

CAPITOL STUDIES

JANUARY 29, 2025 • WEEK 3



LUKE FOR LEGISLATORS

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Theme Verse

Luke 19:10

For the Son of Man has come to **seek** and to **save** that which was **lost**.



My Father's Business



WHEN A JEWISH BOY REACHES THE AGE OF 13, he is considered an adult in that he is now accountable for his own actions, particularly the fulfilling of all the commandments or “mitzvahs.” Prior to this, his father is accountable for his son’s actions. The father is also required to see that his son receives concentrated time learning and “practicing” the commandments during the year before his son’s 13th birthday so that he will be prepared for what is expected of him.¹ In Jewish families today, a special ceremony called *bar mitzvah* is held to celebrate this significant occasion. *Bar mitzvah* means “son of the commandment.” In Luke chapter 2, we read of something that was perhaps similar in Jesus’ life as a 12-year-old.

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INTRODUCTION

Chapter 2 gives us details (historical and personal) about the birth of Jesus Christ. Much of this material we have previously discussed in our Christmas studies, so this study will focus primarily on material that we have not covered. We will touch briefly on the birth of Christ, go on to his boyhood, and end with Jesus at age 12, only months away from entering full adulthood in the Jewish faith. In every stage of His life, He fulfilled God's holy will.

I. BIRTH OF JESUS

Luke 2:6-7

While they were there, the days were completed 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.²

“That Mary wrapped the child herself points to a lonely birth. That He was laid in a manger has traditionally been taken to mean that Jesus was born in a stable. He may have been. But it is also possible that the birth took place in a very poor home where the animals shared the same roof as the family.”³ Perhaps it was a cave where the family's animals were kept.

Luke 2:10-14

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; ¹¹for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. ¹²This 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 host praising God and saying, ¹⁴“Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased.”

Like Zacharias and Mary, the shepherds were afraid when the angel appeared, but the angel knew their fear and quickly told them not to be afraid (cf. 1:13, 30). He explained that he had good and joyful news. The word translated “bring ... good news” would later most often be used of the “good news” of the Gospel (*evangelizomai*). Though the announcement of the Savior came first to God's people, the Jews, this “good news of great joy” was for the people of every tribe, tongue, and nation. It was for all those in the past, the present, and the future. The angel was saying this good news was meant for me and for you! A Savior from our sins. A way to get to heaven.

Like with Zacharias and Mary, God gave the shepherds a sign. “This would help them recognize the baby, but it would also attest the truth of the angel's words. In Bethlehem that night there might be one or two babies *wrapped in swaddling clothes*, but surely only one *lying in a manger*.”⁴ God's birth announcement ended with a multitude of other angels praising God and proclaiming peace to the earth through the long-awaited arrival of the Messiah.



II. PRESENTATION OF JESUS

Luke 2:21-24

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. 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 was said in the Law of the Lord, “A pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons.”

It was customary for baby boys to be named at the time of their circumcision, which was eight days after the baby was born. Scripture does not give us a reason for waiting eight days, but it is interesting to note that on day eight, the amount of vitamin K in the baby is at its highest (aiding clotting), immunity levels are up (preventing infection), cortisol levels surge (easing inflammation), and testosterone levels rise (aiding tissue elasticity and healing). Sacrificial lambs were also kept eight days before they were offered.⁵

A woman bearing a son was considered “unclean” for forty days. At the end of that time of “purification,” it was the custom for Jewish parents to present their child to God with an offering. Typically, this would be a yearling lamb and a dove or pigeon. If poor, two doves or pigeons could be offered instead. Apparently, Mary and Joseph were poor.

III. EARLY BOYHOOD OF JESUS

Luke 2:39-40

When they had performed everything according to the Law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own city of Nazareth. ⁴⁰The Child continued to grow and become strong, increasing in wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him.

Mary and Joseph were careful to follow the commands of Scripture in both circumcision and baby dedication. Putting the Biblical accounts of Matthew and Luke together, we surmise that Mary and Joseph remained in Bethlehem until after the wisemen left, then went to Egypt. When it was safe, they returned to live in Nazareth. They were diligent in rearing Jesus in their home. He grew taller, stronger, and wiser; and God, His Father, poured His grace on Him. So, what happened next seemed to shock His human parents.

IV. LATER BOYHOOD OF JESUS

A. Missing

Luke 2:41-47

Now His parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover. ⁴²And when He became twelve, they went up there according to the custom of the Feast; ⁴³and 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, ⁴⁴but supposed Him to be in the caravan, and went a day's journey; and they began looking for Him among their relatives and acquaintances. ⁴⁵When they did not find Him, they returned to Jerusalem looking for Him. ⁴⁶Then, after three days they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both listening to them and asking them questions. ⁴⁷And all who heard Him were amazed at His understanding and His answers.

“The Passover was a feast officially lasting eight days. Mary, Joseph, and other family members, including probably our Lord’s four half-brothers and [his] half-sisters (Matthew 13:55, 56) had attended Jerusalem for Passover. The book of Exodus teaches that all the males of Israel were expected at Jerusalem three times a year for Passover, the Feast of Firstfruits and the Feast of Ingathering at harvest (Exodus 34:22, 23).”⁶ The Passover was over. Mary and Joseph assumed Jesus was with other family or friends in the group traveling home to Nazareth. When they couldn’t find him, they searched for three days back in Jerusalem. Jesus was instead in the temple asking and answering questions of the Jewish teachers. The “boy” Jesus amazed everyone with his understanding (insight) and answers.

B. Mission

Luke 2:48-49

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.” ⁴⁹And 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?”

Amazed, astonished, anxious parents: they were confused, worried, and hurt by Jesus’ actions. Mary’s loving rebuke brought a respectful but surprised response from Jesus: “Why were you looking for Me? Didn’t you know that I would be in My Father’s house?” “The word *had to be, it is necessary, or must* (Gk. word *dei*) was often on our Lord’s lips: ‘I must preach’ (Luke 4:43); ‘The Son of man must suffer’ (Luke 9:22); the Son of man ‘must be lifted up’ (John 3:14). The divine *Must* is important to take note of in the Scripture text. Even at the age of twelve, Jesus was moved by a divine compulsion to do the Father’s will.”⁷ The first recorded words of the Messiah are a recognition of His unique relationship to God (*my Father*) and the necessity (*must*) to be in “My Father’s house” and “about my Father’s business” (NKJV). “He was by now fully aware of exactly who He was. Surely, too, they should have come directly to His Father’s house. As for this “Father’s business,” it was certainly not that of a carpenter but the work of the cross.”⁸

C. Misunderstood

Luke 2:50-51

But they did not understand the statement which He had made to them. ⁵¹And 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.



“They did not understand his words (v. 50). Mary and Joseph were ordinary people who did not always grasp the full meaning of spiritual truth. It is all the more remarkable that our Lord, in obedience to the fifth commandment, was able to recognize their authority as parents, and be ‘subject to them’ (v. 51). He acknowledged their God-given rights over him, however poor their understanding may at times have seemed to him. Mary and Joseph had spoken with an angel and seen the miracle of Jesus’ birth, yet still their understanding of Christ’s mission was limited.”⁹ “Christ’s obedience was necessary so that He could ‘fulfill all righteousness’ (Matthew 3:15) and thus prove to be the perfect sacrifice to take the place of sinners (1 Peter 3:18). He was the perfectly righteous One whose righteousness would be imputed to sinners (cf. Romans 3:24-26).”¹⁰ “As a dutiful son Jesus returned to Nazareth and *was obedient to them* (NIV) (this is Luke’s last reference to Joseph; was he dead before Jesus’ ministry began?). It was not yet time for him to engage on his mission, so he remained in the home. As before with the shepherds (19), Mary did not forget. She might not understand, but she remembered.”¹¹

V. YOUNG MAN JESUS

Luke 2:52

And Jesus kept increasing in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.

Jesus continued to advance intellectually, physically, and socially—*in favor with God and man* (cf. 1 Samuel 2:26; Proverbs 3:4). “Jesus did not cease being God or divest Himself of divine attributes in order to become man. Rather He took on a human nature (an addition, not a subtraction), and submitted the use of His divine attributes to the will of the Father (John 5:19, 30; 8:28; Philippians 2:5-8). Therefore, there were times when His omniscience was on display (Matthew 9:4; John 2:24, 25; 4:17, 18; 11:11-14; 16:30) and other times when it was veiled by His humanity in accordance with the Father’s will (Mark 13:32). Christ was therefore subject to the normal process of human growth, intellectually, physically, spiritually, and socially.”¹²

CONCLUSION

Here is Jesus, the God-man, with a mission. The Son of Man’s divine business was clear: to do the will of His Father in heaven. As “Christians” or “little Christs,” our business should be the same as His: to do the will of our Father in heaven. All we do should be “to the glory of God” (1 Corinthians 10:31). How are you doing in finding and doing God’s will for your life? God has graciously given us His Word so we can know His will for our lives. Read the Bible daily. Pray that God will give you understanding, discernment, and wisdom as you read. Let’s encourage and pray for one another as together we strive to do the will of God for our lives.

Chaplain Arin Hess



FOOTNOTES

1. Charles R Swindoll, *The Origination of Something Glorious: Jesus Birth and Beginning of Ministry*, Insight for Living, Word Publishing, 1994, pg. 68.
2. All Scripture quotations, unless noted, are taken from the *New American Standard Bible*, 1995 Update.
3. Leon Morris, *Luke: An Introduction and Commentary*, InterVarsity Press, 1988, Vol. 3, pg. 100.
4. *Ibid.*, pg. 102-103.
5. Rabbi Aryohom Harris, Circumcision Countdown, <https://seattlebris.com>, April 23, 2024.
6. Gavin Childress, *Opening up Luke's Gospel*, Day One Publications, 2006, pg. 26.
7. *Ibid.*
8. Warren Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, Victor Books, 1996, Vol. 1, pg. 179.
9. John Phillips, *Exploring the Gospel of Luke: An Expository Commentary*, Kregel Publications, WORDsearch Corp, 2009.
10. Childress, *Opening up Luke's Gospel*, pg. 26.
11. John MacArthur, *MacArthur Study Bible*, pg. 1904.
12. *Ibid.*, pg. 1517.



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WEEKLY BIBLE STUDY

Meeting during the
109th Legislature's
First Session

SENATORS

6:45 – 7:45 A.M.
Wednesdays
Capitol Office #1004

STAFF

12:00 – 1:00 P.M.
Wednesdays
NE State Office Building
Morrill Room