SMITH FOR CHRIST

TEACHING THE WORD · WATCHING THE TIMES




DEEP DIVE

# Luke

## *Chapter Two, Verses 1–52*

*A Savior Born in the City of David — an emperor's decree, a manger, shepherds and angels, two old saints in the temple, and a boy in His Father's house*

NASB 1995 | VERSE BY VERSE | FOUR VOICES | WITH DIAGRAMS

A census from Rome moves a carpenter and his pregnant fiancée to Bethlehem, where the Son of David is laid in a manger because there is no room. Angels preach to shepherds, an old man takes the Child in his arms and says he is ready to die, and twelve years later the boy Jesus astonishes the teachers in His Father's house. Read through four teachers — **David Guzik**, **R.C. Sproul**, **C.H. Spurgeon** and **Matthew Henry** — with the Greek behind Luke's key words.

THE PASSAGE

**Luke 2:1–52**

*manger · shepherds · Simeon · the temple*

THE METHOD

**Verse by Verse**

*Color-coded by teacher*

WHAT'S INSIDE

# Contents

*Four movements from Caesar's decree to the boy who grew in wisdom*


| | | |
|---|---|---|
| — | **How to Read This Study** · *the four voices & their colors* | 3 |
| — | **Before the Passage** · *from Caesar Augustus to the city of David* | 3 |
| I | **No Room in the Inn** · *Luke 2:1–7 · the birth in Bethlehem* | 5 |
| II | **Good News of Great Joy** · *Luke 2:8–20 · the angels and the shepherds* | 6 |
| III | **My Eyes Have Seen Your Salvation** · *Luke 2:21–38 · Simeon and Anna* | 9 |
| IV | **In My Father's House** · *Luke 2:39–52 · the boy Jesus in the temple* | 11 |
| V | **The Passage in the Whole Bible** · *cross-references* | 13 |
| † | **At a Glance** · *the four voices side by side* | 15 |
| † | **Key Insights & Questions for the Table** · *discussion* | 15 |
| † | **Sources** · *where each voice comes from* | 17 |


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

SECTION I · THE PASSAGE

# Luke 2:1–52

*A Savior Born in the City of David — Caesar counts his people; God sends His Son — wrapped in cloths, waited for, and about His Father's work*

## † How to Read This Study

This study walks Luke 2 in 4 movements, in Luke's own order. Each movement opens with the full NASB 1995 text of those verses, marked with the Berean colors and shapes; then the Greek behind the key words; then the teachers, each in his own color — **David Guzik**, the pastor who walks the text verse by verse; **R.C. Sproul**, the theologian who presses every word for its doctrine; **C.H. Spurgeon**, the preacher who turns the doctrine into a call to the heart; and **Matthew Henry**, the Puritan commentator who gathers it into plain, practical counsel. The figures draw the passage so you can see where Luke is going. Read the Scripture first; then let each voice add its angle.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word — R.C. SPROUL · Ligonier · St. Andrew's
C.H. SPURGEON · Metropolitan Tabernacle — MATTHEW HENRY · Commentary on the Whole Bible

HOW THIS STUDY IS MARKED — God — His character & actions; Command / instruction; Key repeated word; Sin / warning; Promise / blessing; Time / place / contrast

KEY VERSE · LUKE 2:11

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

## † Before the Passage

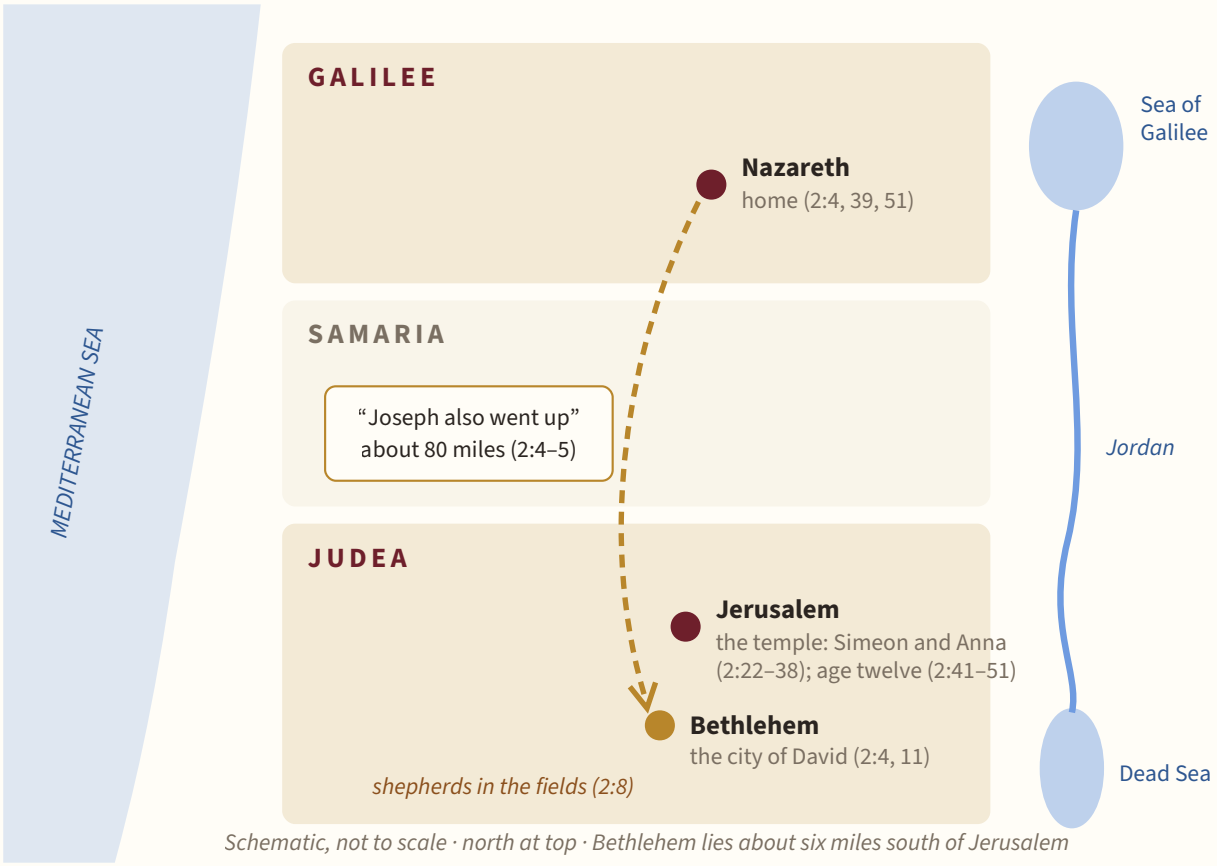
Luke 1 ended with John growing up in the deserts and Mary going home to Nazareth after three months with Elizabeth (1:56, 80). Gabriel had promised Mary a Son who would sit on "the throne of His father David" (1:32), and Micah had named the town: "Bethlehem Ephrathah … From you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel" (Micah 5:2). But Mary lived about eighty miles north, in Galilee. Luke 2 tells how God moved her.

He moved her through Rome. Caesar Augustus (ruled 27 BC–AD 14) had ended decades of civil war, and Guzik notes that he "took the title Caesar Augustus" as "the sole ruler of the Roman world." A census for taxation required each man to register in his own city. Guzik: "It is an impressive thought; one man, in the ivory palaces of Rome, gave a command – and the whole world responded." Henry sees the deeper hand: "Providence had another reach in it."

The Law of Moses frames the second half of the chapter. A boy was circumcised on the eighth day (Leviticus 12:3); after a set time of purification the mother brought an offering, a lamb or, if she was poor, two birds (Leviticus 12:8); and every firstborn son belonged to the LORD and had to be presented and redeemed (Exodus 13:2, 12–13). Luke names the Law five times in eighteen verses (vv. 22, 23, 24, 27, 39). Jesus is born under the Law (Galatians 4:4) and keeps it from His first week.

Every Jewish man was to appear before the LORD at the great feasts, and Galilean families made the Passover pilgrimage together in large caravans. The chapter ends in the same temple where Luke 1 began. Zacharias had stood there silent; now Simeon blesses God there, Anna gives thanks there, and a twelve-year-old Jesus calls it “My Father’s house.”

FIGURE · NAZARETH, BETHLEHEM AND JERUSALEM




*Schematic, not to scale · north at top · Bethlehem lies about six miles south of Jerusalem*

*Caesar’s census sends Joseph and Mary about eighty miles south to Bethlehem, the city of David; Jerusalem’s temple, a few miles north, is the scene of the rest of the chapter.*

I
MOVEMENT

LUKE 2:1–7

## No Room in the Inn

*Caesar's decree, the road to Bethlehem, and a manger for a cradle*

[1] *Now in those days* *a decree went out from Caesar Augustus*, *that a census be taken of all the inhabited earth.* [2] *This was the first census taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria.* [3] *And everyone was on his way to register for the census, each to his own city.* [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,* [5] *in order to register along with Mary, who was engaged to him, and was with child.* [6] *While they were there, the days were completed for her to give birth.* [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 2:1–7

*"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

### ἀπογραφή

APOGRAPHĒ · "CENSUS, REGISTRATION" · G582

A writing-off, an enrollment on an official list — here for taxation. Only two New Testament uses: "the first census taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria" (v. 2), and the later census of AD 6 when "Judas of Galilee rose up in the days of the census" (Acts 5:37). Guzik reads "first" as distinguishing this enrollment from that later, better-known one. Either way, Luke ties the birth of Christ to a real decree and a named governor.

### κατάλυμα

KATALYMA · "INN, GUEST ROOM" · G2646

From *katalyō*, to loosen (the pack animals) — a lodging place. It occurs only three times: here, and for the "guest room" where Jesus ate the Last Supper (Luke 22:11; Mark 14:14). Luke has a different word for a commercial inn in the Good Samaritan story (*pandocheion*, 10:34). Whether a crowded public lodge or a family's full guest room, the point stands: there was no space for them, and Mary laid her Son where animals ate.

### φάτνη

PHATNĒ · "MANGER" · G5336

A feeding trough or stall. Luke uses it three times in this chapter (vv. 7, 12, 16) and once more for the stall a man unties his ox from on the Sabbath (13:15). The manger is the sign the angel gives (v. 12): the Christ will be found where no one would look for a king. Henry: "he was laid in a manger, instead of a cradle."

**DAVID GUZIK** · Enduring Word

Guzik insists, "This is not "once upon a time."" Luke places the birth under a real emperor and a real census — "you could look up the record of the same census Luke mentioned," as Justin Martyr told the Romans. One decree moved an empire, yet "Augustus wasn't really powerful at all"; he was serving God's plan to bring Mary to Bethlehem, as Micah foretold. "Who does the world know more today – Jesus or Caesar Augustus?" "The trip from Nazareth to Bethlehem (just outside of Jerusalem) is about 80 miles," and Luke tells the birth with restraint. "That there was no room in the inn was symbolic of what was to happen to Jesus."

**R.C. SPROUL** · Ligonier · St. Andrew's

Sproul's Christmas Day sermon, "The Birth of Jesus" (25 Dec 2011), presents the nativity as real history, not myth, and sets two kings side by side: Caesar Augustus, who could order the whole world to register, and the infant in the manger, who is the true King. The humiliation began at once: "There was no place for Him to lay His head." Yet that lowliness is the setting for glory, for the same night heaven opened over the fields outside Bethlehem.

**C.H. SPURGEON** · Metropolitan Tabernacle

In "No Room for Christ in the Inn" (Luke 2:7) Spurgeon finds gospel in the manger: "By being in a manger He was declared to be the king of the poor," and "We might tremble to approach a throne, but we cannot fear to approach a manger." A stable was "free to all," so "you may come to Him just as you are; you may come now." "Even beastlike men may come to Christ, and live." Then he turns the text on us: "The palaces of emperors and the halls of kings afforded the Royal Stranger no refuge," and "How little room has He found even in the Church." Make room for Christ, he warns, and the world will have no room for you.

**MATTHEW HENRY** · Commentary on the Whole Bible

Henry sees God's timing — "Now this was the time when the Messiah was to be born, according to Daniel's prophecy" — and God's use of Caesar: the decree served Rome's purpose, "but Providence had another reach in it." Even the names preach: "Bethlehem signifies the house of bread." The inn is a parable: "Christ was born in an inn, to intimate that he came into the world but to sojourn here for awhile," and it is an invitation too — "An inn receives all comers, and so does Christ."

II
MOVEMENT

LUKE 2:8–20

## Good News of Great Joy

*Shepherds by night, the glory of the Lord, and a sign in a manger*

8 *In the same region there were some shepherds staying out in the fields and keeping watch over their flock by*
*night.* 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.* 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;* 11 *for today in the city of David there has been born for*
*you* △ *a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.* 12 *"This will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths and*
*lying in a manger."* 13 *And suddenly there appeared 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 men with whom He is pleased."*
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.”* 16 *So they came in a hurry and found their way to Mary and Joseph, and the baby as He lay in the manger.* 17 *When they had seen this, they made known the statement which had been told them about this Child.* 18 *And all who heard it wondered at the things which were told them by the shepherds.* 19 *But Mary treasured all these things, pondering them in her heart.* 20 *The shepherds went back, glorifying and praising God for all that they had heard and seen, just as had been told them.*
>
> LUKE 2:8–20

> *“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.”*
>
> ISAIAH 9:6

FIGURE · WHO SAW HIM FIRST

**WHO SAW HIM FIRST — AND WHAT THEY DID**

| THE SHEPHERDS 2:8–20 | SIMEON 2:25–35 | ANNA 2:36–38 | THE TEACHERS 2:46–47 |
|---|---|---|---|
| *men of the night fields* | *righteous, devout* | *a widow of eighty-four* | *scholars of the Law* |
| “Let us go straight to Bethlehem” | took Him into his arms | never left the temple | heard His questions and His answers |
| **glorifying and praising God** | **“my eyes have seen Your salvation”** | **spoke of Him to all who were looking** | **amazed at His understanding** |

Not Caesar, not Herod, not the rulers of the temple — the first to see Him were the lowly and the waiting.
*Henry: “An inn receives all comers, and so does Christ.”*

*Read each column top to bottom: who they were, what they did with the Child, and what came out of their mouths.*

## εὐαγγελίζομαι

EUANGELIZOMAI · “I BRING GOOD NEWS” · G2097

“I bring you good news (*euangelizomai*) of great joy” (v. 10). The verb Gabriel used to Zacharias (1:19) now rings over Bethlehem. Guzik: “The first preacher of the gospel was an angel.” The content is three titles in one breath — “a Savior (*sōtēr*, G4990), who is Christ the Lord” (v. 11) — Luke’s only use of *sōtēr* for Jesus in his Gospel, after Mary’s “God my Savior” (1:47).

## εὐδοκία

EUDOKIA · "GOOD PLEASURE" · G2107

Good pleasure, favor, what one delights in. The best manuscripts read the genitive, *eudokias*: peace "among men of [His] good pleasure" — the NASB's "among men with whom He is pleased." The KJV follows manuscripts with the nominative, "good will toward men." Either way the peace comes from God's favor, not man's merit. Paul uses the word for God's saving purpose: "according to the kind intention (*eudokia*) of His will" (Ephesians 1:5).

## συμβάλλουσα

SYMBALLOUSA · "PONDERING" · G4820

From *syn* (together) and *ballō* (to throw): to throw things together, to compare, to put the pieces side by side. The shepherds' hearers "wondered" for a moment; Mary "treasured" (*syntēreō*, to keep safe) and kept turning it all over (v. 19). Guzik quotes Bruce on the tenses: "The wonder of the many was a transient emotion (aorist)," while Mary's keeping went on. Henry: "The truths of Christ are worth keeping; and the way to keep them safe is to ponder them."

**DAVID GUZIK** · Enduring Word

Guzik notes that shepherds were not respected men, yet they heard first: "The first preacher of the gospel was an angel." The message is exactly what we need — "We don't need another advisor, a reformer, or a committee, but a Savior." The "heavenly host" is an army, and its song puts things in order: "Let God have all the glory, so we may have the peace." He quotes Calvin on the manger — "This was a revolting sight, and was sufficient of itself to produce an aversion to Christ" — and still the shepherds came. When the singing stopped, "Angels may go, but Jesus remains."

**R.C. SPROUL** · Ligonier · St. Andrew's

Sproul calls the shepherds "the lowest people of the land" — and that is precisely who saw the glory first. In his Christmas sermon (25 Dec 2011) the humiliation of the manger is balanced by the glory that shone around the fields; the angel's first word is a command not to fear, and the news is for all the people. The shepherds did not keep it to themselves: "They told every single person they knew." And Mary, quieter, kept these things and pondered them in her heart.

**C.H. SPURGEON** · Metropolitan Tabernacle

Spurgeon's "The First Christmas Carol" (Luke 2:14) hears three notes. First, "They sang of Christ, and of the salvation which He came into this world to work out," because "salvation is God's highest glory." Second, peace: "There had been no peace on earth since Adam fell," but now "the swaddling band with which He was wrapped up was the white flag of peace." Third, good will — "He has goodwill toward man, for He gave His Son," and "this third note melts my heart the most." (Spurgeon preached the KJV reading.) He ends practically: Christmas means "peace with thyself, peace with thy fellow men, peace with thy God."

**MATTHEW HENRY** · Commentary on the Whole Bible

Henry honors the shepherds' honest work: "We are not out of the way of divine visits when we are sensibly employed in an honest calling." Their haste to Bethlehem is a lesson — "Those that would hear from God must stir up themselves." The angels' song tells where peace comes from: "God's good-will in sending the Messiah introduced peace in this lower world." And Mary shows how to keep what we have heard: "The truths of Christ are worth keeping; and the way to keep them safe is to ponder them."

III
MOVEMENT

LUKE 2:21–38

## My Eyes Have Seen Your Salvation

*Circumcision, the offering of the poor, Simeon's song and Anna's thanks*

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.* 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* 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"),*
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."* 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.* 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.* 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,* 28 *then he took Him into his arms, and blessed God, and said,* 29 *"Now*
*Lord, You are releasing Your bond-servant to ☆ depart in peace, According to Your word;* 30 *For △ my eyes have*
*seen Your salvation,* 31 *Which You have prepared in the presence of all peoples,* 32 *△ A LIGHT OF REVELATION TO*
*THE GENTILES, And the glory of Your people Israel."* 33 *And His father and mother were amazed at the things*
*which were being said about Him.* 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—* 35 *and ⚠ a sword will pierce*
*even your own soul—to the end that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed."* 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,* 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.* 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.*

LUKE 2:21–38

*"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."*

LEVITICUS 12:8

*"... I will also make You a light of the nations So that My salvation may reach to the end of the earth."*

ISAIAH 49:6

FIGURE · THE FIRST TWELVE YEARS




Day 40 = 7 days + 33 days of purification (Leviticus 12:2–4); Luke says only “when the days … were completed.”
*Luke passes over the years between v40 and v41 with one sentence: “The Child continued to grow.”*

*Follow the line left to right: Luke moves from the birth to the eighth day, the fortieth day, the return to Nazareth and the Passover at twelve.*

## παράκλησις

PARAKLĒSIS · “CONSOLATION” · G3874

Comfort, encouragement — literally a calling-alongside, the root of the Spirit’s title *Paraklētos* (John 14:16). “The consolation of Israel” (v. 25) gathers up Isaiah 40:1, “Comfort, O comfort My people.” Simeon was waiting for God’s comfort to arrive in a Person. Luke uses the word only once more in his Gospel, as a warning: “woe to you who are rich, for you are receiving your comfort in full” (6:24).

## ἀπολύεις

APOLYEIS · “YOU ARE RELEASING” · G630

To set free, to dismiss, to let go — used of releasing a prisoner and discharging a soldier or slave. Simeon calls himself God’s *doulos*, bond-servant, and God his *Despota*, Master (v. 29): a watchman relieved at dawn. 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.” The redemption Anna’s friends waited for is *lytrōsis* (G3085, v. 38) — the same word Zacharias used: God “accomplished redemption” (1:68).

## ἀντιλεγόμενον

ANTILEGOMENON · “OPPOSED, SPOKEN AGAINST” · G483

Literally “spoken against.” Simeon’s second oracle (vv. 34–35) darkens the song: the Child is a “sign” (*sēmeion*, G4592) people will argue with, and a “sword” (*rhomphaia*, G4501, a long, broad blade) will pierce Mary’s own soul. Guzik: “Sign is literally “a target that people shoot at.”” Luke will use the verb again at the end of Acts, where the Jews of Rome say of the Christian sect, “it is spoken against everywhere” (Acts 28:22).

**DAVID GUZIK** · Enduring Word

Guzik notes that Luke speaks of "their" purification and that the family brought the poorer offering of two birds; they could not afford a lamb — yet, in the words on Guzik's page, "Mary's firstborn son was a lamb without blemish and without spot." Simeon "came by the Spirit into the temple" and "took Him up in his arms." His song is a watchman going off duty at sunrise. The warning to Mary is sober — "Jesus is like a magnet that is attractive to some, but others are repelled from Him," and "mothering the Messiah would not be all sweetness and light." Of Anna: "As a widow she knew pain and loss but had not become bitter."

**R.C. SPROUL** · Ligonier · St. Andrew's

In "Song of Simeon" (22 Jan 2012) Sproul explains the rites. "Circumcision was also a sign that the person had his sin removed through the grace of the covenant," though Jesus "was perfectly sinless from the moment of His conception to the moment of His death." "The presentation of the firstborn son was a sign of the redeeming of the people" — so "The Redeemer, in following the law, had to be redeemed before He could ever save anyone." Simeon's song says, in effect, "I have seen all I have ever needed to see." Then the warning: "Mary, there will be no neutrality for your son. … He will either bring people to life, or He will lead them to death in their sins."

**C.H. SPURGEON** · Metropolitan Tabernacle

Spurgeon's "Nunc Dimittis" (Luke 2:29–31) makes Simeon every believer's pattern: "All the saints have seen God's salvation, therefore should they all depart in peace," and "Believers already enjoy peace as much as ever Simeon did." Yet peace in dying grows from peace in living: "No man can depart in peace who has not lived in peace." "The departure of the child of God is appointed of the Lord." He is careful: "A sight of Christ with the natural eye is not saving" — faith is the eye that matters. And he rebukes the idle: "Saints are willing to depart when their work is almost done."

**MATTHEW HENRY** · Commentary on the Whole Bible

Henry sees the cross in the eighth day: "Then he shed his blood by drops, which afterwards he poured out in purple streams," for "Christ submitted to it, that he might with the better grace cancel it, and set it aside for us." Mary, "being poor, and not able to reach the price of a lamb," brought two doves. Simeon proves that "Never any that hoped in God's word were made ashamed of their hope," and that "Those that have welcomed Christ may welcome death." Of Anna: "Devotion is a thing we ought to be constant in," and "Those that have an acquaintance with Christ themselves should do all they can to bring others acquainted with him."

IV
MOVEMENT

LUKE 2:39–52

## In My Father's House

*A lost boy found among the teachers, and eighteen quiet years of growth*

> 39 *When they had performed everything* ↻ *according to the Law* *of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own city of Nazareth.* 40 *The Child continued to grow and become strong, increasing in wisdom; and* ☆ *the grace of God was upon Him*. 41 *Now His parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover.* 42 *And when He became twelve, they went up there according to the custom of the Feast;* 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,*

> 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.* 45 *When they did not find Him, they returned to Jerusalem looking for Him.* 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.* 47 *And all who heard Him were amazed at His understanding and His answers.* 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."* 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?"* 50 *But they did not understand the statement which He had made to them.* 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.* 52 *And Jesus kept increasing in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.*
>
> LUKE 2:39–52

## ἐν τοῖς τοῦ πατρός μου δεῖ εἶναί με

DEI · "I HAD TO BE" · G1163

Literally, "in the [things] of My Father it is necessary that I be." There is no word for "house" or "business" in the Greek — hence the NASB's "house" and the KJV's "business"; both are fair, and Spurgeon preached both senses. The verb is *dei*, Luke's divine "must" (4:43; 9:22; 24:7, 26, 44). The first words of Jesus in Luke already speak of necessity and of His Father — and Mary had just said "Your father and I" (v. 48).

## προέκοπτεν

PROEKOPTEN · "KEPT INCREASING" · G4298

From *pro* (forward) and *koptō* (to cut): to cut one's way forward, to advance like a pioneer clearing a path. The imperfect tense means steady, continuing progress. Jesus grew in wisdom (the mind), stature (the body, or age) and favor (*charis*, G5485) with God and men (v. 52) — the same *charis* that "was upon Him" in v. 40. Real growth, in a real human nature, with nothing in it to undo.

## ὑποτασσόμενος

HYPOTASSOMENOS · "IN SUBJECTION" · G5293

A military word, to arrange under, to rank oneself beneath. The present participle with "continued" means He kept on placing Himself under Joseph and Mary. The One who had just called the temple His Father's house went home to Nazareth and obeyed a carpenter. Henry: "Herein he hath given an example to children to be dutiful and obedient to their parents in the Lord."

**DAVID GUZIK** · Enduring Word

Guzik defends the parents: "It would not be difficult to lose track of a young boy with such a large group of travelers." When they found Him among the teachers, listening and asking, "This is something like a middle-school child discussing physics with a rocket scientist." His answer was natural to Jewish ears — "In that day, there was nothing more natural than a son taking up his father's business" — but this Son meant His heavenly Father. Then He went home and obeyed: "Jesus went from vision to duty." Guzik dismisses the legends of a wonder-working child; with Trapp, "Where the Scripture hath no tongue, we must have no ears."

**R.C. SPROUL** · Ligonier · St. Andrew's

Sproul's "Jesus in the Temple" (29 Jan 2012) asks how a twelve-year-old could astonish the scholars. He rejects the quick answer that His divine nature fed Him information: "Jesus didn't have to rely on His divine nature to astound anybody." Sin damages the mind as well as the body and will — "I haven't loved God with all of my mind for one minute in my life" — but Jesus' human mind was unfallen. "Find a perfect human being and see what they can learn in twelve years." "They saw clearly that this child knew more than they did at every point," and "He knew His Father like no twelve-year-old had ever known before."

**C.H. SPURGEON** · Metropolitan Tabernacle

Spurgeon's "The First Recorded Words of Jesus" (Luke 2:48–49, 25 June 1882) notes that "they are the first recorded utterances of our divine Lord," and that "Jesus the child perceived that he was the Son of the Highest." "Nazareth was the place where he was brought up, but Jerusalem's Temple was on earth his true home." He honors the boy's listening: "Hot spirits think that they are not serving God when they are learning; but in this they err," because "the good matter cannot come out of you if it has never gone into you." With Mary, "When you cannot put a truth into your understandings, yet lay it up in your affections." And for seekers: "He is not lost to those who long for him."

**MATTHEW HENRY** · Commentary on the Whole Bible

Henry draws lessons for families: "Public ordinances must be frequented," and parents who miss Christ must turn back — "Those that would find Christ must seek till they find." For the young: "Let them begin at twelve years old, and sooner, to enquire after knowledge." Jesus' answer sets a pattern: "it becomes the children of God, in conformity to Christ, to attend their heavenly Father's business." Yet He went home obedient, and "Herein he hath given an example to children to be dutiful and obedient to their parents in the Lord." "Young people, as they grow in stature, should grow in wisdom."

V
THEME

CROSS-REFERENCES

## The Passage in the Whole Bible

*From the firstborn of Egypt to the Word made flesh*

> *"Sanctify to Me every firstborn, the first offspring of every womb among the sons of Israel, both of man and beast; it belongs to Me."*
>
> EXODUS 13:2

> *"There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, On the throne of David and over his kingdom, To establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness From then on and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will accomplish this."*
>
> ISAIAH 9:7

> *"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."*
>
> ISAIAH 8:14

> *"Behold, I am going to send My messenger, and he will clear the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple ..."*
>
> MALACHI 3:1

> *"And the Word 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

> *"But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons."*
>
> GALATIANS 4:4-5

> *"but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men."*
>
> PHILIPPIANS 2:7

> *"Therefore, He had to be made like His brethren in all things, so that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people."*
>
> HEBREWS 2:17

**DAVID GUZIK** · Enduring Word

Guzik notes that the census which brought Mary to Bethlehem fulfilled Micah 5:2, and that Simeon's words reach past Israel to include the Gentiles.

**MATTHEW HENRY** · Commentary on the Whole Bible

Henry reads the birth as "The fulness of time," when God would "send forth his Son, made of a woman" — Paul's words in Galatians 4:4 (KJV), which Henry applies to the birth at Bethlehem.

SECTION II · STUDY HELPS

# At a Glance

*Four voices, one chapter*

Four teachers, one chapter. Guzik keeps the history and customs in front of us; Sproul preaches the doctrine — the true King, the sinless Redeemer under the Law, the perfect human mind of Jesus; Spurgeon preaches the manger, the carol, the peaceful death and the first words of Christ; Henry gives a proverb for every verse. All four see the same thing: the King of glory came low, and the lowly saw Him first.

| THE MOVEMENT | GUZIK · the text | SPROUL · the doctrine | SPURGEON · the heart | HENRY · the counsel |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **I · The manger** | Not "once upon a time"; Augustus served God's plan; no room was a sign. | Caesar and the true King side by side; no place to lay His head. | King of the poor; no one fears a manger; make room for Him. | Providence had another reach; an inn receives all comers. |
| **II · Shepherds** | The first preacher was an angel; we need a Savior, not a committee. | The lowest people saw the glory; they told everyone they knew. | Glory, peace, good will — the swaddling band was a white flag. | Honest work is no barrier to divine visits; ponder to keep. |
| **III · Simeon & Anna** | A watchman relieved at dawn; Jesus is a magnet; Anna not bitter. | The Redeemer was redeemed; no neutrality about her Son. | Every believer may depart in peace — if he has lived in peace. | Blood by drops, then in streams; who welcome Christ may welcome death. |
| **IV · The temple** | A son takes up his father's business; from vision to duty. | Not His divine nature — a perfect human mind learning. | His first words: Son of the Highest, at home in His Father's house. | Seek till you find; obey parents; grow in wisdom. |

LUKE 2:1–52 · A COMPARATIVE READING

## † Key Insights to Carry

- **God moves emperors to keep a promise.** Caesar wanted taxes; God wanted Bethlehem (Micah 5:2). Henry: "Providence had another reach in it." Guzik: "Augustus wasn't really powerful at all." HENRY
- **The sign was a manger.** The angel's sign was not a palace but a feeding trough (v12). Spurgeon: "We might tremble to approach a throne, but we cannot fear to approach a manger." SPURGEON
- **The gospel came first to the lowly.** Sproul calls the shepherds "the lowest people of the land." Guzik: "The first preacher of the gospel was an angel." Heaven preached to the night shift. SPROUL
- **Glory to God, peace to men — in that order.** Guzik: "Let God have all the glory, so we may have the peace." The peace is for those on whom God's *eudokia*, good pleasure, rests (v14). THE GREEK
- **Two ways to hear the news.** The crowd "wondered" (v18) — a passing emotion; Mary "treasured … pondering" (v19), turning it over for years (cf. v51). THE TEXT
- **The Redeemer was redeemed.** Luke names the Law five times (vv22–24, 27, 39). Sproul: "The Redeemer, in following the law, had to be redeemed before He could ever save anyone." Jesus was born under the Law to redeem those under the Law (Gal 4:4–5). SPROUL
- **The Lamb came with the offering of the poor.** Mary could not afford a lamb (Lev 12:8) — but she was carrying one. Henry: "being poor, and not able to reach the price of a lamb, she brings two doves." HENRY
- **Ready to die because he had seen.** Simeon was "released" like a watchman at dawn (*apolyō*). Spurgeon: "No man can depart in peace who has not lived in peace." SPURGEON

- **No neutral ground.** The Child is set "for the fall and rise of many" and is "a sign to be opposed" (v34). Sproul: "Mary, there will be no neutrality for your son." SPROUL
- **Jesus grew.** He increased (*prokoptō*, to cut forward) in wisdom, stature and favor, and "continued in subjection" to His parents (vv51–52). The Son of God learned obedience at a carpenter's table. THE GREEK

## † Questions for the Table

**1** **Caesar thought he was running the world; God used his decree to bring Mary to Bethlehem. Where am I tempted to think the powerful people in my life are in control instead of God?**

Providence had another reach in it (Henry).

2:1-7; Mic 5:2; Prov 21:1

**2** **There was no room for them in the inn. What in my schedule, my habits or my heart is crowding Jesus out right now?**

Make room for Christ, even if the world makes no room for you (Spurgeon).

2:7

**3** **God sent the first gospel message to shepherds working the night shift. What does that tell me about how God sees men the world overlooks — including me?**

The first preacher of the gospel was an angel (Guzik).

2:8-12

**4** **The shepherds went "in a hurry," then told everyone; Mary quietly pondered. Which one do I need more of this week — urgency or reflection?**

The way to keep the truths of Christ safe is to ponder them (Henry).

2:15-20

**5** **Simeon could say "depart in peace" because he had seen God's salvation. If my life ended this week, could I say the same? What would need to change?**

No man can depart in peace who has not lived in peace (Spurgeon).

2:25-32

**6** **Jesus knew He belonged in His Father's house, and still went home and obeyed His parents for eighteen years. Where is God calling me to faithful, ordinary obedience?**

From vision to duty (Guzik).

2:49-52; Heb 5:8

*Luke 2 moves from Caesar's palace to a feeding trough, from angels in the sky to an old man's arms, and from the temple courts back to a carpenter's home in Nazareth. The King of glory was born poor, kept the Law, was opposed from the start, and grew up in quiet obedience. Make room for Him, ponder what you have heard, and tell someone what you have seen.*

*Teaching the Word. Watching the Times. — Smith For Christ*

## † Sources

Each teacher's section summarizes the pages below in our own words; short quotations are verbatim from them. Matthew Henry (1662–1714) completed his *Commentary* himself through the Gospels and Acts. Henry's Commentary and C.H. Spurgeon (1834–1892) are in the public domain; Guzik and Sproul are summarized — consult each author's own work.


- Guzik, Enduring Word Commentary, Luke 2 — https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/luke-2/
- Ligonier Scripture index, Luke 2 — https://learn.ligonier.org/scripture/luke-2
- Ligonier sermon index, Luke — https://learn.ligonier.org/scripture/luke?type=sermon
- Sproul, "The Birth of Jesus" (Luke 2:1–20, 25 Dec 2011) — https://learn.ligonier.org/sermons/birth-jesus
- Sproul, "Song of Simeon" (Luke 2:21–38, 22 Jan 2012) — https://learn.ligonier.org/sermons/song-simeon
- Sproul, "Jesus in the Temple" (Luke 2:39–52, 29 Jan 2012) — https://learn.ligonier.org/sermons/jesus-temple
- Spurgeon, "No Room for Christ in the Inn" (Luke 2:7) — https://biblehub.com/sermons/auth/spurgeon/no_room_for_christ_in_the_inn.htm
- Spurgeon, "The First Christmas Carol" (Luke 2:14) — https://biblehub.com/sermons/auth/spurgeon/the_first_christmas_carol.htm
- Spurgeon, "Nunc Dimittis" (Luke 2:29–31) — https://biblehub.com/sermons/auth/spurgeon/nunc_dimittis.htm
- Spurgeon, "The First Recorded Words of Jesus" (Luke 2:48–49, 25 June 1882, MTP 28) — https://www.spurgeon.org/sermons/the-first-recorded-words-of-jesus
- Matthew Henry, Commentary on the Whole Bible, Luke 2 — https://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/matthew-henry-complete/luke/2.html
- NASB 1995 — Leviticus 12:8 — https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Leviticus%2012:8&version=NASB1995
- NASB 1995 — Galatians 4:4–5 — https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Galatians%204:4-5&version=NASB1995
- NASB 1995 — Exodus 13:2; Isaiah 9:6–7; Malachi 3:1; Philippians 2:7; Hebrews 2:17 (saved NASB95 chapter pages from the John verification set) — https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Exodus%2013&version=NASB1995
- NASB 1995 — Micah 5:2; Isaiah 8:14; Isaiah 49:6; John 1:14 (wording as checked for earlier SFC studies) — https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Micah%205:2&version=NASB1995
- Biblehub Greek interlinear, Luke 2 (Strong's 582, 4683, 5336, 2646, 4756, 2107, 4820, 630, 4592, 483, 4501, 3085, 1839, 3600, 1163, 5293, 4298, 5485) — https://biblehub.com/interlinear/luke/2.htm


Scripture: New American Standard Bible® (NASB), © 1960–1995 The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission. Greek: SBL Greek New Testament; Strong's numbers per biblehub.com. · Smith For Christ Publishing · Ed Smith