SMITH FOR CHRIST PUBLISHING · BEREAN DASHBOARD STUDY

Luke 2

A Savior Born in the City of David — O·I·A, integrated with the Deep Dive

OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION · 2026-11-10 · NASB 1995

"Seeking God diligently — examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so." — Acts 17:11

CHAPTER THEME

The Son of David is born in David's town because a pagan emperor wanted taxes, laid in a feeding trough, and announced first to shepherds. He keeps the Law from His first week, is welcomed by two old saints who were waiting, and grows up in quiet obedience — the Savior who came low enough for me to reach.

00 The Text

LUKE 2 (NASB95), MARKED

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

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.

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.

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.

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.

Marked in the text

- **v1** “a decree went out from Caesar Augustus” — Time / place / contrast
- **v4** “the city of David which is called Bethlehem” — Time / place / contrast
- **v7** “laid Him in a manger” — God — His character & actions
- **v7** “there was no room for them in the inn” — Sin / warning
- **v9** “the glory of the Lord shone around them” — God — His character & actions
- **v10** “Do not be afraid” — Command / instruction
- **v10** “good news of great joy which will be for all the people” — Promise / blessing
- **v11** “a Savior, who is Christ the Lord” — God — His character & actions
- **v14** “Glory to God in the highest” — God — His character & actions
- **v14** “on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased” — Promise / blessing
- **v16** “they came in a hurry” — Command / instruction
- **v19** “pondering them in her heart” — Time / place / contrast
- **v20** “glorifying and praising God” — Command / instruction
- **v21** “His name was then called Jesus” — God — His character & actions
- **v24** “A PAIR OF TURTLEDOVES OR TWO YOUNG PIGEONS” — Time / place / contrast
- **v25** “looking for the consolation of Israel” — Promise / blessing
- **v29** “depart in peace” — Promise / blessing
- **v30** “my eyes have seen Your salvation” — God — His character & actions
- **v32** “A LIGHT OF REVELATION TO THE GENTILES” — God — His character & actions
- **v34** “a sign to be opposed” — Sin / warning
- **v35** “a sword will pierce even your own soul” — Sin / warning
- **v37** “serving night and day with fastings and prayers” — Command / instruction
- **v38** “the redemption of Jerusalem” — Promise / blessing
- **v40** “the grace of God was upon Him” — Promise / blessing
- **v46** “after three days” — Time / place / contrast
- **v49** “I had to be in My Father’s house” — God — His character & actions
- **v51** “He continued in subjection to them” — Command / instruction
- **v52** “increasing in wisdom and stature” — Time / place / contrast
- **v22** “according to the law” — Key repeated word (every occurrence)
- **v25** “looking” — Key repeated word (every occurrence)

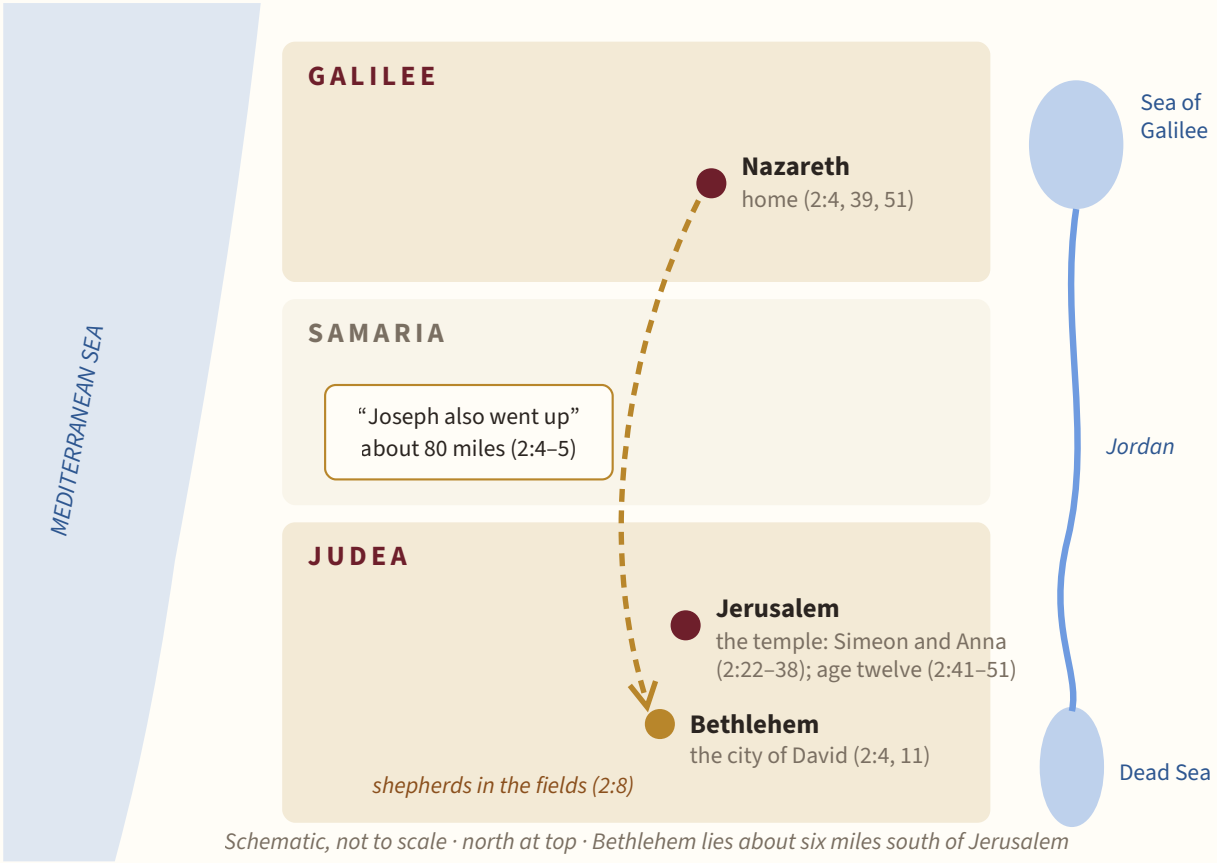
01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · LUKE 2:7

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

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.

Setting. Caesar Augustus orders a census, and Joseph takes Mary from Nazareth to Bethlehem, where she gives birth and lays her Son in a manger (vv1–7). Angels announce the birth to shepherds in the nearby fields, who hurry to see and then tell others (vv8–20). On the eighth day He is circumcised and named Jesus; after the days of purification He is presented in the temple, where Simeon and Anna recognize Him (vv21–38). The family returns to Nazareth (vv39–40). At twelve, at Passover, Jesus stays behind in the temple and is found after three days among the teachers; He goes home and grows (vv41–52).

Structure:

- vv1–7 — **the birth in Bethlehem:** Caesar's decree, the first census under Quirinius (vv1–3); Joseph goes up from Nazareth to the city of David with Mary, who is with child (vv4–5); her firstborn son, wrapped in cloths and laid in a manger — no room in the inn (vv6–7).
- vv8–20 — **the angels and the shepherds:** shepherds keeping watch by night; the glory of the Lord (vv8–9); "Do not be afraid" — good news of great joy; a Savior, Christ the Lord; the sign of the manger (vv10–12); the heavenly host: "Glory to God in the highest" (vv13–14); "Let us go straight to Bethlehem" — they find Him (vv15–16); they make it known; all wonder; Mary treasures and ponders; the shepherds return glorifying God (vv17–20).
- vv21–38 — **Simeon and Anna:** circumcised and named Jesus (v21); purification, presentation, the offering of two birds (vv22–24); Simeon — righteous, devout, waiting, the Spirit upon him (vv25–27); "Now Lord, You are releasing Your bond-servant" — salvation, a light to the Gentiles, the glory of Israel (vv28–32); the fall and rise of many; a sign opposed; a sword (vv33–35); Anna, eighty-four, never left the temple; she speaks of Him to those looking for redemption (vv36–38).
- vv39–52 — **the boy Jesus in the temple:** back to Nazareth; the Child grows; the grace of God upon Him (vv39–40); Passover at twelve; He stays behind; a day's journey; three days of searching (vv41–45); found among the teachers, listening and asking; all amazed (vv46–47); "Son, why have You treated us this way?" — "I had to be in My Father's house" (vv48–50); subject to them; Mary treasures; Jesus increases in wisdom, stature and favor (vv51–52).

Repeated words, with counts:

- "Lord" ×10 — vv9 (×2), 11, 15, 22, 23 (×2), 24, 29, 39.
- "look(ing) / found / find" ×10 — vv12, 16, 25, 38, 44, 45 (×2), 46, 48, 49.
- "child / Child / baby / boy / son" ×10 — vv5, 7, 12, 16, 17, 27, 34, 40, 43, 48.
- "God" ×7 — vv13, 14, 20, 28, 38, 40, 52.
- "see / seen / saw" ×7 — vv15, 17, 20, 26 (×2), 30, 48.
- "Jerusalem" ×6 — vv22, 25, 38, 41, 43, 45; "days" ×6 — vv1, 6, 21, 22, 43, 46.
- "law / Law" ×5 — vv22, 23, 24, 27, 39 ("according to the law" in vv22, 24, 39; "the custom of the Law," v27).
- "census / register" ×5 — vv1, 2, 3 (×2), 5; "city" ×5 — vv3, 4 (×2), 11, 39.
- "angel(s)" ×5 — vv9, 10, 13, 15, 21; "shepherds" ×4 — vv8, 15, 18, 20.
- "told / made known" ×5 — vv15, 17 (×2), 18, 20.
- "glory / glorifying" ×4 — vv9, 14, 20, 32; "amazed / wondered / astonished" ×4 — vv18, 33, 47, 48.
- "Mary" ×4; "mother" ×4 — vv33, 34, 48, 51; "Jesus" ×4 — vv21, 27, 43, 52.
- "manger" ×3 — vv7, 12, 16; "temple" ×3 — vv27, 37, 46; "Holy Spirit / Spirit" ×3 — vv25, 26, 27; "Israel" ×3 — vv25, 32, 34.
- "heart(s)" ×3 — vv19, 35, 51; "treasured / pondering" ×3 — vv19 (×2), 51.
- "peace" ×2 — vv14, 29; "salvation / Savior" ×2 — vv11, 30; "wisdom" ×2 — vv40, 52.

Contrasts: Caesar Augustus ⟷ a baby in a manger (vv1, 7). The city of David ⟷ no room in the inn (vv4, 7). Night fields ⟷ the glory of the Lord (vv8–9). Glory in the highest ⟷ peace on earth (v14). The crowd wondered ⟷ Mary treasured and pondered (vv18–19). The offering of the poor ⟷ the firstborn holy to the Lord (vv23–24).

Release in peace ⟷ a sword (vv29, 35). Fall ⟷ rise (v34). Gentiles ⟷ Israel (v32). “Your father and I” ⟷ “My Father’s house” (vv48–49). The temple ⟷ subjection in Nazareth (vv49, 51).

Shape of the chapter: two scenes in Bethlehem (birth, shepherds) and two in the temple (presentation, Passover at twelve), with Nazareth as the frame (vv4, 39, 51). Each scene ends with someone responding — glorifying, praising, giving thanks, treasuring.

Chapter theme (my words): God keeps His promise to David through a pagan census and a feeding trough. The Savior is announced to the lowly, keeps the Law as a baby, is recognized by those who were waiting, and grows up knowing He belongs to His Father — and still goes home and obeys.

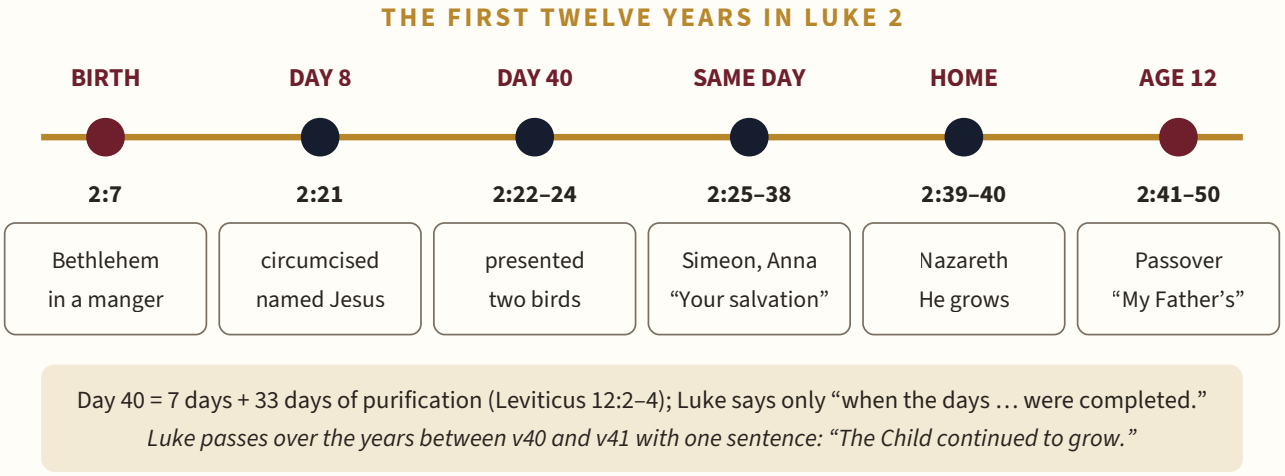
02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · LUKE 2:30–32

"For △ my eyes have seen Your salvation, Which You have prepared in the presence of all peoples, ☆ A LIGHT OF REVELATION TO THE GENTILES, And ☆ the glory of Your people Israel."

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.

Is Luke's history reliable? Guzik: "This is not "once upon a time."" Luke names Caesar Augustus and Quirinius. The census has been debated because Quirinius' well-known census was in AD 6 (Acts 5:37); Guzik reads "the first census" (v2) as distinguishing this one from that later enrollment. I hold that Luke, who has been tested more than any ancient historian (Sproul, Luke 1), got it right.

Why Bethlehem? Because Micah 5:2 said the ruler of Israel would come from there, and because Joseph "was of the house and family of David" (v4). Henry: "Bethlehem signifies the house of bread" — the Bread of Life was born in the house of bread and laid in a feeding trough.

What was "the inn"? *Katalyma* means a lodging or guest room (22:11). Whatever the building, there was no space, and the Son of God began life where animals ate. Guzik: "That there was no room in the inn was symbolic of what was to happen to Jesus." Spurgeon: "By being in a manger He was declared to be the king of the poor."

Why shepherds? Sproul calls them "the lowest people of the land." God announced His Son first to working men on the night shift. Henry: "We are not out of the way of divine visits when we are sensibly employed in an honest calling."

"Peace among men with whom He is pleased" (v14). The NASB follows the manuscripts that read *eudokias* — men on whom God's good pleasure rests; the KJV reads "good will toward men," which Spurgeon preached. Either way, the peace is God's gift through the Savior, not something men achieve. Guzik: "Let God have all the glory, so we may have the peace."

Why was the sinless Jesus circumcised and "redeemed"? Sproul: circumcision signified the removal of sin, yet Jesus "was perfectly sinless from the moment of His conception to the moment of His death." He kept the Law for us — "born under the Law, so that He might redeem those who were under the Law" (Gal 4:4–5). Sproul: "The Redeemer, in following the law, had to be redeemed before He could ever save anyone." Henry: His blood was shed "by drops" on the eighth day and "in purple streams" on the cross.

Simeon's two oracles. The first is praise: salvation prepared before all peoples, "A light of revelation to the Gentiles, And the glory of Your people Israel" (v32, Isaiah 49:6). The second is warning: "the fall and rise of many in Israel," "a sign to be opposed," and a sword for Mary (vv34–35). Guzik: "Jesus is like a magnet." Sproul: "there will be no neutrality for your son." I note that Simeon calls Jesus "the glory of Your people Israel" — God has not finished with Israel; the stone they stumbled over (Isa 8:14) will yet be their glory (Rom 11:11–12, 26).

Anna. A widow for decades, she "never left the temple, serving night and day with fastings and prayers" (v37). Guzik: she "knew pain and loss but had not become bitter." Henry: "Those that have an acquaintance with Christ themselves should do all they can to bring others acquainted with him."

How could a twelve-year-old astonish the teachers? Sproul: not by switching on His deity — "Jesus didn't have to rely on His divine nature to astound anybody." His human mind was untouched by sin. "Find a perfect human being and see what they can learn in twelve years." Spurgeon: "Hot spirits think that they are not serving God when they are learning; but in this they err."

"My Father's house." His first recorded words (Spurgeon) answer Mary's "Your father and I" with "My Father's." The Greek has no noun — "in the things of My Father" — so "house" (NASB) and "business" (KJV) are both fair. The verb is *dei*, the divine must. Then He "went down … and He continued in subjection to them" (v51). Guzik: "Jesus went from vision to duty."

Word study (Greek):

- **census — *apographē* (G582):** an official enrollment (v2; Acts 5:37).
- **wrapped in cloths — *sparganoō* (G4683):** bound in strips of cloth (vv7, 12).
- **manger — *phatnē* (G5336):** a feeding trough (vv7, 12, 16; 13:15).
- **inn — *katalyma* (G2646):** a lodging, guest room (v7; 22:11).
- **host — *stratia* (G4756):** an army (v13).
- **good pleasure — *eudokia* (G2107):** God's favor (v14; Eph 1:5).
- **pondering — *symballō* (G4820):** to throw together, compare (v19).
- **consolation — *paraklēsis* (G3874):** comfort, calling alongside (v25; Isa 40:1).
- **releasing — *apolyō* (G630):** to set free, dismiss (v29).
- **sign — *sēmeion* (G4592); opposed — *antilegō* (G483):** a sign spoken against (v34).
- **sword — *rhomphaia* (G4501):** a long, broad blade (v35).
- **redemption — *lytrōsis* (G3085):** ransoming (v38; 1:68).
- **amazed — *existēmi* (G1839):** beside themselves (v47); **anxiously — *odynaō* (G3600):** in anguish (v48).

- **had to — *dei* (G1163):** the divine necessity (v49).
- **in subjection — *hypotassō* (G5293):** to rank oneself under (v51).
- **increasing — *prokoptō* (G4298):** to cut one's way forward (v52); **favor — *charis* (G5485):** grace (vv40, 52).

Key insights to carry (from the Deep Dive):

1. **God moves emperors to keep a promise** (Henry, Guzik).
2. **The sign was a manger** (Spurgeon).
3. **The gospel came first to the lowly** (Sproul, Guzik).
4. **Glory to God, peace to men — in that order** (v14).
5. **Two ways to hear the news** — wonder or treasure (vv18–19).
6. **The Redeemer was redeemed** (Sproul).
7. **The Lamb came with the offering of the poor** (Henry).
8. **Ready to die because he had seen** (Spurgeon).
9. **No neutral ground** (Sproul).
10. **Jesus grew** — in wisdom, stature, favor, and obedience (vv51–52).

Cross-references: Gen 35:19; Exod 13:2, 12–13; Lev 12:2–8; Num 18:15–16; Deut 16:16; 1 Sam 2:26; 2 Sam 7:12–13; Isa 8:14; 9:6–7; 40:1; 49:6; 52:10; Mic 5:2; Mal 3:1; Matt 2:1–23; John 1:14; Acts 5:37; Rom 11:11–12, 26; Gal 4:4–5; Phil 2:7; Heb 2:17; 5:8.

03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · LUKE 2:51

"And He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and He continued in subjection to them; and His mother treasured all these things in her heart."

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.

Example to follow — the shepherds. They heard, they went "in a hurry," they found Him, they told others, and they went back to their flocks "glorifying and praising God" (vv15–20). Nothing about their job changed; everything about them did. Many of the men I serve work hard jobs no one honors, or no job at all right now. God sent His first gospel message to men like that. This week I will tell one man, plainly, what I have seen Jesus do.

Sin to confess — no room. I have crowded Jesus out — not with hostility but with busyness, screens, worry and my own plans (v7). Spurgeon asked whether there was room even in the church. I confess the full inn of my heart, and I ask Him to move in and take the best room.

Example to follow — Mary's pondering. She did not understand everything (v50), but she "treasured all these things, pondering them in her heart" (vv19, 51). When I don't understand what God is doing, I don't have to quit; I can keep it, turn it over, and wait. Spurgeon: "When you cannot put a truth into your understandings, yet lay it up in your affections."

Promise to trust — "depart in peace." Simeon was ready to die because he had held God's salvation in his arms (vv29–30). That peace is for every believer (Spurgeon) — but it grows out of a life lived in peace with God now. Some of the men I sit with have buried friends this year. Christ makes it possible to face death with open hands.

Command to obey — ordinary obedience. The Son of God knew who His Father was, and He still went home to Nazareth and "continued in subjection" to His parents for eighteen years (v51). I want big assignments; God often gives me faithful, hidden ones. This week I will do the ordinary things in front of me — my job, my family, my word — as my Father's business.

Questions for the table (from the Deep Dive):

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? (2:1–7; Mic 5:2; Prov 21:1) *Providence had another reach in it (Henry).*
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? (2:7) *Make room for Christ, even if the world makes no room for you (Spurgeon).*
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? (2:8–12) *The first preacher of the gospel was an angel (Guzik).*
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? (2:15–20) *The way to keep the truths of Christ safe is to ponder them (Henry).*
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? (2:25–32) *No man can depart in peace who has not lived in peace (Spurgeon).*
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? (2:49–52; Heb 5:8) *From vision to duty (Guzik).*

Worship. The Christ of God was laid in a feeding trough, announced by an army of angels to men nobody noticed, carried into the temple with the offering of the poor, and held in the arms of an old man who said he had seen enough. He is the Savior, Christ the Lord; a light of revelation to the Gentiles and the glory of God's people Israel; the Son who was always about His Father's business, and the boy who obeyed a carpenter.

Prayer. Lord Jesus, You came low enough for shepherds and sinners to reach You. Forgive me for leaving You no room. Make my heart a place where You are welcome, teach me to treasure Your words when I don't understand them, and give me Simeon's peace — the peace of a man who has seen Your salvation. Make me faithful in the ordinary places, about my Father's business, until the day You release Your servant in peace. Amen.

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