

Day 3: January 3

Of all the writers of the New Testament, Luke is the most like a modern historian. Modern archaeologists and historians have recognised his accuracy and that he was a contemporary of many of the events he writes about.

Luke 2 is the account of the birth and early years of Jesus. This chapter contains words which should be familiar to you, as it was the inspiration for many Christmas carols. For this reason words from the King James Version are retained, where relevant, even if they are archaic.

Luke 2

(1) And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus¹, that all the world should be taxed.

(2) (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor² of Syria³.)

(3) And all went to be taxed⁴, every one into his own city.

(4) And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David⁵.)

(5) To be taxed with Mary his espoused *wife*⁶, being great with child.

(6) And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered.

(7) And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger⁷; because there was no room for them in the inn.

(8) And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night⁸.

(9) And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were very afraid⁹.

(10) And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

(11) For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

(12) And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

(13) And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,

(14) Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

(15) And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord has made known unto us.

(16) And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger.

(17) And when they had seen it, they made spread around the saying which was told them concerning this child.

(18) And all they that heard it marvelled at those things which were told them by the shepherds.

- (19) But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart.
- (20) And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.
- (21) And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the child, his name was called JESUS¹⁰, which was so named of the angel before he was conceived in the womb.
- (22) And when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were accomplished, they brought him to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord;
- (23) (As it is written in the law of the Lord, Every male that opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord;)
- (24) And to offer a sacrifice according to that which is said in the law of the Lord, A pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons¹¹.
- (25) And, behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon; and the same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the spirit was Holy upon him.
- (26) And it was revealed unto him by the spirit of the Holy One, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ¹².
- (27) And he came by the spirit into the temple: and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him after the custom of the law,
- (28) Then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said,
- (29) Lord, now you may let thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word:
- (30) For mine eyes have seen thy salvation,
- (31) Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people;
- (32) A light¹³ to lighten the Gentiles¹⁴, and the glory of thy people Israel.
- (33) And Joseph and his mother marvelled at those things which were spoken of him.
- (34) And Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary his mother, Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against;
- (35) (Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also,) that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.
- (36) And there was one Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher¹⁵: she was of a great age, and had lived with an husband seven years from her virginity;
- (37) And she was a widow of about fourscore and four years, which departed not from the temple, but served God with fasting and prayers night and day.
- (38) And she coming in that instant gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spoke of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem.
- (39) And when they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own city Nazareth.
- (40) And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him.
- (41) Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the passover¹⁶.
- (42) And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast.
- (43) And when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the child Jesus tarried

behind in Jerusalem; and Joseph and his mother knew not of it.

(44) But they, supposing him to have been in the company, went a day's journey; and they sought him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance.

(45) And when they found him not, they turned back again to Jerusalem, seeking him.

(46) And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions.

(47) And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers.

(48) And when they saw him, they were amazed: and his mother said unto him, Son, why have you in this way dealt with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing.

(49) And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? Don't you see that I must be about my Father's business¹⁷?

(50) And they understood not the saying which he spoke unto them.

(51) And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them: but his mother kept all these sayings in her heart.

(52) And Jesus increased in wisdom¹⁸ and maturity, and in favour with God and man.

(King James Version updated with reference to the Greek texts, including minority texts)

1 63 BC – AD 14, born Gaius Octavius Thurinus, adopted by Julius Caesar in 44 BC. Because of the various names he had, he is referred to as Octavius between 63 and 44 BC, Octavian (or Octavianus) between 44 and 27 BC, and Augustus for events after 27 BC. Luke was spot on.

2 Greek *hēgemoneuō* to act as ruler. He was not the ruler.

3 Cyrenius, it seems, was sent out by Augustus during the the census of 8-7 BC as Varus the then governor of Syria (from about 7 BC to about 4 BC) was not trustworthy.

4 Greek is *apographē* means both enrolment and writing for taxation. There is no corroborating historical record of taxation occurring, this was a census only.

5 David was the 2nd King of Israel so this makes Joseph was a descendant of the Royal family. Bethlehem was not the royal city, but the inheritance of David's family when the Israelites arrived in Israel about 1400BC from Egypt.

6 Minority texts leave out 'wife', betrothal was a binding contract.

7 The manger was where the animals were kept, or in modern terms the stables. There was not much difference in the quality of accommodation between humans and animals.

8 Bethlehem is in the hills area at it can snow in late December and January. This event could not have occurred in late December.

9 Literally *phobeo mega phobos*

10 This name has come to English through German, Latin and Greek. It is a Hebrew name best translated in to English as Y'shua, pronounced Yahshua, or Yeshua. In German where J is pronounced as Y it is written as Joshua.

11 This offering means that they were poor. For a firstborn they were meant to give a lamb, the pigeons was the option if they were not able to bring a lamb.

12 Christ *Christos* is untranslated from Greek. It means 'anointed' which in Hebrew is 'Messiah'

13 'Light' is a metaphor for knowledge and hope.

14 Gentile is older English and means 'non-Jew'. The Greek word is *ethnos*, which is far closer to the modern word 'ethnic' and means 'foreign'.

15 Asher is one of the supposed 'lost' 10 tribes. This shows they were not all 'lost'.

16 An annual Jewish feast where each family sacrificed and ate a lamb. It commemorated the nation of Israel's beginning when they were delivered from slavery in Egypt.

17 The Temple was considered the house or dwelling of God. He was calling God his Father.

18 Greek is *sophos*, means skilled, expert (of artificers or making things), wise, skilled in letters, cultivated, learned from (which we get sophisticated).