

THRIVING



IN THE WORD . IN PRAYER . IN FELLOWSHIP

Luke 2

Jesus' Birth in Bethlehem

2 Now in those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus, that a census be taken of all the inhabited earth. ²This was the first census taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³And all *the people* were on their way to register for the census, each to his own city. ⁴Now 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, ⁵in order to register along with Mary, who was betrothed to him, and was pregnant. ⁶While they were there, the time came for her to give birth. ⁷And 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. ⁸In the same region there were *some* shepherds staying out in the fields and keeping watch over their flock at night. ⁹And an angel of the Lord *suddenly* stood near them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them; and they were terribly frightened. ¹⁰And so 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; ¹¹for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. ¹²And this *will be* a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." ¹³And suddenly there appeared with the angel a multitude of the heavenly army of *angels* praising God and saying, ¹⁴"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among people with whom He is pleased." ¹⁵When the angels had departed from them into heaven, the shepherds *began* saying to one another, "Let's go straight to Bethlehem, then, and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us." ¹⁶And they came in a hurry and found their way to Mary and Joseph, and the baby as He lay in the manger. ¹⁷When they had seen *Him*, they made known the statement which had been told them about this Child. ¹⁸And all who heard it were amazed about the things which were told them by the shepherds. ¹⁹But Mary treasured all these things, pondering them in her heart. ²⁰And the shepherds went back, glorifying and praising God for all that they had heard and seen, just as had been told them.

Jesus Presented at the Temple

²¹And when eight days were completed so that it was time for His circumcision, He was also named Jesus, the *name* given by the angel before He was conceived in the womb. ²²And 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"), ²⁴and to offer a sacrifice according to what has been stated in the Law of the Lord: "A PAIR OF TURTLEDOVES OR TWO YOUNG DOVES." ²⁵And there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; and this man was righteous and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel; and the Holy Spirit was upon him. ²⁶And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. ²⁷And he came by 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 in his arms,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 His mother Mary, “Behold, this *Child* is appointed for the fall and rise of many in Israel, and as a sign to be opposed—³⁵ and a sword will pierce 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 for seven years after her marriage,³⁷ and *then* as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She did not leave the temple *grounds*, serving night and day with fasts and prayers.³⁸ And at that very moment she came up and *began* giving thanks to God, and continued to speak about Him to all those who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem.

Return to Nazareth

³⁹ And when *His parents* had completed everything in accordance with the Law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own city of Nazareth.⁴⁰ Now the Child continued to grow and to become strong, increasing in wisdom; and the favor of God was upon Him.⁴¹ His parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover.⁴² And when He was twelve years old, they went up *there* according to the custom of the feast;⁴³ and as they were returning, after spending the full number of days *required*, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but His parents were unaware *of it*.⁴⁴ Instead, they thought that He was *somewhere* in the caravan, and they went a day’s journey; and *then* they *began* looking for Him among their relatives and acquaintances.⁴⁵ And 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 *Joseph and Mary* saw Him, they were bewildered; 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 And yet they on their part 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 to be subject 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 people.

1. What does this passage teach us about God?
2. What does this passage teach us about ourselves?
3. How do you think we are supposed to respond to this passage?
4. What are you excited to share with others?

“So much grandeur and glory in Luke 2. The angel of the Lord shows up, bringing good news of great joy. Choirs of angels sing glory to God in the highest. Shepherds rushed to see what had happened and left glorifying God. The long awaited Messiah had been born to save all of mankind from their sin. Yet Mary, in the quietness of her heart, ponders all these things. This Christmas, as we ponder afresh the miracle and gift of Christmas, we join in praise and worship our Savior.”— Julie Bernard

“Jesus was born that you might be born again. He lived that you might live. He died that you might die to sin. He is risen, and today he makes intercession for transgressors that they may be reconciled to God through him. Come, then; believe, trust rejoice, adore!”— Charles Spurgeon