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Luke 2

(2019)

Bible House of Grace contains an easy to read New and Old Testament commentary full of spiritual treasures and pearls, complete with an insightful resource guide illuminating God's love and grace.



Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man, as to such I neither claim perfect knowledge or perfect understanding.

Luke 2.

Topics.

- Mary and Joseph go to Bethlehem.
- Mary gives birth to Jesus.
- An angel of the Lord appears to shepherds.
- Mary's child is circumcised and named Jesus.
- Simeon blesses Jesus and his mother Mary.
- Anna a prophetess speaks of Jesus.
- Jesus at twelve teaches in the temple.

The previous chapter: in the previous chapter Gabriel an angel of the LORD told Zechariah his wife Elizabeth will have a child and that he is to name him John. Gabriel told Mary the Holy Spirit will come upon her and her child will be called the Son of God. Mary went to the home of Elizabeth and Zechariah and at the end of her three months stay Elizabeth gave birth to John.

NOTE: for information concerning people, places and the meaning of words see Map Locations and People of the Bible, and Bible Dictionary on Website Menu.

LUKE 2:1-5

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Mary and Joseph go to Bethlehem.

- **Luke 2:1-5:** In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. ²This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³And all went to be registered, each to his own town. ⁴And 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, ⁵to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child.

Caesar: (Kaisar) was the common title of the Roman emperor i.e., Caesar Augustus (Luke 2:1), Caesar Tiberius (Luke 3:1) (Luke 20:22), Caesar Claudius (Acts 11:28) and Caesar Nero (Phil. 4:22).

Quirinius: (Cyrenius in KJV) was the Roman governor of Syria (Luke 2:2).

Syria: (modern day Iraq) is Samaria and in ancient times is generally called Assyria.

Joseph: the husband of Mary and foster father of Jesus dwelt at Nazareth at the time of Quirinius, but he belonged to the city of Bethlehem (the city of David).

Galilee: was (called Galilee of the nations) was the region on the west side of the Sea of Galilee and the place where Jesus lived. Much of Jesus public ministry took place along its north shore and many of his disciples were from here. After the resurrection Jesus appeared to his disciples here. The Sea of Galilee is also called, the Sea of Tiberias, the Lake of Gennesaret, the Sea of Chinnereth and the Sea of Cinneroth.

Nazareth: was a small insignificant town in lower Galilee in Palestine and the place where Joseph and Mary lived, it is where Gabriel appeared to Mary.

Mary and Josephs journey: Mary and Joseph travelled from Nazareth to Bethlehem where Jesus was born, while there Herod ordered the killing of babies that were less than two years old. Mary and Joseph were warned by an angel to flee into Egypt after some time in Egypt they returned to Nazareth to live. Jesus eventually left the city of Nazareth for a wider ministry. In Scripture Jesus is sometimes referred to as the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee. His enemies used the name Nazarene as a title of scorn, but used by His friends it had a friendly meaning. Today Nazareth is a large Arab city on south edge of Lower Galilee, 16 miles from the tip of the Sea of Galilee.

Judea: (Judah) is a Greco-Roman designation for the Palestine territory that succeeded David's kingdom of Judah west of the Dead Sea.

Bethlehem: means a house of dust it was southwest of Jerusalem in Palestine and the city of Joseph and birthplace of Jesus here Herod killed the children of Bethlehem.

Jewish Betrothal and Marriage: Jewish betrothal and marriage involves a double ceremony performed together in modern times, but separated in ancient times by a year. First is the betrothal (erusin), which includes the reading of the marriage contract (ketubba) and the giving of the ring with a declaration, "Behold you are consecrated to me by this ring according to the Law of Moses and Israel," accompanied by certain benedictions. This is followed by the marriage proper (nissu'in), consisting of the reciting of the seven marriage benedictions. The ceremony is performed under a huppa (a canopy) that symbolizes the bridal bower. There was a Jewish marriage betrothal contract written (called the Ketubba) to protect the bride and guarantee her certain future rights before her marriage and to make divorce a costly matter for the husband because Jewish religious law permitted a man to divorce his wife at any time for any reason. The conditions stipulated in the document also guarantee the woman's right to property when her husband died. A Jewish wife carefully preserved the ketubba, not as evidence of marriage but for its future value (Britannica Encyclopaedia).

Notice: Luke refers to Mary as Joseph's betrothed rather than his wife, this no-doubt is because they have not consummated the relationship.

In those days: the words, "In those days," (v1) refers to the days that Elizabeth gave birth to John the Baptist, Zechariah miraculously spoke and all of Judea was talking about John's birth (all recorded in the previous chapter).

LUKE 2:6-7

Mary gives Birth to Jesus.

- **Luke 2:6-7:** And while they (Joseph and Mary) were there, the time came for her to give birth. ⁷And 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.

A manger was a crib or stall used for food and an inn was a lodging-place that was used for breaking up a journey.

LUKE 2:8-14

An Angel of the Lord appears to Shepherds.

- **Luke 2:8-14:** And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with fear. ¹⁰And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy that will be for all the people.

¹¹For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord.

¹²And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.” ¹³And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, ¹⁴“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!”

The LORD’S religious leaders the chief priests, Pharisees and scribes were so full of pride, selfish ambition and hypocrisy that God had to send His angel to humble shepherds in a field. Priests serving in the temple may have expected an angel to appear, but shepherds out in an open field would certainly have not, this maybe one of the reasons they were fearful when God’s glory shone all about them and a multitude of angels appeared praising God.

Glory to God in the highest.: when the angels were praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest" (v14), they were not implying that the baby that had been born was God as some in Christian circles believe, rather they are praising God because the promised Messiah, Saviour and Son of God had been born. For further information see the title:

- Trinity (The Doctrine of the Trinity).
- In Various Topics (ON WEBSITE MENU).

LUKE 2:15-20

The Shepherds go to Bethlehem to find Jesus.

- **Luke 2:15-20:** 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." ¹⁶And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. ¹⁷And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. ¹⁸And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. ¹⁹But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. ²⁰And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

When the angel of the Lord appeared to the shepherds he told them that the Saviour Christ the Lord has been born, to confirm to the shepherds that what he said was true he told them that they would find a baby wrapped in swaddling clothes in a manger in Bethlehem the city of David (v11-12). Obviously, a manger was not the normal place for a baby to be born, so to see a new born baby in a manger especially after the angel had said they would, was clearly a sign that the child was the Christ and promised Saviour. The Shepherds find the baby exactly as the angel had said, they tell Mary and Joseph everything they had experienced, seen and heard and Mary treasured up what they said and pondered them in her heart.

LUKE 2:21-24

Mary’s Child is Circumcised and Named Jesus.

- **Luke 2:21-24:** 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. ²²And when the time came for their (Mary and Joseph) purification according to the Law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord ²³(as it is written in the Law of the Lord, "Every male who first opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord") ²⁴and to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the Law of the Lord, "a pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons."

Circumcision was a sign of the everlasting covenant between God and Abraham (Gen. 17:9-16) whoever was not circumcised broke God's covenant and was to be cut off from God's people (Gen. 17:12), the

ceremony also included naming the baby boy being circumcised. Female babies were named in the synagogue on the Sabbath following their birth when the father was called to recite the benedictions over the reading of Torah. Under the Mosaic Law purification was required for the birth of a child, the mother was to offer up her first-born child to the LORD and offer a sacrifice of a Lamb or if poor two turtledoves (Lev. 12:8) (Exod. 13:2) (Exod. 13:12).

LUKE 2:25-35

Simeon Blesses Jesus and his Mother Mary.

- **Luke 2:25-35:** 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. ²⁶And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. ²⁷And 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, ²⁸he took him up in his arms and blessed God and said, ²⁹"Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace, according to your word; ³⁰for my eyes have seen your salvation ³¹that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, ³²a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to your people Israel."³³And his father and his mother marvelled at what was said about him. ³⁴And Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, "Behold, this child is appointed for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign that is opposed ³⁵and a sword will pierce through your (Mary's) own soul also, so that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed."

The LORD revealed to this faithful elderly man that he would see the Christ before he died. Imagine for a moment his excitement when he saw Mary and Joseph walk into the temple with their new-born child, Simeon now fully content to go to his grave takes the baby in his arms and in absolute joy lifts him up toward heaven glorifying and praising God that he has seen His Salvation.

NOTICE: the Lord Jesus Christ is God's salvation, salvation is not in doctrine or intellectual knowledge, but in a person whose name is Jesus, Scripture in relationship to salvation is written to convict the reader of sin, bring them to repentance and turn them to the saving grace of God through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ the Son of God and Saviour of all who will come to him.

A light to the Gentiles: Simeon's words, "A light to the Gentiles and for glory to the people of Israel," once again is a beautiful example of the wonderful and majestic language of the Bible, the words, "A light to the Gentiles," takes the mind of the reader to a banquet table of prophetic Scripture written of Christ in the Old Testament one of which is recorded in the following words of Isaiah:

- Behold my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights; I have put my Spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the nations. ²He will not cry aloud or lift up his voice, or make it heard in the street; ³a bruised reed he will not break, and a faintly burning wick he will not quench; he will faithfully bring forth justice. ⁴He will not grow faint or be discouraged till he has established justice in the earth; and the coastlands wait for his law. ⁵Thus says God, the LORD, who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread out the earth and what comes from it, who gives breath to the people on it and spirit to those who walk in it: ⁶"I am the LORD; I have called you in righteousness; I will take you by the hand and keep you; I will give you as a covenant for the people, a *light for the nations* (also Isaiah 49:6-7) (Isaiah 42:1-6).

The phrase, "The fall and rising of many" (v34), refers to the fall of the religious leaders of Jesus generation the chief priests, Pharisees, scribes and the entire Levitical priesthood and to the rise of the Gentiles.

The expression, "For a sign that is opposed," (v34) refers to the following words of Isaiah:

- Thus, says the Lord God, "Behold, I am the one who has laid as a foundation in Zion, a stone, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone, of a sure foundation 'Whoever believes will not be in haste. He will become a sanctuary and a stone of offense and a rock of stumbling to both houses of Israel, a trap and a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem (Isaiah 28:16) (Isaiah 8:14)

In the following verse Paul says the same thing as Isaiah:

- The Household of God is built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief cornerstone.

And Peter writes:

- For it stands in Scripture: "Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious, and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.

And then adds:

- A stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense (i.e., a sign that is opposed) (Ephesians 2:20) (1 Peter 2:6, 8).

LUKE 2:36-38

Anna a prophetess speaks of Jesus.

- **Luke 2:36-38:** And there was a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was advanced in years, having lived with her husband seven years from when she was a virgin,³⁷ and then as a widow until she was eighty-four. She did not depart from the temple, worshiping with fasting and prayer night and day.³⁸ 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.

Virgin means chaste and chaste carries the idea of a pure woman, one that is restrained, modest, celibate, unused, unspoilt, spotless, stainless and pure. Scripture teaches that single people should not be having a sexual relationship until they are married, therefore when the Bible uses the word virgin in relationship to an unmarried woman it carries the concept of a woman that is chaste and not just young. When the word virgin is used figuratively in the Bible it implies faithfulness. From God's viewpoint there seems to be two groups of people, the entire nation Israel being the wider view and from them the faithful and those who return to the LORD in repentance. The faithful or repentant are called the remnant or the virgin daughter of Israel thus virgin carries the idea of being separated, faithful or the only people of God, it implies a people with only one God in contrast to people with many gods. The use of the word virgin when applied to the people of God carries a picture of God's people being chaste with one God contrasted to Satan's people fornicating with many gods.

Anna the prophetess: Anna means favoured, she was an elderly woman who had been married for seven years before her husband died. The phrase, "From the time she was a virgin," means she had been married to her husband from the time she was a young girl and that he was the only man she had been with. She was an eighty-four-year-old single woman who gave herself to the LORD by constantly offering praise and worship to him. Many older people may not be able to do a great deal of activity for the LORD, but like Anna they can delight and thrill the heart of God by spending their time in fellowship with Him. Anna in the temple testified of God to men and women who were waiting for the redemption of Jerusalem.

LUKE 2:39

Mary Joseph and Jesus return to Nazareth.

- **Luke 2:39:** And when they (Mary and Joseph) had performed everything according to the Law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth.

Mary Joseph and Jesus return to their own town Nazareth in Galilee.

LUKE 2:40-50

Jesus at Twelve Teaches in the Temple.

- **Luke 2:40-50:** And the child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom. And the favour of God was upon him. ⁴¹Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover. ⁴²And when he was twelve years old, they went up according to custom. ⁴³And when the feast was ended, as they were returning, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. His parents did not know it, ⁴⁴but supposing him to be in the group they went a day's journey, but then they began to search for him among their relatives and acquaintances, ⁴⁵and when they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem, searching for him. ⁴⁶After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. ⁴⁷And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. ⁴⁸And when his parents saw him, they were astonished. And his mother said to him, "Son, why have you treated us so? Behold, your father and I have been searching for you in great distress." ⁴⁹And he said to them, "Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" ⁵⁰And they did not understand the saying that he spoke to them.

The fact Luke says, Jesus grew in wisdom shows that he was not born with all wisdom. Jews from every nation would have been in the temple at this time as it was the annual celebration of the Passover Feast. Jesus at twelve knew who his true Father was. Telling Mary and Joseph that he must be in his Father's house puzzled his parents, showing that neither Mary or Joseph fully understood who Jesus was or his ultimate future; no-one did not even the apostles until after his death and resurrection.

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LUKE 2:51-52

Mary, Joseph and Jesus return to Nazareth.

- **Luke 2:51-52:** And he (Jesus) went down with them and came to Nazareth and was submissive to them. And his mother treasured up all these things in her heart. ⁵²And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favour with God and man.

Jesus obeyed his parents until the time of his ministry and grew in wisdom, notice Jesus not only grew in favour with God, but he grew in favour with men setting the example for all who belong to the family of God.

For further information see the titles:

- Virgin (The biblical meaning of Virgin).
- Virgin Birth and the Promised Seed of Abraham and David.
- Both titles are in Various Topics (ON WEBSITE MENU).

As the founder of Bible House of Grace, I would like to thank the many Christian scholars, commentators and theologians who have gone before me, and the many today, who have freely made available their works to enhance the knowledge of the Bible to all people worldwide. It is only with the help of these faithful writers that much of Bible House of Grace exists as it does today.
