

## I. Chapter 2

A. Again, the point isn't to prove God's power to allow men to prophesy truthfully—it's to demonstrate that God keeps his promises and that Jesus is the fulfillment.

(Luke 2:1-20) In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. 2 (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) 3 And everyone went to his own town to register. 4 So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. 5 He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. 6 While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, 7 and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

8 And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. 9 An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified.

B. "Glory" refers to the bright shining light that surrounds God. This is what is in heaven around God's throne.

10 But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. 11 Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord.

C. "Christ" is from the Greek *Christos*, which means the anointed one—which is the Greek word for Hebrew Messiah—the anointed one. Anointing was the ceremony by which a king was ordained king—hence, "Christ" means the King prophesied by the prophets, the Messiah, who has finally come. When Jesus is called "Christ," it's not just another word for Jesus. It's not his last name. It's a title—like "King Jesus" but better.

D. "Lord" can mean "sir" or can be a reference to a king. Context determines. But "the Lord" is a reference to the king or to God.

12 This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." 13 Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, 14 "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests." 15 When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about." 16 So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the

manger. 17 When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, 18 and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. 19 **But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart.** 20 The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

E. V. 19 just seems to say that Luke got these stories from Mary herself. Who else would say this?

(Luke 2:21-24) On the eighth day, when it was time to circumcise him, he was named Jesus, the name the angel had given him before he had been conceived. 22 When the time of their purification according to the Law of Moses had been completed, Joseph and Mary took him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord 23 (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, “Every firstborn male is to be consecrated to the Lord”), 24 and to offer a sacrifice in keeping with what is said in the Law of the Lord: “a pair of doves or two young pigeons.”

F. God’s insisting on naming John and Jesus is important—as the power to name demonstrates that God has a higher calling on these men than their parents. God was intentionally taking away parental prerogatives.

1. John would die in prison. Jesus would die on a cross.
2. John left home to live in the wilderness and Jesus left home to be an itinerant preacher.
3. Their parents had to surrender their children to God. Mary was called “blessed” but she suffered terribly as the mother of Jesus.
4. Just so, when we baptize our sons and daughters, we surrender them to God. God’s call is higher than ours. We give up certain parental prerogatives.
5. If God calls a child to missions, to preach, to run a halfway house, to live like a pauper for God, to live in India to heal lepers, it’s God’s call. We don’t get to decide (and have no business arguing). If you don’t like the deal, don’t give your children to God (but there’s an even higher price, for that)
6. We really need to understand what we’re doing as parents and not only accept the consequences but cooperate with God in training our children for Christian service—if we’re serious about all this church stuff.

G. Now, we are bad to skip all the speeches (I also skip the songs in the *Lord of the Rings*). They seem to us to be just references to a bunch of old prophecies.

But Luke puts them here for a reason, which is in part to tell us what this Jesus is going to be about. If we skip them, we might misunderstand the rest of the book.

(Luke 2:25-35) Now there was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon, who was righteous and devout. He was waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. 26 It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Christ. 27 **Moved by the Spirit**, he went into the temple courts. When the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what the custom of the Law required, 28 Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying: 29 "Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you now dismiss your servant in peace. 30 For my eyes have seen your salvation, 31 which you have prepared in the sight of all people, 32 **a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel.**" 33 The child's father and mother marveled at what was said about him. 34 Then Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, his mother: "**This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken against, 35 so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul too.**"

H. Ow! Simeon dramatically changes things.

1. The salvation of the Gentiles is now explicit. The OT prophets were pretty clear, but the Jews ignored this.
2. Jesus will upset the political applecart. This is not just personal salvation—it's about how the world works. Some people who lose power, some will gain. We should expect those in power to be unhappy when their positions are threatened.
3. Many will despise Jesus—again, because of his impact on the "powers"
4. He will reveal the thoughts of our hearts—scary to the wicked
5. And Mary will suffer because of her son's suffering.

(Luke 2:36-40) There was also a **prophetess**, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was very old; she had lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, 37 and then was a widow until she was eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped night and day, fasting and praying. 38 Coming up to them at that very moment, she gave thanks to God and **spoke about the child to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem.** 39 When Joseph and Mary had done everything required by the Law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee to their own town of Nazareth. 40 And the child grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him.

I. Women did not speak to strangers in First Century Palestine, but by the power of God, Anna spoke in the temple courts and told everyone about Jesus. (Why couldn't God have found a man to do this? Wouldn't that have been less offensive? Wouldn't God be more prudent to avoid unnecessary change from accepted practices? Why go against cultural convention and the prejudices of the Jewish power structure? Well, the question answers itself)

(Luke 2:41-52) Every year his parents went to Jerusalem for the Feast of the Passover. <sup>42</sup> When he was twelve years old, they went up to the Feast, according to the custom. <sup>43</sup> After the Feast was over, while his parents were returning home, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but they were unaware of it. <sup>44</sup> Thinking he was in their company, they traveled on for a day. Then they began looking for him among their relatives and friends. <sup>45</sup> When they did not find him, they went back to Jerusalem to look for him. <sup>46</sup> After three days they found him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, **listening to them and asking them questions.** <sup>47</sup> **Everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding and his answers.** <sup>48</sup> When his parents saw him, they were astonished. His mother said to him, "Son, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you." <sup>49</sup> "Why were you searching for me?" he asked. "Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?" <sup>50</sup> But they did not understand what he was saying to them. <sup>51</sup> Then he went down to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them. But his mother treasured all these things in her heart. <sup>52</sup> And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.

J. An interesting story—surely told to Luke by Mary.