

That You May Know The Certainty

LESSON 3: AFTER JESUS'S BIRTH (LUKE 2:8-52)

Both John and Jesus had now been born. We previously learned of some events that happened after John's birth and about his childhood. Now, Luke tells of some events that happened after Jesus's birth and some brief comments about His childhood.

SHEPHERDS VISIT JESUS (LUKE 2:8-20)

2:8-14. Shepherds were watching their sheep at night in the fields near Bethlehem when Jesus was born. Note that we are never told when Jesus was born. Then, an angel of the Lord stood before them and the shepherds were terrified. However, the angel told them not to be afraid, as he proclaimed good news of great joy that will be for all people! This great news concerned the birth of One in Bethlehem (city of David) who is the Savior, Messiah, and Lord! They would be able to identify this One by finding a Baby wrapped tightly in cloth and lying in a manger. Suddenly, there was a Heavenly army with the angel praising and glorifying God, saying there is peace on earth for the people God favors. This is not a physical kind of peace (Matthew 10:34-39), but the peace that comes from being in a right relationship with God and forgiven of sin through God's favor/grace (Romans 5:1-2; Philippians 4:6-7; Titus 2:11)!

2:15-20. After the angels left, the shepherds hurried straight to Bethlehem to see what had happened. When they arrived, they found Mary, Joseph, and the Baby (Jesus) just as had been described. They spread the news about what had been revealed to them. Those who heard (potentially including those in and around Bethlehem) were amazed. Mary, however, was storing up everything in her heart and contemplating them (compare with Luke 1:26-45). Then, the shepherds returned, praising God for the magnificent things they had seen and heard.

JESUS IS CIRCUMCISED AND PRESENTED (LUKE 2:21-38)

2:21-24. Jesus was circumcised on the eighth day (Genesis 17:12; Leviticus 12:3). He was named Jesus

(Luke 1:31; "Jehovah is salvation"; the equivalent of Yeshua/Joshua; also Immanuel, Matthew 1:23). After the days for Mary's purification after childbirth were complete (about 40 days for a male child, Leviticus 12:2-5), they came to the temple in Jerusalem to present Jesus. God had required all firstborn males to be consecrated (dedicated as holy, as a reminder of how God spared the firstborn of the Israelites from death in Egypt during the first Passover, Exodus 13:2). They also offered the sacrifices required after Mary's uncleanness (Leviticus 12:6-8). Note that they offered the provisional sacrifice for those who were not able to afford the normal sacrifice, indicating they were poor and the wise men had not yet visited them (Matthew 2:11).

2:25-35. A man named Simeon was in Jerusalem at the time Jesus's family came into the temple. He was righteous, devout, and anticipating the Messiah's coming (Israel's consolation/comfort, Isaiah 61:1-3). The Holy Spirit was on him and said he would see the Lord's Messiah dying. The Holy Spirit then guided him into the temple, he took the child Jesus in his arms when His parents brought Him in and praised God. Now, Simeon was ready to die in peace, having gotten to see the One through Whom God was bringing the salvation He had prepared for all peoples – both Jews and Gentiles (Titus 2:11; Romans 1:16; Ephesians 3:1-13). Jesus's parents were amazed at what was being said about Jesus (compare with 2:17-19). Then, Simeon blessed Jesus's parents and directed some remarks to Mary specifically. He said her Child would cause the fall and rise of many in Israel (as many would reject Him and others would accept Him as the Messiah). He would even be opposed (rejected, Isaiah 8:14-15; 1 Peter 2:6-8). With this rejection, Mary's soul would be pierced by a sword (seeing her Son be mistreated and killed, John 19:25). Through this rejection of Jesus as the Messiah, the hearts/thoughts of many would be revealed.

2:36-38. An old prophetess named Anna (a widow who had been married for seven years, but had now either been widowed for 84 years or into her 84th year of life) was devoted to God in the temple. She served God night and day with fasting and prayers. She came up after the events with Simeon and began to thank God (presumably for sending the Messiah). She then spoke about Him to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem (Israel).

JESUS'S CHILDHOOD (LUKE 2:39-52)

2:39-40. Matthew records that Jesus's family fled to Egypt to survive King Herod's attempt to kill Jesus as a Child (Matthew 2:13-23). After Herod's death (4 BC), Jesus and His family settled back in Nazareth, which was His hometown. Jesus grew like other children, in strength and wisdom, and God's favor was on Him (compare with John in Luke 1:80).

2:41-52. Jesus's family traveled to Jerusalem every year for Passover (Deuteronomy 16:16; the yearly memorial of God delivering the firstborn of Israel, Exodus 12). Jesus was twelve during this particular trip. After the Festival of Unleavened Bread was complete (Passover began this festival, Leviticus 23:5-6), Jesus's family set out with a caravan of friends and relatives to travel back to Nazareth. After about a day's journey (20+ miles), they recognized Jesus was not with the caravan (women and children would often be in the front and men in the back). They traveled back to Jerusalem to search for Him and found Him in the temple complex, listening to the Jewish teachers and asking them questions. Jesus's questions and answers amazed those who heard Him. Jesus's parents had been anxious about His whereabouts and did not understand why He had not traveled with them. However, Jesus's response indicated that He understood His mission on earth was to be about His Father's work and pursuing His interests (John 4:34; 6:38). In this, Jesus declared to be the Son of God (Luke 1:35). His parents, though, did not understand (remember that it had been over a decade since the events that transpired before and after His birth). After this, they returned to Nazareth. Jesus was obedient to His parents (Ephesians 6:1-3; this is the last reference to Joseph in Scripture as being alive) and His mother kept everything in her heart (Luke 2:19). Jesus continued to grow into adulthood, growing in wisdom, stature, and favor with God and people.

CONCLUSION

All the events that transpired after Jesus's birth have demonstrated that Jesus is not a normal child. Instead, He truly was the Messianic King God had sent into the world. From humble beginnings, Jesus would grow into adulthood until the time He began His public ministry.

DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS

What was revealed to the shepherds?

What happened after the shepherds found Jesus?

Why did Mary and Joseph go to the temple with Jesus?

What did Simeon reveal about Jesus?

What did Anna do?

Where did Jesus's family settle?

What happened when Jesus's family traveled to Jerusalem when He was twelve?

How did Jesus conduct Himself as a Child?

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Written by Eric Krieg

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