

FINAL STUDY NOTES - *LUKE CHAPTER 2* 1-13/14-2024

CLASSROOM LOCATION AND ZOOM – SIGN IN INFORMATION:

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PLEASE NOTE WE WILL CONTINUE TO NEED A PASSCODE TO JOIN THE ONLINE (ZOOM) STUDY!

MONDAY 7 PM Bible Study - Time: 07:00 PM DAYLIGHT SAVING Time (US and Canada)
THE MONDAY NIGHT STUDY WILL BE MEETING ON ZOOM ONLY UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE!

MEETING ID# - 878 5864 4763 Passcode: 087484

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TUESDAY 7 AM Bible Study - Time: 07:00 AM DAYLIGHT SAVING Time (US and Canada).

- TUES MORNING MTG PLACE:
- 1201 KEY WEST, CORONA DEL MAR (shown as 1201 KW, Corona del Mar, CA 92625) on Global Positioning System (GPS) in automobiles. For driving directions from your starting point, suggest using *WAZE* (waze.com/live-map) or *MapQuest* (mapquest.com),
- AS WELL AS CONTINUING IN ZOOM!

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OPENING PRAYER

LUKE – Chapter 2 – Christ Born of Mary – (vs. 1-7); Glory in the Highest – (vs. 8-20); Circumcision of Jesus – (v. 21); Jesus Presented in the Temple – (vs. 22-24); Simeon Sees God’s Salvation – (vs. 25-35); Anna Bears Witness of the Redeemer – (vs. 36-38); The Family Returns to Nazareth – (vs. 39-40); The Boy Jesus Amazes the Scholars – (vs. 41-50); Jesus Advances in Wisdom and Favor – (vs. 51-52).

- **Review: (*Luk 1:31-35*)** *And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name JESUS. [32] He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. [33] And He will reign over the house of Jacob*

forever; and of His kingdom there will be no end." [34] Then Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I do not know a man?" [35] And the angel answered and said to her, "**The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God.**"

The Birth of Jesus Christ

Luk 2:1 *And it came to pass in those days that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered* (a census, to be taxed).

- **It came to pass in those days:** Luke clearly tells us that he recorded actual history and real events. These are not fanciful stories or myths. This is real.

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

- **Caesar Augustus, whose real name was Gaius Octavian.** Gaius Octavian was the first Roman emperor, a grandnephew of Julius Caesar. He took the name of Caesar by adoption and the name Augustus was given to him by the Roman senate. Gradually the power of Rome was vested into one man, a singularly astute man, Gaius Octavian and the senate in trying to give to him a title, first of all suggested that he be called the king of Rome. But he rejected the title of king, saying that it signified only a temporary reign. So, they finally came up with this title, Augustus, meaning exalted and sacred, suggesting a divine type of a title. It was the beginning of the claim of the Roman Caesars to deity. Gradually the rulers of Rome claimed deity and the requirement was to say that Caesar is Lord. Many of the Christians were martyred because they would refuse to acknowledge that Caesar is Lord.

Luk 2:3 *So all went to be registered, everyone to his own city.*

- **We begin to realize a little bit of the power of this man,** "there went forth a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed. Here is a fellow sitting in Rome, having now achieved such power. He was working towards total authority. He is able to make a decree and all of the world immediately bows to that decree. Think of that kind of power. One man. There is no appeal.

Luk 2:4 *Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David,*

- **They had to return to Bethlehem in order to be enrolled for this taxation.** It is about an eighty-mile journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem. But that is not on a freeway in an air-conditioned car. That is at best on a donkey or walking. Can you imagine Mary in the advanced stages of pregnancy making that eighty-mile arduous journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem? Just because someone in Rome wants everybody to be taxed. There was no appeal. Caesar said it, you got to do it. Caesar reigns. So, Joseph went from Nazareth to Bethlehem.
- **There is another side to this story. This other side begins seven hundred years earlier.** It begins with the prophet whose name was Micah. He was prophesying concerning the Messiah that was to come. In his prophecy he said, (**Mic 5:2**) "*But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, Though you are little among the thousands of Judah, Yet out of you shall come forth to Me The One to be Ruler in Israel, Whose goings forth are from of old, From everlasting.*" Caesar, sitting on the throne in Rome is not what he thinks he is. The autocratic ruler of the world, all he is a puppet in the hands of God.
- **God had a problem. The child was to be born in Bethlehem in order to fulfill the prophecies.** And He knew that they would not go voluntarily to Bethlehem at this stage of her pregnancy. God taps Caesar on the shoulder and says, Hey, order a taxation, everybody to return to their home city to be taxed. So, he gives the decree and God gets Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem in order that the Baby might be born in Bethlehem. Man may think he rules but God overrules.
- **The timing of the decree was perfect!** If the decree had gone out a month earlier, then Mary would have gone to Bethlehem, have been registered and returned to Nazareth before the birth of Jesus. If it had been a month later, she would have given birth to Jesus in Nazareth, and then made her way with her newborn into Bethlehem. But Micah's prophecy, as is the case with all prophecies in the Bible, must be fulfilled to perfection. So, the decree's timing was perfect!
- **How aware am I of the importance of God's timing? Often I am in a hurry and wonder what God is waiting so long. But afterward His fulfilling His calling, I can see the perfection of His timing!**

Luk 2:5 *to be registered with Mary, his betrothed wife, who was with child.*

- **You all understand what that means, don't you?** I know you mothers specially do.

Luk 2:6 *So it was, that while they were there, the days were completed for her to be delivered.*

Luk 2:7 And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

- **Do not think of the inn as a Motel or a hotel.** It was just a vertical walled area, a shelter, a place for the animals, but there was not even place there for them. So, Jesus was born and placed in a manger because there was no room for them in the inn. There is a beauty and a pathos to this all wrapped up.
- **It seems like there was no room in the earth for Him.** There was surely no room for Him within the religious system of the day. They were upset with Him. Throughout His life it seemed to be the story of His life, no room for Jesus. Unfortunately, it continues to be the story in many lives where people are unwilling to make room for the Savior.
- **Because there was no room for them in the inn.** The text would seem to indicate that she was alone. Perhaps not even a midwife to attend to her.

The Shepherds and the Angels – Glory to God and Great Joy!

Luk 2:8 Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night.

- **Just when Jesus was born, we do not know the date for certain.** There are many who suggest that it was perhaps in the early part of October. It is very possible that in God's design that He was born perhaps during the feast of Trumpets. That would be quite significant. We do know that other events of the life of Christ coordinated with the feast of Israel. We do know that He was crucified on Passover and we do know that the Holy Spirit descended upon the disciples on the day of Pentecost. It is possible that on the other major feast s, Tabernacles or Trumpets, the blowing of trumpets, or perhaps even on Yom Kippur, the day of atonement our Savior was born. That would seem to fit more with the pattern that God established because when Paul talked about.
- **There have been recent studies, example by William Federer that support December 25 as the birthday of Christ. (go to calvarycch.org sermons by author - Federer "Rediscovering Christ in Christmas Traditions, Part 1," 12/12/84).** But we cannot be dogmatic about that date. The Bible gives us the date of His crucifixion in several books, but nowhere are we given the specific birth date of His birth. We just know that He was born!

Luk 2:9 And behold (4x vs. 9,10,25,34), an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory (evidence of God's majestic presence) of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid.

- **Apparently God had given to Gabriel the charge of overseeing the events of the Messiah's coming into the world.** Five hundred years earlier, Gabriel had appeared to Daniel, telling him the very time that the Messiah would come. It would be related to the decree to rebuild the wall of Jerusalem, the commandment to restore and rebuild Jerusalem to the coming of the Messiah, which would be 483 years.
- **It was the angel Gabriel that we found in chapter one, who appeared to Zacharias** as he was ministering in the temple, informing him that his wife Elizabeth was to have a son in her old age who would be the forerunner of the Messiah. It was Gabriel that then appeared to Mary and let her know that God had chosen her the special instrument to be the human instrument of bringing His Son into the world.
- **The Bible does not tell us that it was Gabriel that appeared to the shepherds** but it likely was him. Having accomplished his job, the child is born, is swaddled, safely there in the manger, and he has to tell somebody. He goes out and finds the shepherds and makes the announcement to them.

Luk 2:10 Then the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people.

- **Not to just the Jews but to the world.** The Gospel is for the world, for all who believe. This birth announcement is going to be made by heaven, not to the Roman Senate or to Caesar. It is going to be made to a group of very anonymous shepherds. That are watching their sheep, attending to them in the field outside of the city of Bethlehem. And so that is the target group. That is who the announcement is going to be made, which certainly speaks to the fact that God is no respecter of persons.
- **Good tidings of great joy to all.** The birth of Jesus into the world? It is good! It is a source of great joy, and it will be to all people, much as to the Jews! Also, to the entire Gentile world, the whole world!

Luk 2:11 For there is born to you this day in the city of David (Bethlehem) a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.

- **They are told that Jesus come into the world as a Savior.** Christ means Messiah! He was born into the world as the Jewish Messiah, the fulfillment of the prophecies, which speak of the fact that He has

come into the world to save man from his sin. He is not merely lying in a manger, simply as a baby man, but that He is the Christ! He is also The Lord! The God Man, fully God and fully man!

- **Christ the Lord.** The Greek word *Christos* is the translation of the Hebrew word *Mashiach*, and the word Lord is *Kurios*, which also is the Greek word for the Jehovah or Yahweh of the Old Testament Savior, which is the Messiah, the Lord.

Luk 2:12 *And this will be the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger.*"

- There will be only one in Bethlehem, wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger! And bolstering their faith, he tells them, He will be a Savior, who is Christ the Lord!
- It would not been an unusual sign to see a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths, but it would be most unusual to see a baby lying in a manger - a feeding trough! If the angel had not told them to look for such a specific sign, they would never have believed it!

Luk 2:13 *And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host (entourage of angels) praising God and saying:*

- Whenever you hear a large, great choir singing, it is awesome in its own right. Here you have an entire choir, *a multitude of the heavenly host praising God*, making this declaration concerning the Messiah to them even further! One thing that needs to be understood is **how dramatic all of this birth of Jesus is!** Whatever it was thought of in the ancient world or whatever His birth is thought of today, heaven is excited about this! Heaven was excited about this! Heaven is excited to provide the world with a Savior, who is Christ the Lord! It does not matter how many or how few believe in Him, it will never change! The fact that heaven is as excited as it can be in this expression over the birth of this Savior into the world, regardless of whatever man may think of Him or do with Him.
- **Does my life demonstrate excitement and praise in this? How excited am I about His coming?**
- **What an extreme contrast between the angelic glory and the humble Jesus!** God loves to put His glory in unlikely packages so that His glory is more clearly displayed!

Luk 2:14 *"Glory (praise given) to God in the highest, And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!"*

- The great thing that they sang was and is glory to God in the highest! In the highest heavens, among the highest orders of beings, in the highest and most exalted degrees! It is a gift from God! Salvation is a gift from God, and so *Glory to God* for The Savior and His salvation! *Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men!*
- We are told in the prophecies concerning Jesus, the Messiah, (*Isa 9:7a*) *Of the increase of His government and peace There will be no end*, Peace on earth, good will toward men. Now that has not yet been fulfilled. When the angel Gabriel told Daniel of the coming of the Messiah and told him of the things that would transpire through the Messiah: making an end of sin, reconciliation for iniquity, fulfilling the prophecies, anointing the most holy place, we realize that Jesus fulfilled a part of those prophecies.
- Daniel said the Messiah would be cut off and truly He was cut off, He was crucified. But He is coming again. He is coming again to fulfill the remaining prophecies and when He comes again, there will be peace on earth, for one of His names is Prince of Peace. Also, (*Isa 66:12a*) *For thus says the LORD: "Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river,*
- Jesus said to His disciples (*Joh 14:27*) *Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.* So, there is peace on earth in the heart of the believer tonight! If you believe in Jesus Christ, then the peace of God is keeping your heart and your mind. You have trust in Him. He made peace possible for you. Peace with God. And having peace with God, He also brings to us the peace of God that keeps and establishes our hearts.
- **There are many people who have peace with God but they do not have yet the peace of God.** You cannot really experience the peace of God until you really understand and know the grace of God. That is why so often in the New Testament, we read "Grace and peace to you." But always grace first because until you know the grace of God and really experience and understand God's grace, you do not really have the peace of God.

Luk 2:15 *So it was, when the angels had gone away from them into heaven, that the shepherds said to one another, "Let us now go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has come to pass, which the Lord has made known to us."*

- **Then the shepherds said, what are we going to do here?** Let us go find the place as they told us how to find them. So let us head out and do that!
- **Probably the traditional site of the shepherd's field is not correct.** If you go to Bethlehem today, they will take you about three quarters of a mile away from the Church of Nativity and they will show you a cave and they will say, this is the cave where the shepherds were. But "*let us now go to Bethlehem*" would indicate perhaps that it was some distance away.

Luk 2:16 And they came with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the Babe lying in a manger.

- **So, this beautiful, beautiful scene!** Now what they had seen so supernatural out in the open, now it is fulfilled before their eyes as a second kind of witness to the truth of all of it!

Luk 2:17 Now when they had seen Him, they made widely known the saying which was told them concerning this Child.

- **They went in all directions and began to tell everyone who would listen** what they had experienced, the announcement that had been made by The Angel; about the multitude of Angels, and of their finding the child, to everyone who would listen! It is a beautiful example for us, they are to us of the fact that when you have been given that kind of a revelation. You do not just go home, go to sleep and forget all about it. That news is too good to keep to ourselves! The whole world deserves to hear that news that God has supernaturally revealed to us and. Also, it is true related to the gospel and the gospel that has changed our lives! We are not to keep it to ourselves! But to make that news of salvation known to everyone!
- **"They made widely known the saying!"_ What a great example of the shepherds is for us! How am I, are we doing, in making that news of salvation known to everyone?**

Luk 2:18 And all those who heard it marveled (wondered, admired) at those things which were told them by the shepherds.

Luk 2:19 But Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart.

- **She already knew a lot about Jesus.** She knew that her birth was a miracle, a miracle of God. She knew what the Angel Gabriel had told her about the coming of the Son, in saying, *Blessed are you among women!* You are the one that is chosen to bring the Messiah into the world.

Luk 2:20 Then the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told them.

- The shepherds had such happiness and praise to God because the word was fulfilled just as it was told them.
- **They were glorifying** (3x; Luke only; healed Leper (5:25); healed blind man (18:43) **and praising** (4x; Luke most; Zacharias opened mouth (1:64); multitude of angels (2:13); *disciples at Ascension (24:53)* **God for what they had heard** from the angel, and for what they had seen, the babe *in the manger*, and just then *in the swaddling*, when they came in, as it had been spoken to them. They thanked God that they had seen Christ, though in the depth of His humiliation. As afterwards the cross of Christ, so now His *manger*, was to some foolishness and a *stumbling-block*, but others saw in it, and admired, and praised, the wisdom of God and the power of God.
- **How marked is my life in glorifying and praising God? Seldom? Frequently? Always?**

Luk 2:21 And when eight days were completed for the circumcision of the Child, His name was called JESUS, the name given by the angel before He was conceived in the womb.

- **Under the law, the child was to be circumcised on the eighth day** in order that he might have the mark of the Hebrew nation. God gave the rite of circumcision to Abraham, the sign of that covenant was circumcision to God's people. It was symbolic of cutting away the flesh. It was symbolic of a nation of people who would be living after the Spirit rather than after the flesh. It became a very important rite so that if the eighth day would happen to fall on the sabbath day, they could go ahead and circumcise. So, on the eighth day, the child was named when they circumcised the child, He was given His name and so they called His name JESUS!
- **The angel told Mary before He was ever conceived that she was to bear the Son**, to call His name JESUS. The glorious name, Yeshua. The Hebrew name is Joshua and Joshua is a contraction of Jehoshua. Joshua you remember was the servant of Moses. And his given name was Hoshea, which means Salvation. But Moses renamed him and Moses called him Jehoshua, which is Jehovah is salvation. It was then contracted to just Joshua, for Jo is a contraction of Jehovah and there is no "J" sound in the Hebrew so it gets a "Y" sound and it would be Yeshua, which implies His mission. (*Mat*

1:21) *And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins.*" Jehovah is salvation!

Jesus Presented at the Temple

Luk 2:22 *Now when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were completed, they brought Him to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord*

- Now some thirty-three days later, she would have to go through purification rites and so having gone through the thirty-three days of purification. Now if it is a girl, you have to go sixty-six days. But for boys it was thirty-three days for purification rites and then she would come to the temple and offer the sacrifices that would then allow her to again participate in the ceremonial worship in the temple.

Luk 2:23 *(as it is written in the law of the Lord, "EVERY MALE WHO OPENS THE WOMB SHALL BE CALLED HOLY TO THE LORD"),*

- **Originally this was the Law of the Lord.** The firstborn male child was to be the priest dedicated to the Lord to the ministry, to the priesthood. Later on, this was changed. It became the tribe of Levi that was chosen for the priesthood and they stood in the place of the firstborn son. God's ideal and divine ideal was that the firstborn son always be the priest of the family. So, the parents are bringing Him to present Him to the Lord, the male child that open the womb. He was to **BE CALLED HOLY TO THE LORD.**

Luk 2:24 *and to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the law of the Lord, "A PAIR OF TURTLEDOVES OR TWO YOUNG PIGEONS."*

- **This indicates that Mary and Joseph were poor** because under the law they were to be bring a lamb. (**Lev 12:8**) *And if she is not able to bring a lamb, then she may bring two turtledoves or two young pigeons—one as a burnt offering and the other as a sin offering. So the priest shall make atonement for her, and she will be clean.* This would also indicate that the wise men had not yet come. You remember that the wise men brought the gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh and many believed that they brought sufficient gold to support Jesus through His lifetime. That is how He was able to take a large company and travel around the country, financing His ministry.

Luk 2:25 *And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon, and this man was just and devout, waiting for the Consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him.*

- **Simeon was just!** This speaks of his character, of his relationship with his fellow man. He was not only *just*, but *devout*, which speaks of his relationship with God. This is a special guy. And he was *waiting for the consolation of Israel*. He was waiting for the Messiah to come. In into the world *and the Holy Spirit was upon him*,

Luk 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.*

- **Simeon was waiting for the Messiah.** He was waiting for God's promises to be fulfilled. Also, the Holy Spirit was upon him! God's anointing of the Spirit.
- **He had that revelation, that he would not see death before** you had seen the Lord's Messiah.
- **This is a beautiful picture of the spiritual gift of the word of knowledge.** Under the Old Covenant, where God reveals something to Simeon that he would not otherwise know in terms of spiritual gifts, and he knew as a word of knowledge, I am not going to die before I see the promised Messiah.
- **Imagine the anticipation that built into his life.** I mean, every day was, could this be the day? Of course, we have that same anticipation in our lives as we are waiting for the Lord to come back and rapture us. We are not sure that it will be in our lifetime. But it might be right away, even before this message is over. Even if the Rapture does not come, we will each take our last breath one day? Are we ready?
- **We can see how eager, ready and waiting Simeon was to live to see the Messiah! Is there much similarity in my life to that of Simeon's?**

Luk 2:27 *So he came by the Spirit into the temple. And when the parents brought in the Child Jesus, to do for Him according to the custom of the law,*

- Simeon was a devout man, led by the Spirit!

Luk 2:28 *he took Him up in his arms and blessed God and said:*

Luk 2:29 *"Lord, now You are letting Your servant depart in peace, According to Your word;*

- Great, Simeon says, Oh God, now I see Him! I see now that this is the Messiah! I can die in peace! I can depart in peace, *according to your word.*

Luk 2:30 *For my eyes have seen Your salvation.*

- **The angels declared, (Mat 1:21) And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins.** Now this godly man, filled with the Holy Spirit, says as he takes the child, said *For my eyes have seen Your salvation.*

Luk 2:31 Which You have prepared before the face of all peoples,

- Notice that the salvation is not just for the Jews.

Luk 2:32 A light to bring revelation to the Gentiles, And the glory of Your people Israel."

- Jesus came to save the world from sin!
- **The glory of your people, Israel.** The single greatest glory associated with the Jewish people in human history is the provision to the world of a Messiah and a Savior. The Jews have been used by God in two great things in human history. God used them to bring the word of God into human history and then to bring his Messiah into human history. How sad it is, how few Jews trust in Jesus as their Messiah, though He is their glory. He is the greatest product of the Jewish people that has ever been and ever will be! But, their eyes will be opened at His Second Coming!

Luk 2:33 And Joseph and His mother marveled at those things which were spoken of Him.

- Again, here's Mary just marveling at the things, which are said concerning her Son.
- They marveled because Gabriel did not say anything about the Gentiles to the shepherds! This may be the first time they are hearing that this Messiah is not just about Israel. This child is a Light, a divine Light to bring light to the Gentile world that sits in darkness to the nations of the world. A Light to enlighten the Gentiles, plural, the nations. They hear it in the temple precincts from Simeon and the glory of Your people, Israel!

Luk 2:34 Then Simeon blessed them, and said to Mary His mother, "Behold, this Child is destined for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign which will be spoken against

- This child "destined for the fall and rising of many in Israel." Israel fell, as Jesus predicted. He said that the temple was to be destroyed, not one stone to be left standing upon another, and the people were going to be dispersed throughout the world.
- **The fall of Israel, that happened, but it is also for the rising of many in Israel**, and that rising again interestingly enough has already begun. The nation of Israel does exist, you cannot deny it. The rising again, and we have that glorious psalm, When the Lord shall build up Zion, then shall He appear in His glory. The birth of the nation of Israel and the rising up again of the nation on May 14, 1948, is one of the most significant biblical prophecies that we have. The Lord's coming is soon!
- **For a sign.** There are four "signs" associated with the birth of Christ: (1) the sign of the virgin birth (*Isa 7:14*); (2) the sign of the guiding star (*Mat 2:2*); (3) the sign of the swaddling clothes in a manger (*Luk 2:12*); and (4) the sign of the stumbling stone (*Isa 8:14; Luk 2:34*). The opposition which would mark the entire life of Christ would begin with His birth, as Herod would seek, unsuccessfully, to slay Him. Many would fall over this "**STONE OF STUMBLING AND A ROCK OF OFFENCE**" in Israel (*1Pe 2:8*), but many would rise again.

Luk 2:35 (yes, a sword (rhomphaia – large and broad cutlass) will pierce through your own soul also), that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed."

- **Set for the fall. The Messiah was rejected. He was hung on a cross** with the accusation, The King of the Jews. (*Matthew 27:24,25*) When Pilate saw that he could not prevail at all, but rather that a tumult was rising, he took water and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, "I am innocent of the blood of this just Person. You see to it." [25] And all the people answered and said, "His blood be on us and on our children." That horrible proclamation was fulfilled and Israel fell and for two thousand years, was scattered and dispersed throughout the world.
- **When Mary stood at the foot of the cross and saw her Son hanging there**, "a sword pierced through her own soul." The suffering that she must have felt. Knowing what she knew about Jesus, holding these secrets in her heart, knowing how the angel had told her; but seeing Him despised and rejected and being ridiculed. Don't you know that a sword did pierce through her own soul, even as this godly man predicted? And so, "**yes, a sword will pierce through your own soul also, that the thoughts of many hearts might be revealed**."
- **What is the condition of your heart? Mary, standing at the cross. Watching her son crucified!** What is going to go through your soul is like the largest weapon that we know about today is going to cut through your heart, Mary. That the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed which determine the condition of the human heart.

- **What do you do with the Messiah? What do you do with Jesus? There are two categories of departures.** Rejecters and acceptors. You are all departures. All of us are departing, one hundred out of one hundred! You are going to depart **as an acceptor**, or you are **going to depart as a rejecter**. Choose! Choose which! Just think what it was like for Simeon to go home this day. It is remarkable! God had revealed these things to him!
- **Just think of those around you! All are “departers” Are they “rejectors” or “acceptors?” What am I doing about it?**

Luk 2:36 *Now there was one, Anna (Hannah in Hebrew), a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel (face of God), of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, and had lived with a husband seven years from her virginity;*

- **Anna, which is the Hebrew Hannah, was the daughter of Phanuel**, which means the face of God. Probably, she had a very godly father. They were of the tribe of Asher. *She was of a great age*, 84 years old, having lived with a husband seven years. Only seven years married, her husband died after the seven years of marriage. Thus, she had been a widow for many years.

Luk 2:37 *and this woman was a widow of about eighty-four years, who did not depart from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day.*

- **She devoted her life to God.** It was just the thing that when her husband died, making, at that point made a commitment, devoting her life completely to God. She probably had little sleeping quarters there in the temple serving in certain duties around the temple.
- **She served God with fastings and prayers night and day.** A woman of prayer, a godly woman, all of these years in serving the Lord. As a widow she knew pain and loss but had not become bitter. As an elderly woman she had not lost hope.

Luk 2:38 *And coming in that instant she gave thanks to the Lord, and spoke of Him to all those who looked for redemption in Jerusalem.*

- **Spoke of Him to all those!** Only three verses are given to Anna, yet we see her total commitment to the Lord and **what a witness she was!** She spoke of Him to all those people who were looking for God's redemption, she went around telling them about this child.

The Return to Nazareth

Luk 2:39 *So when they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own city, Nazareth.*

- **In the meantime, they had fled to Egypt and were in Egypt for about two years**, which Luke does not tell us anything. Matthew is the one that tells us that they had left, and rather than going immediately to Nazareth, they fled to Egypt. And it was not until after the death of Herod the Great that they then returned and went on up to Nazareth.

Luk 2:40 *And the Child grew and became strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him.*

- **In Jesus' first twelve years, He grew and became strong in spirit**, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him. We know of His circumcision on the eighth day, His dedication on the fortieth day, and then we know that in the next twelve years, as He was growing, becoming strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon Him."
- **It would be interesting to have an account of how He related to His brothers** and what kind of a kid He was as He was growing up. There are books of the Apocrypha which have very fanciful stories, a book on the childhood of Jesus, but exaggerated fanciful stories, healing little birds with broken wings and a lot of things like that. But they are just fanciful stories.
- **The grace of God was upon Him. The first time you find the word grace used** in the New Testament. Grace is not mentioned in either the Gospels of Matthew or Mark. It is used right here, "That He grew in wisdom and the grace of God was upon Him. John tells us (**Joh 1:14**) *And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father; full of grace and truth*. The law came through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ! The grace of God, the first time we hear about it on this life.

The Boy Jesus in the Temple

Luk 2:41 *His parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover.*

- **Mary and Joseph were godly people, living according to the law**, "his parents," *went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast Of The Passover*. It was required that the adult Jews attend the feast, the three

major feasts. If they lived a certain distance away, they did not have to come to all three but would have to come whenever they could. So, Mary and Joseph had always come to The Feast of Passover.

Luk 2:42 And when He was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem according to the custom of the feast.

- **He probably had already been through the *bar mitzvah* ceremony**, the son of the covenant or son of the law; because when He was twelve years old, He was in the temple and He was discussing the scripture with the teachers. That would not have been allowed until He had gone through the *bar mitzvah*.

Luk 2:43 When they had finished the days, as they returned, the Boy Jesus lingered behind in Jerusalem. And Joseph (last mention of Joseph) and His mother did not know it;

- **Some think that that is quite strange, how is it that He can stay back in Jerusalem and they not know it?** They traveled with family, with relatives. Traveling in large companies there would probably be several hundred people who would be coming from Nazareth for the Feast. So, they figured that He is with some of His cousins playing around and come evening, He will find us.

Luk 2:44 but supposing Him to have been in the company, they went a day's journey, and sought Him among their relatives and acquaintances.

- **We are told that they supposed that He would have been in the company.** He was somewhere with the crowd, they figured with one of his boyfriends.

Luk 2:45 So when they did not find Him, they returned to Jerusalem, seeking Him.

Luk 2:46 Now so it was that after three days they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both listening to them and asking them questions.

- **Don't you know they were frantic?** Parents, put yourselves in their shoes, you know when your child disappears for a while and you get frantic, you want to call the police and everything else. Then when your child shows up, you want to beat him, because you have been so torn up emotionally.
- **That after three days they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers of the law, both listening to them and asking them questions.** He had the right to do that. Having been *bar mitzvah* 'ed, He had now entered into the place where He was held responsible for His own actions. these doctors of the law.

Luk 2:47 And all who heard Him were astonished at His understanding and answers.

- **They could not believe the understanding that He had and the answers that He was able to give to them.**

Luk 2:48 So when they saw Him, they were amazed; and His mother said to Him, "Son, why have You done this to us? Look, Your father and I have sought You anxiously."

- **We thought maybe You were dead. How can You do this to us?** Now there are those who point to this scripture as a refutation to the virgin birth of Jesus because Mary refers to Joseph as Your father. And so "Your father and I have sought thee sorrowing."

Luk 2:49 And He said to them, "Why did you seek Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?"

- ***I must be about My Father's business!*** Suddenly Mary realizes her child knows! You see, He does not acknowledge Joseph as His Father. *I must be about My Father's business.*

Luk 2:50 But they did not understand the statement which He spoke to them.

- **Jesus' statement told them something about His identity as a unique Son of God the Father**, though ***they did not understand*** it. In that day, culturally, a boy began to learn his father's trade at about 12 years of age. Jesus fulfilled this by instructing the teachers in the temple.

Luk 2:51 Then He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them, but His mother kept all these things in her heart.

- **Here we have all that is told of us of the life of Jesus from twelve years to perhaps thirty years old.** You see, in one verse we are told concerning the earlier period of His life, "He grew, waxed strong in spirit, He was filled with wisdom, the grace of God was upon Him." Now we are told for the next eighteen years that He was there in Nazareth and subject unto them.

Luk 2:52 And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.

- **All we know about the Jesus' childhood is what is given to us right here.** All we need to know is that through His growing up is that He increased in wisdom, knowledge and stature. He grew physically and also in favor with God and men. The impact that he had upon people because of who He was.

Those were the things that marked his childhood. When we see Him again, it will be some eighteen years later as He begins His public ministry.

SUMMARY

- **How aware am I of the importance of God's timing? Often I am in a hurry and wonder what God is waiting so long. But afterward His fulfilling His calling, I can see the perfection of His timing! (Luk 2:4)**
- **"They made widely known the saying!"_ What a great example of the shepherds is for us! How am I, are we doing, in making that news of salvation known to everyone? (Luk 2:17)**
- **How marked is my life in glorifying and praising God? Seldom? Frequently? (Luk 2:20)**
- **We can see how eager, ready and waiting Simeon was to live to see the Messiah! Is there much similarity in my life to that of Simeon's? (Luk 2:26)**
- **Just think of those around you! All are "departers" Are they "rejectors" or "acceptors?" What am I doing about it? (Luk 2:35)**

CLOSING SONG – (Luk 2:17,38) *Now when they had seen Him, they made widely known the saying which was told them concerning this Child. [38] And coming in that instant she gave thanks to the Lord, and spoke of Him to all those who looked for redemption in Jerusalem.*

GO, TELL IT ON THE MOUNTAIN John Work, Traditional Spiritual, Wintley Phipps (2:39/2:42)

*Go, tell it on the mountain Over the hills and everywhere
Go, tell it on the mountain That Jesus Christ is born (2x)
While shepherds kept their watching O'er silent flocks by night
Behold throughout the heavens There shone a Holy light
Go, tell it on the mountain Over the hills and everywhere
Go, tell it on the mountain That Jesus Christ is born
Down in a lowly manger Our humble Christ was born
And brought us all salvation That blessed Christmas morn
Go, tell it on the mountain Over the hills and everywhere
Go, tell it on the mountain That Jesus Christ is born (2X)
That Jesus Christ is born (2X)*

CLOSING PRAYER

NEXT WEEK: Read and study Luke Chapter 3!

Transcription of the first portion of William Federer's sermon message -"Rediscovering Christ in Christmas Traditions, Part 1," 12/12/84 (go to [calvarycc.org/sermons/by/author - Federer](http://calvarycc.org/sermons/by/author/Federer)). Transcript – (not final proof)

Praise the Lord. Praise the Lord. Well, I want you to know that I get a chance to go around the country and have been all 50 states speaking. There are people all across America that call Pastor Jack their pastor. And so, you are helping to impact the entire world by supporting Pastor Jack. Well, I wrote a book. There really is a Santa Claus. History of St. And Christmas holiday. Traditions. And so, I have got to do my first service on December 25th, giving the history of that. And then in the next service, I am going to give the history of Santa Claus. It is fascinating, but I am not going to get into that right now.

So, did you know that Christianity is the largest religion in the world? According to Pew Research Center, approximately one-third of the world is Christian. And so, since Christianity, by the way, it is also the most persecuted religion in the world. But did you know that Jesus was sent into the world, that was the time a one world Anti-Christian Government? I mean, if you are going to start a movement to give it a little bit of greenhouse time where it can grow before you? No! Immediately the church was persecuted, right? So that we win, but so Christmas could be considered the most celebrated religious holiday. Christianity is the largest religion. Most Christians celebrate December 25th, so this could be so. The Roman Empire. It was a one world government and. They wanted to track everybody. Could you imagine a one-world government wanting to track everybody it was? Was called the census a tax enrollment. Luke, it came to pass in those days that it went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed, right? And to do that, they had to count everybody. All went to be taxed every day. Into his own city, Joseph also went up from Galilee out of the city of Nazareth into Judea, unto the City of David, which is called Bethlehem, to be taxed with Mary, his espoused wife, being great with child.

Now Luke 2 goes on, and suddenly there was an Angel with a multitude of heavenly hosts praising God and saying glory to God in the highest and on Earth, peace, goodwill toward men. So, Christmas Day could be considered the most celebrated religious holiday in the world. And now good people have different dates for the date of Christ birth. And believe me, when you get into all

the Greek calendars and Hebrew calendars and Egyptian calendars and all the different dates, it can get confusing. But I want to give the case for December 25th. OK?

All right. And so early Christians were predominantly. And did you know that Jews did not celebrate birthdays? Josephus wrote that the law does not permit us to make festivals at the birth of our children. And so. The early believers were Jewish and they were more concerned about the dates of Passover. When did Jesus get crucified? When did he rise from the dead? That was the big thing. Well, matter of fact. We were visiting in Turkey years ago and we were at a house and my wife asked the woman of the house when her birthday was. And she goes into the other room and shuffles through some papers and comes out with a card. Goes oh, this is my birthday. She did not even have it memorized, right? But the Greeks were Pagan. The Greeks kept track of birthdays, and then the Greeks started to convert to Christianity. And so, as more and more Greeks were converting, they asked the question when was Jesus born? And so. It is a little bit of a detective story, so we got to track this down. And so, you have to put on your detective hat. It begins with pinning down when was John the Baptist conceived? So let us unpack this.

John the Baptist father was Zachariah. He was a Levite priest in the last day years of King Herod the Great, who died anywhere from 4 to 1 BC. *Luke 1 in the time of Herod, king of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah* who belonged to the priestly division of Abijah. That is our first clue. What was the priestly division of Abijah? Well, in Chronicles, King David with the help of Zadok, David separated Levites into divisions for their appointed order of ministering. The first lot fell to Jehoiarib and the eighth to Abijah. It goes on to list all twenty-four, but for our investigation we are just going to be concerned about the first, Jehoiarib and then the 8th Abijah. And so, we have David listing these twenty-four family names and but we don't know when they served. So how did this priestly division work? And it was not until the Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered in 1947 that they began to find the fact that the priest served twice a year, a week at a time, six months apart. And so now we can begin to understand the priestly division, right? They call it the "Sacredotal Courses" of these priests. So, twenty-four divisions, ministering twice a year, a week at a time, six months apart. Now when on the calendar did these weeks begin. Have to pin this down and so there's different people that are really brilliant, and they are coming up with different dates. But I am giving the 25th argument, right? So here it is.

That temple was destroyed in Jerusalem on August 4th, 70 AD. This is a record in the Roman calendar. We know it. It is pinned down, it is August 4th, 70 AD. The Julian Roman calendar. Well, if you were to look at the Hebrew calendar that goes to the 9th of Av. And so, the 9th of Av is the most serious day, right? They always have bad things happen on that date. So, the first week of August, we now know that the temple was destroyed. And what Priestly division was on duty when the temple was destroyed? Well, the Jerusalem Talmud said the Levite family on duty when the temple was destroyed was Jehoiarib, the first course. So now we know if Jehoiarib is on course, we can begin to countdown the next weeks to the eighth week, to Abijah.

So here is Wikipedia. I do not normally quote Wikipedia, but I thought I would throw it up there. In Jewish tradition, Jehoiarib was the priestly course on duty when the Second Temple was destroyed by the Roman Imperial Army. In the second week of the lunar month Av, in 70 CE. So now we know Jehoiarib was on duty the first week. And then we can count down 8 weeks. And I find out that Abijah was on duty the last week of September. Right. First week of August 8 weeks later is the last week of September. And so, in Jewish tradition, this is the month of Tishri and the last week is the day of Atonement and the Feast of Tabernacles. Two very important feasts this last week.

And so, the Gospel of Luke there was, in the days of Herod, king of Judea, certain priests name Zacharias of the division of Abijah. So it was that while he was serving as a priest before the Lord. In the order of his division according to the custom of the priesthood. His lot fell to burn incense when he went into the Temple of the Lord. Now what is it? His lot fell to burn incense. So only the high priest gets to go into the Holy of Holies, but the other Levite priests get to go into the Holy Place. The sort of the room before you get into the Holy Holies and who gets to be chosen? A real honor to be going to that holy place. Do they pick it based on seniority or popularity? No, they do it by casting of lots. And so, there is an estimated 24,000 Levites. And to have the lot fall for you to serve in the temple is really rare! But for you to get the lot to serve in the temple on this important week with the Day of Atonement and the Feast of Tabernacles. **It is a once in a lifetime thing!** The fact that Zechariah was chosen to be on duty in burning incense was a once in a lifetime thing. And so it goes on to say that the whole multitude of the people were praying outside at the hour of incense. And so, it would make sense that the people are waiting outside because this is a special week. And so, Luke 1:11 and there appeared unto him an Angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense, the Angel said to him, fear not thy wife, Elizabeth shall bear the son. And when Zacharias time of service was completed, he returned home. And after this his wife Elizabeth became pregnant. For five months remained in seclusion.

So now we know that John the Baptist would have been conceived on the last week of September. And so, the Byzantine Rite Church has a Julian calendar. They celebrate September 23rd as the conception of John the Baptist. And the second century work Proto Evangelium of Saint James does the same thing, and lo and behold, the Greek Orthodox, Catholic, Lutheran, Anglican Church is all mark September 23rd as the date of the conception of John the Baptist. And nine months later is June 24th. They all celebrate that as the birthday of John the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ, and it was one of the oldest Christian observances since the council of Agde in 506 AD. So, they are celebrating the conception of John the Baptist.

And so, let us piece it together. So, if John the Baptist is conceived the last week of September. Six months later is when Mary visits. And so now we can pin down that Mary or the Angel appeared to her the last week of March.. So, this is what Luke says in the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the Angel Gabriel to Nazareth to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The Virgin's name was Mary.

And so now if we know that Mary conceived the last week of March and then visits Elizabeth. It says the Angel answered. And behold, thy cousin Elizabeth hath conceived a son in her old age. This is the 6th month of her who was called barren. This is the only pregnancy in the Bible where twice it is mentioned that she is in her six month. And so, if March 25th, it has been celebrated as the feast of the Annunciation, on March 25th. That is when the Angel appeared to Mary and announced to her that she was going to conceive. And so, nine months after March 25th is **December 25th**.

So that is the traditional way of picking December 25th and we had the information, but when the Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered and these archaeological discoveries were able to piece together the order of Abijah and find out last week of September, six months later last week in March. And then, nine months later, last week of December. So, did you like that? All right.

So, Susan K Roll wrote "Origins of Christmas." John Chrysostom and he lived in like the third century AD counts off the months of Elizabeth's pregnancy and dates Mary's conception from the 6th month of Elizabeth then counts off another nine months to arrive at the birth date of Christ.

And then a fourth century book on solstices and equinoxes. Our Lord was conceived in the month of March 25th, which is the day of the passion of the Lord and of his conception. On the day he was conceived on the same, he suffered. So, Yale Professor Andrew McGowan, in how December 25th became Christmas. Archaeological review online, he said it was a common belief that the Messiah fulfilled his mission on the anniversary of its inception.

So, you read through all these fourth century fifth century, sixth century works, I will say, OK. 25th was conceived and he died on March 25th. Now the Easter Orthodox Church moves it into April and then January. So, there has always been a little bit of a fudge room there. Seeing Augustine writes in 4/17/AD for he, Jesus, is believed to have been conceived on the 25th of March, upon which day he also suffered.

So, we got March 25th, but then people said what about the sheep in the field? Shepherds would not have been in the field in the wintertime. Well, lambs are needed all year round for daily sacrifices in the temple, which is like six miles away from Bethlehem. So, they needed lambs all year round. And. Then the argument suffers when one considers the moderate climate of Bethlehem temperatures in December are no lower than 47°. Which is similar to Flagstaff, AZ. So, it is cool, but it is not frigid cold.

And then you have. Farmers websites talking about sheep being born in December. Here is one. It is a U.K. website, War Horse Valley, County Farm Park. Lambs are born around 145 days, about 4.5 months after the ewe falls pregnant. Lambing can start as early as December. And go on as late as June. So, here is an agriculture website that says, hey, lambs can be born in December. Agricultural website Carroll County Grown. Why are lambs born during the? It says sheep are short day/long night breeders, meaning they breed late summer/early fall and consequently their lambs are born in the winter and spring so lambs can be born in the winter. Is this interesting?

So, some think December 25th was chosen to erase the Roman winter solstice festival of Saturnalia. But this is discounted when you realize the winter solstice is December 22nd, not December 25th. So. If you look at the, the earth goes around the sun in an elliptical orbit. And when it is the furthest away. Before it starts going away and coming back it looks like. The sun is standing. It is in the same place in the sky for two days in a row, so soul means sun. Stice means still, sun standing still. It is called Solstice, and so the winter solstice is December 22nd. That is when the earth is the furthest, and then it comes. And then you have the summer solstice, June 22nd, right before it comes, and then halfway in between you have the spring equinox and the fall equinox. Equal means equal. Knox means night! So, you have the same amount of sunlight before, and then the nighttime. And so anyway, it is December 22nd is when the pagans would celebrate the winter solstice, not December 25th.

Anyway, now there is another Roman holiday. Some think the date was chosen to replace Rome's *Natalis Sol Invictus*, and this is the date Romans worship their unconquered sun God. And so, this all the Christians they picked that date because they wanted to overlap this Pagan date. Did you know? No Christian writer prior to the 12th century even suggested this?

And in fact, Christians were celebrating the December 25th before the Romans. And so, you have a Pope Telesphorus, seventh Bishop of Rome, died in 136 AD. He began the December 25th midnight Mass to honor what he believed to be the exact day and hour of the birth of Christ. And so here in 136 AD, you have got Christians celebrating midnight December 25th. And then there is a Theophilus of Caesarea who dies 181 AD. The Bishop of the See in Palestine. See means an area. He said we ought to celebrate the birthday of our Lord on what day soever the 25th of December shall happen.

And then you have. Saint. Hippolytus. How would you like to have a kid and name him that right? And hey Hippo, so St. Hippolytus, he wrote around 204 AD. His commentary on Daniel, he says for the first advent of our Lord in the flesh, when he was born in Bethlehem was December 25th. He suffered in the 33rd year, March 25th, Friday the 18th year of Tiberius Caesar, while Rufus and Roubellion were Consuls. So, he is saying in the year 204 AD, he is saying December 25th. Now, why is that important? Because these acknowledgments were **before 274 AD** when Roman Emperor Aurelian introduced the imperial cult of *Sol Invictus*. So, **the Christians were celebrating December 25th before the Roman emperor instituted it**. And so maybe it is the other way around. Maybe it is because the Romans wanted to stamp. The Christian day. Because we have 3 centuries of Romans trying to stamp out Christians. There were ten major persecutions in the first three hundred years. Christians were having church in catacombs caves that they digged in the ground and they would burn them at the stake. They are trying to stamp out Christianity. Only make sense that as the Christianity grows that they want to stamp out the date. So instead of December 25th being chosen by Christians to replace Roman *Sol Invictus*, maybe Emperor Aurelian picked December 25th to replace the growing popularity of the birth of Christ.