old Testament piety, with its minute attention to precept and ceremony. Compare Acts 2:5+." **Friberg** adds this was " a characteristic of one who carefully observes the law. The kindred word, eulabeia, godly-fear, occurs twice' Hebrews 5:7; Hebrews 12:28.

> **TDNT** - The Non-Christian Usage - This group denotes an attitude of "caution" or "circumspection," e.g., regard for the kairos, vigilance, provision, concern, then conscientiousness, in religion scrupulosity or awe, more generally fear or anxiety.
>
> **Liddell- Scott** on **eulabes** - taking hold well, holding fast:-then metaphorically undertaking prudently, discreet, cautions, circumspect,
>
> **Gary Hill** - **eulabēs** ("devout") literally means "taking hold of what is good." It focuses on the outward response someone gives to what they feel is truly worthwhile (worthy of respect). Eulabēs is sometimes translated "God-fearing" because it shows awe-inspired fear that reveres what is sacred, i.e. "godly respect" for the things of God. Eulabēs especially suggests piety in the inner being (the soul), defining a devout attitude towards God (His Word). 2152 (eusebēs) is "by holy awe of God, finding expression in devoted activity" (Vine). Trench says "In eulabēs we have the anxious and scrupulous worshiper, who makes a conscience of changing anything, of omitting anything, being above all things fearful to offend. Threskos (Jas 1:26) which still more nearly corresponds to the Latin 'religiosus' – focus on the zealous and diligent performer of the divine offices, of the outward service of God . . . 'cultus,' or perhaps more strictly, of which euāebela is the informing soul" In sum, eulabēs...describes a circumspect person who "takes hold" of (respects) what is sacred. Eulabēs "literally means, 'handling well'; hence, 'cautious, circumspect'; 'God-fearing, pious'" (Souter). The root eulab- emphasizes the outward respect (reverence) that comes with true piety. Eulabēs ("devout") conveys personal initiative needed to pursue "godliness," giving reverence (due respect) to God and His Word. Eulabēs applies "to morals and religion, i.e. circumspection which inspires a cautious, careful observance of God's law. Thus it is peculiarly expressive of Old Testament piety, with its minute attention to precept and ceremony" (WS). In religious (spiritual) contexts, this root eulab-, "godly fear" refers to the piety shaped by genuine godly fear, i.e. coming from a personal knowledge of God's love.] Working it out - We can only be genuinely devout by living in God's persuasions of faith, which always shows reverence for His written Word (Scripture). Being devout (eulabēs) is important because it impacts the Lord forever! (Discovery Bible)

Eulabes - 4x in 4v in the NT and twice in the Septuagint (Lev 15:31+ **eulabes** means keeping clean of, keeping from, Micah 7:2+ = "The **godly** [Heb - chasid = kind, pious; Lxx = eulabes] has perished from the earth"). Luke describes other **devout** men below:

> Luke 2:25 And there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; and this man was righteous and **devout**, looking for the consolation of Israel; and the Holy Spirit was upon him.
>
> Acts 2:5+ Now there were Jews living in Jerusalem, **devout** men from every nation under heaven.
>
> Acts 8:2+ Some **devout** men buried Stephen, and made loud lamentation over him.
>
> Acts 22:12+ "A certain Ananias, a man who was **devout** by the standard of the Law, and well spoken of by all the Jews who lived there,

Looking (waiting)(4327)(**prosdechomai** from **pros** = in compound Greek words implies motion or direction toward + **dechomai** [word study] = a deliberate and ready reception) means to accept favorably, to receive one into intercourse/companionship, to give access to oneself or receive to oneself. Prosdechomai means to receive one coming from some place and so to welcome with friendliness (Ro 16:2+, Phil 2:29+). This great Greek verb describes one who is waiting for something (in the present context **Someone**) with a sense of expectancy (Take a moment to ponder the similar uses of **prosdechomai** - Mk 15:43 ("Joseph of Arimathea came, a prominent member of the Council, who himself was **waiting for** the kingdom of God"), Luke 2:25, Lk 2:38+, Lk 12:36+, Lk 23:51+, Acts 23:21+, Titus 2:13+,Jude 1:21+).

> **THOUGHT** - Does this verb describe your life beloved? If not what "earthly cargo" do you need to jettison in order to assure a safe voyage and an "abundant" arrival at port (see 2 Pe 1:10,11+, He 6:19, 20+, 2 Cor 5:10+)? In Isaiah 49:3 Jehovah says "Those who hopefully wait for Me will not be put to shame."

The root verb **dechomai** means to accept deliberately and readily, receive kindly and so to take to oneself what is presented or brought by another. It means to welcome as a teacher, a friend, or a guest into one's house. The word describes accepting persons with open arms, minds, and hearts, even going beyond normally expected gracious hospitality. The term was often used of welcoming honored guests and meeting their needs with special attention and kindness.

Prosdechomai is used of things future, in the sense of expecting and with the meaning of accepting. This verb is virtually always is found in the **middle voice** conveying reflexive action (action directed or turned back on **self**) which means that one receives to one's **self** or gives another access to one's **self**.

As alluded to in the introductory comments on this passage, prosdechomai is in the **present tense** which calls for our **looking** to be our **lifestyle**!

> **THOUGHT** - Are you looking for Him? If you are looking at the visible things, the temporal things (2 Co 4:18+) of this passing world (1 Jn 2:17+), you can be sure that your ***looking*** (for Him = Second Coming) will be a bit ***lacking***! As an aside the only way we can be continually looking for Jesus is by relying on the filling and empowering of the Spirit of Jesus Whose role is to point us to the Son, to glorify the Son (John 16:14)!

We need more men like **G Campbell Morgan** who said "I never begin my work in the morning without thinking that perhaps he may interrupt my work and begin his own. I am not looking for death, I am looking for Him." (**Amen**!) How would my daily choices change if I lived with what I like to call "vertical vision" (in contrast to "horizontal vision" -- looking at the things of the world [horizontal] rather than the things above [vertical])?

Adoniram Judson alluded to living expectantly in light of His **imminent** return when he wrote that "A life once spent is irrevocable. It will remain to be contemplated through eternity. The same may be said of each day. When it is once past, it is gone forever. All the marks which we put upon it, it will exhibit forever. Each day will not only be a witness of our conduct, but will affect our everlasting destiny. How shall we then wish to see each day marked with usefulness?! It is too late to mend the days that are past. The future is in our power.

> Let us, then, each morning,
> resolve to send the day into eternity
> in such a garb as we shall wish it to wear forever.

> **THOUGHT - Beloved**, if you are struggling with the cost you might have to pay to be one of God's winning runners, or simply struggling with God's will for your life, struggling with what to do with your time, struggling with how you should live in these last days, struggling with whether you are really looking forward to that moment in eternity when you will stand fully revealed before your Lord, then **you cannot afford not to watch** the following video by John Piper (click title to watch Dr Piper's 46 minute video = Don't Waste Your

Life. You can also download a free copy of John Piper's book Don't Waste Your Life (also has a study guide)

Moulton-Milligan have this secular use of **prosdechomai** "I am waiting for the 450 drachma you have given to Radanus." (Comment: We can probably all identify with this person's anticipation of being repaid!)

If we are to be looking for Christ to return at any time, living in light of its imminency, such an "uplook outlook" should be a powerful incentive to spur us on to fight the good fight necessary for godly living and bold witnessing. Note the emphasis is that we are to be looking for the Christ and not for the Antichrist, for a one world government or for any other supernatural sign. Beloved, our Bridegroom's coming is imminent, and no prophetic event is required to precede His sure return (**See related topics** Imminency; Another discussion on imminency). **Maranatha** (Our Lord, come! 1 Cor 16:22).

THOUGHT - Is that my mindset? Do my day to day choices reflect the reality of an expectant attitude?

Expectant Looking
Is the "Antidote" for
Apathetic Living

Hudson Taylor put it this way "Since he may come any day, it is well to be ready every day."

The watchers on the mountain
Proclaim the Bridegroom near,
Go, meet Him as He comes,
With Hallelujahs clear!

The marriage feast is waiting,
The gates wide open stand
Up, up! ye heirs of glory,
The Bridegroom is at hand!"

THOUGHT - May we be like the **Psalmist** who cried "My soul waits for the Lord More than the watchmen for the morning; Indeed, more than the watchmen for the morning." (Ps 130:6-note)

Related Resources:

- Watching and Waiting
- Vertical Vision
- Second Coming of Christ
- A Maranatha Mindset
- Maranatha-Our Lord, Come!
- Redeem the Time

Consolation (3874)(**paraklesis** from **pará** = side of + **kaléo** = call) refers to calling to one's side or one's aid which can be for the purpose of providing solace, comfort, consolation, exhortation, encouragement.

BDAG notes that **paraklesis** is used in Luke 2:25 "in an eschatological (prophetic) sense...i.e., Messianic salvation....In later times Jews occasionally called the Messiah himself מְנַחֵם = '**Comforter**'." This is fascinating to me in that this same Hebrew noun (מְנַחֵם= **Comforter**) is used in the lament of the city of Jerusalem after her destruction and the departure of Yahweh from the Temple (final destruction by Babylon in 586 BC). In this tragic setting the Spirit inspires Jeremiah to record these words as if spoken by the desolate city ""For these things I weep; My eyes run down with water; Because far from me is a **COMFORTER** (מְנַחֵם; Lxx = parakaleo which is in same word family as paraklesis), One who restores my soul. My children are desolate Because the enemy has prevailed." (Lam 1:16, cp similar sentiment in Lam 1:2) It is as if Simeon picks up the centuries old lament of ancient Jerusalem as he daily scans the horizon in search of the **Comforter**!

As an aside we do well to recall that all of Scripture is actually a **paraklesis**, an exhortation, admonition, comfort or encouragement for as Paul wrote "whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the **encouragement of the Scriptures** we might have hope." (Ro. 15:4+).

We also see a foreshadowing of this future comfort (and Comforter) in the prophecy of Isaiah "Comfort, O comfort My people," says your God.

The Lxx of comfort...comfort is the verb parakaleo. Clearly God's heart to His people Israel is to send them comfort and how better than to send the comfort in the form of the Comforter Himself, the Messiah. And as shown in the context of Luke 2, Simeon was

looking eagerly for the consolation that only the Messiah Himself could provide.

The Godly "Senior Saint" (Simeon, Luke 2:25-32)

1. His death was permitted by God
2. His death followed a godly life of faithful service
3. His death meant peace—he had seen the Savior!

1. Look at his eyes: a promise was fulfilled; he saw Jesus
2. Look at his lips: he praises the Sovereign Lord
3. Look at his heart—he is experiencing God's peace

I love C H Spurgeon's sermon entitled "**Simeon**" based on Luke 2:25 and I would strongly recommend clicking here and reading the entire message. Here is an excerpt from his introduction:

WHAT a biography of a man! How short, and yet how complete!

We have seen biographies so prolix, that full one half is nonsense, and much of the other half too vapid to be worth reading. We have seen large volumes spun out of men's letters. Writing desks have been broken open, and private diaries exposed to the world. Now-a-days, if a man is a little celebrated, his signature, the house in which he was born, the place where he dines, and everything else, is thought worthy of public notice. So soon as he is departed this life, he is embalmed in huge folios, the profit of which rests mainly, I believe, with the publishers, and not with the readers. Short biographies are the best, which give a concise and exact account of the whole man. What do we care about what Simeon did—where he was born, where he was married, what street he used to walk through, or what coloured coat he wore? We have a very concise account of his history, and that is enough.

His "**name was Simeon**;" he lived "in Jerusalem;" "the same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was upon him."

Beloved, that is enough of a biography for any one of us. If, when we die, so much as this can be said of us—

- our **name**—
- our **business**, "waiting for the consolation of Israel"—
- our **character**, "just and devout"—
- our **companionship**, having the Holy Ghost upon us—

that will be sufficient to hand us down not to time, but to eternity, memorable amongst the just, and estimable amongst all them that are sanctified.

Pause awhile, I beseech you, and contemplate Simeon's character. The Holy Ghost thought it worthy of notice, since he has put a "**behold**" in the sentence. "**Behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon**." He doth not say, "**Behold**, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was king Herod;" he doth not say, "**Behold**, there was a man in Jerusalem, who was high priest;" but, "**Behold**!"—turn aside here, for the sight is so rare, you may never see such a thing again so long as you live; here is a perfect marvel; "**Behold**," there was one man in Jerusalem who was "just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel; and the Holy Ghost was upon him." His character is summed up in two words—"**just and devout.**"

- "**Just**"—that is his character before men.
- "**Devout**"—that is his character before God.

He was "**just**." Was he a father? He did not provoke his children to anger, lest they should be discouraged. Was he a master? He gave unto his servants that which was just and equal, knowing that he also had his Master in heaven. Was he a citizen? He rendered obedience unto the powers that then were, submitting himself to the ordinances of man for the Lord's sake. Was he a merchant? He overreached in no transaction, but providing things honest in the sight of all men, he honoured God in his common business habits. Was he a servant? Then he did not render eye-service, as a man-pleaser, but in singleness of heart he served the Lord. If, as is very probable, he was one of the teachers of the Jews, then he was faithful; he spoke what he knew to be the Word of God, although it might not be for his gain, and would not, like the other shepherds, turn aside to speak error, for the sake of filthy lucre.

- **Before men he was just. But that is only half a good man's character.**

There are many who say, "I am just and upright; I never robbed a man in my life; I pay twenty shillings in the pound; and if anybody

can find fault with my character, let him speak. Am I not just? But as for your religion," such a one will say, "I do not care about it; I think it cant." Sir, you have only one feature of a good man, and that the smallest. You do good towards man, but not towards God; you do not rob your fellow, but you rob your Maker. "Will a man rob God?" Yes, and think far less of it than he would if he robbed man. He who robs man is called a villain; he who robs God is often called a gentleman. Simeon had both features of a Christian.

He was a "**just** man," and he was also "**devout**." Mark, it does not say he was a just man and religious. A man may be very religious, and yet he may not be devout. Religion, you know, as the term is used, consists very much in outward observances; godliness and devotion consist in the inward life and action arising from the inner spring of true consecration. It does not say here that Simeon was a religious man, for that he might have been, and yet have been a Pharisee, a hypocrite, a mere professor. But no; he was a "**devout**" man.

- He valued the "outward and visible sign," but he possessed the "inward and spiritual grace."

Therefore he is called "**a just man and devout**." "**Behold**!" says the Holy Ghost. "**Behold**!" for it is a rarity! Come ye here, ye Christians of the present day! Many of you are **just**, but ye are not **devout**; and some of you pretend to be **devout**, but ye are not **just**.

- **The just and the devout together make up the perfection of the godly man**
- **Simeon was "a just man and devout."** (See complete sermon - "**Simeon**")

Simeon A Hidden One Luke 2:25-32 James Smith From Handfuls of Purpose

"My mother's grave my Sinai was,
But light, not lightning, was the cause
That won me from my unbelief,
And staunch'd an ageing father's grief;
Softly my childhood's prayer returned,
And my old faith within me burned."

Simeon seems to have been one of the Lord's hidden ones, who, under the guidance of God, calmly and quietly served Him in waiting. But the hidden one is here brought into light. He has prayed in secret, he is now rewarded openly.

1. See his holy character.

> **a. He was just and devout (Luke 2:25)**. Just in his dealings with men, and devout in his dealings with God. Righteous and holy. These are the two sides of a Christian life, they must be equally honest and true.
>
> **b. He waited for the consolation of Israel.** He waited and prayed because he believed. This dear old man of God had no faith in any other means or efforts to comfort Israel than the coming of the King. This is still Israel's hope, for "the Lord shall comfort Zion" (Isa 51:3). His waiting was rewarded; his hope was fulfilled. "They shall not be ashamed that wait for Me" (Isa 49:23). Wait on the Lord!
>
> **c. He was endued with the Spirit.** "The Holy Ghost was upon him." There is always a very vital connection between waiting on the Lord and being endued with power (Act 2:1-4). The effect of the Holy Spirit resting upon Him was twofold: **1. He was taught.** It was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. **2. He was led.** "He came by the Spirit into the temple" (Luke 2:27). Every Spirit-possessed one has the things of Christ revealed to him or her, and will be led by the Spirit. It may simplify the matter to reverse the order here: (1) Be filled with the Spirit, then you will (2) be willing to wait on and for the Lord; and then (3) you will be able to live a just and devout life before God and men, being taught of God and led by the Spirit.

2. Hear his joyful testimony. His is indeed a striking attitude as he stands with the infant Saviour in those arms so long outstretched in prayer and patient waiting. Who can refrain from giving a glowing testimony when the arms of their faith have been filled with the personal Saviour? He blesses God as one whose life had now been fully satisfied with his gift. Crowned with his honour, and ready to depart in peace. Such is always the satisfying power of Jesus Christ when received by faith. He testifies of-

> **a. Christ as the Salvation of God.** "Mine eyes have seen Thy salvation" (Luke 2:30). Beautiful is the title thus given to Jesus. "Thy Salvation." God's great love, mercy, and power united to redeem and bless us in the person of His Son. This was the making bare of the arm of the Lord for salvation (Isa 52:10). This naked arm

reveals, if we might so put it, the strong and mighty saving muscle of Jehovah. "O arm of the Lord, awake, awake!" What else but the living Christ in our hearts will ever fit us for departing in peace?

b. Christ as the Light of the Gentiles (Luke 2:32). "As a revelation to the nations" (Newberry). Christ is God's revealed Light to the nations of the earth. With regard to the character of God and the way of salvation there is no other light. All else is but the light of sin-blinded reason, which is only supposition or superstition. "I am the Light of the World." (Jn 8:12) Salvation is a coming out of darkness into His marvellous light. (1Pe 2:9) The sparks of our own making will never turn night into day (Isa 9:2). No more can our own work save us. The presence of Christ with us and in us is as Heaven's own searchlight turned upon the Father that we may see Him, and turned upon ourselves, upon sin, death, and eternity that we might see these, as it were, with His eyes. "Walk in the light" (1Jn 1:7).

c. Christ as the Glory of Israel (Luke 2:32). This is the order revealed by the Holy Ghost to Simeon. Christ was to be first a light to the Gentiles, after that the glory of His people Israel. Was there another in Israel who believed that the Christ would first bless the Gentile nations before He would be glorified among His own ancient people? The Holy Spirit could make no mistake. The Messiah would be cut off, numbered with transgressors. **But He will come again, not as a sin-offering, but as the King of Israel, with great power and glory**. They shall mourn because of Him (having crucified Him) (SEE Zechariah 12:10+), but the glory of the Lord will then have arisen upon them. Where the glorified One is there will be glory, for glory always dwells in Immanuel's land, whether in earth or in Heaven, in Time, or Eternity. Christ is our Salvation; Christ is our Light; Christ is our Glory. To Him be the praise.

John MacArthur has an excellent summary of the **role of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament** - A common misconception about the Holy Spirit is that His ministry in the lives of God's people began on the day of Pentecost. That is not the case, however. All those who were saved before the cross and Pentecost were saved in the same way as those who were saved afterward—by grace through faith (Eph. 2:8–9). And **no sinner**, "dead in … trespasses and sins" (Eph. 2:1), **can come to repentance and faith apart from the work of the Holy Spirit.** "The heart is more deceitful than all else," wrote Jeremiah, "and is desperately sick; who can understand it?" (Jer. 17:9). Sinners can no more change their hearts by their own efforts than people can change their skin color, or animals the pattern of their fur (Jer. 13:23). "Who can say, 'I have cleansed my heart, I am pure from my sin'?" Solomon asked rhetorically (Pr. 20:9). The obvious answer is no one, since "there is none righteous, not even one; there is none who understands, there is none who seeks for God; all have turned aside, together they have become useless; there is none who does good, there is not even one" (Ro 3:10–12; cf. Job 15:14; 1Ki 8:46; Eccl 7:20; Ro 3:23). **The Holy Spirit convicted people in the Old Testament of their sin, prompted repentance, gave life, elicited faith, and drew them to God**. **Apart from His work, no person in any age can ever be justified, sanctified, empowered for service and witness, understand Scripture, or pray in the will of God.** There is, however, a new dimension to the Spirit's work in the lives of believers after Pentecost. As Jesus told the disciples in John 14:17 concerning the increased degree of the Spirit's ministry to them, "He abides **with** you and will be **in** you." Under the old covenant, the Spirit was present in power and person **WITH** believers. But under the New covenant, His presence was **IN** those who believed and is expressed in an unprecedented way (cf. Ezek. 36:26–27-note). There was to come for believers a giving of the Spirit by which unique power would be provided for ministry and evangelism. That happened on the day of Pentecost, when the Spirit was given to believers in a new fullness that became normative for all believers since (Rom. 8:9; 1 Cor. 12:13). Luke's note that **the Holy Spirit was UPON** Simeon reflects the Spirit's pre-Pentecost empowering of people to serve and speak for God (cf. Ex 31:2–3; Nu 11:25; Nu 27:18; Jdg. 3:9–10; Jdg 11:29; Jdg 13:24–25; Jdg 14:6, 19; Jdg 15:14; 1Sa 16:13; 2Chr. 15:1; 2Chr 20:14–17; 2Chr 24:20; Mic. 3:8; Zech. 7:12). He has already recorded the Holy Spirit's filling of John the Baptist (Luke 1:15-note), Elizabeth (Luke 1:41-note), and Zacharias (Luke 1:67-note). (See context in Luke Commentary)

THOUGHT - In the examples below sometimes the Holy Spirit is **IN** an individual and other times He is **UPON** them. The point is that the Spirit is necessary for supernatural work for God in both testaments! And whether He was on or in the OT saints is not the issue. The vital truth is that He was present. And even when the Spirit was **IN** OT saints, it was not a permanent indwelling as is our incredible gift in the New Covenant! Do we really grasp the value and our great need of the Father's incredible gift? Are you daily seeking to be filled with His Spirit (Eph 5:18+) before you begin your journey into the crooked and perverse generation (Php 2:15+)? Are you quick to confess and repent so that you do not grieve or quench the Spirit (1Th 5:19+, Pr 28:13+, 1Jn 1:9+, 1Jn 1:7+, Eph 4:30+) and in effect "throw water of His flame" in your heart? The modern church needs to return to the pattern of the church of Acts where clearly we see that they continually manifested their need for and empowerment by the Holy Spirit. We can do no less, lest we surely accomplish less for God's Kingdom and His Glory!

Related Resources:

- The Holy Spirit-Walking Like Jesus Walked! - AN UNDERSTANDING OF THIS TRUTH CAN BE LIFE CHANGING!
- A Spirit Filled Church

EXAMPLES OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

Exodus 31:2-3 “See, I have called by name Bezalel, the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah. 3 “I have **filled him with the Spirit of God** in wisdom, in understanding, in knowledge, and in all [kinds of] craftsmanship,

Numbers 11:25 Then the LORD came down in the cloud and spoke to him; and **He took of the Spirit who was upon him and placed [Him] upon the seventy elders**. And when the Spirit rested upon them, they prophesied. But they did not do [it] again.

Numbers 27:18 So the LORD said to Moses, “Take **Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is the Spirit**, and lay your hand on him;

Judges 3:9-10 When the sons of Israel cried to the LORD, the LORD raised up a deliverer for the sons of Israel to deliver them, Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb’s younger brother. 10 The **Spirit of the LORD came upon him**, and he judged Israel. When he went out to war, the LORD gave Cushan-rishathaim king of Mesopotamia into his hand, so that he prevailed over Cushan-rishathaim.

Judges 11:29 Now **the Spirit of the LORD came upon Jephthah,** so that he passed through Gilead and Manasseh; then he passed through Mizpah of Gilead, and from Mizpah of Gilead he went on to the sons of Ammon.

Judges 13:24-25 Then the woman gave birth to a son and named him Samson; and the child grew up and the LORD blessed him. 25 And **the Spirit of the LORD began to stir him** in Mahaneh-dan, between Zorah and Eshtaol.

Judges 14:6; 19 **The Spirit of the LORD came upon him mightily**, so that he tore him as one tears a young goat though he had nothing in his hand; but he did not tell his father or mother what he had done....19 **Then the Spirit of the LORD came upon him mightily**, and he went down to Ashkelon and killed thirty of them and took their spoil and gave the changes [of clothes] to those who told the riddle. And his anger burned, and he went up to his father’s house.

Judges 15:14 When he came to Lehi, the Philistines shouted as they met him. **And the Spirit of the LORD came upon him mightily** so that the ropes that were on his arms were as flax that is burned with fire, and his bonds dropped from his hands.

1 Samuel 16:13 Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers; **and the Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon David** from that day forward. And Samuel arose and went to Ramah.

2 Chronicles 15:1 Now **the Spirit of God came on Azariah** the son of Oded, 2 and he went out to meet Asa and said to him, “Listen to me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin: the LORD is with you when you are with Him. And if you seek Him, He will let you find Him; but if you forsake Him, He will forsake you.

2 Chronicles 20:14-17 Then in the midst of the assembly **the Spirit of the LORD came upon Jahaziel** the son of Zechariah, the son of Benaiah, the son of Jeiel, the son of Mattaniah, the Levite of the sons of Asaph; 15 and he said, “Listen, all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem and King Jehoshaphat: thus says the LORD to you, ‘Do not fear or be dismayed because of this great multitude, for the battle is not yours but God’s. 16 ‘Tomorrow go down against them. Behold, they will come up by the ascent of Ziz, and you will find them at the end of the valley in front of the wilderness of Jeruel. 17 ‘You [need] not fight in this [battle;] station yourselves, stand and see the salvation of the LORD on your behalf, O Judah and Jerusalem.’ Do not fear or be dismayed; tomorrow go out to face them, for the LORD is with you.”

2 Chronicles 24:20 Then **the Spirit of God came on Zechariah the son of Jehoiada the priest;** and he stood above the people and said to them, “Thus God has said, ‘Why do you transgress the commandments of the LORD and do not prosper? Because you have forsaken the LORD, He has also forsaken you.’”

Micah 3:8 On the other hand **I am filled with power– With the Spirit of the LORD- And with justice and courag**e To make known to Jacob his rebellious act, Even to Israel his sin.

Zechariah 7:12 “They made their hearts [like] flint so that they could not hear the law and the words which **the LORD of hosts had sent by His Spirit through the former prophets**; therefore great wrath came from the LORD of hosts.

Luke 2:26 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.

- **it** : Ps 25:14 Am 3:7
- **the Lord's**: Ps 2:2,6 Isa 61:1 Da 9:24-26 Joh 1:41 4:29 20:31 Ac 2:36 9:20 Ac 10:38 17:3 Heb 1:8,9
- Luke 2 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- Luke 2:25-35 The Gospel According to Simeon - Dr Steven Lawson - excellent

CSB It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he saw the Lord's Messiah.

ESV 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.

GWN and had told him that he wouldn't die until he had seen the Messiah, whom the Lord would send.

KJV And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ.

NET It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Christ.

NAB It had been revealed to him by the holy Spirit that he should not see death before he had seen the Messiah of the Lord.

NIV It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Christ.

NLT and had revealed to him that he would not die until he had seen the Lord's Messiah.

NJB It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death until he had set eyes on the Christ of the Lord.

YLT and it hath been divinely told him by the Holy Spirit -- not to see death before he may see the Christ of the Lord.

NIRV The Spirit had told Simeon that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Christ.

GOD PROMISES SIMEON
HE WILL SEE THE MESSIAH

It had been revealed (chrematizo) **to Simeon** - How? We do not know exactly, but we do know this truth pointing to Jesus was **revealed** by the **Spirit of Truth** (His Name - Jn 14:17, 15:26, 16:13) Who Luke had just described as **UPON HIM** (Lk 2:25) and Whose role it is to glorify Jesus (Jn 16:14). The same verb for **revealed** is used in a somewhat negative context in Mt 2:12+ of the magi who "**having been warned** by God in a dream not to return to Herod...left for their own country by another way."**Revealed** is in the perfect tense, indicating it stood **revealed**, it had been **revealed** at some point in time in the past and the revelation stood. **Marvin Vincent** adds an interesting thought that "The word (**Revealed**) here implies that the revelation to Simeon had been given in answer to prayer."

THOUGHT - Have you ever asked yourself, “If God were to withdraw His Holy Spirit from me, would I even notice the difference?” Would your week have gone any differently than it did if the Spirit had pulled out? To walk by the Spirit means to depend on Him consciously for everything you do. You depend on Him to resist temptation. You ask Him for insight into His Word. You rely on Him for the right attitude in the midst of trials. You seek Him for wisdom in difficult decisions. When you live in the power of the Holy Spirit, your life is marked by hope in God. (Ro 15:13+)

Spurgeon - That which the Holy Ghost reveals will assuredly come to pass, as it did in the experience of old Simeon (Luke

Exposition)

See death (thanatos) (Horao ton thanatos) - **Bengel** calls the phrase "not **SEE** death before he had **SEEN** the Lord's anointed" a "**sweet antithesis!**" Sweet indeed, for Simeon would not see death until he saw the One Who would conquer death forever! The phrase "**see** death" is a Hebraism for to die. To "**taste**" of death, was also a common way among the Hebrews of expressing death. As the psalmist asked in one of the more poignant questions in all the Bible - "What man can live and not **see death**? Can he deliver his soul from the power of Sheol? Selah." (Ps 89:48) Answer? No. Only Christ can deliver from eternal death.

> **THOUGHT** - But this revelation is now given to every man, that he need not taste of **death** until, by the eye of faith, he may **see** the Christ of God. He is offered freely. He has come. He waits to manifest Himself to the world, and He is not willing that any should perish (2Pe 3:9). To us also it will be as great a privilege in our dying hours to have seen Christ by faith as it was to Simeon. **It will be the only thing that can support us then - the only thing that will enable us to depart in peace**. (Barnes) This begs the question dear reader - Have you "SEEN" Christ with eyes of faith, even as did **C H Spurgeon** one stormy winter night when God opened the eyes of his heart to hear and respond to God's call "**Look** unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else." (See C.H.Spurgeon's Testimony).

Ryle - We see in the song of Simeon how completely a believer can be delivered from the fear of death; “Lord,” says old Simeon, “now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace.” He speaks like one for whom the grave has lost its terrors, and the world its charms. He desires to be released from the miseries of this pilgrim-state of existence, and to be allowed to go home. He is willing to be “absent from the body and present with the Lord.” He speaks as one who knows where he is going when he departs this life, and cares not how soon he goes. The change with him will be a change for the better, and he desires that his change may come. What is it that can enable a mortal man to use such language as this? What can deliver us from that “fear of death” to which so many are in bondage? What can take the sting of death away?—There is but one answer to such questions. Nothing but strong faith can do it. Faith laying firm hold on an unseen Saviour,—faith resting on the promises of an unseen God,—faith, and faith only, can enable a man to look death in the face, and say, “I depart in peace.” It is not enough to be weary of pain, and sickness, and ready to submit to anything for the sake of a change. It is not enough to feel indifferent to the world, when we have no more strength to mingle in its business, or enjoy its pleasures. We must have something more than this, if we desire to depart in real peace. We must have faith like old Simeon’s, even that faith which is the gift of God. Without such faith we may die quietly, and there may seem “no bands in our death.” (Psalm 73:4.) But, dying without such faith, we shall never find ourselves at home, when we wake up in another world. (Luke 2)

Spurgeon - You see, dear friends, he was not afraid to die, and he knew that he could not die until he had seen the Messiah. Some of us, if we had a revelation that, on the occurrence of a certain event, we should die, might be filled with alarm or anxiety, but it is not so with holy Simeon; he rather longs to depart in peace. He looks upon the coming of “the Lord’s Christ” with great joy, because now he knows the battle of life for him will soon be over, and that he will enter into his victory. (Luke Exposition)

DO I HAVE AN "MM"?
A "MESSIAH MINDSET"

Before he had seen the Lord's (kurios) **Christ** (Christos) - **The Lord's Christ** or the Lord's Anointed. Simeon had already seen **the Lord's Christ** with eyes of faith, but soon would see Him with physical sight. That is a sure promise to us also dear child of God (1 Jn 3:1+) for John writes "Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because **we will see Him just as He is**." (1 Jn 3:2+). **Simeon** "must have lived in a constant state of joyous expectation, knowing that each new day might bring the Messiah he longed to see. That knowledge must also have had a sobering effect on him, motivating him to lead a godly life (cf 1 Jn 3:3+)." (MacArthur)

> **THOUGHT** - Simeon's joyous state of expectation, his "**Messiah mindset**" begs the question of us "What effect does it have on our choices that each new day might be the day of Messiah's return and if not is for sure one day closer to His glorious return?" Does Who I am looking for, have any transformative impact on Who I am living for? It should!

The Lord's (kurios) **Christ** (Christos) **-** Notice the three members of the Trinity in Lk 2:25-26. Here the **Lord** refers to the Father and of course **Christ** to the Son. The Messiah is called the Lord's Christ in Psalm 2:2 where the psalmist records "The kings of the earth take their stand And the rulers take counsel together Against the **LORD** and against **His Anointed** (Lxx = Christos)."

> **THOUGHT** - God had promised Simeon that he would not die until he saw the Messiah at His first coming and God was true to His promise. God has promised us beloved that we will see the Messiah either when we die or at His Second Coming and He will again be true to His promise (cp Titus 1:2+)! Simeon saw Him for a short time. We shall see Him forever. The tragedy is that unbelievers will get to see the Messiah for a short time

(and sadly this will make hell an even more emotionally painful tragedy for them!) for John writes "BEHOLD, HE IS COMING WITH THE CLOUDS, and **every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him; and all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him.** So it is to be. Amen." (Rev 1:7-note)

Had been revealed (5537)(**chrematizo** from **chrema** = an affair, business) in the NT means to impart a divine message (an injunction or warning). **Chrematizo** in this sense speaks of a divine oracle or declaration as here in (Lk 2:26) and in other contexts speaks of a divine warning (He 12:25, 8:5, Mt 2:12, 22). In a second usage in the NT chrematizo means to bear a title and so to be called as in Acts 11:26 where "the disciples were first called Christians". (used with this sense in Ro 7:3). In the Greek papyri **chrematizo** meant to transact business, of official pronouncements by magistrates and of a royal reply to a petition as well as an answer of an oracle or as describing a revelation from a lifeless "god." Josephus uses **chrematizo** in the sense of to receive a response from God.

Death (2288)(**thanatos**) is a cessation of all vital functions and thus is the end of life on earth (as we know it).**Death** speaks of **separation**, the separation of the soul from the body and the end of earthly life. Spiritual death is separation from the life of God not only in this life but forever in the life to come unless they are born again. The first use of **Thanatos** in the Septuagint is in a well known promise from God "you shall surely die (Lxx = thanatos apothnesko)." (Ge 2:17) followed by the second use in the deceptive lie by Satan "You surely shall not die (thanatos apothnesko)!" (Ge 3:4) In 1Jn 2:11 associates this spiritual **death** with **darkness** explaining that "the one who hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going because the darkness has blinded his eyes."

Christ (5547)(**Christos** from **chrio** = to rub or anoint, consecrate to an office) means one who has been anointed, symbolizing appointment to a task. The majority of the NT uses refer to Jesus (exceptions = "false Christs" - Mt 24:24, Mk 13:22). In Acts 10:38+ we see the root verb **chrio** used by Luke to describe Jesus' powerful ministry "You know of Jesus of Nazareth, how God**anointed** Him with the Holy Spirit and with power, and how He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him." **Christos** was the great confession of Peter when Jesus "said to them (His disciples), "But who do you say that I am?" And Peter answered and said, "The **Christ** of God."" (Lk 9:20+)

Christos is translated in the **NAS 1995 edition** as **Christ** (516x), **Christ's** (11x) and **Messiah** (4x - Mt 1:1, 16, 17, 2:4). The NIV and ESV never translate **Christos** as Messiah, but always as Christ. The Holman Christian Standard Bible has an interesting approach and translates **Christos** as **Messiah** many times depending on the context (**see explanatory note**) The NLT paraphrase translates **Christos** as Messiah over 80 times. The NET translates **Christos** as **Messiah** in Jn 4:29, Acts 3:20, Eph 2:12.

Related Resources:

- Messiah - Anointed One
- messias = Messiah

Luke 2:27 And he came in the Spirit into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to carry out for Him the custom of the Law,

NET So Simeon, directed by the Spirit, came into the temple courts, and when the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what was customary according to the law,

GNT κα λθεν ν τ πνε ματι ε ς τ ερ ν· κα ν τ ε σαγαγε ν το ς γονε ς τ παιδ ον ησο ν το ποι σαι α το ς κατ τ ε θισμ νον το ν μου περ α το

NLT That day the Spirit led him to the Temple. So when Mary and Joseph came to present the baby Jesus to the Lord as the law required,

KJV And he came by the Spirit into the temple: and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him after the custom of the law,

ESV And he came in 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,

NIV Moved by the Spirit, he went into the temple courts. When the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what the custom of the Law required,

ASV And he came in the Spirit into the temple: and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, that they might do concerning him after the custom of the law,

CSB Guided by the Spirit, he entered the temple complex. When the parents brought in the child Jesus to perform for Him what was customary under the law,

- **he came in the Spirit into the temple** Lu 4:1 Mt 4:1 Ac 8:29 10:19 11:12 16:7 Rev 1:10 17:3
- **the parents**: Lu 2:41,48,51
- **to carry out for Him**: Lu 2:22
- Luke 2 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- Luke 2:25-35 The Gospel According to Simeon - Dr Steven Lawson - excellent

Women's Court - Where Mary Could Enter
(CLICK ANOTHER MODEL OF TEMPLE)

BEHOLD: A MAN
IN THE SPIRIT

And he came in the Spirit into the temple- Literally the text reads, "In the Spirit he came into the temple." **John Gill** says the Spirit "moved upon him, and influenced and directed him, to go thither at that very time." **Ellicott** says Simeon was "in a spiritual state in which the power of the Divine Spirit was the pervading element." This indicates Simeon had willing surrendered his will to the will of God! (Have you? Have I?) The HCSB's "guided by the Spirit" would seem to be an accurate paraphrase. The identical phrase **in the Spirit** is used by John in the **Revelation of Jesus Christ** (Rev. 1:10; Rev. 4:2; Rev. 17:3; Rev. 21:10, cf the Spirit's leading in Ezek 8:3, Lk 4:1, Mt 4:1) which is fascinating for here Simeon in the Spirit will soon also experience a **literal revelation of Jesus Christ**! The Temple is hieron referring to the entire Temple complex not naos which is the inner holy sanctuary. Both the **NET** and **NIV** have **into the Temple courts** for the NAS phase **into the temple**. The **temple courts** (see diagram above) would refer to the larger temple area. Simeon was either in the court of the Gentiles (#12 in the diagram) or the court of women (#9 in the diagram), either of which Mary would be allowed to enter by Jewish regulations. The time is 41 days after the birth of Jesus (purification after birth took 40 days) as Joseph and Mary came to offer a burnt and sin offering at the Temple because of her ceremonial uncleanness at the deliverance of her first born Son.

> **THOUGHT** - Notice God's perfect timing with the phrase **when the parents brought in the child**, reflecting His absolute sovereign control of the timing of these seemingly random events (with God there are NO random or chance events!) -- the **Spirit** brings Simeon **into the Temple** the very time Joseph and Mary bring Jesus **into the Temple**! Why are we so fearful of keeping **in step with the Spirit** (Gal 5:25NIV+)? After all, He desires only our ultimate good and God's great glory!

In the Spirit - This is the third time the Holy Spirit is mentioned associated with Simeon (and they are no other uses in Luke 2). Clearly this man was a Spirit filled, Spirit controlled man (Eph 5:18+). He came in in in the Spirit's power and leading. Simeon was under the influence of the Holy Spirit and guided by the Spirit. And beloved we too should be continually **IN THE SPIRIT** for Paul commands you and I to "**let the Holy Spirit guide your lives** Then you won't be doing what your sinful nature craves. (Gal 5:16NLT+) (See note below on "IN THE SPIRIT")

> **OCCURRENCES OF IN THE SPIRIT** - Matt. 22:43; Lk. 1:17; Lk. 2:27; Acts 19:21; Rom. 8:9; 1 Co. 6:11; 1 Co. 14:16; Eph. 2:22; Eph. 3:5; Eph. 4:23; Eph. 6:18; Phil. 3:3; Col. 1:8; 1 Tim. 3:16; 1 Pet. 3:18; 1 Pet. 4:6; Rev. 1:10; Rev. 4:2; Rev. 17:3; Rev. 21:10

Spurgeon - Men who have the Spirit will be led by the Spirit. Simeon came into the temple at the right moment. Just when a young man was entering, with his wife and new-born child, "He came by the Spirit into the temple." He came in, I say, at the right time. Did ever anybody, who was not led by the Spirit, find Christ? Somebody has come in here tonight, and he does not know why he has come; but he has been led here by the Spirit that he may see Jesus, and may have such a sight of him as shall be his salvation. God grant that it may be proved that many an aged Simeon has traveled here this Sabbath night, led by the Spirit for this purpose, to find the Saviour in his own house! (Luke Exposition)

Alexander Maclaren - Think of the old man, waiting there in the Sanctuary, told by God that he was thus about to have the fulfilment of his life-long desire, and yet probably not knowing what kind of a shape the fulfilment would take. There is no reason to believe that he knew he was to see an infant; and he waits. And presently a peasant woman comes in with a child in her arms, and there arises in his soul the voice 'Anoint Him! for this is He!' And so, whether he expected such a vision or no, he takes the Child in his arms, and says, 'Lord! Now, now !-after all these years of waiting-lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace.'

Related Resource:

- Praying in the Spirit

In Acts 19:21 "Paul purposed **in the Spirit** to go to Jerusalem." John Trapp writes that "By the instinct of the Holy Spirit, his counselor and conduct, by whom all his actions were moderated. So he went bound in the spirit, Acts 20:22. So Simeon came by the spirit into the temple, Luk 2:27. And so still, the steps of every good man are ordered by the Lord, Ps 37:23."

John Butler on **He came in the Spirit** - Simeon came to the Temple by the leading of the Holy Spirit. It was providential. It was at the same time that the Christ child was brought to the temple to do after the custom of the law for a new born boy. The Spirit of God knows more than we do and it behooves us to submit to Him if we want providence to work in our favor. Here the leading was worship. God has blessings for us if we will show up to worship. The message, the lesson will often be just what we need to help us along life's way. Providence will be in your favor when you follow the leading of the Holy Spirit. Especially will providence be in your favor when you follow the Spirit to worship the Lord. Mankind misses so much when they ignore the leading of the Spirit to worship. Some complain that nothing ever seems to work out for them. Maybe the answer to their problem is right here. They do not follow the Spirit when He leads them to church. (Sermon Starters)

A B Simpson on **came in the Spirit** - "Such a walk will enable us to meet the providences of God as they come to us in victory, and to maintain the perfect harmony between our inward life and the outward leadings of His own. We have some beautiful examples of the transcendent importance of this walking in the Spirit, in connection with the conjunctures of circumstances on which so much often hangs. There never was a moment in human history on which more depended than that when the infant Christ was first brought into the Temple. What an honor and privilege it was to be there and catch the first glimpse of His blessed face, and even hold in the embrace of human arms the Gift of ages! Yet that was the honor of two aged pilgrims who were walking in the Spirit. **Simeon** and **Anna**, led of the Holy Ghost, came in at that very moment into the Temple. Led of God unerringly, and walking step by step with Him (cp Gal 5:25NIV-note), they were enabled to meet Him in this glorious opportunity, and be the first heralds of His coming. No wonder the aged Simeon, as he took him in his arms, could ask no more on earth: "Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation." (Walking in the Spirit)

The phrase **in the Spirit** is found in 19 passages, all in the New Testament:

> Matthew 22:43 He said to them, "Then how does David **in the Spirit** call Him 'Lord,' saying,
>
> Luke 2:27 And he came **in the Spirit** into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to carry out for Him the custom of the Law,
>
> Romans 8:9 However, you are not in the flesh but **in the Spirit**, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him.
>
> 1 Corinthians 6:11 Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and **in the Spirit of our God.**
>
> Ephesians 2:22 in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God **in the Spirit.**
>
> Ephesians 3:5 which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets **in the Spirit;**
>
> Ephesians 6:18 With all prayer and petition pray at all times **in the Spirit,** and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints,
>
> Philippians 3:3 for we are the true circumcision, who worship **in the Spirit of God** and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh,
>
> Colossians 1:8 and he also informed us of your love **in the Spirit.**
>
> 1 Timothy 3:16 By common confession, great is the mystery of godliness: He who was revealed in the flesh, Was vindicated **in the Spirit,** Seen by angels, Proclaimed among the nations, Believed on in the world, Taken up in glory.
>
> Revelation 1:10 I was **in the Spirit** on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like the sound of a trumpet,
>
> Revelation 4:2 Immediately I was **in the Spirit;** and behold, a throne was standing in heaven, and One sitting on the throne.
>
> Revelation 17:3 And he carried me away **in the Spirit** into a wilderness; and I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast, full of blasphemous names, having seven heads and ten horns.
>
> Revelation 21:10 And he carried me away **in the Spirit** to a great and high mountain, and showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God,

And when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to carry out for Him the custom of the Law- Note that **when** indicates Simeon was already present having been guided by the Spirit. The parents would have presented the child Jesus to the priest with their offering and the priest would then offer the two turtle doves on behalf of the parents. Whether the priest actually held Jesus is unclear. Note that there is absolutely no evidence that Simeon himself was a priest. This "required that in the case of the firstborn there was a payment of five shekels for "redemption" from priestly service, which could be paid after the first month of the child's life. Forty days after birth, the mother's purification was accomplished." (Criswell)

Living in the Spirit
Galatians 5:25
Wade Horton

INTRODUCTION: Our experience with the Lord should be as the cloud and fire to the Israelites; an ever-present, over-shadowing influence. There are certain privileges and blessings that belong only to those who live in the Spirit.

I. GOD MUST BE WORSHIPED IN THE SPIRIT. John 4:23, 24

A. Jesus told the woman at the well: "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."

B. The only way to worship God in spirit and truth is to be in the Spirit.

C. The Revised Version states, "Who worship in the Spirit of God." It is not a matter of position, place or posture, but in the spirit. We may be pious, solemn and serious in our worship, but all useless unless it is in the spirit.

II. GOD'S VOICE HEARD AND GLORY WITNESSED.

A. In Revelation 1:10, John said, "I was in the Spirit... and heard... a great voice" and saw the Son of man clothed in glory.

B. He saw Him in His glory... those who live in the spirit will continually be enraptured by the glory of God.

III. HEAVENLY AND FUTURE THINGS UNDERSTOOD.

A. Revelation 4:1, 2: "Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter. And immediately I was in the spirit."

B. Must be in the spirit to understand spiritual things. Several times John says in Revelation, "I was in the spirit."

C. The reason things to come are so little understood is because people don't live in the spirit.

D. Paul caught up in the third heaven and heard unspeakable words that were unlawful for a man to utter. 2 Cor. 12:2-5. Those in the spirit hear things the ordinary Christian never hears.

IV. GOD'S POWER SEEN WHILE IN THE SPIRIT.

A. The Lord carried me in the spirit, and set me in a valley of bones. Ezek. 37:1-10. He prophesies and life came back and they stood up. Ezekiel's message had effect.

B. Those in the spirit see God work when others cannot. They can see and feel God's mighty breath.

V. DIVINE STRENGTH AND COMFORT ARE ENJOYED BY THOSE WHO ARE IN THE SPIRIT.

A. Acts 20:22-24: "... behold, I go bound in the spirit... bonds and afflictions abide me. But none of these things move me...."

B. Men in the spirit have a calm and peaceful assurance even under trying circumstances.

C. "God is our refuge.... [we] will not... fear, though the earth be removed." Psa. 46:1, 2.

VI. PROOF OF HIS DWELLING IN US.

A. Romans 8:9: "... in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you."

B. If He does not dwell in you, you cannot live in the spirit. Easy to talk it, but the doing is what is needed.

C. "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" 1 Cor. 3:16.

D. The Spirit does not come to dwell like a candle under a bushel, or as a helpless invalid whose presence cannot be felt or seen on the outside. But as a mighty life-giving and spiritual wonder worker whose presence cannot be hid.

VII. THOSE IN THE SPIRIT CAN RENDER BETTER SERVICE TO THE MASTER.

A. Acts 6:3: "... look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom." In the Spirit and full of the Spirit is the only kind of person God can use.

B. Preaching in the Spirit. 1 Cor. 2:4: "And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power."

C. Teaching in the Spirit. Acts 18:25: Apollos taught "being fervent in the spirit."

D. Singing in the Spirit. 1 Cor. 14:15. "... in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord." Eph. 5:1-9.

E. Praying in the Spirit. Eph. 6:18: "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit." Jude 20: "... praying in the Holy Ghost."

F. Romans 8:26: "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered."

CONCLUSION: Gal. 5:16-note: "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh." The church would run good if we kept ourselves full of the oil of the Spirit.

IN THE SPIRIT
James Smith

Having received the Spirit, and having Him indwelling and filling us, our life is now to be lived "in the Spirit." That is, under His guiding, ever present, almighty overshadowing influence, like the Israelites under the pillar of cloud. From Scripture we observe there are certain privileges and blessings which can only be enjoyed by those who are "in the Spirit." We mention the following—

1. God is to be worshipped.

We worship God in the Spirit (Phil. 3:3). God is a Spirit, and our spirit must worship Him (John 4:24). But that is not all, our spirit must worship in the Spirit of God, or as in the Revised Version, "Who worship in the Spirit of God." We may be serious and solemn in our worship, and yet not be in the Spirit; and if not in the Spirit, then no acceptable worship is given. All such worshippers, no matter how earnest, worship they know not what. In all the churches as well as in Athens, how many there are of whom it might be said, "They are too superstitious."

2. God's voice is heard and His glory witnessed.

I was in the Spirit, and heard behind me a great voice,... and saw the Son of Man clothed in glory" (Rev. 1:10-18). Those who are continually in the Spirit are continually enraptured with the glory of the Lord. Those not in the Spirit may talk fluently about the "voice" and the "glory," but to their own hearts it is all unreal. In the Spirit we hear not the still small voice only as of one speaking from afar and heard with difficulty, but "a great voice as of a trumpet," about which there can be no doubt.

3. Heavenly things are understood.

"Come up hither, and I will show you things,... and immediately I was in the Spirit" (Rev. 4:1, 2). We cannot understand the things of God but by the Spirit of God, for they are spiritually discerned. Then if God would show thee,... immediately you must be in the Spirit. The book of the Revelation of Jesus may be divided into four sections. The first beginning at chap. 1:10; second at chap. 4:2; third at chap. 17:3; fourth at chap. 21:10. At each of these changes in the scene of Revelation, John reminds us that he was "in the Spirit." How else could he understand the great mysteries? How else can we? Is our not being in the Spirit not the chief reason why "the things to come" are so little understood? Paul undoubtedly understood the unspeakable words he heard in Paradise, although it was impossible for him to utter them (2 Cor. 12:4). Every one who is in the Spirit is unspeakably above those who are not.

4. Man's helplessness and God's power are seen.

"The Lord carried me in the Spirit, and set me in the valley of bones;... so I prophesied and they stood up" (Ezek. 37:1-10). It was while he was in the Spirit that he saw how dead and dry the bones were, and when he prophesied so successfully. Those in the Spirit see the need as others cannot, and so have no faith in the mere human remedies, but speak the word as God has commanded (vs. 7-10), and so witness the quickening power of the almighty breath.

5. Divine strength and comfort are enjoyed.

"Behold I go bound in the Spirit," bonds and afflictions abide me, but none of these things move me (Acts 20:22-24). When in the Spirit a man is dwelling in the holy calm and undisturbable element of Heaven, and made strong in the midst of otherwise crushing circumstances. The peace of God keeps his heart. "God is our refuge, we will not fear though the earth be removed. There is a river, the streams whereof make glad" (Psa. 46:1-4).

6. Is the proof of His indwelling in us.

"Ye are in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you" (Rom. 8:9). If the Spirit of God is not abiding in us we cannot live in the Spirit. It is easy to preach the theory of the Spirit's indwelling, but living in the Spirit is the practical manifestation of it. He does not come to dwell in us as a candle under a bushel, or as a helpless invalid whose presence cannot be seen or felt outside, but as a mighty life-quickener and a spiritual wonder-worker, whose presence cannot be hid.

7. All service is to be rendered.

"Look ye out men full of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 6:3). Even for the work of an almoner this was needed. Paul's preaching was in demonstration of the Spirit (1 Cor. 2:4); "Apollos taught, being fervent in the Spirit" (Acts 18:25); all prayer is to be in the Spirit (Eph.

6:18); to be in the Spirit is to be in immediate touch with God, and not to be in direct contact with God is to be out of fellowship, and consequently fruitless (John 15:6).

Luke 2:28 then he took Him into his arms, and blessed God, and said,

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- **took**: Mk 9:36 10:16
- **and**: Lu 2:13,14,20 Lu 1:46,64,68 Ps 32:11 33:1 105:1-3 135:19,20
- Luke 2 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- Luke 2:25-35 The Gospel According to Simeon - Dr Steven Lawson - excellent

Simeon the Godreceiver
by Alexei Yegorov. 1830–40s

BLESSING GOD WHEN JESUS IS REVEALED

Then - Marks sequence or succession in a chain of events (see Time phrases).

It is worth noting that as far as we can discern from Scripture, Simeon was not a priest, and had no "religious credentials" or special authority. But he was a **righteous and devout** man who walked closely with and in the power of the Holy Spirit, Who illuminated to him that this baby was the Savior of the world. Oh, what we miss in our routine days when we fail to walk in the Spirit!

He took (dechomai) **Him into his arms, and blessed** (eulogeo) **God, and said** - Simeon did what Jesus himself was going to do later on (Mk 9:36; Mk 10:16). This has given rise to Simeon being called by the name **Theodokos**, 'the receiver of God! 'Simeon's first response in the Spirit was to speak well of God. A good pattern. And a good indication we are truly "in the Spirit!" It is fitting we bless God when Jesus is revealed to our heart, whether in a sermon, when reading the Bible, etc. That finite, fallen creatures can Bless God is an amazing truth, an amazing gift. Don't let today end without blessing God! Scripture calls us to "*bless God*"! See: Lk 1:64,68, 2:28; Ro 1:25, 9:5; 2 Cor 1:3, 11:31; Eph 1:3; 1 Pet 1:3.

David Guzik makes a good point - Simeon's prophecy was filled with love for his Savior; and he hardly knew Jesus. We who know so much more about Him should love Him even more.

Psalm 103:1-6
A Psalm of David.
Bless the LORD, O my soul,
And all that is within me,
bless His holy name.
Bless the LORD, O my soul,
And forget none of His benefits;
Who pardons all your iniquities,
Who heals all your diseases;
Who redeems your life from the pit,
Who crowns you with lovingkindness and compassion;
Who satisfies your years with good things,
So that your youth is renewed like the eagle.

It is as if Simeon recognized that "This is all my salvation and all my desire" (2Sa 23:5). If Simeon could have sung, he might have sung something like this...

Joy of my desire
Lisa McClendon

Joy of my desire,
Lord of glory, Rose of Sharon,
Rare and sweet.

You are now my peace,
Comforter and friend,
Wonderful, so beautiful,

You are to me.

I worship You in spirit and in truth.
Lord, I worship You in spirit and in truth.
There will never be a friend as dear to me,
There will never be a friend as dear to me,
There will never be a friend as dear to me,
As dear to me as You, You.

Warren Wiersbe - Simeon was led by the Spirit and taught by the Word, and his heart was focused wholly on seeing the Savior. When he saw Him, he received him and (blessed) God. Can we find a better example to follow? (See context in his book Bible Personalities: A Treasury of Insights for Personal Growth and Ministry)

Hendriksen- When the Holy Spirit made clear to him that this very child was the Messiah, Simeon's heart was surcharged with gratitude to such an extent that before his Father's throne he poured out his ardent thanksgiving. As is clear from his **Nunc Dimittis**, he thanked God for what this child meant to him personally and for what it meant to the world of both Gentile and Jew.

Word in Life Study Bible - Simeon, whose name means "God hears," is an example of how God honors those who engage in lifetimes of quiet prayer and constant watchfulness. Simeon was a man of patient faith, yet his wait for the Messiah must have seemed interminable. He likely had many opportunities for doubt, as numerous would-be Messiahs sounded false alarms in the land. Yet somehow he knew that the Redeemer would first come not as a great, heavenly champion wrapped in banners of nationalism, nor with a political agenda of violence, but as a Baby carried in the arms of His parents.

Took (received) (1209)(**dechomai** = middle voice of a primary verb) means to to receive something offered or transmitted by another. **Dechomai** means to accept with a deliberate and ready reception of what is offered, to receive kindly and so to take to oneself what is presented or brought by another. It means to welcome as a teacher, a friend, or a guest into one's house. The word describes Simeon as accepting the infant Jesus with open arms, mind, and heart, going beyond normally expected gracious hospitality. The term was often used of welcoming honored guests and meeting their needs with special attention and kindness. This verb is used by Jesus 4 times in one verse - "Whoever **receives** one child like this in My name **receives** Me; and whoever **receives** Me does not **receive** Me, but Him who sent Me."" (Mark 9:37) In Mark 10:15 He said ""Truly I say to you, whoever does not **receive** the kingdom of God like a child will not enter it at all.""

Blessed (2127)(**eulogeo** from **eu** = good + **lógos** = word; cognates **eulogetos** and **eulogia**) means speak good or well. When eulogeo is used by men toward men it means to speak well of with praise and thanksgiving (English "**Eulogy**" = an address in praise for one deceased). To say good or positive things. **Eulogeo** can be from men to God, from men to men, and from God to men. When God blesses men He grants them favor and confers happiness upon them. "*Blessing God*" extends (shares) *ourselves* with the Lord, giving our *word* to be *completely His*– i.e. *conferring ourselves* to Him which fulfills the common OT imperative, "*Bless the Lord*!" "And at once (Lk 1:63) his (Zacharias) mouth was opened and his tongue loosed, and he was speaking, *blessing* (*eulogéō*) God." (Lk 1:64)

The verb for **praise** is epaineo. The distinction between "blessing God" and "praising God" is carefully preserved in the original Hebrew/Greek text of Scripture and therefore both should be practiced in true worship! "**Praising God**" acknowledges (exalts) His work and character. In contrast, "**blessing God**" means surrendering oneself to Him. The scriptural imperative to "bless God!" is frequent in the (Hebrew) - See Ps 103:1,2, 104:1, etc. Unfortunately, it was "eliminated" by the NIV (and other translations), rendering it the same as "praise God."

Steven Cole - Charles Eliot was the president and then, in retirement, the president emeritus of Harvard University. During the summer of his 90th year, he made his way slowly down the road from his cottage in Northeast Harbor, Maine, to the cottage of his neighbors, the Peabodys. Mrs. Peabody greeted him warmly and invited him into the living room. After a brief conversation, Eliot asked if he might hold her new baby. Mystified, she lifted her infant son from his crib and laid him in the arms of Harvard's venerable president emeritus. Eliot held the baby quietly for a few minutes. Then, with a little gesture of thanks, he returned him to his mother, explaining, "I have been looking at the end of life for so long that I wanted to look for a few moments at its beginning." (In Reader's Digest [8/83].) We all need hope. Especially in old age, but also at all other points in life, we need hope. One of the blessings that comes along with the little ones God entrusts to us is hope.

Luke 2:29 "Now Lord, You are releasing Your bond-servant to depart in peace, According to Your word;

NET "Now, according to your word, Sovereign Lord, permit your servant to depart in peace.

GNT N ν πολ εις τ ν δο λ ν σου, δ σποτα, κατ τ μ σου ν ε ρ ν ·

NLT "Sovereign Lord, now let your servant die in peace, as you have promised.

KJV Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word:

ESV "Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace, according to your word;

NIV "Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you now dismiss your servant in peace.

- **now**: Ge 15:15 46:30 Ps 37:37 Isa 57:1,2 Php 1:23 Rev 14:13
- **according**: Lu 2:26
- Luke 2 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- Luke 2:25-35 The Gospel According to Simeon - Dr Steven Lawson - excellent

Simeon's Song of Praise

NUNC DIMITTIS

Simeon's song has been called **Nunc Dimittis** because these are the first two words in the Latin Vulgate (Latin for "now you let depart"). **Wiersbe** notes that "In Luke 2:29–32 we find Simeon's response to seeing Jesus. This is the fifth and last of the "Christmas songs" in Luke. (Elizabeth, 1:42–45; Mary, 1:46–56; Zacharias, 1:67–79; the angels, 2:13–14). It is first of all a **worship hymn** as he blesses God for keeping His promise and sending the Messiah. He joyfully praises God that he has been privileged to see the Lord's Christ." (Scroll to page 145 in The Bible Exposition Commentary)

Note the translations above as they lead to a significant difference in interpretation. Some read like a prayer (NET, NLT, KJV), but that is not correct. The NAS, ESV and NIV are accurate in rendering this as a statement of Simeon's faith in God's Word. It is more of a praise than a prayer! It is a testimony of Simeon to the trustworthiness of God's Word!

> **Maclaren** comments - We have here **not a petition** or an aspiration, but **a statement of the fact** that Simeon recognises the appointed token that his days were drawing to an end, and it is the glad recognition of that fact. 'Lord! I see now that the time has come when I may put aside all this coil of weary waiting and burdened mortality, and go to rest.' Look how he regards approaching death. 'Thou lettest Thy servant depart' is but a feeble translation of the original, which is better given in the version that has become very familiar to us all by its use in a musical service, the Nunc Dimittis; 'Now Thou dost send away' It is the technical word for relieving a sentry from his post. It conveys the idea of the hour having come when the slave who has been on the watch through all the long, weary night, or toiling through all the hot, dusty day, may extinguish his lantern, or fling down his mattock, and go home to his little hut. 'Lord! Thou dost dismiss me now, and I take the dismission as the end of the long watch, as the end of the long toil.' But notice, still further, how Simeon not only recognises, but welcomes the approach of death. 'Thou lettest Thy servant depart in peace.' Yes, there speaks a calm voice tranquilly accepting the permission. He feels no agitation, no fluster of any kind, but quietly slips away from his post. And the reason for that peaceful welcome of the end is 'for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation.' That sight is the reason, first of all, for his being sure that the curfew had rung for him, and that the day's work was done. But it is also the reason for the peacefulness of his departure. He went 'in peace,' because of what? Because the weary, blurred, old eyes had seen all that any man needs to see to be satisfied and blessed. Life could yield nothing more, though its length were doubled to this old man, than the sight of God's salvation. Can it yield anything more to us, brethren? And may we not say, if we have seen that sight, what an unbelieving author said, with a touch of self-complacency not admirable, 'I have warmed both hands at the fire of life, and I am ready to depart.' We may go in peace, if our eyes have seen Him who satisfies our vision, whose bright presence will go with us into the darkness, and whom we shall see more perfectly when we have passed from the sentry-box to the home above, and have ceased to be slaves in the far-off plantation, and are taken to be sons in the Father's house. 'Thou lettest Thy servant depart in peace.' (Scroll down for full message - Simeon's Swan-Song - Lk 2:29-30)

Criswell - Simeon's song, called Nunc Dimittis (Latin for "now you let depart," after the first two words of the Latin translation of Simeon's song), exhibits his knowledge of Isaiah 40-55.

> **THOUGHT** - Simeon's knowledge of the Word shows the close association of the Word and the Spirit. That is

to say a Spirit filled man is always a Word filled man! See Chart Comparing this clear association - Filled with His Spirit/Richly Indwelt with His Word.

Wiersbe - Because of his readiness and eagerness to die (Luke 2:29), Simeon is usually pictured as a very old man, but **nothing in Scripture supports this.** Tradition says he was 113 years old, but it is only tradition. (Scroll to page 145 in The Bible Exposition Commentary)

Now Lord (despotes) - **Now** is an expression of time and means the momentary present, at the time directly following the present moment, without delay or hesitation; with no time intervening. This was Simeon's special moment in time! Simeon was on God's timetable. He was **NOW** ready to go to His God. What a wonderful mindset to have in our last hours of life, and something only possible for a genuine believer in Jesus and one filled with the Spirit of Christ. No fear in life, no fear in death! Lord is not the usual kurios but **despotes** that speaks of the supreme power of God, and of the relation of a slave to his master as a result of purchase, as used by Peter to describe those who deny "the **Master** (despotes) Who bought them" (2 Pe 2:1+), speaking of Jesus Christ. Jude 1:4+ also speaks of those would deny "our only **Master** (despotes) and Lord (kurios), Jesus Christ."

Steven Cole - The key to Simeon's righteous life can be seen in his view of himself in relation to God. In verse 29, the word "Lord" is an unusual one, used only five times in reference to God. We get our word "despot" from it. Thayer's Greek Lexicon says that it means "absolute ownership and uncontrolled power." Simeon saw God as the Sovereign Lord who had prepared His salvation (Lik 2:30, 31) and had graciously allowed Simeon to see it. And Simeon saw himself as the slave of this Sovereign Lord. Slaves have no rights. They belong to their owner and their only obligation is to obey. Simeon had a high view of God and a humble view of himself. Keep in mind the times in which Simeon lived. The Jewish religious leaders were largely political and not deeply spiritual. There had been no prophet in Israel for 400 years. Israel had been oppressed by one foreign power after another during those long centuries, and even now they were ruled by the corrupt Herod under the dominion of Rome. It would have been easy for Simeon to get caught up in the political fervor of the times and to wonder skeptically, "Where are these great promises of God for His people?" But instead, he was righteous and devout. If we hope in Christ, we must take care to live righteously. We will view God as the Sovereign Lord, our Master, and ourselves as His slaves. We will comb His Word to determine how He wants us to live, and we will walk with Him every day. To hope in Jesus Christ means to live righteously. (Luke 2:21-35 Christ our Hope)

You are releasing (apoluo) **Your bond-servant** (doulos) **to depart in peace** (eirene) - How apropos that the last word in the Greek sentence for emphasis is eirene or peace! Death is not an enemy to those who know Jesus as Savior and Master! "The servant of God dies and is thereby released from his service." (Meyer) **Releasing** is the idea of to granting freedom, of freeing from confinement in these mortal bodies and this temporal earth and into eternity. Liberating from even the presence of sin and its passing pleasures. In other words, Simeon is now ready to die. How wonderful to die in **peace**, something only a believer in Jesus can experience. For unregenerate hearts the moment of death brings uncertainty, anxiety, fear, terror, etc, which is not inappropriate, because their destiny is eternal punishment a horrible existence in outer darkness that Jesus said would be accompanied by weeping and gnashing of teeth (Mt 8:12, Mt 22:13, Mt 25:30)!

Peace floods the soul
when Christ rules the heart.

Simeon was a **bond-servant** (doulos) of God, a man who had surrendered wholly to his Master's will and was wholly devoted to Him to the disregard of his own interest and even his own life.

THOUGHT - Would you describe yourself as bond-servant of Jesus Christ and He as your Master?

David Guzik - It was as if Simeon were commanded by God to keep a lonely watch through the night until he saw the sun come up. This now was, for him, God's sunrise, and because Jesus had come, Simeon could be relieved of his watch.

Cambridge Bible - On leaving a dying person the Jews said, 'Go in peace' (*Be shalôm*), Genesis 15:15. Otherwise they said, 'Go to peace' (*Le shalôm*) as Jethro did to Moses. See on Luke 7:50. (Luke 2)

Matthew Henry - Simeon bids farewell to this world. How poor does this world look to one that has Christ in his arms, and salvation in his view! See here, how comfortable is the death of a good man; he departs in peace with God, peace with his own conscience, in peace with death. Those that have welcomed Christ, may welcome death.

I rest beneath the Almighty's shade,
My griefs expire, my troubles cease;
Thou, Lord, on whom my soul is stayed,
Wilt keep me still in perfect peace.
---Charles Wesley.

According to Your word (rhema) - **According** means in agreement with, in a manner corresponding or conforming to or in a manner agreeing with the Word of God. That is, consistent with the revealed word and will of God. The **word** of promise from the "non-lying God." (Titus 1:2+, cf Nu 23:19) The trustworthy Word that had been revealed to Simeon by the Spirit. God's Word is good to the end of our life and beyond! This phrase **according to Your Word** is concentrated in Psalm 119 with the only NT uses by Luke -Ps. 119:9; Ps. 119:25; Ps. 119:28; Ps. 119:41; Ps. 119:58; Ps. 119:65; Ps. 119:76; Ps. 119:107; Ps. 119:116; Ps. 119:154; Ps. 119:169; Ps. 119:170; Lk. 1:38; Lk. 2:29

> **THOUGHT** - This is a great phrase which we every saint can use to guide his or her life, praying that we might daily order our steps **according to God's Word** (enabled by God's Spirit).

David Guzik - John Trapp quoted a poet's expression of Simeon's heart:

> "I fear no sin, I dread no death;
>
> I have lived long enough, I have my life;
>
> I have longed enough, I have my love;
>
> I have seen long enough, I have my light;
>
> I have served enough, I have my saint;
>
> I have sorrowed enough, I have my joy;
>
> Sweet babe, let this psalm serve as a lullaby to thee, and for a funeral for me. Oh, sleep in my arms, and let me sleep in they peace."

Lord (Master) (1203)(**despotes**) means one who possesses undisputed ownership and absolute, unrestricted authority, so that the Greeks refused the title to any but the gods. The **despotes** was one who has legal control and authority over persons, such as slaves. In the NT **despotes** and **kurios** are used interchangeably of God, and of masters of servants. In Greek culture and terminology, **servant** and **despótēs** went together. It is notable that three times the saints use despotes when prayerfully entreating their Sovereign (Lk 2:29; Acts 4:24; Rev 6:10). Paul uses this title in his last letter "Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from these things, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified, useful to the **Master** (despotes), prepared for every good work." (2 Ti 2:21+)

Releasing...to depart (630)(**apoluo** from **apó** = from + **lúo** = loose) means to free fully, relieve, release, dismiss, set at liberty. As legal term, to grant acquittal, set free, pardon. Apoluo frequently has the sense of to let loose from another's custody as in Acts 17:9 and in all four Gospels describes the **release** of Barabbas instead of Jesus (Jn 18:39, Mt 27:15, 17, 21, etc, cf Acts 16:35). "The idea is that of loosing a person from a chain, or giving a prisoner release from captivity." (Ryle) "The word is often used of manumitting or setting free on payment of ransom; and as Simeon uses the word for bond-servant, it is evident that his death is conceived by him under the figure of enfranchisement from service." (Marvin Vincent) "The verb **apoluō** was common for the manumission of slaves and Simeon here calls himself "thy slave." (A T Robertson)

> **Wiersbe** mixes the meaning of **apoluo** and **analuo** in his comment that "The word **depart** in the Greek has several meanings (ED: WIERSBE IS NOT COMPLETELY CORRECT FOR HE IS REFERRING TO ANOTHER GREEK WORD VERY CLOSE TO APOLUO, THE GREEK VERB ANALUO ALSO USED TO DESCRIBE ONE'S IMPENDING DEATH - cf use in Php 1:23), and each of them tells us something about the death of a Christian. It means to release a prisoner (APOLUO USED THIS WAY), to untie a ship and set sail (IN CLASSIC GREEK REFERS TO ANALUO), to take down a tent (IN CLASSIC GREEK REFERS TO ANALUO), and to unyoke a beast of burden. God's people are not afraid of death because it only frees us from the burdens of this life and leads into the blessings of the next life." (Scroll to page 145 in The Bible Exposition Commentary)

Here are notes on **analuo** which apparently was what Wiersbe was thinking primarily about when he wrote this comment - The figure is breaking up a camp or loosening the mooring of a ship, to depart. The ancient Greeks used the word to indicate loosing the anchor of a ship in order to sail from a port. In the NT, to return (Lu12:36); to depart by loosing anchor, as it were, and setting sail to a better and a more blessed world, to die (Php1:23). Barclay says of use in (Php 1:23) "My desire is to depart," says Paul, and the phrase is very vivid. **Analuo** is used of (i) It is the word for striking camp, loosening the tent ropes, pulling up the tent pins and moving on. Death is a moving on. It is said that in the terrible days of the war, when the Royal Air Force stood between Britain and destruction and the lives of its pilots were being sacrificially spent, they never spoke of a pilot as having been killed but always as having been "posted to another station." Each day is a day's march nearer home, until in the end camp in this world is for ever struck and exchanged for permanent residence in the world of glory.

(ii) It is the word for loosening the mooring ropes, pulling up the anchors and setting sail. Death is a setting sail, a departure on

that voyage which leads to the everlasting haven and to God. (iii) It is the word for solving problems. Death brings life's solutions. There is some place where all earth's questions will be answered and where those who have waited will in the end understand.

Bond-servant (1401)(**doulos** from **deo** = to bind) (**Click** additional notes on **doulos**) was an individual bound to another in servitude and conveys the idea of the slave's close, binding ties with his master, belonging to him, obligated to and desiring to do his will and in a permanent relation of servitude.

Peace (1515)(**eirene** from verb **eiro** = to join or bind together that which has been separated) literally pictures the binding or joining together again of that which had been separated or divided and thus setting at one again, a meaning convey by the common expression of one "having it all together". It follows that peace is the opposite of division or dissension. Peace as a state of concord and harmony is the opposite of war. **Eirene** conveys a sense of inner rest, well being and harmony. The ultimate peace is the state of reconciliation with God (cf Ro 5:1+, Col 1:20+), effected by placing one's faith in the gospel. In eschatology, peace is prophesied to be an essential characteristic of the Messianic kingdom (Acts 10:36+). If **grace** defines our "resources", **peace** is the conscious possession of those more than adequate resources.

Word (4487)(**rhema** from verb **rheo** = to speak - to say, speak or utter definite words) refers to the spoken word, especially a word as uttered by a living voice. Laleo is another word translated speak but it refers only to uttering a sound whereas rheo refers to uttering a definite intelligible word. In this context it refers to a promise as in Lu 1:38+ "*And Mary said, "Behold, the bondslave of the Lord; be it done to me according to your **word**." And the angel departed from her.*" All uses of **rhema** by Luke - Lk. 1:37; Lk. 1:38; Lk. 1:65; Lk. 2:15; Lk. 2:17; Lk. 2:19; Lk. 2:29; Lk. 2:50; Lk. 2:51; Lk. 3:2; Lk. 5:5; Lk. 7:1; Lk. 9:45; Lk. 18:34; Lk. 20:26; Lk. 24:8; Lk. 24:11; Jn. 3:34; Acts 2:14; Acts 5:20; Acts 5:32; Acts 6:11; Acts 10:22; Acts 10:37; Acts 10:44; Acts 11:14; Acts 11:16; Acts 13:42; Acts 16:38; Acts 26:25; Acts 28:25

A Few Last Words
of Saints and Sinners

JAMES GUTHRIE. While at St. Andrew's University he came under the godly influence of Samuel Rutherford and in 1638 became a minister of the Presbyterian Church. In spite of love for his country and loyalty to his king, he was hated by some for his staunch witness for the truth, and on account of certain statements he had made, he was charged with high treason, found guilty and executed. His speech on the scaffold was a long and moving one. Before he died he lifted the napkin from his face and cried: "The covenants, the covenants, shall yet be Scotland's reviving. Now **let Thy servant depart in peace**, since my eyes have seen Thy salvation."

PHILIP W. OTTERBEIN (1726-1813), was the great German evangelist so mightily blessed of God in a revival ministry. He came to America in 1752 and after a while became associated with Martin Boehm of the Mennonite Church. Meeting for the first time, these two warriors said, "We are brethren," which greeting gave rise to the designation, "United Brethren In Christ" — a cause they founded and developed. Wherever they labored together or separately, there were striking scenes, and multitudes were added to the Lord. After half a century of strenuous and successful evangelistic activity, Otterbein reached the end of his earthly ministry and died testifying: "The conflict is over and past. I begin to feel an unspeakable fulness of love and **peace** divine. Lay my head upon my pillow and be still."

JOHN OWEN (1616-1683) He died peacefully having survived all his children. His last words were characteristic of devotion to Christ: "I am going to Him whom my soul loveth, or rather who has loved me with an everlasting love, which is the sole ground of all my consolation."

Dwight L. MOODY (1837-1899) "I see earth receding; heaven is opening. God is calling me."

WILLIAM CAREY (1761-1834), known as "The Father and Founder of Modem Missions," developed remarkable gifts as a linguist. On his deathbed he said to a friend: "When I am gone, say nothing about Dr. Carey; speak about Dr. Carey's Saviour." In his will, Carey directed that the following words be cut on his tombstone: "William Carey, born August 17, 1761: died`A wretched, poor, and helpless worm, On Thy kind arms I fall.'

DAVID BRAINERD, whose intercessory prayer life and remark-able work among the American Indians still inspire the Lord's people. Just before he died, Brainerd was heard to whisper: "He will come; and will not tarry.

I shall soon be in glory; soon be with God and His angels."

JOHN WESLEY, of whom it has been said that eternity alone will reveal what the world owes to his mighty ministry, was active up to the last. Until the end, he was full of praise, counsel and exhortations. In his last moments with what remaining strength he had, he cried out twice over, in holy triumph: "The best of all is, God is with us." The very last word Wesley was heard to articulate was: "Farewell!" Then, without a lingering groan, the evangelist of the highways and by-ways, beloved pastor of thousands, and father of the great Methodist Church entered into the joy of his Lord.

ADONIRAM JUDSON (1788-1850), the missionary apostle to Burma, was privileged to see hundreds converted to Christ, and his name holds an exalted place in the history of modem missions. Broken in health, he died while making a voyage to the Isle of Bourbon. Before he breathed his last and his body was committed to the great deep, he said to those around him on board ship: "I go with the gladness of a boy bounding away from school, I feel so strong in Christ."

JOHN CALVIN, whose stern theology exercised a tremendous influence for generations, spent his last days in constant prayer with relatives, ministers and senators. After his last repast with a few friends, he was carried back to his bedchamber and smilingly said: "This intervening wall will not prevent me from being present with you in spirit, though absent in body." Shortly after he died in so very tranquil a manner that he seemed to resemble one in a state of sleep rather than death.

ANDREW JACKSON, born March 15, 1767, died June 8, 1845, was of Scotch-Irish descent. Just before he died, he was heard to murmur: "My sufferings, though great, are nothing in comparison with those of my Saviour, through whose death I look for everlasting life."

WILLIAM HENRY, the English physician who authored several works on chemistry, was a sincere Christian who ministered to the souls of his patients as well as their bodies. When he died in 1836, he peacefully passed away, saying: "A sweet falling of the soul on Jesus."

QUEEN MARY OF SCOTS (1587), prayed fervently for peace in the world, constancy to all suffering persecution, and for grace and the Holy Spirit in her last hour. Fervently she prayed for cruel Queen Elizabeth (see her last words below). Before the death stroke beheaded her, she exclaimed: "Like as Thy arms, Lord Jesus Christ, were stretched out upon the Cross, even so receive me with the outstretched arms of Thy mercy."

Some words not so comforting

QUEEN ELIZABETH OF ENGLAND (1603), sometimes called "The lion-hearted Elizabeth". It is said that she embodied the traits of a haughty temper, strong self-will, love of pomp and magnificence, combined with caution, prudence and suspicion. At her death she had about two thousand costly dresses in her wardrobe. Just before her death she uttered the words: "All my possessions for one moment of time."

You can borrow this fascinating book - **Last words of saints and sinners** by Lockyer, Herbert - 105 ratings The last words of the dying have fascinated readers throughout history. They reveal the fears, hopes, courage, and legacies of both the famous and not-so-famous. This collection of seven hundred quotes includes the last words of commoners, atheists, poets, and politicians along with noted Christians and martyrs. Excellent for casual reading and as a ready reference source for the pastor or public speaker.

ILLUSTRATION OF PEACE - Jim Walton was translating the NT for the Muinane people of La Sabana in the jungles of Colombia. But he was having trouble with the word ***peace***. During this time, Fernando, the village chief, was promised a 20-minute plane ride to a location that would have taken him 3 days to travel by walking. The plane was delayed in arriving at La Sabana, so Fernando departed on foot. When the plane finally came, a runner took off to bring Fernando back. But by the time he had returned, the plane had left. Fernando was livid because of the mix-up. He went to Jim and launched into an angry tirade. Fortunately, Walton had taped the chief's diatribe. When he later translated it, he discovered that the chief kept repeating the phrase, "*I don't have one heart*." Jim asked other villagers what having "*one heart*" meant, and he found that it was like saying, "*There is nothing between you and the other person*." That, Walton realized, was just what he needed to translate the word ***peace***. To have ***peace*** with God means that there is nothing--no sin, no guilt, no condemnation--that separates us. And that ***peace*** with God is possible only through Christ (Ro 5:1+). Do you have "one heart" with God today.

Luke 2:30 For my eyes have seen Your salvation,

- Lu 2:10,11 3:6 Ge 49:18 2Sa 23:1-5 Isa 49:6 Ac 4:10-12
- Luke 2 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- Luke 2:25-35 The Gospel According to Simeon - Dr Steven Lawson - excellent

THE FORMULA FOR PEACE:
SEEING JESUS!

In Genesis we find the first mention of salvation in Scripture when Jacob declared "For Thy salvation I wait, O LORD. (Ge 49:18) The Hebrew word for **salvation** is (03444) yeshua which is actually the same as the name "**Jesus**." The Septuagint translates the Hebrew with soteria which means salvation, deliverance, preservation (Lk 1:69, 1:71, 77).

For - Term of explanation. Simeon explains why he has this inner peace in the face of the thought of departing (death).

Steven Cole - all that Simeon saw was a carpenter, his young wife, and their baby. There was no halo over Jesus' head. But the Spirit directed Simeon to approach this ordinary-looking couple and their ordinary-looking baby. With eyes of faith, Simeon saw in their arms the Light of the world, born to bring hope to all peoples. To see Him today, you must also look with eyes of faith that have been opened by God's Spirit. Pray that God would grant you eyes to see what many miss (Luke 10:21-24). (Luke 2:25-35 Christ, the Hope of the World)

My eyes have seen your salvation - The Messianic deliverance/Deliverer! With his spiritual eyes he sees that this baby Jesus is the personification of God's **salvation**! Just as God had promised him! And God has promised us that one day (soon) we too will see our **Salvation** Jesus Christ! **Salvation** is a Person! This declaration by Simeon is a fulfillment of a precious and magnificent promise in Ps 50:23!

> He who offers a sacrifice of thanksgiving honors Me; And to him who orders his way aright I shall show the **salvation** of God."

This also recalls Isaiah's prophecy

> The LORD has bared His holy arm In the sight of all the nations,**That all the ends of the earth may SEE THE SALVATION of our God.** (Isaiah 52:10)

In that psalm the Hebrew for "**salvation**" = yesha from root yasha = Savior, Deliverer! The Septuagint translates the Hebrew word yesha with the Greek **soterion**, the same word used here in Luke 2:30.

John MacArthur - He (Simeon) understood that salvation for Israel involved much more than the national deliverance promised by the Abrahamic and Davidic covenants, whose blessings will not be fully realized until the millennial kingdom. In the incarnation, Jesus came not to save His people from their enemies, but from their sins (Matt. 1:21; cf. Acts 4:12). (See context Luke Commentary)

Jamieson - Many saw this child, nay, the full-grown "man, Christ Jesus," who never saw in Him "God's Salvation." This estimate of an object of sight, an unconscious, helpless babe, was pure faith. He "beheld His glory" (Joh 1:14). In another view it was prior faith rewarded by present sight.

Your salvation (soterios/soterion) - Salvation is God's possession and He graciously bestows it on His children by grace through faith. In this context of course **Your salvation** is another way of saying Jesus.

Criswell adds "The aged Simeon saw through the Holy Spirit that the infant in his arms would bring salvation both to Jews and Gentiles (Luke 2:32). In the Bible's first mention of "salvation," father Jacob said he had been waiting for it (Genesis 49:18). Now Simeon, the namesake of his second son, had actually seen it in the Spirit in the person of little Jesus. (The Believer's Study Bible)

J Vernon McGee - There was a man by the name of Simeon who by the Holy Spirit was in the temple when the Lord Jesus was brought in to fulfill the Mosaic Law. God had promised Simeon that he would see the salvation of God. What did he see? He saw a little Baby. Salvation is a Person, and not something that you do. Salvation is a Person, and that Person is the Lord Jesus Christ. You either have Him, or you don't have Him. You either trust Him, or you don't trust Him. Do you have Him today? (See Thru the Bible)

John Trapp quoted a poet's expression of Simeon's heart:

> "I fear no sin, I dread no death;
> I have lived long enough, I have my life;
> I have longed enough, I have my love;

I have seen long enough, I have my light;
I have served enough, I have my saint;
I have sorrowed enough, I have my joy;
Sweet babe, let this psalm serve as a lullaby to thee, and for a funeral for me. Oh, sleep in my arms, and let me sleep in they peace."

Salvation (4992)(**soterios/soterion** from **soter** = savior) is an adjective which refers to that which is pertains to the means of salvation = bringing salvation, delivering, rescuing. When Simeon took baby Jesus in his arms, he realized that Jesus was the means of salvation and said that his eyes had seen tó soterión sou, thy salvation. **Soterion** "is a more abstract, energetic word than the one commonly so translated." (Ryle)

> All 4 uses of **soterion** in the NT - Lk. 2:30; Lk. 3:6; Acts 28:28; Eph. 6:17; Titus 2:11 (For the grace of God has appeared, bringing **salvation** to all men,)

A New Force

Read: Luke 2:25-35

> My eyes have seen Your salvation which You have prepared before the face of all peoples. —Luke 2:30-31

When Matteo Ricci went to China in the 16th century, he took samples of religious art to illustrate the Christian story for people who had never heard it. They readily accepted portraits of Mary holding the baby Jesus, but when he produced paintings of the crucifixion and tried to explain that the God-child had come to be executed, his audience reacted with revulsion and horror. They couldn't worship a crucified God.

As I thumb through my Christmas cards, I realize that we do much the same thing. In our celebrations and observances, we may not think about how the story that began at Bethlehem turned out at Calvary.

In Luke's account of the Christmas story, only one person—the old man Simeon—seems to grasp the mysterious nature of what God has set in motion. "This Child is destined for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign which will be spoken against," he told Mary, and then he made the prediction that a sword would pierce her own soul (Lk 2:34-35).

Simeon knew that though on the surface little had changed—Herod still ruled, Roman troops still occupied Israel—underneath, everything had changed. God's promised redemption had arrived.

The cradle without the cross misses the true meaning of Christ's birth.

By Philip Yancey (Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved)

Luke 2:31 Which You have prepared in the presence of all peoples,

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> NET that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples:
>
> GNT το μασας κατ πρ σωπον π ντων τ ν λα ν,
>
> NLT which you have prepared for all people.
>
> KJV Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people;
>
> ESV that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples,
>
> NIV which you have prepared in the sight of all people,
>
> ASV Which thou hast prepared before the face of all peoples;
>
> CSB You have prepared it in the presence of all peoples--

- Ps 96:1-3,10-13 Ps 97:6-8 98:2,3 Isa 42:1-4,10-12 45:21-25 Isa 62:1,2
- Luke 2 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- Luke 2:25-35 The Gospel According to Simeon - Dr Steven Lawson - excellent

Related Passage:

> Luke 24:47+ and that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to **all the nations** (THE JEWS AND GENTILES), beginning from Jerusalem.

SALVATION MADE READY FOR JEWS AND GENTILES

Which You have prepared (hetoimazo) **in the presence of all peoples** - **Which** of course refers to **salvation** in Lk 2:30, and ultimately to the Savior, the "consolation of Israel" (Lk 2:25+), but also the "consolation of the world!" The Salvation which God had prepared beforehand (even from the foundation of the world (Eph 1:4+, "before time began" = 2 Ti 1:9NET+, Rev 13:8+) and foretold in more than 300 OT Messianic prophecies) was for **all peoples**.

Man is not devising his own way to God. Salvation is God coming to man. Religion is man trying to lift himself up to God, but the message of the Cross is that God has come down to man by going up on the Cross! God has not met us half-way. He came the whole way to save us, to pay the price in full (Jn 19:30+).

In the presence of all peoples - **Presence** (KJV = before the face) is **prosopon** (**pros** = towards + **ops** = eye) which literally means Jesus was before the eyes of **all**. Salvation was not to be just for the Jews but for **all peoples** which would include the Gentiles, for God "so loved the world" (Jn 3:16+)! It is a global Gospel, a worldwide outreach to a lost and dying world, "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Ro 3:23+). A missionary message of mercy, from "the Father of mercies and God of all comfort." (2 Cor 1:3)! This statement is a prelude to the more definitive statement in the next verse, one which undoubtedly would have shocked the ears of most of Simeon's Jewish audience.

We see this salvation prepared is a global salvation (not universal salvation - cf Mt 7:13, 14+ - note "**few**" and "**many**") which John described in Revelation 5:9+

> And they sang a new song, saying, “Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood **men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation**.

John MacArthur agrees writing that "Simeon’s next statement would shock Jewish sensibilities. Fiercely proud of their status as God’s chosen, covenant people, the Jews believed Messiah was their deliverer. They assumed He would establish their kingdom, which would then rule over the infidel Gentiles." (See Luke Commentary)

NET Note - Is the phrase all peoples a reference to Israel alone, or to both Israel and the Gentiles? The following verse makes it clear that all peoples includes Gentiles, another key Lukan emphasis (Luke 24:47+; Acts 10:34–43+).

J Vernon McGee - This is a remarkable statement coming from a man who was limited in his outlook upon life—that is, he was limited to a particular area geographically. Yet he saw the One who was to be the Savior of the world. This is to me one of the amazing things about the Word of God, especially the New Testament. Although given to a certain people, it is certainly directed to the world. No other religion pointed that way. You will notice that the religions of the world are generally localized for a peculiar people, generally a race or nation. But Christianity has been from the outset for all people everywhere. (See Thru the Bible)

Prepared (made ready) (2090)(**hetoimazo** from **heteos** = fitness - see also **hetoimasia**) means to make ready, specifically to make ready beforehand for some purpose, use, or activity. God has been preparing salvation even before the foundation of the world, "But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law." (Gal 4:4+) Inherent in the word **prepared** are the ideas of design and determined. God has designed salvation and He has determined salvation. All Luke's uses - Lk. 1:17; Lk. 1:76; Lk. 2:31; Lk. 3:4; Lk. 9:52; Lk. 12:20; Lk. 12:47; Lk. 17:8; Lk. 22:8; Lk. 22:9; Lk. 22:12; Lk. 22:13; Lk. 23:56; Lk. 24:1; Acts 23:23.

Luke 2:32 A LIGHT OF REVELATION TO THE GENTILES, And the glory of Your people Israel."

- **light of revelation**: Isa 9:2, 42:6,7, 49:6, 60:1-3,19 Mt 4:16 Ac 13:47,48 28:28 Ro 15:8,9
- **and**: Ps 85:9 Isa 4:2, 45:25, 60:19 Jer 2:11 Zec 2:5 1Co 1:31 Rev 21:23
- Luke 2 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- Luke 2:25-35 The Gospel According to Simeon - Dr Steven Lawson - excellent

Related Passages:

> Isaiah 9:2 The people who walk in darkness **Will see a great light**; Those who live in a dark land, **The light**

will shine on them.

Isaiah 60:1-3 1"Arise, shine; **for your light has come,** And the glory of the LORD has risen upon you. 2 "For behold, darkness will cover the earth And deep darkness the peoples; But **the LORD will rise upon you And His glory will appear upon you**. 3 "Nations will come to your light, And kings to the brightness of your rising.

Matthew 4:16 "**THE PEOPLE WHO WERE SITTING IN DARKNESS SAW A GREAT LIGHT,** AND THOSE WHO WERE SITTING IN THE LAND AND SHADOW OF DEATH, UPON THEM A LIGHT DAWNED."

Acts 13:47-48 (QUOTING Isa 49:6-7)"For so the Lord has commanded us, '**I HAVE PLACED YOU AS A LIGHT FOR THE GENTILES,** THAT YOU MAY BRING SALVATION TO THE END OF THE EARTH.'" When the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord; and as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed.

Acts 28:28 "Therefore let it be known to you that this salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles; they will also listen."

Romans 15:8 For I say that Christ has become a servant to the circumcision on behalf of the truth of God to confirm the promises given to the fathers, and for the Gentiles to glorify God for His mercy; as it is written, "THEREFORE I WILL GIVE PRAISE TO YOU AMONG THE GENTILES, AND I WILL SING TO YOUR NAME."

JESUS A LIGHT OF REVELATION

Warren Wiersbe refers to this section of Simeon's song as "a missionary hymn, which is something unusual for a devout Jew standing in the temple. He sees this great salvation going out to the Gentiles! Jesus has restored the glory to Israel and brought the light to the Gentiles so that all people can be saved (see Luke 2:10). Remember that the compassion of Christ for the whole world is one of Luke's major themes." (Scroll to page 145 in The Bible Exposition Commentary) One has to wonder at the reaction of the Jews in the Temple who heard the word **Gentiles** who they despised!

The Prophet Isaiah had foretold 700 years earlier that "The people who walk in darkness will see a great light; Those who live in a dark land, The light will shine on them." (Isaiah 9:2+, see also notes on Mt 4:16). Isaiah was referring to the coming Messiah as the "**light**" that would shine and remove spiritual darkness (for those who received Him - Jn 8:12).

A light of revelation to the Gentiles (ethnos) - **Gentiles** probably describes most of you who are reading this great prophecy. If you have believed in Jesus the Light of the world, then you can consider yourself as a walking fulfillment of this prophecy! While it was a light of revelation for the Jews, it was especially so for the Gentiles, for our darkness was deeper than the Jews (Eph 2:11-12+). This passage recalls Paul's words "For God, Who said, "Light shall shine out of darkness," is the One Who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ." (2 Cor 4:6+) Gentiles are to be more than spectators, but even sharers in the salvation.

Isaiah had given a prophecy that also described the Messiah as a "**light**"

> "I am the LORD, I have called You (**MESSIAH**) in righteousness, I will also hold You by the hand and watch over You, And I will appoint You as a covenant to the people (THE JEWS), As **a light to the nations** (GENTILES), To open blind eyes, To bring out prisoners from the dungeon And those who dwell in darkness from the prison. (Isa 42:6, 7)
>
> He says, "It is too small a thing that You (**MESSIAH**) should be My Servant To raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the preserved ones of Israel (THE BELIEVING JEWISH REMNANT); I will also make You a **light of the nations** (OR "TO THE GENTILES") So that My salvation may reach to the end of the earth." (Isa 49:6)
>
> "Pay attention to Me, O My people, And give ear to Me, O My nation; For a law will go forth from Me, And I will set My justice for **a light of the peoples.** (Isa 51:4)
>
> The LORD has bared His holy arm **In the sight of all the nations** (GENTILES), **That all the ends of the earth may see The salvation of our God.** (Isa 52:10)
>
> "**Nations** (GENTILES) **will come to your light,** And kings to the brightness of your rising (Isa 60:3)

And so here in Luke 2:32 **Simeon** testified that **Messiah's first coming** marked the beginning fulfillment of these Old Testament prophecies. **Messiah** will completely fulfill these promises "as a Covenant to the people" (Isa 42:6) and "to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the preserved ones of Israel" (Isa 49:6), at His Second Coming when ""THE DELIVERER (**MESSIAH**) WILL COME FROM ZION, HE WILL REMOVE UNGODLINESS FROM JACOB." THIS IS MY COVENANT WITH THEM, WHEN I TAKE

AWAY THEIR SINS." (Ro 11:26-27+, see Zechariah's description of this fulfillment - Zech 12:10-14+, Zech 13:1+, Zech 13:9+).

Cambridge Bible - A memorable prophecy, considering that even the Apostles found it hard to grasp the full admission of the Gentiles, clearly as it had been indicated in older prophecy, as in Psalm 98:2-3. "The LORD has made known His salvation; He has revealed His righteousness in the sight of the nations. 3 He has remembered His lovingkindness and His faithfulness to the house of Israel; All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God." (Luke 2)

Ryle - We see, furthermore, in the song of Simeon, what clear views of Christ's work and office some Jewish believers attained, even before the Gospel was preached. We find this good old man speaking of Jesus as "the salvation which God had prepared,"—as "a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of his people Israel." Well would it have been for the letter-learned Scribes and Pharisees of Simeon's time, if they had sat at his feet, and listened to his word. Christ was indeed "a light to lighten the Gentiles." Without Him they were sunk in gross darkness and superstition. They knew not the way of life. They worshipped the works of their own hands. Their wisest philosophers were utterly ignorant in spiritual things. "Professing themselves to be wise they became fools." (Rom. 1:22.) The Gospel of Christ was like sun-rise to Greece and Rome, and the whole heathen world. The light which it let in on men's minds on the subject of religion, was as great as the change from night to day. (Luke 2)

A Light of revelation (apokalupsis) **to the Gentiles** (ethnos) - According to tradition, **Light** was one of the names of the Messiah. Light was also what Israel was to be to the Gentile nations in darkness, a task that the nation as a whole failed miserably to fulfill! Ultimately the Messiah would fulfill this prophecy.

In Acts Luke records "that the Christ (MESSIAH) was to suffer, [and] that by reason of [His] resurrection from the dead He would be the first to **proclaim LIGHT** both to the [Jewish] people and to the Gentiles." (Acts 26:23+)

Spurgeon - Simeon had studied the ancient prophecies to good purpose, and he perceived from them that "the Lord's Christ" would be "a light to lighten the Gentiles" as well as "the glory of" God's ancient people, "Israel." (**NOTE**: Clearly Spurgeon did not think that God was finished with the literal nation of Israel as is commonly taught in so-called "**Replacement Theology**." See also The Millennial Position of Spurgeon by Dennis Swanson)

> **Here is another statement by Spurgeon in 1864** (84 years before Israel became a sovereign nation for a second time) - He surely ought to have known his own mind, and led by the Holy Spirit he gives us as an explanation of the vision, not– "Thus saith the Lord, my dying Church shall be restored," but–" I will bring my people out of their graves, and bring them into the land of Israel… **The meaning of our text, as opened up by the context, is most evidently, if words mean anything (ED: AND THEY ALWAYS DO WHEN THEY ARE THE WORD OF GOD, THE WORD OF TRUTH!), first, that there shall be a political restoration of the Jews to their own land and to their own nationality; and then, secondly, there is in the text, and in the context, a most plain declaration, that there shall be a spiritual restoration, a conversion in fact, of the tribes of Israel.** (From his sermon entitled The Restoration and Conversion of the Jews - Ezekiel 37:1-10)

Isaiah had prophesied centuries earlier "there will be no [more] gloom for her who was in anguish; in earlier times He treated the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali with contempt, but later on He shall make [it] glorious, by the way of the sea, on the other side of Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles. **The people who walk in darkness Will see a great light; Those who live in a dark land, The light will shine on them.**" (Isa 9:1-2+)

Here are several other passages that predicted the coming "Light of the world" (John 8:12)...

> Isaiah 42:6 "I am the LORD, I have called You in righteousness, I will also hold You by the hand and watch over You, And I will appoint You as a covenant to the people, **as a light to the nations**,
>
> > **Comment**: This passage refers to the Messiah would institute a new covenant (Jer 31:31-34-note, cp parallel idea in Isaiah 49:8). The nations is a clear reference to the Gentiles.
>
> Isaiah 49:6 He says, "It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant To raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the preserved ones of Israel; **I will also make You a light of the nations** (gentiles) (Isa 60:3) So that My salvation may reach to the end of the earth."
>
> > **John MacArthur** - The Servant's goal is the salvation and restoration of Israel for the fulfillment of the covenant promise. But not limited to Israel, He is to function as a light bringing salvation to the Gentiles. Israel's mission had always been to bring the nations to God (19:24; 42:6). This she will finally do very effectively in the tribulation after the conversion of the 144,000 witnesses (Rev 7:1–10; 14:1–5) and when she is restored to her Land at the Servant's return to earth. Cf. 9:2; 11:10; 42:6; 45:22; Lk 2:32. Paul applied this verse to his ministry to the Gentiles on his first missionary journey (Ac 13:47).
>
> Isaiah 51:4-5 Pay attention to Me, O My people, And give ear to Me, O My nation; For a law will go forth from

Me, **And I will set My justice for a light of the peoples** (Gentiles). "My righteousness is near, **My salvation has gone forth**, And My arms will judge the peoples; The coastlands will wait for Me, And for My arm they will wait expectantly.

Isaiah 52:10 The LORD has bared His holy arm In the sight of all the nations (Gentiles), That all the ends of the earth may see The salvation of our God.

Isaiah 60:1-3 (God is addressing Zion, Isa 59:20, 60:14) Arise, shine; for **your light has come**, And the glory of the LORD has risen upon you. For behold, darkness will cover the earth And deep darkness the peoples; But the LORD will rise upon you And His glory will appear upon you. Nations (Gentiles) **will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising**.

HCSB note - Though the light comes to God's people, the nations will share in it by coming to the light. The idea that the nations will respond favorably to God is a fulfillment of the promise to Abraham that he would be a blessing to the nations (Gen 12:3).

MacArthur interprets this as prophecy that will be fulfilled in the Millennium - Jerusalem's light will attract other nations seeking relief from their darkness (2:3). Only believing Jews and Gentiles will enter the earthly kingdom after the Day of the Lord, but as the 1,000 years goes along children will be born and nations will become populated by those who reject Jesus Christ. The glory of the King in Jerusalem, and His mighty power will draw those Gentiles to His light.

Malachi 4:2-note "But for you who fear My name, **the Sun of Righteousness** will rise with healing in its wings; and you will go forth and skip about like calves from the stall.

Comment - The "Sun of Righteous" is a prophecy of the Messiah. MacArthur agrees that "The reference is to the Messiah, "the LORD our righteousness" (Ps 84:11; Jer 23:5, 6; 1Co 1:30)."

Ryle - Christ was indeed "**the glory of Israel**." The descent from Abraham—the covenants—the promises—the law of Moses—the divinely ordered Temple service—all these were mighty privileges. But all were as nothing compared to the mighty fact, that out of Israel was born the Saviour of the world. This was to be the highest honor of the Jewish nation, that the mother of Christ was a Jewish woman, and that the blood of One "made of the seed of David, according to the flesh," was to make atonement for the sin of mankind. (Rom. 1:3.) The words of old Simeon, let us remember, will yet receive a fuller accomplishment (NOW REMEMBER RYLE LIVED FROM 1816-1900 BEFORE DISPENSATIONALISM AND YET NOTICE THAT HE DOES NOT REPLACE ISRAEL WITH THE CHURCH!). The "**light**" which he saw by faith, as he held the child Jesus in his arms, shall yet shine so brightly that all the nations of the Gentile world shall see it.—The "**glory**" of that Jesus whom Israel crucified, **shall one day be revealed so clearly to the scattered Jews**, **that they shall look on Him whom they pierced, and repent, and be converted** (Zech 12:10-14+, Zech 13:1+) The day shall come when the veil shall be taken from the heart of Israel, and all shall "glory in the Lord." (Isa. 45:25.) **For that day let us wait, and watch, and pray. If Christ be the light and glory of our souls, that day cannot come too soon**. The glory of God is the chief end not only of men but also of the heavenly hosts. (Luke 2)

And the glory (**doxa**) **of Your people Israel** - Who is "**the glory**?" In context, this is salvation and by default a description of the Savior, the Messiah. What is fascinating is that in Ezekiel we read of the progressive departure of the **glory** of the Lord from the Temple, Ezekiel writing that "the **glory** of the God of Israel (cf Shekinah glory) went up from the cherub on which it had been (FROM WITHIN THE TEMPLE PROPER), to the threshold of the temple" (Ezekiel 9:3+). "Then the **glory** of the LORD departed from the threshold of the temple" (Ezekiel 10:18+). "When the cherubim departed, they lifted their wings and rose up from the earth in my sight with the wheels beside them; and they stood still at the entrance of the east gate of the LORD'S house (TEMPLE), and **the glory of the God of Israel** hovered over them (AT THE EAST GATE WHICH FACED TOWARD THE MOUNT OF OLIVES). " (Ezekiel 10:19+). Then finally "The glory of the LORD went up from the midst of the city and stood over the mountain which is east of the city (MOUNT OF OLIVES) (Ezekiel 11:23+). (see schematic of His progressive departure) So in the past the **GLORY OF THE PEOPLE ISRAEL** had departed. But now Simeon with Spirit illuminated clarity sees the Baby that he is holding in his hands as the return of **the GLORY of Your people Israel**. In fact when we compare John's description, it is clear that the "Glorious One" had returned for at least a brief time writing "And the Word (Jn 1:1+) became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw **HIS GLORY, GLORY** as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth." (John 1:14+).

Ryle - Ford quotes Dr. Richard Clerke's remarks on this verse, "It is noted by the learned that the sweet singer of this song doth put the Gentile before the Jew, because the second calling, the conversion of the Jews to Christ, **shall not be till the fulness of the Gentiles be come in** (Ro 11:25, 26+)." (Luke 2)

Arnold Fruchtenbaum agrees - He prophecies as Zachariah did that He will be a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and the Glory of God's people Israel. The second part of that prophecy (about Israel) will be fully accomplished when the Jewish nation calls on Yeshua as their Messiah.

And so godly Simeon sees the Christ child with **glory**, **glory as of the only begotten from the Father**! This righteous man recognized the Messiah, the glory of Your people Israel, but sadly most of Israel failed to recognize His **glory**, Luke recording Jesus prophecy of the destruction of the Herod's Temple and Jerusalem in 70 AD declaring "and they (ROMANS) will level you to the ground and your children within you, and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because (WHY WAS THE TEMPLE DESTROYED?) **you did not recognize the time of your visitation**" (Lk 19:44+) The eyes of Simeon had been supernaturally opened to recognize the **Glorious One,** the Messiah, Who the majority of Israel failed to recognize! (Dear believer lift your voice and hands as you sing Glorious One)

Isaiah describes the **future glory of Messiah -**

> In that day (WHAT DAY? THE MILLENNIUM, cf description in Isaiah 2:1-5+) the Branch of the LORD (THE MESSIAH) will be beautiful and **glorious**, (Lxx uses the same word doxa used here in Lk 2:32) and the fruit of the earth will be the pride and the adornment of the survivors of Israel (BELIEVING REMNANT) (Isaiah 4:2+)

Related Resource:

- Glory of God - Past, Present and Future.

Revelation (602)(**apokalupsis** from **apó** = from + **kalúpto** = cover, conceal, English = apocalypse) literally means cover from and so the idea is to remove that which conceals something. **Apokalupsis** conveys the idea of "taking the lid off" and means to remove the cover and expose to open view that which was heretofore not visible, known or disclosed. It means to make manifest or reveal a thing previously secret or unknown. It describes removing of a veil (an unveiling) or covering thus exposing to open view what was concealed. In all its uses, **revelation** refers to something or someone, once hidden, becoming visible and now made fully known.

Gentiles (nation, nations) (1484)(**ethnos** gives us our word "ethnic") in general refers to a multitude (especially persons) associated with one another, living together, united in kinship, culture or traditions and summed up by the words nation, Gentiles (especially when ethnos is plural), people (much like "people groups" in our modern missionary vernacular). In somewhat of a negative sense **ethnos** conveys the meaning of godless (generally idol worshipping) pagans (heathens, cp Eph 4:17, Mt 6:32), foreign nations not worshipping the true God (Mt 4:15). Often **ethnos** stands in clear contradistinction to Jew (Ioudaios) (Gal 2:14). **Ethnos** sometimes refers to Gentile Christians (Ro 11:13, Ro 15:27, 16:4, Gal 2:12). **Ethnos** is used in the singular of the Jewish Nation (Lk 7:5; 23:2; Jn 11:48, 50-53; Jn 18:35; Acts 10:22; 24:2, 10; Acts 26:4; 28:19). Plato used ethnos of a special class of men, a caste, tribe. In the Septuagint ethnos was used for nation, people Ge 10:5; non-Jews, Gentiles Ps 2:1.

> **Marvin Vincent** on **ethnos** - Assigned to the same root as etho, to be accustomed, and hence of a people bound together by like habits or customs. According to biblical usage the term is understood of people who are not of Israel, and who therefore occupy a different position with reference to the plan of salvation. Hence the extension of the gospel salvation to them is treated as a remarkable fact. See Matthew 12:18, Matthew 12:21; Matthew 24:14; Matthew 28:19+; Acts 10:45+; Acts 11:18+; Acts 18:6+.

Related Resources:

- Nations - Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology
- Easton's Bible Dictionary Gentiles
- Fausset Bible Dictionary Gentiles
- Holman Bible Dictionary Gentiles
- Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible Gentiles
- Hastings' Dictionary of the NT Gentiles (2) Gentiles
- International Standard Bible Encyclopedia Gentiles
- Kitto Biblical Cyclopedia Gentiles
- McClintock and Strong's Bible Encyclopedia Gentile
- The Jewish Encyclopedia Gentile

Luke 2:33 And His father and mother were amazed at the things which were being said about Him.

- Lu 2:48 Luke 1:65,66 Isa 8:18
- Luke 2 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

PARENTERAL AMAZEMENT

And His father and mother were amazed (thaumazo) **at the things which were being said about Him** Why were they amazed? Mary had been told He was the Son of God, etc. It seems that they did not understand some of the OT Messianic Prophecies about their young son! Joseph and Mary were continually (present tense) **amazed** that their infant, a normal human baby, was being called the Savior of Jews and Gentiles, in short that He was the long expected and frequently prophesied of Messiah (see Messianic Prophecies). And their amazement continued as He grew into a young man (Luke 2:42-48+)

Both Joseph and Mary had been told Jesus Whose very name means "Jehovah saves" but they did not fully understand the global scope of His salvation. For example in Matthew an angel of the Lord speaking to Joseph says of Mary "She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for **He will save His people from their sins**" (Mt 1:21). Here **His people** clearly refers to the Jews. But Simeon's prophecy enlarges on the words of the angel and says Jesus will also be **a light of revelation to the Gentiles**! To their Jewish minds, this would have been shocking.

Gill says "they wondered, that a stranger to them and the child, coming into the temple at this instant, should have such a revelation made to him, and be able to say the things he did."

Sing them over again to me,
Wonderful words of life.
--P. B. Bliss

Spurgeon - We may be very near to Christ, and yet know very little about him. Joseph and the virgin mother did not understand "those things which were spoken of him." One wonders it was so after all that had been revealed to them; we marvel that they marvelled. (Luke Exposition)

Others were also **amazed**

> Luke 1:65; 66+ Fear came on all those living around them; and all these matters were being talked about in all the hill country of Judea. All who heard them kept them in mind, saying, "What then will this child [turn out to] be?" For the hand of the Lord was certainly with him.

Luke uses thaumazo again in chapter 8 (cf uses of thaumazo in Lk. 1:21+; Lk. 1:63+)

> And He said to them, "Where is your faith?" They were fearful and amazed, saying to one another, "Who then is this, that He commands even the winds and the water, and they obey Him?" (Luke 8:25+, cp Mt 8:27+)

Gilbrant has an interesting comment - That Joseph and Mary marveled at Simeon's witness is an observation often found in Luke. This was not a surprise to the parents; they already knew the specialness of their Son. But it was new information. More and more, as Mary and Joseph obeyed God, He continued to make revelations to them about Jesus. Bit by bit they were putting the pieces of the puzzle together. Now they were beginning to understand that Jesus' work would transcend Palestine and encompass the whole world. (Complete Biblical Library)

Canceled Christmas

Read: Luke 2:36-38

> Joseph and His mother marveled at those things which were spoken of [Jesus]. —Luke 2:33

We felt as if our Christmas was being canceled last year. Actually, our flight to see family in Missouri was canceled due to snow. It's been our tradition for quite a few years to celebrate Christmas with them, so we were greatly disappointed when we only got as far as Minnesota and had to return home to Michigan.

On Sunday, in a message we would have missed, our pastor spoke about expectations for Christmas. He caught my attention when he said, "If our expectations for Christmas are gifts and time with family, we have set our expectations too low. Those are enjoyable and things we're thankful for, but Christmas is the celebration of the coming of Christ and His redemption."

Simeon and Anna celebrated the coming of Jesus and His salvation when Joseph and Mary brought Him to the temple as a baby (Luke 2:25-38). Simeon, a man who was told by the Spirit that he would not die before he saw the Messiah, declared: "My eyes have seen Your salvation" (v.30). When Anna, a widow who served God, saw Jesus, she "spoke of Him to all those who looked for redemption in Jerusalem" (v.38).

We may experience disappointments or heartache during the Christmas season, but Jesus and His salvation always give us reason to celebrate.

How wonderful that we on Christmas morn
Though centuries have passed since Christ was born,
May worship still the Living Lord of men,
Our Savior, Jesus, Babe of Bethlehem.
—Hutchings

Jesus is always the reason to celebrate.

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Luke 2:34 And Simeon blessed them and said to Mary His mother, "Behold, this Child is appointed for the fall and rise of many in Israel, and for a sign to be opposed--

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- **blessed**: Ge 14:19 47:7 Ex 39:43 Lev 9:22,23 Heb 7:1,7
- **appointed**: Isa 8:14,15 Ho 14:9 Mt 21:44 Joh 3:20 Jn 9:29 Ro 9:32 1Co 1:23 2Co 2:15 1Pe 2:7
- **and rising**: Ac 2:36-41 Acts 3:15-19 Acts 6:7 9:1-20
- **for a sign**: Ps 22:6-8 69:9-12 Isa 8:18 Mt 11:19 26:65-67 27:40-45,63 Joh 5:18 8:48-52 9:24-28 Ac 4:26 13:45 17:6 24:5 28:22 1Co 1:23 Heb 12:1-3 1Pe 4:14
- Luke 2 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

> Matthew 21:42, 44 Jesus *said to them, “Did you never read in the Scriptures, ‘THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED, THIS BECAME THE CHIEF CORNER stone; THIS CAME ABOUT FROM THE LORD, AND IT IS MARVELOUS IN OUR EYES’? ..... “And he who **falls on this stone will be broken to pieces**; but on whomever it **falls**, it will scatter him like dust.”
>
> Romans 9:32 Why? Because they did not pursue it by faith, but as though it were by works. They **stumbled over the stumbling stone**,
>
> Isaiah 8:14-15 “Then He shall become a sanctuary; But to both the houses of Israel, a stone to strike and a rock to stumble over, And a snare and a trap for the inhabitants of Jerusalem. 15 **“Many will stumble over them**, Then they will **fall** and be broken; They will even be snared and caught.”
>
> Hosea 14:9 Whoever is wise, let him understand these things; Whoever is discerning, let him know them. For the ways of the LORD are right, And the righteous will walk in them, But **transgressors will stumble** in them.
>
> 1 Corinthians 1:23; 24 but we preach Christ crucified, to Jews **a stumbling block** and to Gentiles foolishness, 24 but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

SIMEON'S PROPHECY OF JESUS:
"THE MAGNET OF THE AGES"

Have you ever pushed two magnets together and watched as they either attracted or repelled? Most of us have and this gives us a perfect picture of the effect the "Child" Jesus would have on the hearts of every man and woman born in Adam - either they would be attracted to Him and be transferred supernaturally from in Adam to in Christ, or they would be repelled by Him and suffer loss not only in time but in eternity.

And Simeon blessed (eulogeo) **them and said to Mary His mother** - The verb **blessed** is the same used in Lk 2:28 (**eulogeo**) so first Simon blessed God and then he blessed the parents. He spoke well of them is the literal sense. Notice he directs his warning to Mary, who would witness the ultimate rejection of her Son on the Cross. Joseph presumably had died by the time of His crucifixion as their is no record of his presence at Calvary. So in that sense Mary would need to be the one who was prepared for the opposition to her Son. To be forewarned is to be forearmed, but clearly Mary could never be fully prepared for what lay ahead for Jesus. No mother could!

Lenski writes "When Simeon now turns to Mary alone and leaves out Joseph, this is done because of the prophetic insight that

Joseph will no longer be among the living when the things that are now stated shall come to pass. Joseph died long before Jesus began his ministry." (See The Interpretation of St. Luke's Gospel)

Ryle - From this expression some have supposed that Simeon was at least a chief priest, if not the high priest. There is nothing to justify the supposition. As one specially inspired by the Holy Ghost to prophesy, Simeon was doing nothing more, in blessing them, than any prophet would have done, whether a priest or not. (Luke 2)

Behold (idou)**, this Child is appointed** (keimai) **for the fall and rise** (anastasis) **of many in Israel, and for a sign** (semeion) **to be opposed** (antilego) **--** Simeon stopped praising and started prophesying. After the blessing comes the warning. Fall speaks of those who stumble over Messiah (1Pe 2:8) whereas rise speaks of those who receive Jesus as their Messiah and Savior (cf Eph 2:6).

Men **fall** solely by their own guilt (Acts 7:51, 52; 28:25–27);
men **rise** up solely by grace (Eph. 2:4–9).
-- R C H Lenski

Lenski on **appointed** (keimai) - "this one is set," i.e., by God himself, for the **double purpose** indicated by the ε ς phrase: "for a falling and a rising up of many in Israel," to which is added another ε ς phrase in elucidation: "and for a sign spoken against." It is God's intention in placing Jesus among Israel that he shall cause many to fall and perish and many to rise up and be saved. This is the so-called voluntas consequens that rests on the infallible foreknowledge and takes into account the effect of grace in men's hearts. When men reject that grace in unbelief they fall, and it is God's will that they perish (Mark 16:16; Isa. 8:14; Matt. 21:42, 44; Rom. 9:33). On the other hand, when God's grace in Christ wins men and makes them rise up from sin and death in a spiritual resurrection (Eph. 2:5, 6), this is again the effect of his consequent will but at the same time the execution of his voluntas antecedens which, disregarding all else, took into account only man's fallen estate and sent grace and a Savior for all alike (John 3:16; Rom. 9:33b; Acts 4:12). (See The Interpretation of St. Luke's Gospel)

NET Note - The phrase the falling and rising of many emphasizes that Jesus will bring division in the nation, as some will be judged (falling) and others blessed (rising) because of how they respond to him. The language is like Isa 8:14–15 and conceptually like Isa 28:13–16. Here is the first hint that Jesus' coming will be accompanied with some difficulties.

> **THOUGHT** - Jesus is history's watershed, its dividing ridge: our relation to him is decisive for woe or weal, for bane or blessing. (Hendriksen)

Jewish believer **Arnold Fruchtenbaum** - He tells them that Yeshua will be the **rise and fall of many in Israel.** He will be a point of division in the Jewish people: the **rise** of those who believe, and the **fall** of those who don't.

Gilbrant - John the Baptist's preaching also pointed to the either/or, blessing/judgment character of the kingdom of God coming in Jesus. Jesus would be a **sign** of salvation, yet a **sign** that would be rejected by many (as were Isaiah and his children, Isaiah 8:18). As a result of this rejection, Mary's soul would be pierced. This can best be understood as her witnessing the crucifixion of her own Son. (Complete Biblical Library)

A T Robertson - He will be a **stumbling-block** to some (Isa. 8:14; Matt. 21:42, 44; Rom. 9:33; 1 Pet. 2:16f.) who love darkness rather than light (Jn 3:19), he will be the **cause of rising** for others (Ro 6:4, 9; Eph. 2:6). "**Judas despairs, Peter repents: one robber blasphemes, the other confesses**" (Plummer). Jesus is the magnet of the ages. He draws some, He repels others. This is true of all epoch-making men to some extent.

Vincent - For the **fall**, because he will be a stumbling-block to many (Isaiah 8:14; Matthew 21:42, Matthew 21:44; Acts 4:11; Romans 9:33; 1 Corinthians 1:23). For the **rising**, because many will be raised up through him to life and glory (Romans 6:4, Romans 6:9; Ephesians 2:6).

The prophet Isaiah had spoken of Jesus as a **Stone** in two passages - the imagery is that Jesus is a "**Stone**" over which people will stumble and fall. One will either stumble over Christ and be eternally lost or stand upon Him by grace through faith and be eternally saved.

> "Then He shall become a sanctuary; But to both the houses of Israel, a**stone to strike and a rock to stumble over,** And a snare and a trap for the inhabitants of Jerusalem. "Many will stumble over them, Then they will fall and be broken; They will even be snared and caught." (Isa 8:14,15)
>
> So the word of the LORD to them will be, "Order on order, order on order, Line on line, line on line, A little here, a little there," That they may go and stumble backward, be broken, snared and taken captive. 14 Therefore, hear the word of the LORD, O scoffers, Who rule this people who are in Jerusalem, 15 Because you have said, "We have made a covenant with death, And with Sheol we have made a pact. The overwhelming scourge will not reach us when it passes by, For we have made falsehood our refuge and we have concealed

ourselves with deception." 16 Therefore thus says the Lord GOD, "**Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a tested stone** (MESSIAH), A costly cornerstone for the foundation, firmly placed. He who believes in it will not be disturbed (THIS IS THE ONE WHO RISES TO HEAVEN!). (Isa 28:13-16)

See also Matt. 21:42, 44; Rom. 9:33; 1 Cor. 1:23; 1 Pet. 2:8

For a sign (semeion) **to be opposed** (antilego) - The KJV is more literal reading "a sign which shall be **spoken against** (antilego)". **Opposed** is present tense signifying that Jesus would be continually spoken against and this has happened for 2000 years! He was initially insulted, mocked, and hated in Israel, this opposition culminating in His crucifixion. Israel's opposition to Jesus Christ is a repeated theme in Luke's gospel (Luke 4:28–30; Luke 13:31–35; Luke 19:47; Luke 20:14–20). And the unregenerate world still opposes Him which of course means His true followers will also be opposed (Mt 10:22, Lk 6:22, Jn 15:18, 19, 17:14)!

What was this **sign**? Ultimately Jesus and His coming and His pointing men to God and to how they could get to God. It was not by their works of righteousness, but by believing in Him. And this "narrow way" would be opposed by many in Israel in Jesus' day and by men throughout the world ever since. How often we are opposed when we share the Gospel of Jesus Christ and hear "You are being narrow minded and bigoted!" "There are many ways to God!" "How can you be so arrogant as to think you have the truth and no other religion has the truth?" And on and on it goes. Jesus only Name by which men may be saved (Acts 4:12) in America today is used more as a profanity on television, movies, music, books, etc.

Spurgeon on **a sign to be opposed** - How true has this been. The cross has been to many a stumbling block, and to the worldly wise it has been foolishness; and so will it be to the world's end. Christ and his gospel will always be spoken against. If you know a gospel which is approved by the age, and patronized by the learned, that gospel is a lie. You may be sure of that; but if it be spoken against, if it be slandered, if it be called absurd, unscientific, and I know not what, all that is in its favor. (Luke Exposition)

David Guzik - **Sign** is literally "a target that people shoot at." Jesus would be the target of great evil.

Bob Utley - One of the evidences which affirms Jesus' Messiahship is His rejection. This may be an allusion to OT texts like Isa. 6:9–10, of which Jesus says is the purpose of parables (i.e. to hide meaning, cf. Luke 8:10; Matt. 13:13; Mark 4:12; John 12:36b–43). The OT predicts again and again that only a faith remnant will be saved (delivered).

Lenski - Simeon calls Jesus "a **sign**," for his person and his work shall signify salvation for Israel as, indeed, also for all men (Lk 2:32). Israel shall see this "**sign**" and all it signifies for them but shall raise only objection to it. This is dreadful and inexplicable but a fact nonetheless. Unbelief is the height of irrationality, and no reasonable explanation can be given for an unreasonable act. Men **fall** solely by their own guilt (Acts 7:51, 52; 28:25–27); men rise up solely by grace (Eph. 2:4–9). (SeeThe Interpretation of St. Luke's Gospel)

Ryle - Christ was to be "**a sign spoken against**." He was to be a mark for all the fiery darts of the wicked one. He was to be "despised and rejected of men." He and His people were to be a "city set upon a hill," assailed on every side, and hated by all sorts of enemies. And so it proved. Men who agreed in nothing else have agreed in hating Christ. From the very first, thousands have been persecutors and unbelievers. (Luke 2)

The opposition which would mark the entire life of Christ would begin with His birth, as Herod would seek, unsuccessfully, to slay Him (Mt 2:16-18+). Many would fall over this "rock of offense" in Israel (1 Pe 2:8), but many would rise again.

A T Robertson says "**Spoken against** (or **opposed** antilego) is a present passive participle, continuous action. It is going on today. Nietzsche regarded Jesus Christ "as the curse of the race because He spared the weak." (Woe! That's not what Nietzsche thinks today!)

Marvin Vincent on **opposed** (antilego) - The participle is the present; and the expression does not voice a prophecy, but describes an inherent characteristic of the sign: a sign of which it is the character to experience contradiction from the world. In the beginning, as a babe, Jesus experienced this at the hands of Herod; so all through his earthly ministry and on the cross; and so it will be to the end, until he shall have put all enemies under his feet. Compare Hebrews 12:3.

J C Ryle - Christ was to be the occasion of "the fall of many in Israel" He was to be a stone of stumbling and rock of offence to many proud and self-righteous Jews, who would reject Him and perish in their sins. And so it proved. To multitudes among them Christ crucified was a stumbling-block, and His Gospel "a savor of death." (1 Cor. 1:23; 2 Cor. 2:16.) Christ was to be the occasion of "rising again to many in Israel." He was to prove the Saviour of many who, at one time, rejected, blasphemed, and reviled Him, but afterwards repented and believed. And so it proved. When the thousands who crucified Him repented, and Saul who persecuted Him was converted, there was nothing less than a rising again from the dead. (Luke 2)

Henry Morris - "**The fall and rising of many**" indicates that those who reject the Messiah will be cast down, while those who accept Him will rise through salvation.

C H Spurgeon - There were **many** who fell through their offences against Jesus: but blessed be his name, there are still many who rise through him, rise first to newness of life on earth and afterwards to resurrection life in glory. Jesus is set for both, he must be to one the savor of death unto death, and to another he must be the savor of life unto life. (Luke Exposition)

Spurgeon on **for the fall and rise of many** - Do you understand that? Whenever Christ comes to a man, there is a fall first, and a rising again afterwards. You never knew the Lord aright if he did not give you a fall first. He pulls us down from our pride and self-sufficiency, and then he lifts us up to a position of eternal safety. He is "set" for this purpose; this is the great design of Christ's coming: "This child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel." (Luke Exposition)

Spurgeon on **rise and fall of many** - The great practical doctrine before us is this, that wherever Jesus Christ comes, with whomsoever he may come in contact, he is never without influence, never inoperative, but in every case a weighty result is produced. There is about the holy child Jesus a power which is always in operation. He is not set to be an unobserved, inactive, slumbering personage in the midst of Israel; but he is set for the falling or for the rising of the many to whom he is known. Never does a man hear the gospel but he either rises or falls under that hearing. There is never a proclamation of Jesus Christ (and this is the spiritual coming forth of Christ himself) which leaves men precisely where they were; the gospel is sure to have some effect upon those who hear it. Moreover, the text informs us that mankind, when they understand the message and work of Christ, do not regard them with indifference; but when they hear the truth as it is in Jesus, they either take it joyfully in their arms with Simeon, or else it becomes to them a sign that shall be spoken against. He that is not with Christ is against him, and he that gathereth not with him scattereth abroad. Where Christ is no man remains a neutral; he decides either for Christ or against him. Given a mind that understands the gospel, you have before you also a mind that either stumbles at this stumbling-stone, being scandalised thereby, or else you have a mind that rejoices in a foundation upon which it delights to build all its hopes for time and for eternity. Observe, then, the two sides of the truth—Jesus always working upon men with marked effect; and on the other hand, man treating the Lord Jesus with warmth either of affection or opposition; an action and a reaction being evermore produced. (Christ - The Rise and Fall of Many)

Blessed (2127)(eulogeo from **eu** = good + **lógos** = word; see cognates **eulogetos** and **eulogia**) means speak good or well. When eulogeo is used by men toward men it means to speak well of with praise and thanksgiving (English "**Eulogy**" = an address in praise for one deceased). To say good or positive things. **Eulogeo** can be from men to God, from men to men, and from God to men. When God blesses men He grants them favor and confers happiness upon them.

> Luke's uses - Lk. 1:42; Lk. 1:64; Lk. 2:28; Lk. 2:34; Lk. 6:28; Lk. 9:16; Lk. 13:35; Lk. 19:38; Lk. 24:30; Lk. 24:50; Lk. 24:51; Lk. 24:53; Jn. 12:13; Acts 3:26

Appointed (2749)(**keimai**) means literally to be in a recumbent position, to lie down, to be laid down. The root meaning refers to lying down or reclining and came to be used of an official appointment as here in Lk 2:34 (cf similar use in Php 1:16+)In the military **keimai** was used of a special assignment, such as guard duty or defense of a strategic position - the soldier was placed (set) on duty. Keimai is present tense expressing continuous activity. Jesus is still to this day **appointed for the fall of rise of many**, but not just in Israel but in the entire world - as a result of Jesus some would fall and some would rise.

Rise (386)(**anastasis** from **ana** = up, again + **histemi** = to cause to stand) literally means "to stand again" or "to cause to stand again" and most NT uses refer to a physical body rising from the dead or coming back to life after having once died. Indeed, those who are dead in their trespasses and sins (Eph 2:1), dead in Adam (Ro 5:12), who place their faith in the Messiah will come back to life as Adam knew it before the fall but even a better life for it "shall also be in the likeness of His **resurrection** (anastasis) (Ro 6:5) for He is "the **resurrection** (anastasis) and the life" (Jn 11:25)! Hallelujah! Luke's uses of **anastasis** - Lk. 2:34; Lk. 14:14; Lk. 20:27; Lk. 20:33; Lk. 20:35; Lk. 20:36; Acts 1:22; Acts 2:31; Acts 4:2; Acts 4:33; Acts 17:18; Acts 17:32; Acts 23:6; Acts 23:8; Acts 24:15; Acts 24:21; Acts 26:23

Sign (4592)(**semeion**) means a distinguishing mark by which something is know. Jesus would serves as a pointer to aid perception or insight, but sadly this little baby Mary is holding will grow up to be the most opposed and hated Person in all of human history!

Opposed (483)(**antilego** from **anti** = over against, opposite, instead of, in place of + **lego** = speak) (gainsayers in KJV {gainsay = deny, contradict, speak against}) means literally to say against or to speak against and so to **contradict** (assert the contrary of, take issue with, implying open or flat denial), to speak in opposition to or to **oppose** (place over against something so as to provide resistance), to **gainsay** (declare to be untrue or invalid and implies disputing the truth of what another has said), to deny, to refute (to deny the truth or accuracy of). In secular Greek antilego was used to mean "**reject** a writing as spurious". Continually contradicting an authority = **obstinate**.

Luke 2:35 and a sword will pierce even your own soul--to the end that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed."

> NET Luke 2:35 Indeed, as a result of him the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed– and a sword will pierce your own soul as well!"

- **a sword**: Ps 42:10 John 19:25
- **that**: Lu 16:14,15 Dt 8:2 Jdg 5:15,16 Mt 12:24-35 Jn 8:42-47 Jn 15:22-24 Acts 8:21-23 1Co 11:19 1Jn 2:19
- Luke 2 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

SIMEON'S PAINFUL PROPHECY
OF MATER DOLOROSA

The Latin phrase "**mater dolorosa**" means grieving mother and this would be Mary in about three years!

And (kai) - This marks the continuation of Simeon's prophecy and this would be the most painful part to Mary. Through the Holy Spirit, Simeon understood what even the disciples failed to grasp until after the event, that the Christ had “to suffer these things and to enter into glory” (Luke 24:26).

A sword (rhomphaia) **will pierce even your own soul** - Mary in witnessing first hand the literal piercing of Jesus' hands, feet and side (Ps 22:16), and would herself be figuratively pierced in seeing His agonizing, painful death on the Cross. John is the only Gospel writer to describe her witness and the **fulfillment of Simeon's prophecy**...

> Therefore the soldiers did these things (Jn 19:24 = cast lots for His tunic fulfilling Ps 22:18). But (VIVID CONTRAST WITH SOLDIERS GAMBLING) **standing by the cross of Jesus were His mother, and His mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene**. When Jesus then saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved (JOHN) standing nearby, He said to His mother, “Woman, behold, your son!” Then He *said to the disciple, “Behold, your mother!” From that hour the disciple took her into his own household. (John 19:25-27)

Simeon's metaphor (a large sword) is vivid - in that day people were usually killed with swords (not guns) and it would be physically painful and usually terminal. And so he paints a picture of Mary's extreme grief and pain as she will one days see Jesus suffering on a horrible Roman cross.

NET Note on a **sword** - A sword (rhomphaia) refers to a very large, broad two-edged sword. The language is figurative, picturing great pain. Though it refers in part to the cross, it really includes the pain all of Jesus' ministry will cause, including the next event in Luke 2:41–52 and extending to the opposition he faced throughout his ministry.

Hendriksen - In a parenthesis Simeon, in addressing Mary, states that a sword would pierce her soul; in fact, as the original indicates, a large and broad sword, the symbol of intense pain, of frightful and piercing anguish. For the fulfilment see John 19:25–27. (BNTC-Luke)

A T Robertson on a **sword** - A large sword, properly a long Thracian javelin. It occurs in the LXX of Goliath’s sword (1 Sa 17:51). How little Mary understood the meaning of Simeon’s words that seemed so out of place in the midst of the glorious things already spoken, a sharp thorn in their roses, a veritable bitter-sweet. But one day Mary will stand by the Cross of Christ with this Thracian javelin clean through her soul, σταβατ Ματερ Δολοροσα [stabat Mater Dolorosa] (John 19:25). It is only a parenthesis here, and a passing cloud perhaps passed over Mary’s heart already puzzled with rapture and ecstasy.

To the end that - This is a term of purpose. In this context it refers to all that precedes and that purpose is to assay hearts - either for or against Jesus. There is simply no middle ground. Jesus is the ultimate polarizing force in the Universe! If you are "toying" with Jesus, my advice is "Stop!" And come to your senses (2 Ti 2:25,26) and by grace through faith get on His side, because as Revelation 19:11-21+ reveals, Jesus wins. And ALL who oppose Him will lose, not just in their short futile life on earth but eternally!

J C Ryle - Christ was to be the occasion of ‘**the thoughts of many hearts being revealed**.” His Gospel was to bring to light the real characters of many people. The enmity to God of some,—the inward weariness and hunger of others, would be discovered by the preaching of the cross. It would show what men really were. And so it proved. The Acts of the Apostles, in almost every chapter, bear testimony that in this, as in every other item of his prophecy, old Simeon spoke truth. (Luke 2)

NET Note - The remark **the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed** shows that how people respond to Jesus indicates where their hearts really are before God.

> **THOUGHT** - And now what do we think of Christ? This is the question that ought to occupy our minds. What thoughts does He call forth in our hearts? This is the inquiry which ought to receive our attention. Are we for

> Him, or are we against Him? Do we love Him, or do we neglect Him? Do we stumble at His doctrine, or do we find it life from the dead? Let us never rest till these questions are satisfactorily answered. (Ryle)

Matthew Henry - Jesus, his doctrine, and people, are still spoken against; his truth and holiness are still denied and blasphemed; his preached word is still the touchstone of men's characters. The secret good affections in the minds of some, will be revealed by their embracing Christ; the secret corruptions of others will be revealed by their enmity to Christ. Men will be judged by the **thoughts** of their hearts concerning Christ.

Wiersbe on **thoughts from many hearts** - the way people speak about Jesus Christ is evidence of what is in their hearts. He is not only the "salvation stone" and the "judgment stone" (Dan. 2:34+, Da 2:45+), but He is also the "touchstone" that exposes what people are really like. "What think ye of Christ?" (Matt. 22:42) is still the most important question for anybody to answer (1 John 4:1–3). (Scroll to page 145 in The Bible Exposition Commentary)

Thoughts from many hearts may be revealed - The point would be that out one's mouth comes that which fills their heart. Given the context of a sword piercing Mary's heart the primary meaning is that hatred (enmity, dislike, etc) in one's heart for Jesus will spew forth like a volcano of blasphemies and profane uses of His glorious Name. The Name of Jesus is the TOUCHSTONE. or means of "measure by which the validity or merit of a concept can be tested." Although the meaning is negative in this context, it is notable that the converse is true that love in one's heart (enabled by the Spirit of God) will come forth as praise to His Holy Name. In both cases what they say reveals the character of their heart.

A T Robertson comments "He is to test men's thoughts (dialogismoi) and purposes. They will be compelled to take a stand for Christ or against him. That is true today."

> **THOUGHT** - How often I have been in conversations and someone uses the great Name of Jesus as a "curse word!" Sometimes I speak up and say something like "Yes, they are going to need His help." (Or something fitting the context). This usually receives little reaction. Other times I am discussing the need for faith and when I get to Jesus as the "narrow road" sadly the dialogue is many times terminated! Even in this example, their hearts have been "tested" and "revealed."

R C H Lenski writes that "The idea is that when Jesus comes to a man with his grace and salvation, his contact with that man will produce and reveal to men certain thoughts of a decisive nature, either those of unbelief, when a man rejects Jesus and loves darkness more than light (John 3:19), or those of faith, when a man has been brought to love truth and comes to the light with his deeds wrought in God (John 3:21). Hitherto Mary (and Joseph) had heard only the glorious part of Jesus' work, now she hears also the painful part, which is almost unbelievable and yet sure to come, for by the Spirit Simeon spoke true words of revelation and prophecy, they were uttered under divine inspiration." (See The Interpretation of St. Luke's Gospel).

MacArthur - The rejection of the Messiah would reveal the appalling truth (THOUGHTS) about the apostate state of the Jews.

Spurgeon (Luke Exposition) - This favored woman had the greatest smart (a kind of pain such as that caused by a wound, burn, or sore) to go with her great honor. She saw the suffering and anguish of her son; and the nearer you are to Christ, the more of sorrow it will cost you, sorrow which you may be well content to bear. You know how it is put in that hymn of which many of us are very fond, —

"If I find him, if I follow,
What his guerdon here?
Many a labor, many a sorrow,
Many a tear.'"

Yet, I say again, you may be well content to bear it all for his sake; for you remember what the next verse of the hymn is, —

"If I still hold closely to him,
What hath be at last?
'Borrow vanquished, labour ended,
Jordan past.'"

Spurgeon - Christ's death revealed the **thoughts of many hearts**. It revealed the thought in the heart of Pilate, that he loved popularity better than the truth. It revealed the thought of the heart of Judas, that he loved gold better than he loved his Master. It revealed the thought in the heart of Caiaphas, that he would keep to old customs rather than to the right. It revealed the thought in the hearts of the disciples, and showed what poor timid, trembling hearts they had. Peter's impulsive spirit, too, was revealed in all its weakness by the death of the Saviour. The cross is the great touchstone; wherever it comes, it tests and tries us, ¾even as the crucible tries the metal that is put into it,¾ and lets us know what manner of men we are. Dost thou love Christ? Dost thou glory in his cross? Then it is well with thee. But dost thou despise the cross? Dost thou set up thine own righteousness in opposition to it? Art

thou depending upon anything beside Jesus Christ and him crucified? Then his cross reveals thee to be self-righteous, and dead in trespasses and sins. Our Saviour was not only to be received by men, but he was to be welcomed by women also, so now we read Luke 2:36. (Luke Exposition)

Spurgeon on **thoughts of many hearts** - Christ and his cross are the revealers of **the thoughts of men's hearts**. Men's hearts can conceal their thoughts until Christ's cross comes near; then the old enmity rises up, the heart rebels, and we see what is really in men's hearts. (Luke Exposition)

Sword (4501) **rhomphaia** is strictly, a long Thracian javelin; later a large and broad sword. Liddell-Scott has "scimitar." Most are metaphorical descriptions of a **sword** as representative of the Word of God and/or "the Lord's judicial utterances." (Vine). The only literal use of **rhomphaia** is at Revelation 6:8 where the fourth horse and rider were given the authority and power to kill one-fourth of the earth's population with "**sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth**." Even here **sword** is most likely symbolic of war. In most of the NT uses **rhomphaia** represents the authority and power of the Word of God (Rev. 1:16; Rev. 2:12; Rev. 2:16; Rev. 19:15; Rev. 19:21). In Lk 2:35+ **rhomphaia** is figurative and describes anguish of Mary's soul as if pierced by a broad sword (Simeon predicting Jesus' crucifixion)!.

Thoughts (1261)(**dialogismos** from **diá** = through or as a preposition to intensify meaning of +**logizomai** = reckon, take an inventory, conclude; English *dialogue*) means literally reasoning through and so to think or reason with thoroughness and completeness. It pictures one deliberating with one's self which conveys the basic meaning of inner reasoning. It describes evil thoughts. Jesus used this noun in Matthew declaring "For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, slanders. (Mt 15:19, cf Mk 7:21) **Luke's** uses of **dialogismos** (he uses 6 of 14 NT occurrences) - Matt. 15:19; Mk. 7:21; Lk. 2:35; Lk. 5:22; Lk. 6:8; Lk. 9:46; Lk. 9:47; Lk. 24:38; Rom. 1:21; Rom. 14:1; 1 Co. 3:20; Phil. 2:14; 1 Tim. 2:8; Jas. 2:4

May be revealed (601)(**apokalupto** from **apó** = from + **kalúpto** = cover, conceal, English = apocalypse of **apokalupsis**) literally means to remove the cover from (something that is covered). The figurative sense then is to remove that which conceals something. Almost all of the NT uses are figurative and generally speak of some aspect of spiritual truth that was heretofore hidden but now has the "lid removed" so that it can be seen (understood). The thoughts of these hearts will be revealed!

Luke 2:36 And there was a prophetess, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was advanced in years and had lived with her husband seven years after her marriage,

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- **a prophetess**: Ex 15:20 Jud 4:4 2Ki 22:14 Ac 2:18 21:9 1Co 12:1
- **Asher**: Ge 30:13, Rev 7:6
- **she**: Job 5:26 Ps 92:14
- Luke 2 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

ANNA
THE PROPHETESS

And (kai) - Don't miss the "**and**" because it connects Anna with Simeon. How? Same time. Same place. Time of arrival of Joseph and Mary in the Temple grounds, presumably the court of the woman.

There was a prophetess (prophetis) - Simeon was introduced as a "**man**" (even though he spoke prophetically which was of course because the Spirit was upon him) but **Anna** is introduced directly as a "**prophetess**!" Apparently while Simeon only gave this one prophecy (as far as we know from Scripture), **Anna** had the gift of prophecy and was apparently known to possess that gift since Luke calls her specifically "**the prophetess Anna**." **Anna** is certainly notable as a **prophetess** because there had not been any truly inspired spokesperson for God for 400 years, since the prophet Malachi! And don't miss how Luke includes the women involved in the story of Jesus' life.

Lenski notes that in regard to her gift "she resembled Philip's daughters (Acts 21:9), and she used her gift in a similarly quiet way. The title does not mean that she constantly foretold the future, or that she put herself forward publicly, but that she knew and interpreted the Word and the will of God for edification as 1 Cor. 14 describes this so valuable charisma." (See context in The Interpretation of St. Luke's Gospel)

And what a dramatic contrast godly Anna was with the only other NT use of the word **prophetess** (prophetis) describing ungodly Jezebeel. John records the words of the risen, glorified Lord Jesus...

> 'But I have this against you, that you tolerate the woman **Jezebel**, who calls herself a **prophetess**, and she

teaches and leads My bond-servants astray so that they commit acts of immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols.(Rev 2:20+)

CSB Study Bible Note - The immediate shift of focus from Simeon, a male who prophesied, to Anna, the prophetess, fits with Luke's emphasis on women. The other prophetesses mentioned in the NT are Philip's daughters (Ac 21:8-9)

John MacArthur on **prophetess** (prophetis) - This refers to a woman who spoke God's Word. She was a teacher of the OT, not a source of revelation. The OT mentions only 3 women who prophesied: Miriam (Ex 15:20); Deborah (Jdg 4:4); Huldah (2Ki 22:14; 2Ch 34:22). One other, the "prophetess" Noadiah, was evidently a false prophet, grouped by Nehemiah with his enemies. Isaiah 8:3 refers to the prophet's wife as a "prophetess"—but there is no evidence Isaiah's wife prophesied. Perhaps she is so-called because the child she bore was given a name that was prophetic (Is 8:3, 4). This use of the title for Isaiah's wife also shows that the title does not necessarily indicate an ongoing revelatory prophetic ministry. Rabbinical tradition also regarded Sarah, Hannah, Abigail, and Esther as prophetesses (apparently to make an even 7 with Miriam, Deborah, and Huldah). (See context of MacArthur Study Bible)

Matthew Henry - There was much evil then in the church, yet God left not himself without witness. **Anna** always dwelt in, or at least attended at, the temple.

Anna the daughter of Phanuel - (Hannah = "gracious") Nothing is known of Anna's father **Phanuel**, whose name means "Face of God."

Of the tribe of Asher - Asher is one of the Northern 10 tribes of Israel that head been deported to Assyria in 722 BC but clearly some from this tribe had returned to the land of Israel. The tribe of Asher does not stand out in Old Testament history (Ge 30:12–13; 35:26).

Steven Cole - Anna was a woman. While Jewish women enjoyed more respect in that day than women in other cultures, there still was a fair amount of discrimination against them. The rabbis did not approve of the same amount of instruction in the Torah being given to girls as to boys. They regarded women's minds as not adapted for such investigations (Alfred Edersheim, Sketches of Jewish Social Life [Eerdmans], pp. 132–133). The women were restricted to an area of the temple called "The Women's Court." They could not enter the inner court where the ceremonies were performed. According to Josephus, women and slaves could not give evidence in court (cited by Roland de Vaux, Ancient Israel [McGraw-Hill], 1:156). And yet the Lord is pleased to include the testimony of Anna concerning Jesus. God is no respecter of persons. He is pleased with the devotion of any person, male or female. (Luke 2:36-38b On Wasting Your Life)

She was advanced (probaino) **in years having lived with a husband 7 years after her marriage**- **Advanced in years** means old like yours truly! Anna's ministry in the Temple is a refutation of anyone who says "I'm too old to serve the Lord!"

> **THOUGHT** - If you are a believer, why do you think God has left you alive on earth? Perhaps you might want to re-read the first entry in the Westminster Shorter Catechism which addresses this question and then the verses that follow:
>
> > Q. **What is the chief end of man?**
> > A. Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever.
> >
> > Read Eph 2:10+ (cf Jn 4:34), Jesus' command in Mt 5:16+, Paul's exhortation in Ephesians 5:16+ and Solomon's advice in Eccl 9:10, 12:13-14. See Redeem the Time.

Prophetess (4398)(**prophetis** feminine form of **prophetes** from **pro** = before or forth + **phemi** = to tell) describes a woman gifted by the Spirit for prophesying (does this refer to telling the future and/or foretelling?) See also discussion below. In the Greek sense a prophetess was the interpreter or priestess of a god or an oracle. Only used twice in Luke 2:36, Anna a true prophetess and Jezebel a false prophetess in Rev 2:20. = "the woman Jezebel, who calls herself a **prophetess**." There are 5 uses in the Septuagint

> Exodus 15:20+ Miriam the **prophetess**, Aaron's sister, took the timbrel in her hand, and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dancing.
>
> Judges 4:4+ So Hilkiah the priest, Ahikam, Achbor, Shaphan, and Asaiah went to Huldah the **prophetess**, the wife of Shallum the son of Tikvah, the son of Harhas, keeper of the wardrobe (now she lived in Jerusalem in the Second Quarter); and they spoke to her.
>
> 2 Chronicles 34:22 So Hilkiah and those whom the king had told went to Huldah the **prophetess**, the wife of Shallum the son of Tokhath, the son of Hasrah, the keeper of the wardrobe (now she lived in Jerusalem in the Second Quarter); and they spoke to her regarding this.

Isaiah 8:3+ So I approached the **prophetess**, and she conceived and gave birth to a son. Then the LORD said to me, "Name him Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz;

Gilbrant - (ED: KEEP IN MIND THIS IS SOMEWHAT SUPPOSITIONAL AS THE TEXT DOES NOT GIVE US THE SPECIFIC INFORMATION TO WHICH GILBRANT ALLUDES). She is gifted with an ability to see future events or communicate revelation from God. According to Thayer, her knowledge usually comes through dreams, visions, or inspiration (Complete Biblical Library)

Wikipedia (take their note with a proverbial **grain of salt**) - The Talmud recognizes 48 male prophets who bequeathed permanent messages to mankind.[34] According to the Talmud, there were also seven women counted as prophetesses whose message bears relevance for all generations: Sarah, Miriam, Devorah, Hannah (mother of the prophet Samuel), Abigail (a wife of King David) , Huldah (from the time of Jeremiah), and Esther.[34] The Talmudic and Biblical commentator Rashi points out that Rebecca, Rachel, and Leah were also prophets.[35]

Prophetess appears 9 times in the Bible...

- General scriptures concerning Ezekiel 13:17 ; Joel 2:28,29
- Miriam Exodus 15:20
- Deborah Judges 4:4
- Huldah 2 Kings 22:14
- Noadiah Nehemiah 6:14
- Isaiah's wife Isaiah 8:3
- Elizabeth Luke 1:41-45
- Anna Luke 2:36-38
- Daughters of Philip Acts 21:9
- Jezebel Revelation 2:20

Advanced (4260) (**probaino** from **pro** = before + **baino** = step) means literally to go forward, to advance (as used in Mt 4:21 = "Going on", Mk 1:19 = "Going on"). Luke however uses **probaino** figuratively and idiomatically to describe old (advanced) age. Note that God did some amazing things in the lives of people who were advanced - Elizabeth and Zacharias had a baby name John! Abraham and Sarah had a baby named Isaac, the son of promise!

Luke 1:7 But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and they were both **advanced** in years.

Luke 1:18 Zacharias said to the angel, "How will I know this for certain? For I am an old man and my wife is **advanced** in years."

Probaino - 5x in the NT - Matt. 4:21; Mk. 1:19; Lk. 1:7; Lk. 1:18; Lk. 2:36

Probaino - 10x in the Septuagint - Ge 18:11; Ge 24:1; Ge. 26:13; Ex. 19:19; Jos. 13:1; Jos. 23:1; Jos. 23:2; Jdg. 19:11; 1 Ki. 1:1; Job 2:9;

Genesis 18:11 Now Abraham and Sarah were old, **advanced** in age; Sarah was past childbearing.

Genesis 24:1 Now Abraham was old, **advanced** in age; and the LORD had blessed Abraham in every way.

Joshua 13:1 Now Joshua was old and **advanced** in years when the LORD said to him, "You are old and advanced in years, and very much of the land remains to be possessed.

1 Kings 1:1 Now King David was old, **advanced** in age; and they covered him with clothes, but he could not keep warm.

QUESTION - What is a prophetess? Does the Bible mention any prophetesses?

ANSWER - A prophetess is a female prophet. The word *prophet* comes from the Greek word *prophetes*, which means "spokesman." A prophet in the Bible is a person who proclaims God's Word and therefore speaks for God—a spokesman for God. A prophetess was, therefore, a spokes*woman* for God. The faithful prophet or prophetess was one who, regardless of whether or not he or she was listened to, spoke everything God said to speak. There are several prophetesses mentioned in the Bible.

In the Old Testament we have Miriam, the sister of Aaron and Moses, who was a prophetess (Exodus 15:20). Deborah was another prophetess, and she was also the only woman that we know of to judge Israel (Judges 4:4). Another prophetess in the Bible is Huldah, who lived in Jerusalem during the reign of King Josiah (2 Kings 22:14; 2 Chronicles 34:22). As Josiah was making

reforms in Judah, he found a copy of the Law in the temple. He read it and was troubled over his nation's disobedience. Josiah inquired of the Lord through Huldah the prophetess. Huldah prophesied a disaster that God would bring upon Judah for its idolatry, but Josiah, because of his humility and tender heart before God, would go to his grave in peace and not see the disaster (2 Chronicles 34:19–28). An unnamed prophetess is mentioned in Isaiah 8:1–4. This prophetess bore Isaiah's son Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz, whose name was prophetic.

In the New Testament, another prophetess, Anna, is mentioned in Luke 2. Anna was a widow who spent her days in the temple fasting and praying (Luke 2:36–37). When Mary and Joseph presented the infant Jesus in the temple, Anna immediately recognized Jesus for who He was—the Messiah. She began to give thanks to God and to speak about Jesus to all who were waiting for the redemption of Jerusalem (verse 38). Four more prophetesses are mentioned in Acts 21:9. The four virgin daughters of Philip the evangelist were known for their prophecies. We aren't told the content of their prophecies, but it's likely that some of the prophecies concerned Paul's visit to Jerusalem and pending arrest.

The Bible also mentions two false prophetesses, women who claimed to speak God's word but were lying. One of these false prophetesses is a woman named Noadiah who was part of the conspiracy to make Nehemiah afraid to follow God (Nehemiah 6:14). The other is an unnamed false prophetess referred to as "Jezebel" in Revelation 2:20; this Jezebel-like woman was teaching the church at Thyatira to follow idols and leading them into sexual immorality.

The Bible tells us that prophecies will be spoken in the last days by both men and women, young and old, regardless of social status, as God pours out His Spirit (Joel 2:28; Acts 2:17). This was seen on the Day of Pentecost, when God bypassed the priests and scribes and spoke to the people of Jerusalem through the "common" people of the fledgling church, much to everyone's amazement (Acts 2:12; 4:13).GotQuestions.org

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QUESTION - Who was Anna the prophetess in the Bible?

ANSWER - Anna is mentioned in the Bible as a prophetess and one of the people connected to Jesus' childhood. She was the daughter of Penuel from the tribe of Asher. Her name, which she shares with Hannah in the Old Testament, means "favor" or "grace." All we know of her is found in three verses in the New Testament book of Luke. When Anna encounters the infant Jesus in the temple, we see that her life is indeed overflowing with favor and grace.

"And there was a prophetess, Anna" (Luke 2:36, ESV). Anna is among only a handful of women in the Bible bearing the title "prophetess." The others are Miriam, the sister of Moses (Exodus 15:20); Deborah, the judge (Judges 4:4); Huldah, the wife of Shallum (2 Chronicles 34:22); Isaiah's wife (Isaiah 8:3); and Philip's four unmarried daughters (Acts21:9).

"She was very old; she had lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, and then was a widow until she was eighty-four" (Luke 2:36–37). Anna had been married only seven years when she became a widow, and she remained a widow for the rest of her life. Most translations indicate that Anna was **eighty-four** years old when she met Jesus. But it is also possible to translate the text to mean Anna had lived eighty-four years *after* her husband died. That would mean Anna was at least 104 years old—if she had married at the age of thirteen. Either way, she had spent the vast majority of her life without a husband and was ministering before the Lord in the temple.

"She never left the temple but worshiped night and day, fasting and praying" (Luke 2:37). After becoming a widow, Anna dedicated herself wholly to the Lord. She never left the temple in Jerusalem but spent her time worshiping, fasting, and praying. It is possible that Anna was given living quarters at the temple because of her designation as prophetess, or she may have lived close by. What stands out is that her devotion was constant for the majority of her life, and her devotion was rewarded with an encounter with her Savior. Her many years of sacrifice and service were worth it all when she beheld the Messiah, the One for whom she had waited so long.

"Coming up to them at that very moment" (Luke 2:38). Mary and Joseph arrive at the temple with the baby Jesus to satisfy the Old Testament law. They needed to make the purification offering (see Leviticus 12:6–8) and to present Jesus as their firstborn before God (see Exodus 13:2, 12–15). While they're there, a man named Simeon cradles the Lord Jesus in his arms, praises God, and utters a prophecy concerning Jesus and Mary. At this moment, Anna enters. She immediately recognizes Jesus as the long-awaited Savior and begins thanking God.

"She gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem" (Luke 2:38). Anna the prophetess is among the first few to bring honor to the kingly babe born in a stable. Good news is meant to be shared, and Anna shares it with everyone who was anticipating the Messiah. The Redeemer had come, the prophecies were being fulfilled, and Anna was blessed to see it happen.GotQuestions.org

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Related Resources:

- Holman Bible Dictionary Prophetess
- Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible Prophetess
- Hastings' Dictionary of the NT Prophetess Prophecy Prophet Prophetess
- Vines' Expository Dictionary Prophetess
- Webster Dictionary Prophetess
- International Standard Bible Encyclopedia Prophetess
- McClintock and Strong's Bible Encyclopedia Prophetess
- Bob Utley's Special Topic - Women in the Bible - Interesting

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Women's Study Bible - Anna A Faithful Prophetess - Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, was eighty-four years of age and long widowed. Apparently she was a member of the resident staff at the temple in Jerusalem, devoting herself to continual service in the temple. The text does not indicate why she was called a "prophetess." Her unnamed husband might have been a prophet, or perhaps she herself had spent time praising and bearing testimony or even foretelling future events under divine inspiration. In simplest terms, she obviously was a woman through whom God spoke. As a descendant of the tribe of Asher, Anna looked for the Messiah as the prophets Isaiah (Is. 9:6) and Micah (Mic. 5:2) had foretold. When Mary and Joseph brought the baby Jesus to the temple to present Him to the Lord approximately a month after His birth, they offered their sacrifices according to ancient law. He had been circumcised on the eighth day, probably in Bethlehem. Now the days of Mary's purification were completed (see Lev. 12:4). As they were in the temple, a devout man, Simeon, was moved by the Holy Spirit to be present and to hold the Infant in his arms. Anna watched as Simeon prayed, knowing in her heart that the Messiah had come. Luke's description of this woman helps the reader to understand the respect and veneration which she commanded. A lifetime of prayer and fasting made her comments worth reporting. She, a recognized prophetess, confirmed God's gift of redemption, and her words resonated with all who looked for salvation (Luke 2:38). Anna personified in her day those who "serve the living and true God, and … wait for His Son from heaven" (1 Thess. 1:9, 10). She is a model for us; like her we are to "live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:12, 13).

Luke 2:37 and then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple, serving night and day with fastings and prayers.

> **Amplified** - And as a widow even for eighty-four years. She did not go out from the temple enclosure, but was worshiping night and day with fasting and prayer.
>
> **Wuest** - and she herself a widow eighty-four years, did not leave the temple, rendering sacred service to God with fastings and petitions night and day

- **which** (KJV): Ex 38:8 1Sa 2:2 Ps 23:6 27:4 84:4,10 92:13 135:1,2 Rev 3:12
- **but** (KJV): Ps 22:2 Ac 26:7 1Ti 5:5 Rev 7:15
- Luke 2 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

A CONVICTING PATTERN FOR WORSHIP

Then as a widow to the age of eighty-four - Worship knows no age limits. Indeed Anna was living out Paul's example of passionate pursuit of Jesus " I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus." (Php 3:14+)

> **TECHNICAL NOTE - Anna's Age** - **NET Note** - Grk "living with her husband for seven years from her virginity and she was a widow for eighty four years." The chronology of the eighty-four years is unclear, since the final phrase could mean "she was widowed until the age of eighty-four" (so BDAG 423 s.v. ewj 1.b.a). However, the more natural way to take the syntax is as a reference to the length of her widowhood, the subject of the clause, **in which case Anna was about 105 years old**(so D. L. Bock, Luke [BECNT], 1:251–52; I. H. Marshall, Luke, [NIGTC], 123–24).

Brian Bell - What a very long widowhood! In her loss of human fellowship she waited much on God! The Lord will bring healing to the wounded soul; companionship to the lonely hour; & send you forth with blessings. Old age has its offerings just as youth & prime has theirs!

Ryle - Anna was a woman of irreproachable character. After a married life of only seven years' duration, she had spent eighty-four years as a lone widow. The trials, desolation, and temptation of such a condition were probably very great. But Anna by grace overcame them all. She answered to the description given by St. Paul. She was "a widow indeed." (1 Tim. 4:5.) (Luke 2)

Steven Cole - Anna was elderly. While the elderly were more respected in that society than they are in ours, they were still subject to the abuse of the unscrupulous. In our pragmatic society, the elderly are often viewed as useless. They can't take care of themselves. They can't make a living. Although many may think it, few are crass enough to say what Colorado Governor Richard Lamm said a few years ago. During a discussion of spiraling health care costs, Lamm said that terminally ill elderly people have "a duty to die and get out of the way." In the context, Lamm was not speaking of the right of a competent, terminally ill patient to refuse treatment that would only prolong the dying process. He was speaking of the death of the elderly as a service to society so that limited resources could be freed up for other more useful goals (reported in "Action Line," April 11, 1984). Thankfully, God does not view the elderly as useless or as a burden on society! If an elderly person is devoted to God, their life and death is precious in His sight (Ps. 116:15). The point is, no matter what your station in life—male or female, young or old, rich or poor—you can be devoted to God and He will be pleased with your devotion. The world may ignore or despise you, but God always has had such a godly remnant. They are the salt of the earth; they preserve the whole mass from corruption. You can be counted among them. (A Life Well Spent)

Never left (aphistemi) **the temple** (hieron) - The negative particle *ouk* speaks of absolute negation, giving us the picture of her continuous presence in the Temple. In fact the verb **left** is in the imperfect tense which speaks of over and over, again and again "She kept on not leaving." (A T Robertson) **She never left the Temple** - And beloved in one sense we never leave the temple today, because everywhere we go we carry the temple with us for as Paul asked "Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body." (1 Cor 6:19-20+)

> **THOUGHT** - What a passion she had for One she had never seen! O, how Anna's attitude should convict (and motivate) all of us to a similar "**Messiah Mindset**," for as we think in their heart, so we are (Pr 23:7KJV)! How is your heart? Where are the "eyes of your heart" looking? Paul exhorted the saints "**Set your mind** (present imperative - your lifestyle - only possible as we remain filled with His Spirit - Eph 5:18+) on **the things above**, NOT on the things that are on earth. For (term of explanation) you have died (Ro 6:2-4) and your life is hidden (perfect tense = forever! ~ Eternal security!) with Christ in God. When Christ, our Life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory. (Col 3:2-4+, 1 Jn 3:2-3+)

Ryle - Anna was a woman who loved God's house. "She departed not from the temple." She regarded it as the place where God especially dwelt, and toward which every pious Jew in foreign lands, like Daniel, loved to direct his prayers. "Nearer to God, nearer to God," was the desire of her heart, and she felt that she was never so near as within the walls which contained the ark, the altar, and the holy of holies. She could enter into David's words, "my soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord." (Psalm 84:2.) (Luke 2)

MacArthur suggests an interesting explanation for **never left the temple** - "Anna evidently had her living quarters on the temple grounds. There would have been several such dwelling places for priests in the outer court, and Anna must have been allowed to live there permanently because of her unusual status as a prophetess." (See MacArthur Study Bible)

Gilbrant - The reference to Anna's never leaving the temple perhaps should not be taken literally. The statement probably means that she frequented all of the temple services and prayed there often, although one cannot be certain that housing for venerable servants of God was not maintained in the temple precinct. (Complete Biblical Library)

Serving (latreuo - present tense - continually) **night and day with fastings** (nesteria) **and prayers** (deesis) - A T Robertson on **night and day** - all night and all day. She never missed a service in the temple.**Anna** could not spend the nights there but only the days until the gates were closed. In some churches they have a Sunday morning and evening service and then a Wednesday service. Anna would have been present every time the church door was opened! Attending Temple did not make Anna more holy, but because she was holy (undoubtedly the Holy Spirit was upon her although not specifically mentioned by Luke)! Why **night and day**? Why not **day and night**? The likely answer is that Jews reckoned time different than Gentiles, so for the Jews the new day began at sunset (Lk 18:7; Acts 9:24; 20:31; 26:7; et al.).

Fastings (nesteria) is in the plural here and in Acts 14:23, but the other 3 uses are singular (fast or hunger).

Mal Couch - Luke's use of plural forms (**fastings...prayers**) indicates that her fasts were often and her prayers were many. Anna's communion with her God is the central fact about this remarkable elderly woman.

Ryle - Anna was a woman of great self-denial. She "served God with fastings night and day." She was continually crucifying the

flesh and keeping it in subjection by voluntary abstemiousness. Being fully persuaded in her own mind that the practice was helpful to her soul, she spared no pains to keep it up. (Luke 2)

Ryle - Anna was a woman of much prayer. She "served God with prayer night and day." She was continually communing with him, as her best Friend, about the things that concerned her own peace. She was never weary of pleading with Him on behalf of others, and, above all, for the fulfilment of His promises of Messiah. (Luke 2)

Listen to a prayer by Robert E. Lee – "Knowing that intercessory prayer is our mightiest weapon and the supreme call for all Christians today, I pleadingly urge our people everywhere to pray. Believing that prayer is the greatest contribution that our people can make in this critical hour, I humbly urge that we take time to pray—to really pray. Let there be prayer at sunup, at noonday, at sundown, at midnight—all through the day. Let us all pray for our children, our youth, our aged, our pastors, our homes. Let us pray for our churches. Let us pray for ourselves, that we may not lose the word 'concern' out of our Christian vocabulary. Let us pray for our nation. Let us pray for those who have never known Jesus Christ and redeeming love, for moral forces everywhere, for our national leaders. Let prayer be our passion. Let prayer be our practice."

Left (depart, draw away, withdraw) (868)(**aphistemi** from **apo** = separation of one thing from another + **histemi** = stand and is the root of our English = apostasy) literally means to stand off from means to withdraw, to stand off, to forsake, to depart from or to remove oneself from. To withdraw from a place or a person - Anna never withdrew from the Place (Temple) or the Person (Messiah)! She practically spent her life there!

> **Luke's** uses of **aphistemi** - Lk. 2:37; Lk. 4:13 (devil left); Lk. 8:13 (time of temptation fall away); Lk. 13:27 (depart from Me); Acts 5:37; Acts 5:38; Acts 12:10; Acts 15:38; Acts 19:9; Acts 22:29

Temple (Used in the KJV)(2411)(**hieron** from **hieros =** holy, hallowed, consecrated to God 2x - 1Co 9:13 = "sacred services", 2 Ti 3:15 = "sacred writings") refer to the building set apart and dedicated to the worship and service of the gods. In the NT **hieron** was used to designate the entire complex of temple at Jerusalem. **Hieron** is the all-inclusive word signifying the entire sacred enclosure, with its porticos, courts, and other subordinate buildings.

See excellent depiction of Herod's Temple at this time.

Serving (3000)(**latreuo** from latrís = one hired, hired servant <> from latron = wages) in secular Greek usage meant to work for wages, then to serve without wages. Originally it was used predominantly of physical work then used more generally. At later stage it had cultic use, and was used to describe honoring of the gods. In the NT latreuo came to mean the performance of religious rites as a part of worship and thus to minister to God. **Luke's** uses of **latreuo** - Lk. 1:74; Lk. 2:37; Lk. 4:8; Acts 7:7; Acts 7:42; Acts 24:14; Acts 26:7; Acts 27:23;

> (Lk. 1:74+) To grant us that we, being rescued from the hand of our enemies, Might **serve** Him without fear,

Vine says "Latreuo, and its corresponding noun latreia, originally signified the work of a hired servant, as distinguished from the compulsory service of the slave, but in the course of time it largely lost that significance, and in its usage in Scripture the thought of adoration was added to that of free obedience. Used of the service of God, the word gained the idea of a service characterized by worship (Php 3:3; Heb 8:5; 9:9, 14; 10:2; 12:28; 13:10; Rev 7:15; 22:3). The order "worship," and "serve" is constant in Scripture (e.g., Ro 6:13, 14). Acknowledgment of the Person Himself must have precedence over activity in His service. Service to God derives its effectivity from engagement of the heart with God."

Fastings (3521)(**nesteria** from verb **nesteuo** = to fast) describes fasting, fast, abstinence from eating, generally for want of food (2Co 6:5; 11:27). The Pharisees practiced private fastings of the Jews (Mt 17:21;Luke 2:37) which they felt earned great merit with God, in striking contrast to the fasting of Anna which was an act of worship of her great God. (cf. Luke 18:12; Isa 58:3ff.; Da. 9:3). In longer fasting the religious hypocrites abstained only from better kinds of food. "The great annual public fast of the great Day of Atonement" which occurred in the month Tisri, corresponding to the new moon of October. It thus served to indicate the season of the year after which the navigation of the Mediterranean became dangerous (Acts 27:9 [cf. Lev. 16:29ff.; 23:27ff.]). Nesteria is used in a non-religious sense to describe deprivation of food (2 Cor 6:5, 2 Cor 11:27) **Prayer** is linked with **fasting** here in Luke 2:37 and in Acts 14:23, the former as an act of worship and the latter in the context of making an important church decision. In Acts 27:9 **nesteria** was used of the Day of Atonement, which fell in September or October, a time of year when it navigation was considered dangerous (Acts 27:9).

Nesteria - 5x in 5v Usage: fast(1), fasting(2), fastings(1), hunger(1), without food(1).

> Matthew 17:21 "But this kind does not go out except by prayer and **fasting**."
>
> **NOTE** - Many important Greek manuscripts do not include this verse so it is in parenthesis in the NAS. The KJV based on

the older Textus Receptus does include this passage as legitimate). Notice that the parallel passage in Mark 9:29 omits fasting.

Luke 2:37 and then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple, serving night and day with **fastings** and prayers.

Acts 14:23 When they had appointed elders for them in every church, having prayed with **fasting**, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed.

Acts 27:9 When considerable time had passed and the voyage was now dangerous, since even the **fast** was already over, Paul began to admonish them

2 Corinthians 6:5 in beatings, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in sleeplessness, in **hunger**,

2 Corinthians 11:27 I have been in labor and hardship, through many sleepless nights, in **hunger** and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure.

> **Nesteria** - 33x in 29v in the Septuagint (Lxx) - 2 Sam. 12:16; 1 Ki. 20:9; 1 Ki. 20:12; 2 Chr. 20:3; Ezr. 8:21; Neh. 9:1; Ps. 34:13; Ps. 68:11; Ps. 108:24; Joel 1:14; Joel 2:12; Joel 2:15; Jon. 3:5; Zech. 7:5; Zech. 8:19 (Used four times); Isa. 1:13; Isa. 58:3; Isa. 58:5 (Used twice); Isa. 58:6; Jer. 43:6; Jer. 43:9; Dan. 2:18; Dan. 9:3;
>
> In the OT passages below some of the uses of fasting are good and acceptable to the Lord, but others are "fake fastings," which are futile and are not pleasing to the LORD. The externals in all these fastings were doubtless quite similar. The difference was (as it always is in religious matters) the character of their heart -- were the fastings motivated by selfishness or selflessness? This is a plumbline we should ALL apply continually to ALL of the things we do externally for God. We can be sure that even if we neglect a "motive check" God never does but when the Lord comes He "will both bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and disclose the motives of men's hearts; and then each man's praise will come to him from God." (1 Cor 4:5) Notice that in Joel it is the Lord Who calls for the nation of Israel to fast.
>
> > Joel 2:12 "Yet even now," declares the LORD, "Return to Me with all your heart, And with **fasting**, weeping and mourning;
> >
> > Joel 2:15 Blow a trumpet in Zion, Consecrate a **fast**, proclaim a solemn assembly,
> >
> > Isaiah 58:3-6 Why have we fasted (Lxx - verb **nesteuo**) and You do not see? [Why] have we humbled ourselves and You do not notice?' Behold, on the day of your **fast** (Lxx = **nesteria**) you find [your] desire, And drive hard all your workers. 4 "Behold, you fast (Lxx - verb **nesteuo**) for contention and strife and to strike with a wicked fist. You do not fast (Lxx - verb **nesteuo**) like [you do] today to make your voice heard on high. 5 "Is it a **fast** (Lxx = **nesteria**) like this which I choose, a day for a man to humble himself? Is it for bowing one's head like a reed And for spreading out sackcloth and ashes as a bed? Will you call this a **fast** (Lxx = **nesteria**), even an acceptable day to the LORD? 6 "Is this not the **fast** (Lxx = **nesteria**) which I choose, To loosen the bonds of wickedness, To undo the bands of the yoke, And to let the oppressed go free And break every yoke?
>
> **Gilbrant** comments on the use of **nesteria** in the Septuagint (Lxx) - Nēsteia is found over 20 times in the Septuagint, nearly always translating the regular Hebrew word for "fast" or "fasting," tsôm. The references are always to religious fasts of some sort. Interestingly, this noun form is never used in the Septuagint for the **Day of Atonement,** the only Jewish fast mandated by the Law, though it is regularly so used by later Jewish writers (Bauer). Rather, the word is primarily used of **private fasts which sought the Lord's favor or deliverance** (2 Samuel 12:16, 2 Kings 12:16]; 2 Chronicles 20:3; Ps 35:13; 68:10; Ps 108:24; Daniel 9:3) or of public fasts which sought God's favor (Ezra 8:21, Nehemiah 9:1; Jeremiah 36:6) or His forgiveness (Joel 1:14; 2:12,15; Jonah 3:5) for a nation or group of people. **These fasts were nearly always accompanied by prayer and were usually intended to demonstrate the sincerity of the people who prayed.** But even fasts could be insincere, and God sometimes rejected Israel's fasts precisely because they were not from the heart (Isaiah 1:14; 58:3-6; Zechariah 7:5). (Complete Biblical Library Greek-English Dictionary)

Prayers (1162)(**deesis** from **deomai** = to lack, be in need of) generally refers to urgent requests or supplications to meet a need and are exclusively addressed to God. **Deesis** prayers arise from one's sense of need (which reflects a humble heart) and in knowing what is lacking. Such an individual makes a plea to God to supply for the need. **Deesis** in the New Testament always carries the idea of genuine entreaty and supplication before God. It implies a realization of need and a petition for its supply. In

Classical Greek **deesis** (in contrast to the Biblical uses) was not restricted to sacred uses, but was employed of requests preferred to men. In Ephesians 6:18 (note Eph 6:18KJV has *supplication*) Paul uses **deesis** twice in his exhortation for saints to pray for one another (implying there is great need on all of our parts! Do we really understand this truth?)

QUESTION - What is the connection between prayer and fasting? See video.

ANSWER - Although the connection between prayer and fasting is not specifically explained in Scripture, a common thread connecting the two seems to run through all the instances of prayer and fasting recorded in the Bible. In the Old Testament, it appears that fasting with prayer had to do with a sense of need and dependence, and/or of abject helplessness in the face of actual or anticipated calamity. Prayer and fasting are combined in the Old Testament in times of mourning, repentance, and/or deep spiritual need.

The first chapter of Nehemiah describes Nehemiah praying and fasting, because of his deep distress over the news that Jerusalem had been desolated. His many days of prayer were characterized by tears, fasting, confession on behalf of his people, and pleas to God for mercy. So intense was the outpouring of his concerns that it's almost inconceivable he could "take a break" in the middle of such prayer to eat and drink. The devastation that befell Jerusalem also prompted Daniel to adopt a similar posture: "So I turned to the Lord God and pleaded with him in prayer and petition, in fasting, and in sackcloth and ashes" (Daniel 9:3). Like Nehemiah, Daniel fasted and prayed that God would have mercy upon the people, saying, "We have been wicked and have rebelled; we have turned away from your commands and laws" (v. 5).

In several instances in the Old Testament, fasting is linked with intercessory prayer. David prayed and fasted over his sick child (2 Samuel 12:16), weeping before the Lord in earnest intercession (vv. 21-22). Esther urged Mordecai and the Jews to fast for her as she planned to appear before her husband the king (Esther 4:16). Clearly, fasting and petition are closely linked.

There are instances of prayer and fasting in the New Testament, but they are not connected with repentance or confession. The prophetess Anna "never left the temple but worshiped night and day, fasting and praying" (Luke 2:37). At age 84, her prayer and fasting were part of her service to the Lord in His temple as she awaited the promised Savior of Israel. Also in the New Testament, the church at Antioch was fasting in connection with their worship when the Holy Spirit spoke to them about commissioning Saul and Barnabas to the Lord's work. At that point, they prayed and fasted, placed their hands on the two men and sent them off. So, we see in these examples that prayer and fasting are components of worshiping the Lord and seeking His favor. Nowhere, however, is there any indication that the Lord is more likely to answer prayers if they are accompanied by fasting. Rather, fasting along with prayer seems to indicate the sincerity of the people praying and the critical nature of the situations in which they find themselves.

The more critical the situation, the more appropriate the fasting and prayer. In Mark 9, Jesus casts a demon from a boy. The disciples had been unable to perform the exorcism, although they had previously been given authority over unclean spirits (Mark 6:7). Later, the disciples asked Jesus why they failed in their attempts to free the boy from the demon, and Jesus said, "This kind can come out only by prayer" (Mark 9:29). Matthew's account adds the phrase "and fasting" (Matthew 17:21). In this particular case, the demon was exceptionally malicious and obdurate (Mark 9:21-22). Jesus seems to be saying that a determined foe must be met with an equally determined faith. Prayer is a ready weapon in the spiritual battle (Ephesians 6:18), and fasting helps to focus prayer and give it resolve.

The theology of fasting is a theology of priorities in which believers are given the opportunity to express themselves in an undivided and intensive devotion to the Lord and to the concerns of spiritual life. This devotion will be expressed by abstaining for a short while from such normal and good things as food and drink, so as to enjoy a time of uninterrupted communion with our Father. Our "confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus" (Hebrews 10:19), whether fasting or not fasting, is one of the most delightful parts of that "better thing" which is ours in Christ. Prayer and fasting should not be a burden or a duty, but rather a celebration of God's goodness and mercy to His children.GotQuestions.org

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Luke 2:38 At that very moment she came up and began giving thanks to God, and continued to speak of Him to all those who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.

Amplified And she too came up at that same hour, and she returned thanks to God and talked of [Jesus] to all who were looking for the redemption (deliverance) of Jerusalem.

CSB At that very moment, she came up and began to thank God and to speak about Him to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem.

ESV And coming up at that very hour she began to give thanks to God and to speak of him to all who were waiting for the redemption of Jerusalem.

GWN At that moment she came up to Mary and Joseph and began to thank God. She spoke about Jesus to all who were waiting for Jerusalem to be set free.

KJV And she coming in that instant gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem.

NET At that moment, she came up to them and began to give thanks to God and to speak about the child to all who were waiting for the redemption of Jerusalem.

NAB And coming forward at that very time, she gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were awaiting the redemption of Jerusalem.

NIV Coming up to them at that very moment, she gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem.

NLT She came along just as Simeon was talking with Mary and Joseph, and she began praising God. She talked about the child to everyone who had been waiting expectantly for God to rescue Jerusalem.

NJB She came up just at that moment and began to praise God; and she spoke of the child to all who looked forward to the deliverance of Jerusalem.

Wuest And at that very hour coming up and standing by, she kept on giving thanks to God and kept on speaking concerning Him to all who were expectantly looking toward the redemption of Jerusalem.

YLT and she, at that hour, having come in, was confessing, likewise, to the Lord, and was speaking concerning him, to all those looking for redemption in Jerusalem.

- **coming**: Lu 2:27
- **gave**: Lu 2:28-32 1:46-56,64-66 2Co 9:15 Eph 1:3
- **looked**: Lu 2:25 23:51 24:21 Mk 15:43
- Luke 2 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

ARE YOU LOOKING FOR THE REDEMPTION OF ISRAEL?

And at that very moment she came up - What moment? The instant she saw the Messiah. Perhaps the instant Simeon acknowledged Him as Messiah, for he was also in the Temple complex. One day we too shall see our Messiah and I think godly Anna gives us a foretaste of how we will spontaneously and collectively respond! What an anthem of thanksgiving and praise that day will be! Hallelujah! Come quickly Lord Jesus. Amen!

A T Robertson on **she came up** - Coming up ([epistāsa]). Second aorist active participle. The word often has the notion of coming suddenly or bursting in as of Martha in Luke 10:40. But here it probably means coming up and standing by and so hearing Simeon's wonderful words so that her words form a kind of footnote to his

Spurgeon - God knows how to time what we call our *accidental* walks: "She coming in that instant". (Luke Exposition)

Marshall - **Anna** possessed divine insight into things normally hidden from ordinary people, and hence was able to recognise who the child in the temple was and then to proclaim his significance to those who were interested (G. Friedrich, TDNT VI, 836). (Scroll to page 138 in the NIGTC).

Began giving thanks (anthomologeomai) **to God** - Her first response to her vision of Jesus was one of gratitude and praise. The

imperfect tense vividly pictures her over and over offering up thanks and praise. This tense is also used of her speaking of Him over and over. One can picture the scene of this devout woman who had been worshiping God in spirit and truth now being blessed to see and recognize Messiah as that very God she had been continually serving in the Temple. She could not keep quiet! And so again and again she exclaims in praise and speaking her joy at seeing her long awaited Messiah. Beloved, if she reacted this way on earth, how much greater will be our reaction when we see Him face to face!

I recall that moment over 30 years ago when with the "eyes of my heart" I first "saw" Jesus and I was overjoyed and began giving thanks and speaking over and over to anyone who would listen to my story of how I met the Redeemer. God, by your Spirit, return all of us that time of first love so that we continually have an attitude and actions like the prophetess Anna. Amen

Ryle - Anna was a woman who held communion with other saints. So soon as she had seen Jesus, she “spake of Him” to others whom she knew in Jerusalem, and with whom she was evidently on friendly terms. There was a bond of union between her and all who enjoyed the same hope. They were servants of the same Master, and travellers to the same home. (Luke 2)

"I never begin my work in the morning without thinking that
perhaps He may interrupt my work and begin His own.
I am not looking for death, I am looking for Him."
-- G Campbell Morgan

And continued to speak of Him to all those who were looking for (prosdechomai) **the redemption** (lutrosis) **of Jerusalem** - Note that her audience was those whose hearts were prepared to see Him, those who were **looking** for Messiah. Don't miss the adjective **ALL**. Why not? **ALL** indicates that while most of Jerusalem was in darkness, degradation and despair, there were an appreciable number who were not but in fact they **were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem**.

> **THOUGHT** - Do you live your life with "holy expectation" of one looking for the redemption of the world and the Redeemer's return. What (Who) you are looking for will radically impact what (Who) you are living for!
>
> **Prosdechomai** is used of things future, in the sense of expecting and with the meaning of accepting. This verb is virtually always is found in the **middle voice** conveying reflexive action (action directed or turned back on **self**) which means that one receives to one’s **self** or gives another access to one’s **self**. Have you received Messiah to yourself, giving Him full, unfettered access to your heart? Prosdechomai is in the **present tense** which pictures anticipatory **looking** as one's **lifestyle**!
>
> > **THOUGHT**: Would the verb prosdechomai in the present tense describe your (my) heart attitude today? To repeat what we wrote above, if we are looking at the visible, futile, fleeting, transient, temporal things (2 Co 4:18+) of this passing world (1 Jn 2:17+), we can be sure that your *looking* (for Him = Second Coming) will be a bit *lacking*! As an aside the only way we can be continually looking for Jesus is by continually relying on the filling and empowering of the Spirit of Jesus Whose role is to glorify the Son (John 16:14)! Father grant that by Thy Spirit it might be said of us when we fall asleep in Jesus that we were men and women like **G Campbell Morgan** who said *"I never begin my work in the morning without thinking that perhaps He may interrupt my work and begin His own. I am not looking for death, I am looking for Him*." (In Jesus' Name. Amen!)

A T Robertson adds "There was evidently a group of such spirits that gathered in the temple either men around her and Simeon or whom she met from time to time. There was thus a nucleus of old saints in Jerusalem prepared for the coming of the Messiah when he at last appears as the Messiah in Jerusalem (John 2 and 3). These probably all passed away. But they had a happy hour of hope and joy."

Spurgeon - So that the song of Simeon was sweetened by the voice of Anna, and they both rejoiced in God their Saviour; and their joy was shared by “all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem.” May many of us have a share in that same joy as, by faith, we lovingly gaze upon “the Lord’s Christ.” (Luke Exposition)

Ryle - Faith, we shall always find, is the universal character of God’s elect. These men and women here described, dwelling in the midst of a wicked city, walked by faith, and not by sight. They were not carried away by the flood of worldliness, formality, and self-righteousness around them. They were not infected by the carnal expectations of a mere worldly Messiah, in which most Jews indulged. They lived in the faith of patriarchs and prophets, that the coming Redeemer would bring in holiness and righteousness, and that His principal victory would be over sin and the devil. **For such a Redeemer they waited patiently. For such a victory they earnestly longed.** (Luke 2)

> **THOUGHT** - Let us learn a lesson from these good people. If they, with so few helps and so many discouragements, lived such a life of faith, how much more ought we with a finished Bible and a full Gospel. Let us strive, like them, to walk by faith and look forward. The second advent of Christ is yet to come. The

complete “redemption” of this earth from sin, and Satan, and the curse, is yet to take place. Let us declare plainly by our lives and conduct, that for this second advent we look and long. We may be sure that the highest style of Christianity even now, is to “wait for redemption,” and to love the Lord’s appearing. (Ro 8:23+ = "**waiting eagerly** for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body." 2 Ti 4:8+ = "all who have loved His appearing") (Ryle)

See notes on "Vertical Vision" below

Steven Cole - Witness - Anna couldn’t keep it to herself; she “continued to speak of Him” to others (2:38). If your cup is brim-full, you can’t help but slop some of it on others. If you are excited about your relationship with the living God who sent His Son to save you from your sins, people around you will know about it. Some believers justify their not witnessing by saying, “I don’t talk about it; I just live the message.” But part of living the Christian life is talking about it! We all talk about the things we love. Have you ever been around a sports fanatic? What does he talk about? “Did you see that game last night!” Have you ever been around a young man or woman who has just fallen in love? What do they talk about? Yes, you need to be tactful and sensitive. Yes, you need to wait on the Lord for the right opening. But, all too often we don’t err on the side of being too bold or insensitive. The order, by the way, is important: Worship first, then witness. The reason Anna was telling everyone about the Lord Jesus was that she spent much time in private devotion with the Lord. All too often, the reason that we do not bear witness is that we have lost our first love. (A Life Well Spent)

THE REDEMPTION BY THE REDEEMER

The redemption (lutrosis) **of Jerusalem** - This phrase is clearly a descriptive Name of the Redeemer of Jerusalem and is similar to His descriptive Name **the consolation of Israel** (Lk 2:25+) While religious, unregenerate Jews were looking for a political redemption, godly Anna is looking wholly for a spiritual redemption.

Compare Joseph of Arimathea "who was waiting for the kingdom of God.” (Lk 23:51, cf. Mark 15:43).

THOUGHT - The outlook of God's saints (Simeon, Anna, Arimathea, you and I) who maintain amaranatha mindset, an upward looking, longing, anticipating, welcoming watch for the return of the King of our hearts, our Messiah and Lord, Christ Jesus for we will one day soon see Him "face to face; now I know in part, but then I will know fully just as I also have been fully known." (1 Cor 13:12). How different is our hope filled looking from the hopeless looking of the lost world who are all like the 2 actors in the dark, tragic play Waiting for Godot, in which the actors wait for the arrival of someone named Godot who **never arrives**! Interesting that if you remove the "OT" from Godot, you have the Name of the One we are waiting for, and our waiting will not be in vain beloved! He will return and take us Home! Hallelujah!

ILLUSTRATION - Early in World War II the Japanese army stormed the Philippines and forced United States General Douglas MacArthur to leave the islands. Upon leaving the Philippines, General MacArthur declared his famous promise, “**I shall return**.” And he did, walking ashore a victor at Leyte in the Philippines several years later. In an even more famous quote, the Captain of the hosts, the Lord Jesus Christ declared to His fearful band of disciples “**I will come again**” (John 14:3)...This is the Voice of Freedom, General MacArthur speaking. People of the Philippines: **I have returned. By the grace of Almighty God, our forces stand again on Philippine soil. . . . The hour of your redemption is here. . . . Rally to me**. (Douglas MacArthur On landing at Leyte Island in the Philippines, 20 October 1944)

REDEMPTION - Many years ago, Dr. A. J. Gordon was the pastor of a church in Boston. One day he met a little boy in front of the church who was carrying a rusty cage with several birds in it. Gordon asked, “Son, where did you get those birds?” The boy answered, “I trapped them out in the field.” “What are you going to do with them?” “I’m going to play with them for a while and then I guess I’ll feed them to an old cat we have at home.” Dr. Gordon asked the boy how much he would take to sell the birds. The boy answered, “Mister, you don’t want them. They’re just old field birds and they can’t sing very well.” Gordon replied, “I’ll give you two dollars for the cage and the birds.” “Okay, it’s a deal,” said the boy, “but you’re making a bad bargain.” Gordon paid the boy who left happily with his money. Gordon then walked around behind the church, opened the cage, and freed the birds. The next Sunday Dr. Gordon took the empty cage into the pulpit and used it to illustrate his sermon on redemption: he paid the price so that these creatures in bondage, doomed for destruction, could go free. He said, “That little boy said that the birds could not sing very well, but when I released them from the cage, they went singing into the blue, and it seemed that they were singing, ‘Redeemed, redeemed, redeemed.’” (Paul Lee Tan, Encyclopedia of 7700 Illustrations [Assurance Publishers], p. 1231.)

Mal Couch has an interesting thought on the prophetic significance of this phrase "**redemption of Jerusalem**" - This hope seems to leap ahead to the second coming of the Messiah when He will redeem the great city of Jerusalem from its persecution by the nations of the earth. The prophet Zechariah prophesies that God "will set about to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem" (Zech. 12:9). The Jews will look upon the returning Messiah "whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him" (v. 10). But many of the people who live in the city will be spared and "there will be no more curse, for Jerusalem will dwell in security (Zech 14:11), with the Lord striking all who went against the city (Zech 14:12). Then Zechariah writes about the end of the great world tribulation: "Then it will come about that any who are left of all the nations that went against Jerusalem will go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts" (Zech 14:16). (Luke - Twenty-First Century Commentary)

J C Ryle - It is worthy of remark, that this presentation of our Lord in the temple, appears to have been the primary fulfilment of the prophecy of Malachi 3:1+, "The Lord shall suddenly come to his temple." It was indeed a sudden unostentatious coming. The only witnesses, apparently, were an old man and an old woman,—and the only attendants a poor woman and her equally poor husband,—and the form in which the Lord appeared was as a little infant in arms! How little we should have expected this! How many prophecies may be fulfilling around us at this very time! God's ways are truly not as our ways....And Anna received a rich reward for all her diligence in God's service, before she left the world. She was allowed to see Him who had been so long promised, and for whose coming she had so often prayed. Her faith was at last changed to sight, and her hope to certainty. The joy of this holy woman must indeed have been "unspeakable and full of glory." (1 Peter 1:8.) (Luke 2)

> **THOUGHT** - It would be well for all Christian women to ponder the character of Anna, and learn wisdom from it. The times, no doubt, are greatly changed. The social duties of the Christian are very different from those of the Jewish believer at Jerusalem. All are not placed by God in the condition of widows. But still, after every deduction, there remains much in Anna's history which is worthy of imitation. When we read of her consistency, and holiness, and prayerfulness, and self-denial, we cannot but wish that many daughters of the Christian Church would strive to be like her (Ryle)

Steven Cole - To understand the concept of "**redemption**," you must keep in mind three things. First, redemption implies antecedent bondage. A free person does not need redemption; slaves need redemption. Every person is born enslaved to sin and under the curse of judgment imposed by God's holy law. Second, redemption implies cost. A price must be paid to buy the slave out of bondage. Since the wages of sin is death, that was the price to redeem us from our sins. A sinless substitute had to die in our place. Jesus Christ did that on the cross. Third, redemption implies the ownership of that which is redeemed. Since Christ bought us with His blood, as Paul states, "... you are not your own? For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body" (1 Cor. 6:20). (A Life Well Spent)

Redemption by definition calls for a Redeemer, and Anna had just beheld Him with her eyes.

> **ILLUSTRATION** - Many years ago, Dr. A. J. Gordon was the pastor of a church in Boston. One day he met a little boy in front of the church who was carrying a rusty cage with several birds in it. Gordon asked, "Son, where did you get those birds?" The boy answered, "I trapped them out in the field." "What are you going to do with them?" "I'm going to play with them for a while and then I guess I'll feed them to an old cat we have at home." Dr. Gordon asked the boy how much he would take to sell the birds. The boy answered, "Mister, you don't want them. They're just old field birds and they can't sing very well." Gordon replied, "I'll give you two dollars for the cage and the birds." "Okay, it's a deal," said the boy, "but you're making a bad bargain." Gordon paid the boy who left happily with his money. Gordon then walked around behind the church, opened the cage, and freed the birds. The next Sunday Dr. Gordon took the empty cage into the pulpit and used it to illustrate his sermon on **redemption**: he paid the price so that these creatures in bondage, doomed for destruction, could go free. He said, "**That little boy said that the birds could not sing very well, but when I released them from the cage, they went singing into the blue, and it seemed that they were singing, 'Redeemed, redeemed, redeemed.**'" (Paul Lee Tan, Encyclopedia cf 7700 Illustrations [Assurance Publishers], p. 1231.)

Steven Cole - On his deathbed, Matthew Henry, whose commentary on the whole Bible is still widely used almost 300 years after his death, said to a friend, "**You have been used to take notice of the sayings of dying men-this is mine: that a life spent in the service of God and communion with Him, is the most pleasant life that anyone can live in this world.**" Anna would agree. A life devoted to God is a life well spent. A life devoted to anything else, no matter how noble, is a life ultimately wasted. Whatever you do for a living, make sure that love for Jesus Christ is at the heart of why you are living. Then, whether you live a short or long life on this earth, you can have the assurance that you have spent it well. (A Life Well Spent)

Giving thanks (437)(**anthomologeomai** from **antí** = in turn + **homologéo** = to confess, acknowledge) literally means to confess or acknowledge in turn. The Amplified Version picks up on this sense translating it "*she returned thanks*." It speaks of openly or publicly confessing what is due someone, thus acknowledging them. In the present context the idea then is that she is openly acknowledging

what is due to God which thanksgiving and praise. **Giving thanks** is in the imperfect tense picturing Anna as doing this over and over, again and again. **A T Robertson** adds "It had the idea of a mutual agreement or of saying something before one (ντι [anti]). Anna was evidently deeply moved and repeated her thanksgiving and kept speaking." **Liddell-Scott** writes that the word means (1) to make a mutual agreement, (2) to confess freely and openly or (3) to return thanks.

> The **TDNT** notes that 'Lk. 2:38 is closest to OT use with its νθωμολογε το τ θε (only here in the NT). The praise of Anna is an answer to the act of God (ντι- = anti-) which she has experienced in her old age. It implies "acknowledgment," "obedience," "proclamation." Along the lines of the piety of the Psalter there is a linking of prayer to God with witness to men. Lk. himself shows what he means by this νθομολογε σθαι τ θε in 1:46–55, 68–79; 2:29–32. Formally these are psalms of thanksgiving and hymns of praise in the strict sense, but in content they speak of eschatological fulfilment.
>
> There are only 2 uses in the non-apocryphal Septuagint and 3 in the Apocrypha - 1 Es. 8:88; 3 Ma. 6:33; Ps. 78:13; Sir. 20:3; Dan. 4:37; Lk. 2:38
>
> > Psalm 79:13 So we Your people and the sheep of Your pasture **Will give thanks** (Heb = yadah - give thanks; Lxx = Anthomologeomai) to You forever (A FORETASTE OF SOME OF OUR HEAVENLY ACTIVITIES); To all generations we will tell of Your praise.
>
> **Gilbrant** has this note on **anthomologeomai** - In the apocryphal writings of 1 Esdras 8:91 and Sirach 20:2 the sense of "to confess" is foremost. The Septuagint's use of the term (Psalm 79:13; Daniel 4:34; and 3 Maccabees 6:33) retains the sense of "to give thanks to" or "to praise" (God). Luke, whose style is recognized to have been greatly influenced by the Septuagint (Lxx), more closely reflects the Old Testament understanding (Septuagint; Hebrew yādhâh [hiphil]) rather than the profane Greek (see Moulton-Milligan; Michel, "homologeō," *Kittel*, 5:213). In this highly "septuagintilized" birth narrative, the expression captures the devout and pious character of the prophetess Anna. Her "giving thanks" confirms her prophetic recognition of the infant as "the redemption of Jerusalem." Thanksgiving and praise in Luke's Gospel are the marks of the faithful and a sign of reception of the claims of the Son of God. (Complete Biblical Library Greek-English Dictionary)

Looking for (4327)(**prosdechomai** from **pros** = implies motion or direction toward + **dechomai** = receive with readiness) means to accept favorably, to receive one into companionship. The idea is "to put the Welcome Mat out" for them! Anna in using this verb is referring to all those who are waiting for Messiah with a sense of expectancy (Mk 15:43, Luke 2:25, 38, 12:36, 23:51, Acts 23:21, Titus 2:13, Jude 1:21). How would the elderly prophetess describe you (me) beloved - "**looking**" or "**lackadaisical**" (lacking spirit or liveliness, lacking enthusiasm and determination; carelessly lazy)?"

As discussed above the root verb **dechomai** means to accept deliberately and readily, receive kindly and so to take to oneself what is presented or brought by another. For example, it was used to describe welcoming a teacher, a friend, or a guest into one's house. Dechomai pictures one accepting another with open arms, minds, and hearts, going beyond even normally expected gracious hospitality.

Redemption (3085) (**lutrosis** from **lutroo** = to release on receipt of a ransom <> **Lutroo** is derived from the root verb **luo** = to loosen that which is bound, freeing those in prison, release from prison, opening of what is closed, destroying of foundations, putting off of fetters) strictly speaking means loosing and in context speaks of the experience of being liberated from an oppressive situation by payment of a ransom. It speaks of a setting free or a deliverance and always implies that there will be a cost that must be paid, in fact the precious blood of Christ. Using the root verb **lutroo**, Peter explains that "knowing that **you were not redeemed** (Lutroo) with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ." (1 Peter 1:18-19+).

In the first chapter Luke uses **lutrosis** in what is traditionally called "**The Benedictus**" (Song of Zacharias) from the first word "Blessed" of verse 68 in the Latin Vulgate Bible which reads "Benedictus Dominus Deus".

> And his (John the Baptist's) father Zacharias was **filled with** (controlled by, enabled by, emboldened by - see note on Eph 5:18, see article "Spirit-Filled Believers Are Like Artesian Wells") the Holy Spirit, and prophesied, saying:
>
> > "Blessed [be] the Lord God of Israel, For He has visited us and accomplished (although the Cross was still future, Zacharias prophecy treats the event as good as done) **redemption** (**lutrosis**) for His people, 69 And (Now he explains how the redemption is to be accomplished telling us that God) has raised up a horn of salvation (symbolized strength or power Dt 33:17 fulfilled in the Messiah) for us In the house of David His servant (Messiah was from the line of David)– 70 As He spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from of old– 71 Salvation (deliverance) FROM OUR ENEMIES, And FROM THE HAND OF ALL WHO HATE US; 72 To show mercy toward our fathers, And to remember His holy covenant (the unconditional

covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob), 73 The oath which He swore to Abraham our father (Ge 12:1-3, etc), 74 To grant us that we, being rescued from the hand of our enemies, Might serve Him without fear, 75 In holiness and righteousness before Him all our days. 76 "And you, child, (John the Baptist) will be called the prophet of the Most High; For you will go on BEFORE THE LORD TO PREPARE HIS WAYS; 77 To give to His people [the] knowledge of salvation by the forgiveness of their sins (John's message in Lk 3:2-3), 78 Because of the tender mercy of our God, With which the Sunrise from on high (the Messiah, cp Mal 4:2) will visit us, 79 TO SHINE UPON THOSE WHO SIT IN DARKNESS AND THE SHADOW OF DEATH (see Isa 9:1-2-note), To guide our feet into the way of peace." 80 And the child (John the Baptist - this parallels description of Jesus in Lk 2:51-52) continued to grow and to become strong in spirit, and he lived in the deserts until the day of his public appearance (see Lk 3:1-3) to Israel. (Luke 1:67-80-note)

The only other use of **lutrosis** in the NT is by the writer of Hebrews...

> But when Christ (Messiah) appeared [as] a high priest of the good things to come, [He entered] through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation;and not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood (The ransom price that secured redemption - cp 1 Peter 1:18), He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal **redemption**. (Heb 9:11-12)

Lutrosis is used 8 times in the Septuagint - Lev. 25:29; Lev. 25:48; Num. 18:16; Jdg. 1:15; Ps. 49:8; Ps. 111:9; Ps. 130:7; Isa. 63:4 In one of the uses of **lutrosis** in the Septuagint we read these words from the Messiah in the context of His second coming to redeem Jerusalem..."For the day of vengeance was in My heart, And My year of **redemption** (Lxx = lutrosis) has come. (Isa. 63:4+)

Another great woman of God, Fanny Crosby caught the idea of expectant looking (with the eyes of her heart since she was **blind**) and living in her classic hymn "Blessed Assurance" (see especially her lines below in bold font):

Blessed Assurance
Play the entire hymn by Third Day

Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine!
Oh, what a foretaste of glory divine!
Heir of salvation, purchase of God,
Born of His Spirit, washed in His blood.

Refrain:
This is my story, this is my song,
Praising my Savior all the day long;
This is my story, this is my song,
Praising my Savior all the day long.

Perfect submission, perfect delight,
Visions of rapture now burst on my sight;
Angels, descending, bring from above
Echoes of mercy, whispers of love.

Perfect submission, all is at rest,
I in my Savior am happy and blest,
Watching and waiting, looking above,
Filled with His goodness, lost in His love.

Steven Cole - On his deathbed, Matthew Henry, whose commentary on the whole Bible is still widely used almost 300 years after his death, said to a friend, "You have been used to take notice of the sayings of dying men—this is mine: that a life spent in the service of God and communion with Him, is the most pleasant life that anyone can live in this world." Anna would agree. A life devoted to God is a life well spent. A life devoted to anything else, no matter how noble, is a life ultimately wasted. Whatever you do for a living, make sure that love for Jesus Christ is at the heart of why you are living. Then, whether you live a short or long life on this earth, you can have the assurance that you have spent it well. (A Life Well Spent)

Anna reminds me of **Adoniram Judson** who once wrote

> A life once spent is irrevocable. It will remain to be contemplated through eternity… If it has been a useless life, it can never be improved. Such will stand forever and ever. The same may be said of each day. When it is

> once past, it is gone forever. All the marks which we put upon it, it will exhibit forever… Each day will not only be a witness of our conduct, but will affect our everlasting destiny (**Note**: Not in loss of salvation but of rewards - cp 1Co 3:11, 12, 13, 14, 15, Jn 15:5, 2Co 5:10-note, cp 1Ti 4:7, 8-note). No day will lose its share of influence in determining where shall be our seat in heaven. How shall we then wish to see each day marked with usefulness! It will then be too late to mend its appearance. It is too late to mend the days that are past. The future is in our power. Let us, then, each morning, resolve to send the day into eternity in such a garb as we shall wish it to wear forever. And at night let us reflect that one more day is irrevocably gone, indelibly marked. (See page 33-34 of A memoir of the life and labors of the Rev. Adoniram Judson)

This is "**Coram Deo**" living before the face of God, "**Carpe Diem**" seizing the day, because "**Tempus Fugit**", time flies and so our daily prayer should be "So teach us to number our days, that we may present to Thee a heart of wisdom." (Ps 90:12- see note)

Adoniram Judson, the famed missionary to Burma, spent long, tiresome years translating the Bible for that people group. He was eventually put into prison because of his work, and while there his wife died. After being released, he contracted a serious disease that sapped what little energy he had left. Nevertheless he prayed,

> "Lord, let me finish my work. Spare me long enough to put the saving Word into the hands of the people….The motto of every missionary, whether preacher, printer, or schoolmaster, ought to be "**Devoted for life**."

Another woman of God, Kay Arthur, asks "How do we wait on the Lord?"

There are two things you must do.

> First, learn to sit at His feet and know Him. When Martha complained to Jesus that her sister, Mary, wasn't in the kitchen helping her, Jesus replied, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and bothered about so many things; but only a few things are necessary, really only one, for Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her." Can't we all identify with Martha in the story in [Lu 10:41-42]? We're always preoccupied with the present business of life. We're always in a hurry, even with God. We don't take time to let go, to relax, to be still and know that He is God as Ps46:10 says. To do so involves a choice. It means that some things will not get done. That some people may not understand. But didn't Jesus say that sitting at His feet and hearing His word was "The one thing which was needful"--the thing which could never be taken away from us? In other words, because of what you learned from Him and of Him, you'll always have something to hang on to -- and it won't be by your fingernails.
>
> Second, tell God you only want what He wants -- whatever that means. While such a statement, such a release of your will, your way, may terrify you at this point, it won't if you make it a practice to do the "first" thing that I mentioned: sit at His feet and know Him. If you will give God your reputation…if you will seek no agenda other than God's…if your goal will be the same as Paul's -- that Christ be exalted in your body whether by life or by death…if for you to live will be Christ and to die gain…if you are willing to do His will no matter the cost…then you will never find yourself caught in despair. Rather you will find yourself waiting patiently on the Lord for His direction. His life will be your life...and your life, His! Then, whatever He says to you, do it -- with confidence and without hesitation. "Be still and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth. The Lord of hosts is with us; The God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah." Ps 46:10-11. (God Speaks to My Heart: For Every Need, For Every Moment...)

LIVING WITH VERTICAL VISION

How would my daily choices change if I lived with what I like to call "vertical vision" (in contrast to "horizontal vision" -- looking at the things of the world [horizontal] rather than the things above [vertical])? See discussion of **Vertical Vision**.

Here are other passages that speak of **expectant looking** which will lead to **eternally minded living**...take a moment to prayerfully, meditatively read through the following passages all of which speak of vertical vision:

> Luke 2:25 And there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; and this man was righteous and devout, looking for the consolation of Israel; and the Holy Spirit was upon him.
>
> Luke 12:36 "Be like men who are waiting for their master when he returns from the wedding feast, so that they

may immediately open [the door] to him when he comes and knocks.

Luke 23:51 (he had not consented to their plan and action), [a man] from Arimathea, a city of the Jews, who was waiting for the kingdom of God;

Luke 24:21 “But we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel. Indeed, besides all this, it is the third day since these things happened.

Genesis 49:18 “For Your salvation I wait, O LORD.

Job 14:14 “If a man dies, will he live [again?] All the days of my struggle I will wait Until my change comes.

Isaiah 8:17 And I will wait for the LORD who is hiding His face from the house of Jacob; I will even look eagerly for Him.

Isaiah 25:9 And it will be said in that day, “Behold, this is our God for whom we have waited that He might save us. This is the LORD for whom we have waited; Let us rejoice and be glad in His salvation.”

Isaiah 26:8; 9 Indeed, [while following] the way of Your judgments, O LORD, We have waited for You eagerly; Your name, even Your memory, is the desire of [our] souls.

Isaiah 26:9 At night my soul longs for You, Indeed, my spirit within me seeks You diligently; For when the earth experiences Your judgments The inhabitants of the world learn righteousness.

Isaiah 30:18 Therefore the LORD longs to be gracious to you, And therefore He waits on high to have compassion on you. For the LORD is a God of justice; How blessed are all those who long for Him.

Isaiah 33:2 O LORD, be gracious to us; we have waited for You. Be their strength every morning, Our salvation also in the time of distress.

Isaiah 40:31 Yet those who wait for the LORD Will gain new strength; They will mount up [with] wings like eagles, They will run and not get tired, They will walk and not become weary.

Lamentations 3:25-26 The LORD is good to those who wait for Him, To the person who seeks Him. 26[It is] good that he waits silently For the salvation of the LORD.

Ps 25:5 Lead me in Your truth and teach me, For You are the God of my salvation; For You I wait all the day.
Ps 40:1 For the choir director. A Psalm of David. I waited patiently for the LORD; And He inclined to me and heard my cry.

Ps 40:3 He put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise to our God; Many will see and fear And will trust in the LORD.

Ps 62:1 For the choir director; according to Jeduthun. A Psalm of David. My soul [waits] in silence for God only; From Him is my salvation.

Ps 62:5-7 My soul, wait in silence for God only, For my hope is from Him. 6He only is my rock and my salvation, My stronghold; I shall not be shaken. 7 On God my salvation and my glory [rest;] The rock of my strength, my refuge is in God.

Ps 119:166 I hope for Your salvation, O LORD, And do Your commandments.

Ps 119:74 May those who fear You see me and be glad, Because I wait for Your word.

Ps 123:2 Behold, as the eyes of servants [look] to the hand of their master, As the eyes of a maid to the hand of her mistress, So our eyes [look] to the LORD our God, Until He is gracious to us.

Psalms 130:5 I wait for the LORD, my soul does wait, And in His word do I hope.

Micah 7:7 But as for me, I will watch expectantly for the LORD; I will wait for the God of my salvation. My God will hear me.

Hosea 12:6 Therefore, return to your God, Observe kindness and justice, And wait for your God continually.

Matthew 24:42-51 “Therefore be on the alert, for you do not know which day your Lord is coming. 43“But be sure of this, that if the head of the house had known at what time of the night the thief was coming, he would have been on the alert and would not have allowed his house to be broken into. 44“For this reason you also must be ready; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour when you do not think [He will.] 45“Who then is the faithful and sensible slave whom his master put in charge of his household to give them their food at the proper time? 46“Blessed is that slave whom his master finds so doing when he comes. 47“Truly I say to you that he

will put him in charge of all his possessions. 48“But if that evil slave says in his heart, ‘My master is not coming for a long time,’ 49and begins to beat his fellow slaves and eat and drink with drunkards; 50the master of that slave will come on a day when he does not expect [him] and at an hour which he does not know, 51and will cut him in pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Mark 15:43 Joseph of Arimathea came, a prominent member of the Council, who himself was waiting for the kingdom of God; and he gathered up courage and went in before Pilate, and asked for the body of Jesus.

Acts 24:15 having a hope in God, which these men cherish themselves, that there shall certainly be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked.

Romans 8:19 For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God.

Ro 8:23-25 And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for [our] adoption as sons, the redemption of our body. 24For in hope we have been saved, but hope that is seen is not hope; for who hopes for what he [already] sees? 25But if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we wait eagerly for it.

Galatians 5:5 For we through the Spirit, by faith, are waiting for the hope of righteousness.

1 Thessalonians 1:10 and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, [that is] Jesus, who rescues us from the wrath to come.

Philippians 3:20 For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ;

1 Corinthians 1:7 so that you are not lacking in any gift, awaiting eagerly the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ,

2 Corinthians 5:2 For indeed in this [house] we groan, longing to be clothed with our dwelling from heaven,

Titus 2:13 looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus,

2 Timothy 4:8 in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing.

Hebrews 9:28 so Christ also, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time for salvation without [reference to] sin, to those who eagerly await Him.

Hebrews 10:36; 37 For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised. 37 FOR YET IN A VERY LITTLE WHILE, HE WHO IS COMING WILL COME, AND WILL NOT DELAY.

1 Peter 1:13 Therefore, prepare your minds for action, keep sober [in spirit,] fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

2 Peter 3:12-14 looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat! 13 But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells. 14 Therefore, beloved, since you look for these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, spotless and blameless,

1 John 2:28 Now, little children, abide in Him, so that when He appears, we may have confidence and not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming.

1 John 3:3 And everyone who has this hope [fixed] on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.

Jude 1:21 keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting anxiously for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life.

Revelation 22:12 “Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward [is] with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done.

Luke 2:39 When they had performed everything according to the Law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own city of Nazareth.

- **performed**: Lu 2:21-24 1:6 Dt 12:32 Mt 3:15 Ga 4:4,5
- **they returned**: Lu 2:4 Mt 2:22,23
- Luke 2 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

When they had performed (teleo) **everything according to the Law of the Lord** (kurios) - They were not legalistic but law abiding. Jesus may have been the Son of God, but his earthly parents had fulfilled everything that God's law required regarding the birth of firstborn sons. As godly parents they obeyed the Mosaic Law not to merit personal righteousness but because they were righteous in the sight of God (Mt 1:19+ "Joseph her husband, being a righteous man.").

Hendriksen points out that "The evangelist does not say that after the events of the fortieth day the little family immediately made for the north. Room is left for Matthew's account of the coming of the wise men, the flight to Egypt, the slaughter of "the innocents," and the return of Joseph, Mary, and their child from Egypt; in other words, for the events reported in Matt. 2:1–21."

Joseph and Mary were careful to perform everything, just as God had prescribed "Whatever I command you, you shall be careful to do; you shall not add to nor take away from it. (Dt 12:32)

Bruce Barton comments that "there is a gap of several years between verses 38 and 39—ample time for them to find a place to live in Bethlehem, flee to Egypt to escape Herod's wrath (Matthew 2:1–18), and return to Nazareth when it was safe to do so (after Herod had died, Matthew 2:19–23)."

MacArthur - Luke omitted the visit of the Magi and the flight into Egypt (Mt 2:1-18+). The theme of early rejection, so prominent in Matthew (see Introduction to Matthew: Historical and Theological Themes), was not where Luke focused his attention. The MacArthur Study Bible.(See MacArthur Study Bible)

To their own city Nazareth (Nazaret) - **Nazareth** (shoot or branch) which is in southern Galilee near the crossroads of great caravan trade routes (See map of Jesus birth and early childhood). The town housed the Roman garrison in charge of Galilee. The people of Nazareth had constant contact with people from all over the world. When faced with the prospect of meeting Jesus, a man from Nazareth, Nathanael, later commented, "Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?" (John 1:46 NIV). See study of **Nazareth** including **The Puzzling Problem of Nazareth.**

Matthew records a parallel passage of the couple's passage back to Nazareth.

> But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. Then after being warned by God in a dream, he left for the regions of Galilee,and came and lived in a city called **Nazareth**. This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophets: "He shall be called a Nazarene." (Mt 2:22-23+)
>
> > **A T Robertson** comments that **prophets** "is the plural and no single prophecy exists which says that the Messiah was to be called a Nazarene. It may be that this term of contempt (John 1:46; 7:52) is what is meant, and that several prophecies are to be combined like Psa. 22:6, 8; 69:11, 19; Isa. 53:2, 3, 4. The name Nazareth means a shoot or branch, but it is by no means certain that Matthew has this in mind. It is best to confess that we do not know. See Broadus on Matthew for the various theories. But, despised as Nazareth was at that time, Jesus has exalted its fame. The lowly Nazarene he was at first, but it is our glory to be the followers of the Nazarene. Bruce says that "in this case, therefore, we certainly know that the historic fact suggested the prophetic reference, instead of the prophecy creating the history." The parallels drawn by Matthew between the history of Israel and the birth and infancy of Jesus are not mere fancy. History repeats itself and writers of history find frequent parallels. Surely Matthew is not beyond the bounds of reason or of fact in illustrating in his own way the birth and infancy of Jesus by the Providence of God in the history of Israel.
> >
> > Luke tells nothing of the flight to Egypt and the reason for the return to Nazareth instead of Bethlehem, the place of the birth of Jesus as told in Matt. 2:13–23. But then neither Gospel gives all the details of this period. Luke has also nothing about the visit of the wise men (Matt. 2:1–12) as Matthew tells nothing of the shepherds and of Simeon and Anna (Luke 2:8–28). The two Gospels supplement each other.

Performed (accomplished) (5055)(**teleo** from **telos** = goal, an end, a purpose) means to bring to an end as one brings a process, a course, a task or an undertaking to the end. It means to accomplish and complete something, not merely by bringing it to end but bringing it to "perfection." The idea of teleo is to achieve a goal or to conclude it successfully which is especially poignant in the context of Jesus' life purpose which was to die on the Cross, the purpose He pointed to and which He accomplished declaring "**It is finished** " (tetelestai = perfect tense of teleo)" (John 19:30). **Luke's** uses of **teleo** -Lk. 2:39; Lk. 12:50; Lk. 18:31; Lk. 22:37; Acts

13:29;

Nazareth (3478) see notes on Nazaret **Nazareth** only 12x in the NT - Matt. 2:23; Matt. 4:13; Matt. 21:11; Mk. 1:9; Lk. 1:26; Lk. 2:4; Lk. 2:39; Lk. 2:51; Lk. 4:16; Jn. 1:45; Jn. 1:46; Acts 10:38

Luke 2:40 The Child continued to grow and become strong, increasing in wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him.

- **the Child:** Lu 2:52 Judges 13:24 1Sa 2:18,26 3:19 Ps 22:9 Isa 53:1,2
- **become strong**: Lu 1:80 Eph 6:10 2Ti 2:1
- **increasing in wisdom** : Lu 2:47,52 Isa 11:1-5 Col 2:2,3
- **the grace**: Ps 45:2 John 1:14 Ac 4:33
- Luke 2 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- Luke 2:40 Jesus: From Babyhood to Boyhood - sermon by G Campbell Morgan

"THE HIDDEN YEARS"
JESUS GREW IN STRENGTH, WISDOM AND GRACE

In Luke 2:40, we have a summary of Jesus' life from **infancy to age 12** and in Luke 2:52 we have a summary of His life from **age 12 until adulthood** "And Jesus kept increasing in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men." **Charles Simeon** rightly said "There is little related of him to gratify our curiosity, but enough to regulate our conduct."

The child (paidion) **continued to grow** (auxano) **and to become strong** (krataioo) - The exact description is given of Jesus' forerunner, **John the Baptist - "**And **the child continued to grow and to become strong** in spirit, and he lived in the deserts until the day of his public appearance to Israel." (Luke 1:80+) **NET Note** adds that with "the description grew and became strong, filled with wisdom Luke emphasizes the humanity of Jesus and his growth toward maturity."

> **THOUGHT** - If Jesus needed strength, wisdom and grace, then so do we beloved, for Jesus is our example of how to live the (supernatural) Christian life (cp 1 Jn 2:6+)

Warren Wiersbe - What did Jesus do during the "hidden years" at Nazareth? Dr. Luke reports that the lad developed physically, mentally, socially, and spiritually (Luke 2:40, 52). In His incarnation, the Son of God set aside the independent use of His own divine attributes and submitted Himself wholly to the Father (Phil. 2:1–11). There are deep mysteries here that no one can fully understand or explain, but we have no problem accepting them by faith. Jesus did not perform any miracles as a Boy, traditions notwithstanding, because the turning of water into wine was the beginning of His miracles (John 2:1–11). He worked with Joseph in the carpenter shop (Matt. 13:55; Mark 6:3) and apparently ran the business after Joseph died. Joseph and Mary had other children during those years (Matt. 13:55–56; John 7:1–10), for the "until" of Matthew 1:25 indicates that the couple eventually had normal marital relations. (Scroll to page 145 in The Bible Exposition Commentary)

Disciple's Study Bible - Whereas the birth of Jesus was marked by supernatural events, His childhood growth was natural for any human being. He increased His capacities in all areas of life. His spiritual growth amazed the religious authorities. Still He remained an obedient child. The presence of God was uniquely active in this Child, whose will and attitude developed with His body to reach the full potential God had for Him as His Messenger of redemption

Increasing (pleroo) **in wisdom** (sophia) - More literally this is "filled with wisdom" and the present tense indicates this was continual. **Henry Morris** observes that "As a little child, Jesus already was "strong in [the] Spirit" and "filled with wisdom." Though not specifically stated, this surely implies that He, like John the Baptist (Luke 1:15+), was "filled with the Holy Ghost, even from His mother's womb.".

The grace (charis) **of God was upon Him** - The preposition "upon" (epi) makes one think of Jesus' promise to His disciples that He would send forth "the promise of My Father UPON you," of course foretelling of the coming of the Spirit upon them. (Lk 24:49). The Spirit is called the Spirit of grace (Heb 10:29) and this could be an allusion to the Spirit's presence and working in the life of the fully human Jesus.

Compare Luke's description of Jesus with his later description of Jesus' disciples in Acts - "And with great (megas) power (dunamis) the apostles were giving testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and abundant **grace was upo**n them all." (Acts 4:33) So here we see **grace** associated with **power**, supernatural power enabling them to speak boldly.

The Messiah will know His Father from childhood (Psalm 22:9; Luke 2:40). (From Which psalms predict the coming of Jesus Christ?)

Robert Stein - Today historians are often interested in the early years of famous people in order to understand how and why they developed into the people they became. What were the childhood experiences that caused them to become the kind of people they were? Luke had no such purpose in mind. He sought rather to show that Jesus Christ, the risen Lord, was already aware of his being Christ and Lord, or better yet the Son of God, when he was twelve. (See Luke: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition)

Ryle - One comfortable practical lesson stands out on the face of this truth, which ought never to be overlooked. Our Lord is able to sympathize with man in every stage of man's existence, from the cradle to the grave. He knows by experience the nature and temperament of the child, the boy, and the young man. He has stood in their place. He has occupied their position. He knows their hearts. Let us never forget this in dealing with young people about their souls. Let us tell them confidently, that there is One in heaven at the right hand of God, who is exactly suited to be their Friend. He who died on the cross was once a boy Himself, and feels a special interest in boys and girls, as well as in grown up people. (Luke 2)

David Guzik - To satisfy this curiosity, men wrote their own so-called "Infancy Gospels." They contain spectacular and silly miracles like Jesus talking from the manger; healing a man made into a mule by a spell; bringing clay birds to life with a clap of His hands; healing people with a sprinkling with his old bath water, and so forth. Yet, "**Where the Scripture hath no tongue, we must have no ears**." (Trapp)\

Child (3813)(**paidion** diminutive of **pais** = child) is a little child of either sex, ranging from an infant (Mt 19:13, 14; Mk 10:13-15; Lk 18:16, 17, etc) to children who are older (Mt 11:16; Mt 14:21; 15:38; 18:2-5, etc) **Paidion** is used repeatedly of Jesus in Matthew (Mt 2:8-9, 11, 13-14, 20-21).

Continued to grow (837)(**auxano** means to cause to grow or cause to become greater in extent, size, state, or quality.

Become strong (be strengthened) (2901)(**krataioo** from **krataios** = strong <> see root **kratos**) means to be empowered, to be increased in vigor, to strengthen or in the passive voice (as in this verse) to be strengthened. From where was He strengthened? While it is difficult to fully comprehend, this strengthening is surely the effect of the Holy Spirit .

Increasing (4137)(**pleroo** means to be filled (passive voice =acted on by outside force) to the brim (a net, Mt 13:48, a building, Jn 12:3, Acts 2:2, a city, Acts 5:28, needs Phil 4:19). The idea is to make complete in every particular with the idea that what fills you takes possession of you and controls you. This dynamic is shown in vivid contrast in Eph 5:18-note where you are controlled by wine or by the Spirit!

Wisdom (4678)(**sophia**) is the ability to judge correctly and to follow the best course of action, based on knowledge and understanding.

Grace (favor) (5485)(**charis** from from **chairo** = to rejoice. English = charity. Beggars need "*charity*" even as sinners need *grace*, for we are all spiritual paupers outside of Christ, but "*God gives where he finds empty hands*"-Augustine [cp Mt 5:3-note]) is a word which defies a simple definition but at its core conveys the sense of favor or an act of gracious kindness. The English word **grace** is from the Latin **gratia** meaning favor, charm or thanks. **Gratia** in turn is derived from **gratus** meaning free, ready, quick, willing, prompt. **Webster** defines **grace** as the "unmerited love and favor of God which is the spring and source of all benefits men receive from Him, including especially His assistance given man for his regeneration or sanctification. (Grace is) a virtue from God influencing man, renewing his heart and restraining him from sin. (Compare this more "modern Webster" with Noah Webster's original definition of grace)

POSB has an interesting summary of Jesus' Infancy and Childhood - Jesus grew as a child—physically, spiritually, and mentally.

The idea is that Jesus grew as a normal child. But note the added words: "waxed strong [ekrataiouto] in spirit" (a vigorous growth). He did not just grow in wisdom, He was "filled with wisdom" (pleroumenon sophiai). Simply stated, Jesus grew perfectly at every stage of life.

- ⇒ He grew physically as well as the human body could grow (perfectly well and healthy).
- ⇒ He "waxed strong in spirit," as strong as a child could grow.
- ⇒ He was "filled with wisdom," as much as a child could be filled.

No other child had ever been or ever will be perfect in growth at the various stages of childhood, but the Christ-child was. He grew as well as a child can grow: filled perfectly with all the qualities that fill a child.

b. Why did Christ come into the world as a child and not as a full-grown man? The first man, Adam, stood at the head of the human race as the natural representative of man, and he had been created as a full-grown man. Why not Jesus Christ, the second Adam? He, too, was sent into the world to stand at the head of the human race as the spiritual representative of man. Going through the

stages of growth as a baby, then as a child, and then as a teenager is a humbling experience. Why did God subject His Son to such humiliation? There are at least two reasons.

> **1) Christ needed to set a striking example for every person, no matter the age, even for children.** In lowliness of mind, He went through the experience of a helpless babe, then a dependent child, and then an independent and responsible man. The very fact that the Son of God stooped so low is shocking to any thoughtful person. It sets a striking example of humility and lowliness of mind for every man.
>
> > "Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Ph. 2:3–8).
>
> **2) Christ needed to demonstrate a striking truth to all men: no person can enter heaven unless they first become as a little child**. There was no better way to demonstrate the lesson than for the Son of God Himself to go through the humbling experience of becoming a child before becoming a man.
>
> > "Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven" (Mt. 18:3–4).
>
> **3) Christ needed to experience every situation, condition, and trial of man in order to become the Perfect Sympathizer or Savior.** For this reason, He experienced the most humiliating experiences possible. He experienced …

- being born to an unwed mother (Mt. 1:18–19).
- being born in a stable, the worst of conditions (Lu. 2:7).
- being born to poor parents (Lu. 2:24).
- having his life threatened as a baby (Mt. 2:13f).
- being the cause of unimaginable sorrow (Mt. 2:16f).
- having to be moved and shifted as a baby (Mt. 2:13f).
- being reared in a despicable place, Nazareth (Lu. 2:39).
- having His father die during His youth (see note, pt. 3—Mt. 13:53–58).
- having to support His mother and brothers and sisters (see note, pt. 3—Mt. 13:53–58).
- having no home, not even a place to lay His head (Mt. 8:20; Lu. 9:58).
- being hated and opposed by religionists (Mk. 14:1–2).
- being charged with insanity (Mk. 3:21).
- being charged with demon possession (Mk. 3:22).
- being opposed by His own family (Mk. 3:31–32).
- being rejected, hated, and opposed by listeners (Mt. 13:53–58; Lu. 4:28–29).
- being betrayed by a close friend (Mk. 14:10–11, 18).
- being left alone, rejected, and forsaken by all of His friends (Mk. 14:50).
- being tried before the high court of the land on the charge of treason (Jn. 18:33).
- being executed by crucifixion, the worst possible death (Jn. 19:16f).

Note that each of these experiences reaches the depth of humiliation. Christ stooped to the lowest point of human experience in every condition in order to become the Perfect Sympathizer (Savior). He can now identify with and feel for any person's circumstances. (See context Preacher's Outline & Sermon Bible-Luke)

Luke 2:41 Now His parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover.

- **went (KJV):** Ex 23:14-17 34:23 De 12:5-7,11,18 16:1-8,16 1Sa 1:3,21
- **the (KJV):** Ex 12:14 Lev 23:5 Nu 28:16 Joh 2:13 6:4 11:55 13:1
- Luke 2 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

ATTENDING THE

FEAST OF PASSOVER

It is fascinating to contemplate that the One Who is the fulfillment of the shadow of Passover was Himself taken to the Passover feast that pointed to Him! (1 Cor 5:7 = "Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed.")! As Paul wrote several years later

> Therefore no one is to act as your judge in regard to food or drink or in respect to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath day– things (LIKE PASSOVER) which are a mere **shadow** of what is to come; but the **substance** belongs to Christ.(Col 2:16, 17+)

Every year at the Feast of the Passover - The Passover was a one-day feast and was followed immediately by the week-long Feast of Unleavened Bread. **MacArthur** commenting on Mt 26:27 writes that "The Passover lambs were killed (Mk 14:12) on 14 Nisan (Mar./Apr.). That evening, the Passover meal was eaten. The Feast of Unleavened Bread followed immediately after Passover, from 15–21 Nisan. The entire time was often referred to either as "**Passover**" (Lk 22:1), or as the **Feast of Unleavened Bread**. Therefore the first day refers to 14 Nisan."

This pilgrimage to the Passover was in obedience to the instructions in Exodus

> **Three times a year you shall celebrate a feast to Me.** 15 "You shall observe the **Feast of Unleavened Bread** (began on the evening of Passover - Ex 12:6,18 - On the first day, homes were to be completely cleared of leaven a symbol of corruption and evil; cf. Lev. 2:11-note; 1 Cor. 5:7-8, and a holy assembly was to be called Ex 12:16 - see notes on Lev 23:6-8-note); for seven days you are to eat unleavened bread, as I commanded you, at the appointed time in the month Abib, for in it you came out of Egypt. And none shall appear before Me empty-handed. 16 "Also [you shall observe] the **Feast of the Harvest [of] the first fruits** (Pentecost - see notes on this feast also called Feast of Weeks - Lev 23:15-22) of your labors [from] what you sow in the field; also the **Feast of the Ingathering** (aka, Sukkot, Tabernacles or Booths - Lev 23:34-43-note, cp Dt 31:10,11, Neh 8:14-18) at the end of the year when you gather in [the fruit of] your labors from the field. 17 "**Three times a year all your males shall appear before the Lord GOD** (Ex 23:14-17)
>
> Deuteronomy 16:16+ "Three times in a year all your males shall appear before the LORD your God in the place which He chooses, at the Feast of Unleavened Bread and at the Feast of Weeks and at the Feast of Booths, and they shall not appear before the LORD empty-handed.

Related Resource

- Table summarizing all Seven Great Feasts of Israel

Steven Cole - The Old Testament prescribed that every Jewish man should appear before the Lord for three feasts each year: **Unleavened Bread (Passover), Weeks (Pentecost), and Booths** (Deut. 16:16). By Jesus' time, it was customary for those some distance from Jerusalem to attend only one feast. Joseph and Mary's custom was to make the 80 mile journey from Nazareth each year for the Passover. This incident happened when Jesus was 12. We don't know whether this was the first time He went with them, but it must have been the most exciting time of the year, to leave the small town and go to the capital for this celebration that drew thousands of worshipers. Joseph and Mary stayed for the whole week of festivities and then started back in the caravan. Probably Joseph thought that Jesus was with Mary and she thought he was with Joseph. The fact that they had not checked to make sure probably reflects the fact that they trusted Jesus and knew that He was responsible enough to be where He was supposed to be. When evening came and the caravan stopped for the night, they discovered that Jesus was not with the group. (Imitating Jesus)

J C Ryle - Let draw from the passage a lesson for all married people. We have it in the conduct of Joseph and Mary, here described. We are told that "they went to Jerusalem every year, at the feast of the passover." They regularly honored God's appointed ordinances, and they honored them together. The distance from Nazareth to Jerusalem was great. The journey, to poor people without any means of conveyance, was, doubtless, troublesome and fatiguing. To leave house and home for ten days or a fortnight was no slight expense. But God had given Israel a command, and Joseph and Mary strictly obeyed it. God had appointed an ordinance for their spiritual good, and they regularly kept it. And all that they did concerning the passover they did together. When they went up to the feast, they always went up side by side. So ought it to be with all Christian husbands and wives. They ought to help one another in spiritual things, and to encourage one another in the service of God. Marriage...is a state of life which has the greatest effect on the souls of those who enter into it. It helps them upwards or downwards. It leads them nearer to heaven or nearer to hell. We all depend much on the company we keep. Our characters are insensibly moulded by those with whom we pass our time. To none does this apply so much as to married people. Husbands and wives are continually doing either good or harm to one another's souls. Let all who are married, or think of being married, ponder these things well. Let them take example from the conduct of Joseph and Mary, and resolve to do likewise. Let them pray together, and read the Bible together, and go to the house of

God together, and talk to one another about spiritual matters. Above all, let them beware of throwing obstacles and discouragements in one another's way about, means of grace. Blessed are those husbands who say to their wives as Elkanah did to Hannah, "Do all that is in thy heart." Happy are those wives who say to their husbands as Leah and Rachel did to Jacob, "Whatsoever God hath said unto thee, do." (1 Sa 1:23; Ge 31:16.) (Luke 2)

Luke 2:42 And when He became twelve, they went up there according to the custom of the Feast;

- Luke 2 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

JESUS' PARENTS
KEPT THE PASSOVER FEAST

And when He became twelve, they went up there according to the custom (ethos) **of the Feast** The Jewish father was required to acquaint the children with the Law, and when the child turned 13 he was required to fulfill the Law. Jesus' parents were perhaps getting him accustomed to the Law by taking him at age 12 to the **Feast**, which refers to the Feast of the Passover. The irony is that one day when He grew up Jesus would again go up to the **Feast**, but would go to present Himself as the Passover Lamb! (Jn 1:29+, Isa 53:7+)

Robert Stein - At the age of thirteen a Jewish boy became obligated to observe the law (Nid. 5:6;**Nazir 29b**) and in more recent years has begun to be called a "son of the covenant—**Bar-Mitzvah.**" (See Luke: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition)

NET Note on **twelve** - According to the Mishnah, the age of twelve years old is one year before a boy becomes responsible for his religious commitments (m. Niddah 5.6).

Ryrie - At 13 a Jewish boy became a "**son of the commandment**" and a full member of the religious community. This age was often anticipated by one or two years in the matter of going to the Temple. (Ryrie Study Bible Expanded Edition)

Marvin Vincent adds "At which age he was known as a son of the law, and came under obligation to observe the ordinances personally."

J C Ryle on **twelve** - This age appears to have been regarded by the Jews as a kind of turning point out of the state of childhood. Lightfoot quotes a saying from one of the Rabbinical writers: "Let a man deal gently with his son, till he comes to be twelve years old; but from that time let him descend with him into his way of living,—that is, let him diligently keep him close to that way, rule, and act, by which he may get his living." (Luke 2)

A T Robertson - Luke does not say that Jesus had not been to Jerusalem before, but at twelve a Jewish boy became a "son of the law" and began to observe the ordinances, putting on the phylacteries as a reminder.

According to the custom - Lk 1:9+, Lk 22:39+ (cf this same phrase in Ex. 21:9; 2 Ki. 11:14; 2 Ki. 17:33; Lk. 1:9; Acts 15:1+)

REGULAR HABITS - Jesus' parents, like most devout Jews, went to Jerusalem each year. Jesus' family had the right priorities. Families that establish regular habits of worship are less likely to have their spiritual life deflected by alternative attractions. Keep worship on top of your family's agenda. Putting God first is a great example to children, who quickly learn what parents care about by observing how they plan and spend time. (Luke - Life Application Commentary)

Custom (habit)(1485)(**ethos** from **etho** = to be used, to be accustomed) refers to a usual or customary manner of behavior, habit, pattern of behavior which is more or less fixed by tradition or the usual practice. It may be established by law or otherwise generally sanctioned by the society.

Luke 2:43 and as they were returning, after spending the full number of days, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. But His parents were unaware of it,

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- 2Ch 30:21-23, 25:17
- Luke 2 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

And as they were returning, after spending the full number of days - **The full number of days** is literally "when the days ended" After the feast was over, i.e., after 7 days. "The days" may mean the full seven days (Ex. 12:15-20; Dt. 16:3), or the two chief days

after which many pilgrims left for home." (A T Robertson)

> In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at twilight is the LORD'S Passover. 6 'Then on the fifteenth day of the same month there is the Feast of Unleavened Bread to the LORD; for seven days you shall eat unleavened bread. 7'On the first day you shall have a holy convocation; you shall not do any laborious work. 8 'But for **seven days** you shall present an offering by fire to the LORD. On the seventh day is a holy convocation; you shall not do any laborious work.'" (Lev. 23:5–8-note)

Marvin Vincent adds "Not necessarily the whole seven days of the festival (ED: cf 2Chr 30:21). With the third day commenced the so-called half-holidays, when it was lawful to return home."

The boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. But His parents were unaware of it- This is more literally "Jesus the boy." In Lk 2:40 it was "**the child**" (to paidion), here it is "the boy" (ho pais - no longer the diminutive form). The fact that Jesus stayed behind was not disobedience on His part but reflected His intense interest in the services of the Temple.

MacArthur o n **Jesus stayed behind** - In stark contrast to the apocryphal gospels' spurious tales of youthful miracles and supernatural exploits, this lone biblical insight into the youth of Jesus portrays Him as a typical boy in a typical family. His lingering was neither mischievous nor disobedient; it was owing to a simple mistaken presumption on His parents' part (Lk 2:44) that He was left behind. (MacArthur Daily Bible)

Luke 2:44 but supposed Him to be in the caravan, and went a day's journey; and they began looking for Him among their relatives and acquaintances.

- **in:** Ps 42:4 122:1-4 Isa 2:3
- Luke 2 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

But supposed (nomizo) **Him to be in the caravan and went a day's journey**- The caravan of pilgrims would have had many children and undoubtedly they assumed Jesus was with the other children. An ancient journey like this would have involved a **caravan** for protection and fellowship. And so it was common for pilgrims to travel together to the Feast in organized groups The women usually went ahead and the men followed. Joseph may have thought Jesus was with Mary and Mary that he was with Joseph. "The Nazareth caravan was so long that it took a whole day to look through it" (Plummer). **A day's journey** would have been about 20-25 miles.

James Freeman on "**first day's journey**" - This does not mean that they traveled an entire day before they missed the lad. An ordinary "day's journey" varied from eighteen to thirty miles. See note on 1 Kings 19:4 (#315). But when a party started on a journey the first day's travel was invariably shorter than the usual distance. This is a very ancient custom, and is still practiced. When everything is ready for the caravan to move they slowly march on, but halt for the first night at a distance of from **three to eight miles from the place of starting.** The reason assigned for this usage is, that if anything has been left behind through mistake or forgetfulness, someone may with but little trouble return and get it in time to join the caravan the next day. In the ease before us they made the short journey of the first day, and then halted for the night; so that, instead of traveling all day without missing Jesus, they only traveled a few hours. The first stopping-place of nearly all traveling parties who now leave Jerusalem for the north is el-Birch, supposed to be the ancient Beer, or Beeroth. **It is only eight or ten miles from the city, and is considered a three hours' journey.** There is a tradition that this is the very place where the caravan, of which the family of Jesus was a part, made their first halt; and it certainly has greater probability in its favor than many other traditions connected with Palestine.(**Scroll down to page 1007** of New Manners and Customs by James Freeman)

And they began looking for (anazeteo) **Him among their relatives and acquaintances** - One can only imagine what went through His parent's mind. Travel was dangerous in those days and as a parent of 4 I know where my mind goes when one of my children is astray. As **Criswell** observes "Jesus was missing for nearly three days, before Mary and Joseph retraced their steps on the following day. Probably the women traveled in one group and the men in another. A 12-year-old boy could be with either group; therefore, it is not remarkable that they could have traveled several days before He was missed." (Believers Study Bible) **They began lookin**g is in the imperfect tense adds a vivid picture of them searching over and over for Him or asRobertson puts it "They searched up and down, back and forth, a thorough search and prolonged."

Supposed (3543)(**nomizo** from **nomos** = law, custom) means to think or believe something without being fully settled in mind or opinion. To suppose something that is not true (e.g., Moses wrongly supposed the Israelites would understand God had sent him to deliver them; in Acts 8:20 of Simon's false assumption he could buy the Holy Spirit's power, of the Philippian jailer's nearly fatal

supposition that the prisoners had escaped). To **suppose** means to express a **supposition**, to presume (something) to be true without certain knowledge. To assume (take something as true). To regard or acknowledge as custom. To practice a custom (common use by Greek writers). To have and hold as customary (from root word nomos - custom) as used in Acts 16:13 where the idea is to engage in a customary practice ("where the people customarily prayed"). **BDAG** summarized - 1. to follow or practice what is customary, have in common use 2. to form an idea about something but with some suggestion of tentativeness or refraining from a definitive statement -- think, believe, hold, consider. **Liddell-Scott** - to hold or own as a custom or usage, to use customarily, practice. Passive = to be the custom, be customary. 2. to adopt a custom or usage,

> **Exegetical Dictionary of the NT** - Except in Acts 16:13, where a positive narrative character makes a correct assumption, νομίζω in Luke-Acts always is used of a false assumption, which in some instances is criticized in direct discourse by the opponent (Acts 8:20; 17:29; in 7:25 by the narrative opponent) and is elsewhere related as an erroneous assumption (Luke 2:44; 3:23, a redactional addition intended to balance the genealogy of Joseph with the virgin birth; Acts 14:19; 16:27; 21:29). All the Lukan occurrences are the result of redaction.

Nomizo - 15x in 15v - Usage: suppose(1), supposed(4), supposing(3), think(4), thinks(1), thought(2). Not found in the non-apocryphal Septuagint.

> Matthew 5:17 "Do not **think** that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill.
>
> Matthew 10:34 "Do not **think** that I came to bring peace on the earth; I did not come to bring peace, but a sword.
>
> Matthew 20:10 "When those hired first came, they **thought** that they would receive more; but each of them also received a denarius.
>
> Luke 2:44 but **supposed** Him to be in the caravan, and went a day's journey; and they began looking for Him among their relatives and acquaintances.
>
> Luke 3:23 When He began His ministry, Jesus Himself was about thirty years of age, being, as was **supposed**, the son of Joseph, the son of Eli,
>
> Acts 7:25 "And he (Moses) **supposed** that his brethren understood that God was granting them deliverance through him, but they did not understand.
>
> Acts 8:20 But Peter said to him, "May your silver perish with you, because you **thought** you could obtain the gift of God with money!
>
> Acts 14:19 But Jews came from Antioch and Iconium, and having won over the crowds, they stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, **supposing** him to be dead.
>
> > **Comment** - Most of the uses of nomizo suppose something that is not true (see main discussion above), so Luke's use of nomizo in this passage could be taken as evidence that Paul was not truly dead and that the crowd's supposition was incorrect. We will find out in heaven for sure!!!
>
> Acts 16:13 And on the Sabbath day we went outside the gate to a riverside, where we were **supposing** that there would be a place of prayer; and we sat down and began speaking to the women who had assembled.
> 27 When the jailer awoke and saw the prison doors opened, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself, **supposing** that the prisoners had escaped.
>
> Acts 17:29 "Being then the children of God, we ought not to **think** that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and thought of man.
>
> Acts 21:29 For they had previously seen Trophimus the Ephesian in the city with him, and they **supposed** that Paul had brought him into the temple.
>
> > **A T Robertson** - Imperfect active of nomizō, common to think or suppose. Perfectly harmless word, but they did, as so many people do, put their supposed inference on the same basis with the facts. They did not see Trophimus with Paul now in the temple, nor had they ever seen him there. They simply argued that, if Paul was willing to be seen down street with a Greek Christian, he would not hesitate to bring him (therefore, did bring him, ε σηγαγεν [eisēgagen] as in verse 28) into the temple, that is into the court of Israel and therefore both Paul and Trophimus were entitled to death, especially Paul who had brought him in (if he had) and, besides, they now had Paul. This is the way of the mob-mind in all ages. Many an innocent man has been rushed to his death by the fury of a lynching party.
>
> 1 Corinthians 7:26 I **think** then that this is good in view of the present distress, that it is good for a man to remain as he is.

36 But if any man **thinks** that he is acting unbecomingly toward his virgin daughter, if she is past her youth, and if it must be so, let him do what he wishes, he does not sin; let her marry.

1 Timothy 6:5 and constant friction between men of depraved mind and deprived of the truth, who **suppose** that godliness is a means of gain.

Looking for (327)(**anazeteo** from **ana** = from the bottom up or used to intensify meaning + **zeteo** = seek) mean to seek up and down (back and forth), to seek carefully, to search for, to try to locate, to discover, or to investigate. Anazeteo was often used in the context of hunting for criminals or fugitive slaves (**BDAG**). This verb speaks of the thoroughness with which Jesus' parents were looking for Him. As we might say today they were searching "high and low" to find Him.

Moulton and Milligan note that anazeteo "is specially used of searching for human beings, with an implication of difficulty." "make every effort to search for them" etc. with reference to certain slaves who had deserted. "the culprits having been searched for." "to look for hay,"

Thayer on **anazeteo** - `to run through with the eyes any series or succession of men or things, and so to seek out, search through, make diligent search

Anazeteo is used only by Luke (Lk 2:44, 45) and in Acts 11:25 of Barnabas "And he left for Tarsus to **look for** Saul." There are 2 uses in the Septuagint - Job 3:4, Job 10:6.

Luke 2:45 When they did not find Him, they returned to Jerusalem looking for Him.

- Luke 2 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

LOOKING FOR JESUS

When they did not find (heurisko) **Him, they returned to Jerusalem looking** (anazeteo) **for Him** - Imagine the fear and anxiety Joseph and Mary must have felt at this moment. Talk about some restless nights of sleep! **Looking** (anazeteo) is in the present tense continuous action.

> **THOUGHT** - We were in Colorado in an old mining town high the mountains and my youngest grandson disappeared. His parents and his grandparent's heart began to race, fear gripped us, we felt sick at our stomach, and in panic we began a frantic search that seemed to last forever and finally found him after about 15 minutes. I can only began to imagine the panic that set in to the hearts of Joseph and Mary at losing the one that they angel had said would reign over a kingdom that would never end! (Lk 1:33). For all they knew He could have been kidnapped or worse.

NET Note - "The return to Jerusalem would have taken a second day, since they were already one day's journey away (Ed: As noted above 20-25 miles away)."

Luke 2:46 Then, after three days they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both listening to them and asking them questions.

> CSB After three days, they found Him in the temple complex sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions.
>
> ESV After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions.
>
> KJV And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions.
>
> NET After three days they found him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions.
>
> NIV After three days they found him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions.

NLT Three days later they finally discovered him in the Temple, sitting among the religious teachers, listening to them and asking questions.

YLT And it came to pass, after three days, they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both hearing them and questioning them,

- **after (KJV):** Lu 2:44,45 1Ki 12:5,12 Mt 12:40 16:21 27:63,64
- **the doctors (KJV):** Lu 5:17 Ac 5:34
- **both (KJV):** Isa 49:1,2 50:4
- Luke 2 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

The Teacher teaching the teachers!

JESUS FOUND ON THE THIRD DAY

Then, after three days they found (heurisko) **Him in the temple** (hieron) **-** One day out (Lk 2:44), one day to return (Lk 2:45) and one day to find Him in the Temple. It is surprising they did not go first to the Temple, but they did not fully comprehend Who He was (cp Lk 2:50). There is no clear association of three days with the time of His resurrection after His death, but it is still intriguing that both events involved a disappearance and a re-appearance. When Jesus referred to the resurrection He did not say after three days but "**on the third day**." (All uses of this phrase in NT - Matt. 16:21; Matt. 17:23; Matt. 20:19; Lk. 9:22; Jn. 2:1; Acts 10:40; Acts 27:19; 1 Co. 15:4)

NET Note on "**then**" or "**and it came to pass**" (KJV, Young's Literal) - The introductory phrase egeneto ("it happened that"), is common in Luke (69 times) and Acts (54 times), is redundant in contemporary English and has not been translated. Here kai (and) has not been translated because of differences between Greek and English style. **three days** - Three days means there was one day out, another day back, and a third day of looking in Jerusalem.

Stein writes that "after the first day of travel from Jerusalem, they returned back on the second day to Jerusalem; and they found Jesus on the third day. " (Luke: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition)

A T Robertson writes they were "Probably on the terrace where members of the Sanhedrin gave public instruction on Sabbaths and feast-days, so probably while the feast was still going on. The rabbis probably sat on benches in a circle. The listeners on the ground, among whom was Jesus the boy in a rapture of interest."

Marvin Vincent - "We read in the Talmud that the members of the Temple-Sanhedrin, who, on ordinary days, sat as a court of appeal from the close of the morning to the time of the evening sacrifice, were wont, upon Sabbaths and feast-days, to come out upon the terrace of the temple, and there to teach. In such popular instruction the utmost latitude of questioning would be given. It is in this audience, which sat upon the ground, surrounding and mingling with the doctors, and hence during, not after, the feast, that we must seek the child Jesus" (Edersheim, "Life and Times," etc., i. 247). From this, Edersheim argues that the parents set out for home before the close of the feast.

See Alfred Edersheim's discussion in **Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah** - IN THE HOUSE OF HIS HEAVENLY, AND IN THE HOME OF HIS EARTHLY FATHER - THE TEMPLE OF JERUSALEM - THE RETIREMENT AT NAZARETH. Luke 2:41-52.

Sitting in the midst of the teachers, both listening to them and asking them questions. -THE Teacher teaching the teachers! He was "not occupying a teacher's place, but sitting in the circle among the doctors and their hearers." (Marvin Vincent)

Darrell Bock - Some critics have said that rabbis did not allow children to sit in their presence until the middle of the first century. Does this mean this verse is anachronistic or false? In answer to this, public engagement with rabbis was not unusual at this time, and Jesus' age (12 years old, Lk 2:42) was advanced enough that there is no difficulty in believing he was allowed to sit among the teachers. (See The Gospels and Acts)

Sitting in the midst of the teachers (didaskalos) - "This was a typical, traditional setting for teaching in Israel. The teachers would be seated, with the students, sitting in their midst. Only here does Luke use didaskalos to refer to Jewish teachers; in the rest of his gospel the term is reserved for John the Baptist (Lk 3:12+) or Jesus. No one is called "teacher" after Jesus became the teacher.....The dialogue method was the customary pattern for teaching in Judaism and was employed by the apostle Paul (Acts 17:2+; "reasoned" translates a form of the Greek verb dialegomai, "to discuss"). Students would gather around a teacher or teachers and stimulate the discussion by asking questions. Only here in the Gospels is Jesus portrayed as the student; after this He is always the teacher—who would ask questions for which the Jewish teachers had no adequate answers (cf. Lk 11:19–20+; Lk 13:2–5+; Lk 20:41–44+)." (See Luke 1-24 MacArthur New Testament Commentary)

Both listening to them and asking them questions - **Listening** is reasonable but **asking** is amazing because we all know you have to have some knowledge on which to even base sensible questions. Clearly His understanding of theological matters was astute as shown by their reaction in Lk 2:47. The use of questions and answers was typical of the rabbinical method of teaching, and here we witness the greatest **Rabboni** of all!

A T Robertson - Paul sat at the feet of Gamaliel (Acts 22:3). Picture this eager boy alive with interest. It was his one opportunity in a theological school outside of the synagogue to hear the great rabbis expound the problems of life. This was the most unusual of all children, to be sure, in intellectual grasp and power. But it is a mistake to think that children of twelve do not think profoundly concerning the issues of life. What father or mother has ever been able to answer a child's questions?"

James Freeman -There were several places within the Temple area where teachers of the law met their disciples. One of these places was in the cloisters described in Matthew 24:1 Herod's Temple. Another was in the synagogue that was in the Temple enclosure. After services, the teachers admitted any who wished to converse with them on matters pertaining to the law. There is no reason to suppose that Jesus' conversation with the teachers was in any way controversial. He simply followed the custom of the time, which allowed anyone who chose to question the teachers on any points they desired. **Although our text-verse is often twisted by some to say that the child Jesus was teaching these learned men, that is not what the verse says.** He was asking them questions and learning from them. They were, however, amazed at His understanding and answers to questions that they asked Him—asking questions of students was a rabbinical method of teaching. (New Manners and Customs)

J C Ryle - Let us, secondly, draw from the passage, an example for all young persons. We have it in the conduct of our Lord Jesus Christ, when He was left by Himself in Jerusalem at the age of twelve years. For four days He was out of sight of Mary and Joseph. For three days they "sought him sorrowing," not knowing what had befallen Him. Who can imagine the anxiety of such a mother at losing such a child?—And where did they find Him at last? Not idling His time away, or getting into mischief, as many boys of twelve years old do. Not in vain and unprofitable company. "They found him in the temple of God,—sitting in the midst" of the Jewish teachers, "hearing" what they had to say, and "asking questions" about things He wished to be explained. So ought it to be with the younger members of Christian families. They ought to be steady and trustworthy behind the backs of their parents, as well as before their faces. They ought to seek the company of the wise and prudent, and to use every opportunity of getting spiritual knowledge, before the cares of life come on them, and while their memories are fresh and strong. Let Christian boys and girls ponder these things well, and take example from the conduct of Jesus at the age of only twelve years. Let them remember, that if they are old enough to do wrong, they are also old enough to do right; and that if able to read story-books and to talk, they are also able to read their Bibles and pray. Let them remember, that they are accountable to God, even while they are yet young, and that it is written that God "heard the voice of a lad." (Gen. 21:17.) Happy indeed are those families in which the children "seek the Lord early," and cost their parents no tears. Happy are those parents who can say of their boys and girls, when absent from them, "I can trust my children that they will not wilfully run into sin." (Luke 2

Found (2147)(**heurisko** means to find after searching and so to discover (Mt 7:7), to find accidentally or without seeking (Mt 12:44), to experience for oneself and to to obtain or procure (He 9:12). Figuratively, heurisko speaks of a spiritual or intellectual discovery gained through observation = reflection, perception, investigation (Ro 7:21).

In the Temple (2411)(**hieron)** designated the entire Temple complex and was the all-inclusive word signifying the sacred enclosure, porticos, courts, and other subordinate buildings.

> **In the Temple** in the NT - Matt. 12:5; Matt. 21:12; Matt. 21:14; Matt. 21:15; Matt. 26:55; Mk. 11:15; Mk. 11:27; Mk. 12:35; Mk. 14:49; Lk. 1:21; Lk. 1:22; Lk. 2:46; Lk. 19:47; Lk. 20:1; Lk. 21:37; Lk. 21:38; Lk. 22:53; Lk. 24:53; Jn. 2:14; Jn. 5:14; Jn. 7:28; Jn. 8:20; Jn. 10:23; Jn. 11:56; Jn. 18:20; Acts 2:46; Acts 5:20; Acts 5:25; Acts 5:42; Acts 21:27; Acts 22:17; Acts 24:12; Acts 24:18; Acts 26:21; 2 Thess. 2:4 (Antichrist "in the Temple"); Rev. 3:12 (overcomers "in the Temple")

Teachers (1320) (**didaskalos** from **didasko** = teach to shape will of one being taught by content of what is taught <> cp **didaskalía**) is one who provides instruction or systematically imparts truth. **Didaskalos** refers to **Jesus** (the Master **Teacher**) in 41 of 58 NT uses. Twice Jesus calls Himself **Teacher** (Mt 26:18, Jn 13:13-14). He is referred to as **Teacher** by His disciples (Mk 4:38; 9:38; 13:1; Lk 7:40; 21:7), by the Pharisees (Mt 8:19, 12:38), by Pharisees and Herodians (Mt 22:16); Sadducees (Mk 12:19), a teacher of the law (Mk 12:32), Jewish deceivers (Lk 20:21); the rich young ruler (Lk 18:18), tax collectors (Lk 3:12) and His friend Martha (Jn 11:28). As an aside someone has said our great Teacher writes many of His best lessons on the blackboard of affliction. The **teacher** teaches in such a way as to shape will of one being taught by content of what is taught. **NET Note** - This is the only place in Luke's Gospel where the term **didaskalos**, "teacher" is applied to Jews. (See all Luke's uses of didaskalos below) **Luke** uses **didaskalos** 18x (out of 59 NT uses) - Lk. 2:46; 3:12; 6:40; 7:40; 8:49; 9:38; 10:25; 11:45; 12:13; 18:18; 19:39; 20:21, 28, 39; 21:7; 22:11; Acts 13:1

Asking questions (1905) (**eperotao** from **epí** = an intens. + **erōtáō** = to ask, inquire of, beg of) in the NT means inquiry in general or to put a question, inquire (Mk 9.32, 33)

Luke's uses of **eperotao** - Lk. 2:46; Lk. 3:10; Lk. 3:14; Lk. 6:9; Lk. 8:9; Lk. 8:30; Lk. 9:18; Lk. 17:20; Lk. 18:18; Lk. 18:40; Lk. 20:21; Lk. 20:28; Lk. 20:40; Lk. 21:7; Lk. 22:64; Lk. 23:6; Lk. 23:9; Jn. 18:7; Acts 5:27; Acts 23:34

Luke 6:9 And Jesus said to them, "I **ask** you, is it lawful to do good or to do harm on the Sabbath, to save a life or to destroy it?"

Luke 8:30 And Jesus **asked** him, "What is your name?" And he said, "Legion"; for many demons had entered him.

Luke 9:18 And it happened that while He was praying alone, the disciples were with Him, and He **questioned** them, saying, "Who do the people say that I am?"

Luke 17:20 Now having been **questioned** by the Pharisees as to when the kingdom of God was coming, He answered them and said, "The kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed;

Luke 2:47 And all who heard Him were amazed at His understanding and His answers.

- Lu 4:22,32 Ps 119:99 Mt 7:28 Mk 1:22 John 7:15,46
- Luke 2 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

JESUS' AMAZING UNDERSTANDING AND ANSWERS

All who heard Him were amazed (existemi) - Recall Jesus is only 12 and yet His degree of theological precociousness was striking to all. This reminds us of later exclamations regarding Jesus' words in (John 7:15) "The Jews then were astonished, saying, "How has this man become learned, having never been educated?"" and (John 7:46) The officers answered, "Never has a man spoken the way this man speaks."

MacArthur - This was not the first (cf. Lk 2:18, 33), nor would it be the last time Jesus elicited wonder and amazement in Luke's gospel (cf. Lk 4:22, 32, 36; 5:9; 8:25, 56; 9:43; 11:14; 20:26; 24:41).

Stein - Since this amazement is frequently the result of an encounter with the supernatural (cf. Lk 8:56; 24:22; Acts 2:7, 12), Luke may have intended his readers to see in this incident a supernatural display of wisdom. (Cf. Acts 9:21 for the same reaction to the witness of Saul of Tarsus.) (Luke: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition)

Marshall writes that "Jesus appears as a pupil who astonishes His teachers by the understanding apparent in His questions and answers."

At His understanding (sunesis) **and His answers** - The fact that this story is told of a preteen hints that Jesus was someone special (NET) **Robertson** on **His answers** - It is not difficult to ask hard questions, but this Boy had astounding answers to their questions, revealing His amazing intellectual and spiritual growth. **Answers** (apokrisis) - 4x in NT - Lk. 2:47; Lk. 20:26; Jn. 1:22; Jn. 19:9

> **THOUGHT** - Given the meaning of **sunesis** (bringing together the full picture) it is not surprising that Jesus had such understanding for the entire Old Testament was like a "finger" or "signpost" pointing to the Messiah. All the sacrifices, feasts, special days, etc found their full understanding in Jesus Christ. What a tragedy to hear of a modern movement by some evangelical pastors (SUCH AS ANDY STANLEY) to do away with the teaching of the Old Testament Scriptures! (REFUTATION OF STANLEY - RAY ORTLUND, The Dangerous False Teaching of Andy Stanley) As Jesus Himself said "You search the **Scriptures** (REFERRING TO THE OLD TESTAMENT) because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that testify about Me." (Jn 5:39)

Amazed (astonished, astounded, besides one's self) (1839)(**existemi** from **ek** = out + **hístemi** = to stand) literally means to stand out from or to stand outside oneself (and thus to be beside oneself). To put out of position, to displace or to change. To remove from its place. For example Aristotle writes "you won't budge (existemi) me from my position on these matters." The NT uses of **existemi** are all related in some way to the human mind. Richards adds that existemi "suggests astonishment mixed with anxiety, stimulated by extraordinary events that cannot be explained." **Existemi** means to be amazed, astonished or astounded describing "the feeling of astonishment mingled with fear, caused by events which are miraculous, extraordinary, or difficult to understand."

(**BDAG**) It can describe one who is so astonished almost to the point of failing to comprehend what one has experienced.

Amazed is the "Common verb existēmi meaning that they (Joseph and Mary) stood out of themselves as if their eyes were bulging out." (A T Robertson) And Robertson adds that Luke's use of the vivid imperfect tense is "descriptive of their continued and repeated astonishment."

It is interesting that this same verb **existemi** is used to describe two diametrically opposite reactions - "All the crowds were **amazed**" (existemi)(Mt 12:23) and "He has **lost His senses**." (existemi)(Mk 3:21)!

> **Luke's** uses of **existemi** (He has 11 of the 17 NT uses) - Lk. 2:47; Lk. 8:56; Lk. 24:22; Acts 2:7; Acts 2:12; Acts 8:9; Acts 8:11; Acts 8:13; Acts 9:21; Acts 10:45; Acts 12:16

Other uses of **existemi** in the Gospels...

> Mark 2:12 And he got up and immediately picked up the pallet and went out in the sight of everyone, so that they were all **amazed** and were glorifying God, saying, "We have never seen anything like this."
>
> Mark 5:42 Immediately the girl got up and began to walk, for she was twelve years old. And immediately they were completely **astounded**.
>
> Mark 6:51 Then He got into the boat with them, and the wind stopped; and they were utterly **astonished**,
>
> Luke 8:56 Her parents were **amazed**; but He instructed them to tell no one what had happened.

Understanding (4907) (**sunesis** from **suniemi** = to comprehend, reason out in turn derived from **sun** = with or together + **hiemi** = send) literally is a sending together or a bringing together. **Sunesis** describes the putting together, of comparing and combining things, and thereby grasping or exhibiting quick comprehension. **Sunesis** is the ability to understand concepts and see relationships between them and thus describes the faculty of comprehension, intelligence, acuteness, shrewdness. **Sunesis** is "holistic understanding" which is obtained by joining facts together. Think of it as "synthesized reasoning" which is achieved by bringing implicit or indirect truths together resulting in comprehension which allows us to prudently deal with situations. The idea is "connecting the dots" which involves sanctified (Spirit enabled, Word centered) reasoning which enables one to see the "full picture." Used 7x in NT - Mk. 12:33; Lk. 2:47; 1 Co. 1:19; Eph. 3:4; Col. 1:9; Col. 2:2; 2 Tim. 2:7

Marvin Vincent on **understanding = sunesis** - From suniemi, to bring together. Hence that quality of mind which combines: understanding not only of facts, but of facts in their mutual relations. (Note on Mark 12:33 = Understanding from suniemi, to send or bring together. Hence sunesis [the word in Mk 12:33] is a union or bringing together of the mind with an object, and so used to denote the faculty of quick comprehension, intelligence, sagacity.); where there is meant "the love of a well-pondered and duly considered resolution which determines the whole person; the love which clearly understands itself" (Cremer).

Rich Cathers - As I was thinking of this, there's kind of a model of good communication and understanding going on here.

Good communication - There were four things Jesus did, and I think the order is important.

1) **Listen**
   - You need to hear what the other person is saying.
2) **Ask questions**
   - If you aren't getting something, ask questions. Don't assume you really know what they're trying to say.
3) **Understand**
   - Put it all together.
4) **Answer**
   - Respond

I think us husbands are kind of weak in these things at times. (Sermon Notes)

Luke 2:48 When they saw Him, they were astonished; and His mother said to Him, "Son, why have You treated us this way? Behold, Your father and I have been anxiously looking for You."

- Luke 2 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

SINLESS SON
SOUGHT AND FOUND

When they saw Him, they were astonished (ekplesso) **-** Jesus' parents were astounded, overwhelmed, besides themselves, totally dumbfounded by their Son.

and His mother said to Him, "Son, why have You treated us this way - 'Her question was designed to make Jesus feel guilty, as if He had intentionally caused His parents to suffer. Mary's next statement intensified her rebuke. "Behold," she continued, "your father and I have been anxiously looking for You." As mentioned above, Jesus' behavior in this incident was totally unlike anything Joseph and Mary had ever experienced and thus to them inexplicable. Jesus, of course, had not intentionally defied or hurt His parents. What He had done was to make evident the necessary break that was to come between Him and His earthly family." (See Luke Commentary)

Behold, Your father and I have been anxiously (odunao) **looking** (zeteo) **for You** - **Behold** is used to get someone's attention! It is fascinating Mary is speaking this to Jesus, but she is speaking as a concerned mother. Your "adopted" father. God of course is His Father. **Anxiously** is a fairly strong word expressing that Joseph and Mary were quite distressed and worried when they could not find Jesus. **Looking** is in the imperfect tense indicating that they were looking here and there, looking all over for Him.**A T Robertson** adds that **looking** in the "imperfect tense describes the long drawn out search for three days."

Brian Bell - Were they wrong for being "anxious"? Aren't we to be anxious for nothing? (Phil.4:6) No, this is a different word (odunao). Only Luke uses it (5 x's). Hear how Luke uses it later in Lk 16:24,25 [I am in agony]Every normal parent feels this at some time or another!

They were astonished (they were overwhelmed = NET)(1605)(**ekplesso** from **ek** = out + **plesso** = strike) means strike out, expel by a blow, drive out or away, force out or cast off by a blow. Figuratively **ekplesso** means to drive out of one's senses by a sudden shock or strong feeling, or "to be exceedingly struck in mind". It means to cause to be filled with amazement to the point of being overwhelmed (struck out of one's senses). It encompasses the ideas of wonder, astonishment or amazement. Ekplesso expresses a stunned amazement that leaves the subject unable to grasp what is happening. It is interesting to note that our English word "**astonish**" which is derived from the Latin word extonare meaning to **strike with thunder**! What a picture of Jesus' radical message which must have struck His hearers like thunder!

A T Robertson on **astonished** (especially the root idea of to strike out, drive out by a blow) - Joseph and Mary "were struck out" by what they saw and heard. Even they had not fully realized the power in this wonderful boy. Parents often fail to perceive the wealth of nature in their children.

Marvin Vincent adds that **astonished** is "a very strong word; the verb meaning, literally, to strike out or drive away from; and so to drive out of one's senses. Hence in the general sense of great amazement. Amaze is to throw into a maze or labyrinth; and so is closely akin to the Greek word here, and is a faithful rendering."

Anxiously (feel agony or torment) (3600)(**odunao** from **odune** = sorrow, torment, grief, pain. English anodyne is a drug that relieves pain) means actively to cause intense pain but is used only passively in the NT. All 4 NT uses are by Dr Luke (Lk 2:48, Lk 16:24, 25+ = "agony", Acts 20:38+) . **Odunao** means to experience intense physical pain (Lk 16:24, 25+ = **Hades**) or as in the present context to cause one to experience mental and/or spiritual pain manifest by being grieved, anxious, very worried, deeply distressed, consumed by grief. This Greek word was used in medical literature.

Looking (seeking) (2212)(**zeteo**) implies giving attention and priority to and deliberately pursuing after. **Vincent** comments that "Mary is going over in mind the process of the search."

> **Luke** frequently uses **zeteo** - Luke 2:48; 5:18; 6:19; 9:9; 11:9; 16; 24; 29; 12:29; 31; 13:6; 24; 15:8; 17:33; 19:3; 10; 47; 20:19; 22:2; 6; 24:5; Acts 9:11; 10:19; 21; 13:8; 11; 16:10; 17:5; 27; 21:31; 27:30

Luke 2:49 And He said to them, "Why is it that you were looking for Me? Did you not know that I had to be in My Father's house?"

KJV And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?

JESUS PRONOUNCEMENT:
HIS BUSINESS IN HIS HOUSE

And He said to them - This is the first saying of Jesus that is preserved in the NT.

Why is it that you were looking for Me - "Jesus' first question means, "Why didn't you know where to look?"

A T Robertson - The first words of Jesus preserved to us. This crisp Greek idiom without copula expresses the boy's amazement that his parents should not know that there was only one possible place in Jerusalem for him.

Steven Cole - Jesus here sets the priority of His commitment to the Heavenly Father even above His love for His parents. While we must love our family members, love for Jesus must take precedence if a conflict arises (Luke 14:26+ = "If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple."). (Luke 2:39-52 Imitating Jesus)

Did you not know that I had to be (dei = MUST BE) **in My Father's house?"** (the Temple) - The indicative mood is used with ouk (negation) in a question expecting a positive answer. Compare Lk 1:32+ "the Son of the Most High" and Lk 1:35+ "the Son of God." Jesus knew who He was even at this early age, and He also knew the identity of His true Father, God the Father. The glory (Shekinah) had departed prior to the sacking of Solomon's Temple by the Babylonians in 586BC (see departure of the glory) and was absent from the rebuilt Temple after the 70 year exile. The Shekinah glory was also absent from Herod's ornate Temple. But when Jesus, Himself the glorious One (Jn 1:14 even as a child), entered into His Father's house, the glory had, in a sense at least for a short time, returned. **Had to be** is dei (to be necessary) in the present tense indicating this was a continual necessity for Jesus.

> **THOUGHT** - Dear child of God, are you about your Father's business? Jesus knew His special mission, do you know yours? Remember that when he saved you, He gave you a "mission" Paul writing that "we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them." (Eph 2:10+). Are you walking in those good works (See "**Good Deeds**")? Don't waste your time or your life, playing the game of "trivial pursuit!"

A T Robertson adds that this statement by Jesus reflects the "Messianic consciousness of the necessity (that had been) laid on Him. Jesus often uses dei (must) about His work. Of all the golden dreams of any boy of twelve here is the greatest."

John MacArthur comments that Jesus' having to be present in His Father's house "is not only the crux of the passage, but also expresses the definitive reality of Christian theology. This statement is the first time in Scripture that any individual claimed God as his personal Father. The Jews viewed God as the Father of all in a creative sense, and the Father of Israel in a national sense. But no one had the audacity to claim God as his Father in a personal, intimate sense, because of the profound implications of such a claim. In this confession, Jesus made it clear that His first priority was to do the will of His heavenly Father. He also lifted Himself above the human realm. He was not in the ultimate sense Joseph's son, or Mary's son; He was the eternal Son of God, who came down from heaven (John 3:13; 6:38, 42). As such, He was under the authority of His heavenly Father, not His earthly parents." (See Luke Commentary)

Henry Alford - Up to this time Joseph had been so called ("father") by the holy child Himself; but from this time never." (Luke 2 Commentary)

Moody Bible Commentary - Other than this instance of "divine precociousness" Luke indicated that Jesus' growth and development were completely normal, except for the grace (Lk 2:40b) and favor (Lk 2:52) He enjoyed from God. (See The Moody Bible Commentary)

Robert Stein explains why they "**did...not know**" - Why were Joseph and Mary surprised by this incident in light of the miraculous announcement of Jesus' birth (Lk 1:26–38), the angelic message (Lk 2:1–20), and the prophetic pronouncements (Lk 2:21–40)? Mary, despite all these indicators, seems to have been uncomprehending of just who her son really was. Such a failure to understand is also found in the disciples (cf. Lk 9:44–45; 18:31–34; 24:25–26). We should remember, however, that some twelve years had transpired between this event and what had preceded. In the meantime the lack of other stories like this suggests that Jesus' "silent years" were quite normal. After over a decade of normalcy the supernatural nature of their son and his destiny broke in on them again. As a result they were surprised and once more needed to reflect on these things (2:19, 51). Also possible is that the confusion of Jesus' parents here involved not so much the identity of their son, i.e., his divine sonship, but rather how his sonship

was manifesting itself. (See Luke: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition)

I must (dei) **be** - Speaks of a divine necessity.

Wiersbe - The word **must** was often on our Lord's lips: "I must preach" (Luke 4:43); "The Son of man must suffer" (Luke 9:22); the Son of Man "must be lifted up" (John 3:14). Even at the age of twelve, Jesus was moved by a divine compulsion to do the Father's will. (Scroll to page 146 of BEC)

Marvin Vincent on **I had to be** ("must" - KJV) - Literally means it is necessary or it behooves. A word often used by Jesus concerning His own appointed work, and expressing both the inevitable fulfillment of the divine counsels and the absolute constraint of the principle of duty upon himself. See Matt. 16:21; 26:54; Mark 8:31; Luke 4:43; 9:22; 13:33; 24:7, 26, 46; John 3:14; 4:4; 12:34.

Steven Cole points out that "The word translated **had** to be means **it is necessary**. It is a term Luke often uses to set forth Jesus' mission: "I **MUST** preach the kingdom of God to the other cities also, for I was sent for this purpose" (Lk 4:43). "The Son of Man **MUST** suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised up on the third day" (Lk 9:22). (See also, Lk 13:33 [go to Jerusalem] Lk 17:25 [suffer] Lk 19:5 [remain with Zaccheus] Lk 22:37 [be numbered with transgressors] Lk 24:7 [suffer, die, be raised] Lk 24:26 [suffer and come into glory] and, Lk 24:44 [Scripture about Him must be fulfilled].) This repeated word shows that Jesus did not come to do His own will, but the will of the Father who sent Him. Even so, if Jesus has redeemed us, we are not our own. He saved us for a purpose, and He gifted us so that we can spend our lives serving and glorifying Him. While not all are called into the pastorate or to go to a foreign culture with the gospel, every Christian is called to serve God in some capacity. If you don't have a sense of mission and you are not engaged in fulfilling that mission, you are probably living for yourself. But the Bible calls us to no longer live for ourselves, but for Him who died and rose on our behalf (2 Cor. 5:15). We should imitate Jesus in our unswerving commitment to God's purpose above all else." (Luke 2:39-52 Imitating Jesus)

My Father's house - This reads Literally, *in the things of my Father*. "When the Boy first became conscious of his peculiar relation to the Father in heaven we do not know. But he has it now at twelve and it will grow within Him through the years ahead in Nazareth." (A T Robertson) **Barton** adds that "This is the first mention of Jesus' awareness that he was God's Son (he called God "my Father") and that he had special work to do (he said I "must" be here). (Ibid) **Henry Morris** comments that " - As a boy, Jesus had already become a deep student of the Scriptures, more than able to hold His own with the learned "doctors" (Rabbis). His parents, knowing His interests as well as His divine mission, should have known where He would be--hence His gentle question. The reference to "His Father's business" indicates that, even in His humanity, at the key age of twelve years, He already had begun to realize His identity and purpose."

Marvin Vincent comments that " Mary's question was not as to what her son had been doing, but as to where he had been. Jesus, in effect, answers, "*Where is a child to be found but in his Father's house*?""

NET Note probably refers to the necessity of Jesus being involved in the instruction about God, given what he is doing. The most widely held view today takes this as a reference to the temple as the Father's house. Jesus is saying that his parents should have known where he was."

J C Ryle - He had a Father in heaven, and that this heavenly Father's work demanded His first attention. The expression is one that ought to sink down deeply into the hearts of all Christ's people. It should supply them with a mark at which they should aim in daily life, and a test by which they should try their habits and conversation. It should quicken them when they begin to be slothful. It should check them when they feel inclined to go back to the world.—"Are we about our Father's business? Are we walking in the steps of Jesus Christ?"—Such questions will often prove very humbling, and make us ashamed of ourselves. But such questions are eminently useful to our souls. Never is a Church in so healthy a condition as when its believing members aim high, and strive in all things to be like Christ. (Luke 2)

I had to be (**must** = KJV) (1163)(**dei** from **deo** = to bind or tie objects together, put in prison and also root of **doulos**, bond-servant) refers to what is not optional but needful (binding) out of intrinsic necessity or inevitability. **Dei** refers to inward constraint which is why it is often translated "**must**". **Dei** describes that which is under the necessity of happening or which must necessarily take place, and as stated above, conveys a sense of inevitability. To express the sense of necessity **dei** is translated "one ought", "one should", "one has to" or "one must".

> **Luke** uses **dei** frequently (some 40x out of a total of 101 NT uses) in both his Gospel and the book of Acts - Luke 2:49; 4:43; 9:22; 11:42; 12:12; 13:14; 16; 33; 15:32; 17:25; 18:1; 19:5; 21:9; 22:7; 37; 24:7; 26; 44. Acts 1:16; 21; 3:21; 4:12; 5:29; 9:6; 16; 14:22; 15:5; 16:30; 17:3; 19:21; 36; 20:35; 23:11; 24:19; 25:10; 24; 26:9; 27:21; 24; 26

ILLUSTRATION - An Irish legend tells of a king who disguised himself and went into the banquet hall of one of his barons. He was

escorted to a lowly place among the throng who sat at the feast. The brilliance of his conversation and the nobility of his manner soon attracted the attention of someone with sufficient authority to escort him to a higher table. The same thing occurred once more, and soon he was seated among the nobles of the land. After a display of great wisdom, one of the lords spoke out, “In truth, sir, you speak like a king. If you are not a king, you deserve to be.” Then the king removed his disguise and took his rightful place among his subjects. That is what should have happened when the Lord Jesus Christ came to this earth. Although he was “disguised” as a lowly carpenter from Nazareth, He was the King of kings and Lord of lords. But His subjects were so blinded by their own pride and sin that they were not willing to bow before Him, even though He stated repeatedly and gave sufficient proof that He was the eternal God come down to redeem them. (Adapted from Donald Barn-house, Let Me Illustrate [Revellj pp. 180, 181.) Do you recognize Jesus as the Son of God, as your Savior and Lord? If not, ask God to open your eyes to who Jesus is so that you can receive Him. If He is your Savior, imitate Him in spiritual growth, in routine faithfulness, and in commitment to God’s purpose for your life. (Luke 2:39-52 Imitating Jesus)

Oswald Chambers - Prayer In The Father's House "Wist ye not that I must be in My Father's house?" Luke 2:49

Our Lord's childhood was not immature man-hood; our Lord's childhood is an eternal fact. Am I a holy innocent child of God by identification with my Lord and Saviour? Do I look upon life as being in my Father's house? Is the Son of God living in His Father's house in me?

The abiding Reality is God, and His order comes through the moments. Am I always in contact with Reality, or do I only pray when things have gone wrong, when there is a disturbance in the moments of my life? I have to learn to identify myself with my Lord in holy communion in ways some of us have not begun to learn as yet. "I must be about My Father's business" - live the moments in My Father's house.

Narrow it down to your individual circumstances - are you so identified with the Lord's life that you are simply a child of God, continually talking to Him and realizing that all things come from His hands? Is the Eternal Child in you living in the Father's house? Are the graces of His ministering life working out through you in your home, in your business, in your domestic circle? Have you been wondering why you are going through the things you are? It is not that you have to go through them, it is because of the relation into which the Son of God has come in His Father's providence in your particular sainthood. Let Him have His way, keep in perfect union with Him.

The vicarious life of your Lord is to become your vital simple life; the way He worked and lived among men must be the way He lives in you.

Luke 2:50 But they did not understand the statement which He had made to them.

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They did not understand (suniemi) **the statement** (rhema) - The question could be asked why they did not understand, especially given the fact that they had both received angelic messages and Mary had been clearly told He was the Son of God.

> And Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin? And the angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy offspring shall be called the **Son of God.** (Luke 1:34-35-note)

A T Robertson - Even Mary with all her previous preparation and brooding was not equal to the dawning of the Messianic consciousness in her boy. “My Father is God,” Jesus had virtually said, “and I must be in His house.” Bruce observes that a new era has come when Jesus calls God “Father,” not Despotes (Master, Lord). “Even we do not yet fully understand” (Bruce) what Jesus the boy here said.

John MacArthur - They understood that He was the Messiah, the Son of David, conceived in a virgin’s womb by the power of the Holy Spirit. But the full meaning of His divine sonship eluded them. This would not be the last time that His followers would fail to grasp what Jesus was saying (cf. Luke 9:44–45; 18:34; John 10:6; 12:16). (See Luke Commentary)

Robert Stein on **they did not understand the statement** (rhema) In the past attempts have been made to preserve Mary, the mother of God’s Son, from this lack of understanding; but such attempts do violence to the text and lose sight of the contrast between Jesus’ wisdom and understanding as God’s Son (Lk 2:40, 47, 52) and his parents’ lack of understanding. Similar misunderstandings occurred throughout Jesus’ ministry (cf. Lk 4:22; 9:45; 18:34; 24:5–7, 25–26, 45) and would only be remedied by the resurrection. (See Luke: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition)

NET Note - This was the first of many times those around Jesus did not understand what he was saying at the time (Lk 9:45; 10:21–24; 18:34).

Darrell Bock notes that "A couple of considerations help set the context for their failure to understand.**First**, there is no biblical evidence that Jesus did anything to verify or demonstrate his special identity and calling up to this point in His life. By all appearances He lived an entirely normal childhood, performing no miracles that would signal his supernatural identity. Thus it is reasonable to see Mary and Joseph being caught off guard by Jesus' actions and words in this event, for these would represent something like a debut for him. **Second**, the common Jewish preconception about the Messiah did not include His being divine. To speak of God as "**Father**" was considered too intimate for most Jews, so Jesus' talk about the temple being his **Father's house**" would have confused and possibly alarmed Mary and Joseph—hence Luke's statement about their not understanding." (See The Gospels and Acts)

Understand (4920)(**suniemi** from **sun/syn** = with + **hiemi** = send; Related noun = **sunesis** which Luke used in Luke 2:47) literally means to send together or bring together. The idea is to put together "pieces of the puzzle" (so to speak) and to exhibit comprehension. **Suniemi** is the ability to understand concepts and see relationships between them and thus describes the exercise of the faculty of comprehension, intelligence, acuteness, shrewdness. Luke uses **suniemi** 7 times (out of 25 NT uses) Luke 2:50; 8:10; 18:34; 24:45, Acts 7:25; 28:26

Statement (4487)(**rhema** from verb **rheo** = to speak - to say, speak or utter definite words) refers to the spoken word, especially a word as uttered by a living voice. **Laleo** is another word translated speak but it refers only to uttering a sound whereas rheo refers to uttering a definite intelligible word. **Rhema** refers to any sound produced by the voice which has a definite meaning. It focuses upon the content of the communication. See Vincent's discussion of **rhema** in note on Luke 1:37.

Luke 2:51 And He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and He continued in subjection to them; and His mother treasured all these things in her heart.

- Luke 2 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

JESUS THE NAZARENE

And He went down with them and came to Nazareth (Nazaret) - The reverse of Lk 2:4 where "**Joseph went up**" to Bethlehem (2,543 ft above sea level [69 ft higher than nearby Jerusalem at 2,474 ft] which was a higher elevation than Nazareth - 1138 ft above sea level). Jerusalem being elevated compared to most of Israel leads to the frequent description of those leaving Jerusalem as **going down** (Mk 3:22, Lk 10:30, Acts 11:27+, Acts 25:7) and those coming as **going up** (Mt 20:17, Mk 10:32, Lk 18:31-33, John 2:13, 7:8, Acts 15:2, 21:12, 25:9, Gal 1:17).

See location of Nazareth on Map - this map also shows Galilee. See Gabriel announces to Mary that she will bear a Son

His heavenly Sonship didn't excuse him from his earthly Sonship!
-- Brian Bell

He continued in subjection (hupotasso) **to them** - **Vincent** notes that "The participle and finite verb, denoting habitual, continuous subjection. "Even before, he had been subject to them; but this is mentioned now, when it might seem that he could by this time have exempted himself. Not even to the angels fell such an honor as to the parents of Jesus" (Bengel). Compare Heb. 1:4–8."

MacArthur - His relationship with His heavenly Father did not yet abrogate His responsibility to obey His earthly parents. His obedience to the fifth commandment was an essential part of Jesus' perfect obedience to the law of God. (See Luke Commentary)

A T Robertson - He continued subject unto them, this wondrous Boy who really knew more than parents and rabbis, this gentle, obedient, affectionate Boy. The next eighteen years at Nazareth (Luke 3:23) He remained growing into manhood and becoming the carpenter of Nazareth (Mark 6:3) in succession to **Joseph** (Matt. 13:55) who is mentioned here for the last time. Who can tell the wistful days when Jesus waited at Nazareth for the Father to call Him to His Messianic task?

> **THOUGHT** - What an example Jesus gives all of us as **Rich Cathers** explains "We all have places in our lives where we need to learn the lesson of submission. None of us are above learning this. Even Jesus had to learn to submit....Jesus' ultimate lesson of submission was yielding to the Father's will by going to the cross and dying for us (Lk 22:41-44+). But I think it all started here, at home. I think there's going to be a relationship

between learning to submit in your earthly, human relationships, and learning to submit to God. If you have difficulty submitting to a person, you're going to have trouble submitting to God. " (Sermon Notes)

Rich Cathers quips that "Sometimes people will want to quote Jesus saying , "I must be about my Father's business" (Luke 2:49KJV) as an excuse for not doing what they are asked to do. Though it was Jesus' reason, notice that He too was subject to His parents." (Sermon Notes)

His mother treasured (diatereo) **all these things** (rhema) **in her heart** - Compare Luke 2:19+ - "But Mary treasured all these things, pondering them in her heart."

MacArthur on **treasured all these things in her heart** - Here was the first fulfillment of Simeon's warning to Mary in Lk 2:35, as she treasured all these things in her heart. She had much to think about as she pondered Jesus' amazing reply. Mary had to realize that her Son was her Savior, and she would have to exchange her parental authority over Him for His divine authority over her. The sword would pierce her heart again later in her last appearance in Luke's gospel (8:19–21), when Jesus distanced Himself from His human relationship with her and His siblings (cf. 11:27–28). Ultimately, the sword would pierce Mary's heart as she watched her Son suffer and die on the cross. (See Luke Commentary)

Nazareth (3478) (**Nazara or Nazaret or Nazareth**) is the name of the home town of Jesus fulfilling OT prophecies (not a single prophecy) that Jesus "shall be called a Nazarene." It was so obscure that Nathaniel asked "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" Yes, not just any "good thing" but the greatest Person in time and eternity, the God-Man, Christ Jesus. Our Lord was called "**Jesus of Nazareth**" seven times in the NT (Matt. 26:71; Mk. 1:24; Lk. 4:34; 18:37; Jn. 1:45; Acts 10:38; 26:9) Although Nazareth was small, it did have a Jewish synagogue and was the site of Jesus "inauguration message" in Lk 4:16. There are no uses in the Septuagint (see The Puzzling Problem of Nazareth)

Continued in subjection to (5293)(**hupotasso** from **hupó** = under + **tasso** = arrange in orderly manner) means literally to place under in an orderly fashion. The only other uses of hupotasso by Luke describing spirits (demons) subject to the disciples - Lk 10:17 and Lk 10:20. Notice the present tense (continually) and passive voice (under the authority of his earthly parents) which serves to underscore the possible misinterpretation that Jesus had been disobedient or rebellious toward his parents in the incident in the Temple, for this would have been tantamount to sin (cf Eph 6:1-2, Read Dt 21:18,19 - This discipline of course Joseph did not do with Jesus which also underscores the fact that He was sinless in this vignette). **Henry Morris** - This is the first use in the New Testament of the Greek word (**hupotasso**) here translated "subject unto," also frequently translated "submit to" or "be obedient to." Thus, when we are told to "be subject one to another" (1 Peter 5:5) and "to every ordinance of man" (1 Peter 2:13) and other such humbling acts, it helps to recall that this definitive act of submission was by Christ Himself.

Treasured (1301)(**diatereo** from **dia** - through + **tereo** - watch over, guard) means to keep carefully. In the present context the idea is that these words of are to be carefully remembered. In Acts **diatereo** speaks of moral abstinence, to keep oneself free from, wholly abstain from or avoid something (blood, things strangled, fornication). **A T Robertson** on **diatereo** - She kept thoroughly ([dia]) all these recent sayings (or things, [rhēmata]). In Lk 2:19 [suntereo] is the word used of Mary after the shepherds left. These she kept pondering and comparing all the things. Surely she has a full heart now. Could she foresee how destiny would take Jesus out beyond her mother's reach? **Marvin Vincent** on **diatereo** - The preposition dia, through, indicates close, faithful, persistent keeping, ***through*** all the circumstances which might have weakened the impression of the events. The only other NT use of **diatereo** is also by Luke - Acts 15:29+ that you abstain from things sacrificed to idols and from blood and from things strangled and from fornication; if you **keep** (present tense = continually) yourselves free from such things, you will do well. Farewell."

Compare

> Luke 1:66+ All who heard them kept them in mind, saying, "What then will this child turn out to be?" For the hand of the Lord was certainly with him.
>
> Luke 2:19+ But Mary treasured all these things, pondering them in her heart.

Diatereo is used 24x in 23v in the Septuagint - Gen. 17:9-10+ (keeping covenant); Ge 37:11; Ex. 2:9; 9:16; 12:6; 34:7; Num. 18:7; 28:2; Deut. 7:8; 33:9; Ps. 12:6-7; Prov. 21:23; 22:12; Isa. 56:2

Diatereo is used in Ge 37:11 of Jacob with a similar sense as here with Mary - "His brothers were jealous of him, but his father **kept** the saying (What saying? Ge 37:6-10 - they would bow down to Joseph) in mind."

In Psalm 12:7 of keeping the afflicted in Psalm 12:5 "You, O LORD, **will keep** them; You will preserve him from this generation forever."

NET Note - The third person plural pronominal suffix on the verb is masculine, referring back to the "oppressed" and "needy" in Ps 125 (both of those nouns are plural in form), suggesting that the verb means "protect" here. The suffix **does not** refer to

אֲמָרוֹת (’imarot, “words”) in Ps 12:6, because that term is feminine gender.

BEING YOUNG - If you are twelve years old, one of your hardest jobs in life is obeying the adults who run your home. They are called parents, and they always think they know best. It’s very tough for a twelve-year-old to keep from taking over the family and running it according to intelligent twelve-year-old standards. But when the temptation strikes, remember Jesus… . Even though he knew his real Father, he did not reject his earthly parents. He went back to Nazareth with them and lived under their authority for another eighteen years. God’s people do not despise human relationships or family responsibilities. If the Son of God obeyed his human parents, how much more should you honor your family members! (Life Application Commentary)

Luke 2:52 And Jesus kept increasing in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.

- Luke 2 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

> **AMP** And Jesus increased in wisdom (in broad and full understanding) and in stature *and* years, and in favor with God and man.
>
> **YLT** and Jesus was advancing in wisdom, and in stature, and in favour with God and men.

SUMMARY OF JESUS BOYHOOD IN NAZARETH

This passage summarizes Jesus' life from **boyhood** to **baptism** (Lk 3:21,22+, Mt 3:13-16,17). We see a similar pattern with John the Baptist (Lk 1:80) and Samuel (1 Sa 2:21, 26).

> The LORD visited Hannah; and she conceived and gave birth to three sons and two daughters. And the boy Samuel grew before the LORD. 26 Now the boy Samuel **was growing in stature and in favor both with the LORD and with men**.

We see a similar statement regarding the development of Jesus' character in Hebrews

> Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered. And having been made perfect, He became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation, (Hebrews 5:8-9+).

Matthew Poole adds that “If any ask how He who was the eternal wisdom of the Father, who is the only one God, increased in wisdom, they must know that all things in Scripture which are spoken of Christ, are not spoken with respect to His entire Person, but with respect to the one or other nature united in that Person. He increased in wisdom, as He did in age or stature, with respect to His human, not His divine nature. And as God daily magnified His grace and favor towards him, so He gained Him favor with the unrighteous and people of Galilee.”

Jesus kept increasing (prokopto) **in wisdom** (sophia) **- "**The imperfect tense suggests something of a progressive force to the verb." (NET Note) **A T Robertson** adds "imperfect active, He kept cutting his way forward as through a forest or jungle as pioneers did. He kept growing in stature (hēlikia] may mean age, as in Lk 12:25, but stature here) and in wisdom (more than mere knowledge). His physical, intellectual, moral, spiritual development was perfect. “At each stage he was perfect for that stage” (Plummer).

Brian Bell - Dean Farrar on **increasing** (prokopto) “The word used here is derived from pioneers, cutting down trees in the pathway of an advancing army.” Thayer adds it “means to lengthen out by hammering as a smith forges metals.” The meaning then is “to chop forward, to beat forward, to hack on.” The idea then is strenuous activity rather than passive development

Henry Morris (increased in wisdom) - Jesus is God (John 1:1) and God is omniscient, so how could He '**increase in wisdom**?" This question points up the mystery of His divine/human nature. He was fully God, yet fully man (apart from sin), and this mystery is simply beyond human comprehension. We are told that Christ "emptied Himself" (the essence of the Greek term translated "made Himself of no reputation" in Philippians 2:6), thereby implying a voluntary setting aside of His "omni" attributes in order to take "the form of a servant." In the records of His life and teachings, there is abundant evidence of His deity, including His own claims (John 8:12; 11:26). At the same time, there is abundant evidence of His true humanity, including the fact that He "increased in wisdom" as He also grew in stature. Every act and teaching must be carefully studied in context to sort this out in each instance.

Wiersbe - Since Jesus “increased in wisdom” (Luke 2:52), we wonder how much He understood God’s divine plan at that time. We must not assume that at the age of twelve He was omniscient. Certainly He grew in His comprehension of those mysteries as He

communed with His Father and was taught by the Spirit. One thing is sure: Joseph and Mary didn't understand! This was a part of the pain from "the sword" that Simeon had promised her (Luke 2:35), and no doubt it happened again and again as the boy matured. Years later, during His ministry, our Lord's family didn't understand Him (Luke 8:19–21; John 7:1–5). (Scroll to page 146 of BEC)

Criswell - Luke indicates that Jesus grew (1) intellectually, (2) physically, (3) spiritually, and (4) socially. Thus He grew and matured like any other person.

Steven Cole - In early church history, several different heresies denied the true humanity of Jesus. Some said that He was just a spirit or that He seemed human, but was not actually so. The apostle John was battling some such heresy when he wrote that his own hands had handled Jesus and that "every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God" (1 John 1:1; 4:2). WE NEED TO BE CAREFUL IN EMPHASIZING JESUS' DEITY NOT TO SLIGHT HIS HUMANITY. (Luke 2:39-52 Imitating Jesus)

In favor (charis) **with God and men** - In grace and is speaking of His human maturity. "This is ideal manhood to have the favour of God and men." (**A T Robertson**)

Darrell Bock asks "How could Jesus have increased in favor with God if he was in fact God the Son? Does God the Father come to love God the Son more over time? Some point to this verse as evidence that Jesus is not divine, or that he became divine only after the Father adopted him once he had earned that right.We must first understand that Jesus was fully human, and thus it is appropriate for NT authors to speak of him in ways that fit normal human experience. Luke did this here, describing Jesus' growth as a genuine human. Second, by and large the Synoptic Gospels differ from the Gospel of John in their approach to announcing Jesus' divinity. Matthew, Mark, and Luke all reveal the depth of Jesus' person gradually. They do not announce that Jesus is God at the start as John's Gospel does (John 1:1-18). So we see the fullness of Jesus' person unfold over time as his words and actions reveal who he is, while his birth, as narrated in Matthew and Luke, gives a hint of where things are headed by pointing to his unique conception and by making it clear Jesus is sent by God and is the promised one. The more gradual unveiling in the Synoptic Gospels fits with the experience many people around Jesus would have had as they came to realize his full identity over the course of years." (See The Gospels and Acts)

John MacArthur - The question arises as to why Jesus needed to live all those years, instead of simply coming to earth, dying as a substitute for sin, rising from the dead, and ascending back to heaven. The answer is that He had to live a perfectly righteous life and "fulfill all righteousness" (Matt. 3:15), and thus prove to be the perfect sacrifice to take the place of sinners (1 Peter 3:18). Only then could His righteousness be imputed to believers and their sins placed on Him. When Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 5:21 that God made "Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him," he expressed both aspects of Christ's substitutionary atonement. Not only did Jesus bear believers' sins, God also imputed His righteousness to them. To put it another way, God treated Christ as if He had lived believers' sinful lives, and believers as if they had lived His perfectly righteous life. Jesus lived a perfectly righteous life from childhood through adulthood, so that His righteous life could be imputed to believers. Salvation comes only to those who do not have a "righteousness of [their] own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith" (Phil. 3:9). (See context Luke Commentary)

Brian Bell - Jesus perfectly balanced – at 12 & throughout life. Wisdom – Intellectually! Stature – Physically! Favor with God – Spiritually! [He both communed personally w/His Father; & never forsook the gathering together of the brethren!] Favor with men – Socially! [Character is what we are; Reputation is what others think of us] – Both must be in line w/Christian profession.

Adrian Rogers says the best definition of grace that he has ever heard is that God's grace is "both the**desire** and the **ability** to do the will of God." In a sense this was true of Jesus the Man Who lived His earthly life in dependence on His Father and the filling of the Spirit (cf first description of Jesus as He began His ministry "full of the Spirit" = Lk 4:1+), thus giving every son of Adam a pattern that they could seek to follow when they became believers in Christ.

> **THOUGHT** - Jesus the Man shows us the example we are to imitate (1 John 2:6+, 1 Pe 2:21+, 1 Cor 11:1+). Below is a poem by Marlene Evans that is in the form of a prayer we could all benefit from praying...
>
> O Lord! Help me to be …
> Firm but not harsh;
> Realistic but not skeptical;
> Scheduled but not rigid;
> Pure but not proud;
> Close-mouthed but not unfriendly;
> Appropriate but not stiff;
> Funny but not frivolous;
> Flexible but not scatterbrained;

Humble but not pious;
Kind but not compromising;
Dependable but not dull;
Decisive but not stubborn;
Persistent but not needling;
Precise but not picky;
Simple but not foolish;
Demanding but not intolerant;
Thorough but not unkind;
Human but not worldly;
Spiritual but not impractical;
Generous but not irresponsible;
Enthusiastic but not "hyper;"
Honest but not brutal;
Fair but not unloving;
Proper but not unreal;
Confident but not snobbish;
Bold but not brazen;
Busy but not harried;
Active but not shallow;
Deep but not dry;
Wise but not intimidating;
Intense but not forbidding;
Empathetic but not uncontrolled;
Forgiving but not naive;
Sympathetic but not pitying;
Helpful but not condescending;
Penitent but not paralyzed;
Organized but not bossy;
Spontaneous but not inconsistent.

Lord, I guess I'm asking to grow in favor with God and man. I am asking you to help me become a balanced person. Amen. (Marlene Evans)

Related Resource -

- The Holy Spirit-Walking Like Jesus Walked!

Kept increasing (advancing, making progress) (4298)(**prokopto** from **pró** = before or forward + **kópto** = cut) means literally to cut forward or cut down in front. The idea is to remove the obstacles from a road so that straight and uninterrupted progress is possible.

Comparing **prokopto** to the verb **auxano**, with auxano the growth is caused by factors outside oneself or by the element of life placed there by God Himself, whereas with prokopto the advance is by one's conscious effort. Thus the noun form auxesis is growth or increase brought about by God, while prokope, is a conscious advancement through exertion.

Wisdom (4678)(**sophia**) is the ability to judge correctly and to follow the best course of action, based on knowledge and understanding.

Favor (5485)(**charis**) means grace, God's provision (ability, power, enabling) for living a supernatural life.

Steven Cole outliens FOUR THINGS ABOUT SPIRITUAL GROWTH:

(1) SPIRITUAL GROWTH TAKES TIME, BUT WE MUST ACTIVELY ENGAGE IN THE PROCESS.

The fact that Jesus was growing in wisdom and still increasing more in wisdom (Luke 2:40, 52) shows that it is a lifelong process. But it is not automatic. Jesus hungered and thirsted after such wisdom so much that He set aside some of the "normal" things children like to do so that He could learn the Scriptures. Joseph and Mary also show us that growth is a process. They did not yet understand exactly who Jesus was, but they were growing in that understanding. The question you must ask yourself is, "What am I doing to grow in the things of

God?" Do you have a regular time in His Word and in prayer? Are you reading solid books that instruct you in the faith? Do you engage in spiritual discussions with other like-minded believers?

(2) SPIRITUAL GROWTH INVOLVES AN ACTIVE INTEREST IN THE WORD OF GOD.

Think of all the interesting things in this bustling capital city that could have captivated the interest of a 12-year-old boy from the country. He could have been in the marketplace, watching the vendors haggling over prices with their customers. He could have been fascinated with the architecture of the palace and temple, or with the great walls of that ancient city. He could have joined with other boys in pretending that they were the great generals, defending those walls. He could have explored Hezekiah's famous water tunnel, or any number of other interesting historical sites. He could have been watching the throngs of interesting people. Yet his parents found Him in the temple with the teachers, listening, asking intelligent questions, and giving answers that displayed unusual understanding (2:46, 47). If you want to grow in the things of God, like Jesus you must have a thirst for spiritual truth, demonstrated by listening to those who teach the Word, asking questions, and interacting on these great truths.

(3) SPIRITUAL GROWTH SHOULD BE FOCUSED IN TWO DIRECTIONS: TOWARD GOD AND TOWARD OTHERS.

Jesus grew "in favor with God and men" (2:52). These directions reflect the two great commandments, which are summaries of the two tables of the Ten Commandments, to love God with your total being, and to love your neighbor as yourself. In his introduction to Calvin's Institutes, John McNeill quotes A. Mitchell Hunter who says, "Piety was the keynote of his character. He was a God-possessed soul. Theology was no concern to him as a study in itself; he devoted himself to it as a framework for the support of all that religion meant to him." McNeill goes on to observe that "in Calvin's pages we are everywhere confronting God, not toying with ideas or balancing opinions about him" (John Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion, ed. by John McNeill [Westminster], 1:lii). Calvin rightly saw sound theology as the necessary foundation, but he argued that such doctrine "must enter our heart and pass into our daily living, and so transform us into itself that it may not be unfruitful for us" (ibid., 3.6.4). Always study the Word with a view to knowing and loving God and loving others.

(4) SPIRITUAL GROWTH CAN GET OFF TRACK IF WE ARE NOT ON GUARD.

Here I am not looking at the example of Jesus, but at Joseph and Mary. They both meant well when they supposed that Jesus was with them in the caravan, but they were mistaken. And, neither of them understood Jesus' gentle words of correction. This shows us that even godly people who mean well can be mistaken. Joseph and Mary's failure to grasp the nature of Jesus' mission and calling will later be matched by the disciples, who did not understand the necessity of the cross. This shows that we all must maintain teachable hearts and be willing to change our views when we have gotten off track. I regret that I used to teach much of the self-esteem errors that currently flood the church. God used Calvin's Institutes to show me where I was wrong. Joseph and Mary were humble enough to receive correction from their 12-year-old Son. We must be teachable enough to receive correction from wherever God kindly brings it. We should imitate Jesus in spiritual growth. (Imitating Jesus - Luke 2:39-52)

Hampton Keathley has a good reminder of the importance of passages such as Luke 2:52 - You may wonder how Jesus, who is eternal God, could grow in wisdom and in favor with God and men. If He is perfect, why did He need to grow? Alfred Plummer explains (The Gospel According to St. Luke [Charles Scribner's Sons], p. 79): "At each stage He was perfect for that stage, but the perfection of a child is inferior to the perfection of a man; it is the difference between perfect innocence and perfect holiness." In His humanity, He submitted to His parents. Though in His deity Jesus knew all things, in His humanity He had to grow in godly wisdom and in understanding of His divine calling and mission. The point is, Jesus was truly human.

In early church history, several different heresies denied the true humanity of Jesus. Some said that He was just a spirit or that He seemed human, but was not actually so. The apostle John was battling some such heresy when he wrote that his own hands had handled Jesus and that "every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God" (1 John 1:1; 4:2). We need to be careful in emphasizing Jesus' deity not to slight His humanity. If Jesus was not fully human, then we do not have a Savior, since only a man can save humans from their sin. Nor would we have a Savior who can identify with our weaknesses.

Jesus was fully, truly God. This is the implication of Jesus' question to His parents. Mary has just mentioned how she and Jesus' father were anxiously looking for Him. In response, Jesus draws a gentle, but distinct, line between Joseph as His earthly father and God as His true Father. He is showing that the latter relationship has priority over the former. Plummer (pp. 77-78) comments,

> It is notable that the first recorded words of the Messiah are an expression of His Divine Sonship as man

> … These first recorded words are the kernel of the whole narrative, and the cause of its having been preserved. They must mean more than that Jesus is just a son of Abraham, and therefore has God as His Father. His parents would easily have understood so simple a statement as that.

Jesus' words confirm what the angel had told Mary, as recorded by Luke in 1:32, 35, that her child would be called "Son of the Most High," and that "the holy offspring shall be called the Son of God." This title was also affirmed at Jesus' baptism, when God's voice from heaven proclaimed, "You are My beloved Son, in You I am well-pleased" (Luke 3:22). Later Jesus' Jewish opponents understood His claim to have God as His Father to be a claim to equality with God, and in responding to them, Jesus clearly confirmed their understanding (John 5:18-47).

In our day, several prominent cults deny the true deity of Jesus. If He is not eternal God, we have no Savior, because His death on the cross had no merit beyond Himself. So we must affirm both the true humanity of Jesus (apart from sin) along with His true and undiminished deity. He is fully God and fully man in one unique Person. When He took on human flesh, He voluntarily laid aside the use of some of His divine attributes and took on the form of a servant for the sake of our salvation (Phil. 2:5-12). As a man, Jesus showed us how human life is to be lived in constant dependence on the Father and obedience to His will. The Jesus whom we should imitate is none other than the unique Son of God, the second Person of the Trinity in human flesh.

Related Resources:

- What is Docetism?
- What is Ebionism?
- What is the hypostatic union?
- Does Christ have two natures?
- What is Sabellianism?
- What is Arianism?

An Irish legend tells of a king who disguised himself and went into the banquet hall of one of his barons. He was escorted to a lowly place among the throng who sat at the feast. The brilliance of his conversation and the nobility of his manner soon attracted the attention of someone with sufficient authority to escort him to a higher table. The same thing occurred once more, and soon he was seated among the nobles of the land. After a display of great wisdom, one of the lords spoke out, "In truth, sir, you speak like a king. If you are not a king, you deserve to be." Then the king removed his disguise and took his rightful place among his subjects.

That is what should have happened when the Lord Jesus Christ came to this earth. Although he was "disguised" as a lowly carpenter from Nazareth, He was the King of kings and Lord of lords. But His subjects were so blinded by their own pride and sin that they were not willing to bow before Him, even though He stated repeatedly and gave sufficient proof that He was the eternal God come down to redeem them. (Adapted from Donald Barnhouse, Let Me Illustrate [Revell], pp. 180, 181.)

Do you recognize Jesus as the Son of God, as your Savior and Lord? If not, ask God to open your eyes to who Jesus is so that you can receive Him. If He is your Savior, imitate Him in spiritual growth, in routine faithfulness, and in commitment to God's purpose for your life.

Becoming - By Julie Ackerman Link I grew up in a small town. No famous people. No busy streets. Not much to do. Yet I've always been thankful for my quiet, uncomplicated upbringing.

One evening when my husband and I were attending a business dinner, a new acquaintance asked me where I was from. When I told her, she said, "Aren't you embarrassed to admit it?"

Unsure whether or not she was joking, I simply said, "No."

Although my town was sometimes belittled for its lack of sophistication, it was not lacking in things that matter. My family was part of a church community in which parents brought up children "in the training and admonition of the Lord" (Eph. 6:4).

Jesus also grew up in a small town: Nazareth. A man named Nathanael asked, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" (John 1:46). Jesus proved that the answer is yes. Even though He grew up in an insignificant place, He was the most significant person in all of history.

Experience taught me and Scripture confirms that what matters is not *where* you grow up but *how* you grow up. Sometimes we feel insignificant compared to sophisticated people from prominent places. But we are significant to God, and He can make us strong in spirit and filled with His wisdom.

O teach me what it cost You, Lord,

To make a sinner whole;
And help me understand anew
The value of one soul! —Anon.

What we become is more important than where we're from. (Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved)