

# LUKE

## Chapter 2

### *The Birth of Jesus*

**In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. 2 This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. 3 And all went to be registered, each to his own town. 4 And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, 5 to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. 6 And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. 7 And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.**

2:1 Luke is the only Gospel writer who relates his narrative to dates of world history. (CSB)

*Caesar Augustus.* The first and (according to many) greatest Roman emperor (31 B.C.–A.D. 14). Having replaced the republic with an imperial form of government, he expanded the empire to include the entire Mediterranean world, established the famed *Pax Romana* (“Roman Peace”) and ushered in the golden age of Roman literature and architecture. Augustus (which means “exalted”) was a title voted to him by the Roman senate in 27 B.C. (CSB)

In 27 BC, the Roman Senate conferred on Octavian, the reigning Caesar, the title “Augustus” (“the exalted one”). For all his glory, however, Caesar Augustus remained God’s instrument. His call for a worldwide census unwittingly set into motion the events of Jesus’ birth, thereby bringing to fulfillment the prophecy regarding his place of birth (Mi 5:2). (TLSB)

The association with the census of Caesar Augustus suggests that this descendent of David, with his royal bloodlines, is the Prince of all peoples, a universal King. The theme that dominates Luke-Acts is that salvation through Jesus is for everyone. (CC p. 106)

*all the world.* Gk *oikoumene*, “the inhabited world,” here meaning the Roman Empire. Luke will use such terms later to emphasize the all-inclusive nature of the Gospel. (TLSB)

*registered.* Necessary for taxation. (TLSB)

Used for military service and taxation. Jews, however, were exempt from Roman military service. God used the decree of a pagan emperor to fulfill the prophecy of Mic 5:2. (CSB)

ἀπογράφεσθαι—“Register” was for tax purposes but was not itself the moment of taxation. It was equivalent to a census. The significance of the census is emphasized by its repeated use in the first five verses (ἀπογράφομαι—2:1, 3, 5; ἀπογραφή—2:2). (CC)

2:2 *Quirinius.* This official was possibly in office for two terms, first 6–4 B.C. and then A.D. 6–9. A census is associated with each term. This is the first; Ac 5:37 refers to the second. (CSB)

May have held this office twice and conducted a census in each term. First, when Jesus was born, and then in AD 6–9 (Ac 5:37). (TLSB)

The governorship of Quirinius was an important turning point in Judean history, marking as it did the annexation of Judea, which was made profoundly visible by the census registration with which Quirinius' governorship began. (CC p. 104)

**2:3** *own town*. Probably the town of their ancestral origin. (CSB)

**2:4** *Nazareth ... Bethlehem*. Bethlehem, the town where David was born (1Sa 17:12; 20:6), was at least a three-day trip from Nazareth. (CSB)

Hometown of Joseph's and Mary's ancestor King David. (TLSB)

Bethlehem means "house of bread." Luke will show throughout the narrative that Jesus comes to sit at table with his people and break bread and reveals himself for the first time as the crucified and risen Christ in the breaking of the bread (24:30-31, 35) (CC p. 104)

*Judea*. The Greco-Roman designation for the southern part of Palestine, earlier included in the kingdom of Judah. (CSB)

**2:5** *with Mary*. Mary too was of the house of David and probably was required to enroll. In Syria, the Roman province in which Palestine was located, women 12 years of age and older were required to pay poll tax and therefore to register. (CSB)

Mary was also subject to Roman taxes and required to participate in the census. (TLSB)

**2:7** *cloths*. Strips of cloth were regularly used to wrap a newborn infant. (CSB)

A sign of tender care. Babies were washed, rubbed with salt (and possibly olive oil), and then wrapped (cf Ezk 16:4). Strips of cloth were wrapped tightly around infants to warm and secure them. (TLSB)

Wrapped round with rough pieces of cloth; he is not to be found in an ornate golden bed, but in a manger. The meaning of this is that did not merely take upon himself our lowly mortality, but for our sakes took upon himself the clothing of the poor. (CC p. 108)

*manger*. The feeding trough of the animals. This is the only indication that Christ was born in a stable. Very early tradition suggests that it was a cave, perhaps used as a stable. (CSB)

2 Corinthians 8:9 "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich."

*no place for them in the inn*. Mary and Joseph were forced to bed down in a nearby cave or stable, where animals were housed. The travel caused by the census likely overwhelmed normal arrangements for hospitality. (TLSB)

**2:1-7** Joseph and Mary travel from Nazareth to Bethlehem, where Jesus is born in humble circumstances. The birth of a child always comes with great hardship (Gn 3:16). The birth of this Child comes with great blessings for sinners. As you reflect on the wonder of Jesus' birth, pray also for a humble and pure heart. The mighty Lord will have mercy on you and exalt you by grace alone (Lk 1:49-52). • O Holy Child, grant me sincere humility, even as You exalt me by calling me God's child. Amen. (TLSB)

*The Shepherds and the Angels*

**8 And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. 9 And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. 10 And the angel said to them, “Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. 11 For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. 12 And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and 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 among those with whom he is pleased!” 15 When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us.” 16 And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. 17 And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. 18 And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. 19 But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. 20 And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them. 21 And at the end of eight days, when he was circumcised, he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb.**

**2:8** The Judean countryside has long been used for grazing sheep. David himself had been a shepherd in these fields (1Sm 16:11). (TLSB)

*out in the fields.* Does not necessarily mean it was summer, the dry season. The flocks reserved for temple sacrifice were kept in the fields near Bethlehem throughout the year. (CSB)

Shepherds remind the hearer that David tended flocks in these same fields and recalls that God will send his “Good Shepherd” back to Bethlehem to tend the flocks of Israel. (CC p. 104)

Shepherds had a low reputation and were looked upon with great suspicion. Strack-Billerbeck (II, 114) says that “the testimony of robbers and shepherds, violent men, and in fact all who are under suspicion when it comes to money” was considered invalid. It is comforting that the announcement of the Savior’s birth first was made to such people. We are like those shepherds. Because of our sin we are of a low and suspicious state, but God come to us anyway with Good News of great joy! (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 2, Part 1)

*keeping watch.* Against thieves and predatory animals. (CSB)

**2:9** *An angel of the Lord.* A designation used throughout the birth narratives (see 1:11; Mt 1:20, 24; 2:13, 19). The angel in 1:11 is identified as Gabriel (1:19; see 1:26). (CSB)

*appeared* – These two words tie into the epiphany theme of the lessons, the manifestation of the nature and purpose of Christ. “Glory” is a key Biblical term used hundreds of times. God’s glory generally denotes God’s revelation of Himself in grace, often “incarnationally” as God took up residence in the tabernacle, temple, etc. In and through the incarnational activity of Jesus, God the Father is revealed as a loving, caring, forgiving God (John 1:14). For God’s profoundest demonstration of His being is His act of rescuing people from the predicament of sin. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 2, Part 1)

Suggests that Jesus' birth brings the Lord's presence near to humankind. (TLSB)

**2:10** *fear not*. Fear was the common reaction to angelic appearances, and encouragement was needed. (CSB)

The remedy for fear is faith – faith rooted in the angel's announcement of “good news of great joy” about the birth of the Savior. People today carry around fears of all sorts. How do they get rid of them? Hear and believe the Good News! (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 2, Part 1)

*bring you good news* – εὐαγγελίζομαι—This is translated “proclaim the Good News,” to emphasize the announcement of the Gospel at the birth of Jesus. The Gospel is always something proclaimed or announced. (CC)

Gk *euangelizomai*, “I evangelize,” a favorite expression in Lk (cf 1:19; 2:10; 3:18; 4:18, 43; 7:22; 8:1; 9:6; 16:16; 20:1). Calls to mind many prophetic promises of salvation (e.g., Is 52:7; 61:1). (TLSB)

*all the people*. Universal theme in Lk. However, because Lk repeatedly follows the OT practice of calling Israel “the people,” Israel is likely meant. (TLSB)

**2:11** *city of David*. Bethlehem. (CSB)

*Savior*. Many Jews were looking for a political leader to deliver them from Roman rule, while others were hoping for a savior to deliver them from sickness and physical hardship. But this announcement concerns the Savior who would deliver from sin and death (see Mt 1:21; Jn 4:42). (CSB)

The title, as well as the related terms “save” and “salvation,” form another important Lukan theme (1:47, 69, 71, 77; 7:50; 19:9–10). (TLSB)

*the Lord*. A designation originally reserved for God but later applied to the Messiah as well (see Ac 2:36; Php 2:11).

**2:12** *sign*. The baby serves as a sign for the shepherds that the Good News is true. More important, the prophetic sign of a son born to a virgin was fulfilled. (TLSB)

**2:14** This brief hymn is called the Gloria in Excelsis Deo, from the first words of the Latin Vulgate translation (meaning “Glory to God in the Highest”). The angels recognized the glory and majesty of God by giving praise to him. (CSB)

*in the highest*. A reference to heaven, where God dwells (cf. Mt 6:9). (CSB)

Refers to praise in the heavenly realms, where God and the angels live. (TLSB)

*peace among those with whom he is pleased*. Peace is not assured to all, but only to those pleasing to God—the objects of his good pleasure (see Luke's use of the words “pleased” and “pleasure” elsewhere: 3:22; 10:21; 12:32). The Roman world was experiencing the *Pax Romana* (“Roman Peace”), marked by external tranquillity. But the angels proclaimed a deeper, more lasting peace than that—a peace of mind and soul made possible by the Savior (v. 11). Peace with God is received by faith in Christ (Ro 5:1), and it is on believers that “his favor rests.” The Davidic Messiah was called “Prince of Peace” (Isa 9:6), and Christ promised peace to his

disciples (Jn 14:27). But Christ also brought conflict (the “sword”; see Mt 10:34–36; cf. Lk 12:49), for peace with God involves opposition to Satan and his work (Jas 4:4). (CSB)

Emphasizes not human goodwill but God’s grace and the peace it brings us. (TLSB)

**2:17** The Good News about Jesus is contagious. The shepherds immediately broadcast what they had seen and heard. (TLSB)

**2:19** *pondering*. Detail points to Mary as one of Luke’s sources for the Gospel. (TLSB)

**2:20** *glorifying* – δοξάζοντες—This is the first time in Luke’s gospel that someone “glorifies” God. This will be a frequent response to the many miracles of Jesus. Besides those who respond to Jesus’ miracles, only one other person in Luke, the centurion, “was glorifying God” by saying, “In reality, this man was righteous” (23:47). (CC)

*praising God*. A term often used by Luke (1:64; 2:13, 28; 5:25–26; 7:16; 13:13; 17:15, 18; 18:43; 19:37; 23:47; 24:53). (CSB)

*as it had been told them* – ἤκουσαν καὶ εἶδον—Luke’s word order shows the faithfulness of the shepherds’ response. The word they “heard” from the angel was foremost, and they believed the word even without seeing the sign (2:15). When they “saw” the child, the sight confirmed the word, providing two witnesses, so to speak. The phrase occurs again (in the second person plural) in 7:22, but with the order reversed, referring to Jesus’ miracles that the people “saw” and then his teaching, which they “heard.” (CC)

**2:21** *eight day* – Jesus begins His mission of fulfillment on the eighth day – the first day of the new week of God’s new creation, which will also be the day of His resurrection. His obedience to the Law involves the shedding of His blood for the first time. Jesus’ circumcision is a one-time event availing for all. The foreskin represents sin and rebellion against God (Col. 2:13). The benefits of Jesus’ circumcision are received in Holy Baptism (Col. 2:10-13; see further on Lk 3:21-22). (CC)

The number eight first finds its significance in the rite of passage that rescues Noah and his family from the flood that destroyed the world. Noah and his family were separated from their heathen world by the flood, entered a period of transition in the ark, which represented the Church, and then were incorporated into a new world where they were only eight people alive to repopulate the world. (Heaven on Earth – The Gift of Christ in the Divine Service p. 119)

Early Christians marked the beginning of their life in Christ at baptismal fonts that were eight-sided to indicate that this is when they entered eternity by the union with Christ and His death and resurrection. (Heaven on Earth – The Gift of Christ in the Divine Service p. 127)

*circumcise* – Circumcision was to be performed on each male throughout Israel’s generations. Circumcision represented the cutting off of the old sinful flesh, marking transition and incorporation as a member of God’s people. Circumcision was the OT precedent for Holy Baptism. Both suggest a new birth. It was not only an incorporation but also an eternal hope of age of everlasting life to come. (Heaven on Earth – The Gift of Christ in the Divine Service p. 119)

The circumcision and naming of Jesus recalls his miraculous conception (Lk 1:26–38) and serves as a bridge between his birth (2:1–20) and his presentation in the temple as the one who fulfills

the entire Law (2:22–40). It also continues the parallel with the forerunner of Christ, John the Baptist, who was likewise circumcised and named on the eighth day (1:59–63). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 1)

Jesus begins his mission of fulfillment on the eighth day—the first day of the new week of God’s new creation, which will also be the day of his resurrection. His obedience to the Law *involves the shedding of his blood for the first time*. (CC p. 118)

Jesus’ circumcision is a one-time event availing for all. The foreskin represents sin and rebellion against God (Col 2:13). While Jesus is without sin, he takes humanity’s place under the Law as the sin-bearer, as also in his baptism. The benefits of Jesus’ circumcision are received in Holy Baptism (Col 2:10–13; see further on Lk 3:21–22). In Luther’s exposition of Gen 17:9–11, he includes among the benefits of circumcision for OT believers the forgiveness of sins, justification, and incorporation into the people of God. These benefits accrued to those who received the sign of circumcision through their faith in God’s promise, which is fulfilled in Christ. St. Paul speaks of Holy Baptism as a “circumcision not done by human hands” and as “the circumcision of Christ” (Col 2:11). There was a fierce argument in the early church about whether Gentiles needed to be circumcised. The issue is settled by a proper understanding of Jesus’ fulfillment of the entire OT on our behalf (Lk 2:21–24, 27, 39), for in the circumcision of the one who represents all humanity, all people are circumcised once and for all. (CC pp. 118–119)

To modern hearers, circumcision probably seems like a private matter of medical or cultural significance. Luke, however, understands the circumcision of Jesus as a public event with theological importance. It was the sign of the covenant the Lord had made with Abraham and his offspring (Gen 17:1–14), in which he promised to “be their God” and to grant them “an everlasting possession” (17:8). Moreover, in Abraham’s seed “shall all the nations of the earth be blessed” (22:18). The Law of Moses also included circumcision of the newborn among the regulations for the purification of women after childbirth (Lev 12:3). To be circumcised, then, was to live as God’s people by faith in those promises and to be subject to God’s Law. Although Israel failed to keep the covenant, the Lord kept his promise to Abraham, as Mary acknowledges in the Magnificat (Lk 1:55) and Zechariah in the Benedictus (1:73). In the Son of Mary, the Lord would keep both his promise and his Law (Gal 4:4–5). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 1)

The outward act of removing the foreskin in circumcision represents the cutting off of sin, which means that true circumcision is not the removal of flesh from the body but the removal of sin from the heart. Thus circumcision is no longer necessary; instead, all people need Jesus, his perfect keeping of the Law, and his true and final removal of sin by dying on the cross. This is given in Holy Baptism. Through this means, sin is removed and the baptized person is joined to Christ, his circumcision, and his dying and rising (Col 2:11–15). Baptism, then, is what makes us “Abraham’s offspring, heirs according to promise” (Gal 3:29). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 1)

*name* – At the moment when his blood is first shed he receives the name given to him by the angel, Jesus. It is likely that Luke’s hearers know what Matthew has recorded, that this means “He will save his people from their sins” (Mt 1:21; cf. Acts 4:12, where “name” and “salvation” are used together). Already on the eighth day of Jesus’ life, his destiny of atonement is revealed in his name and his circumcision. (CC p. 119)

In mentioning Jesus' name, "given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb," Luke refers back to the announcement of his conception to Mary by the angel Gabriel (Lk 1:31). Since it was typical for the first son to receive his father's name (1:59–63), the miraculous revelation of Jesus' name by God carries theological significance. In a unique sense, his name is chosen by his Father! The way in which his naming is mentioned, especially in comparison to John the Baptist's naming (1:13, 59–63), reaffirms the virgin birth. Because Luke omits the meaning of the name, it seems likely that he was aware of the birth narrative in the Gospel of Matthew, in which an angel tells Joseph, "You shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins" (Mt 1:21). Salvation—both physical and spiritual—is the hope of those who waited on God (Lk 1:69, 71, 77; 2:30; 3:6). It takes place through the one whose name means, and who truly is, "the Savior" (2:11). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 1)

**2:8–21** Angels reveal to shepherds the Good News of the Savior's birth. The shepherds in turn announce the Good News to others. As you celebrate the glory of Christmas, be sure to announce Jesus' saving work to others also. The Savior is your peace and joy this day and always! • O Holy Child, I treasure the Good News of Your birth for my salvation. Call others to faith through me. Amen. (TLSB)

### *Jesus Presented in the Temple*

**22 And when the time came for their purification according to the Law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord 23 (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, "Every male who first opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord") 24 and to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the Law of the Lord, "a pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons." 25 Now there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon, and this man was righteous and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. 26 And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. 27 And he came in the Spirit into the temple, and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him according to the custom of the Law, 28 he took him up in his arms and blessed God and said, 29 "Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace, according to your word; 30 for my eyes have seen your salvation 31 that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, 32 a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to your people Israel." 33 And his father and his mother marveled at what was said about him. 34 And Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, "Behold, this child is appointed for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign that is opposed 35 (and a sword will pierce through your own soul also), so 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, having lived with her husband seven years from when she was a virgin, 37 and then as a widow until she was eighty-four. She did not depart from the temple, worshiping with fasting and prayer night and day. 38 And coming up at that very hour she began to give thanks to God and to speak of him to all who were waiting for the redemption of Jerusalem.**

**2:22-40** Theophilus (Lk 1:3), already knowing something of the content of the Gospel, is catechized about the Lord of all humankind, of Jerusalem and of the nations. The carefully recorded birth announcements for John and Jesus, the recounting of their births, and also the praises of heaven and earth sung at their births, instruct Theophilus how to understand Jesus growing as God in the flesh. Jesus, after he has been born man, will grow as man grows, and at the temple Theophilus watches the Son of God begin to fulfill his sacrificial ministry with his whole life. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 1)

**2:22-24** Lev 12:1–4 demanded nothing for the husband or the child. With the plural (*tou katharismou autōn* [v 22]), Mary’s purification and the offering for the Child are gathered under one heading; Jesus entered the temple with Mary (Arthur A. Just Jr., *Luke 1:1–9:50*, Concordia Commentary [St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1996], 115). Mary’s impurity stresses the reality of the incarnation. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 1)

In Exodus 13, the firstborn were presented (*parastēsai* [v 22]) as the special servants of the Lord. For Jesus no purchase price (Num 3:12–13, 44–51; 18:16) is noted—for he is holy (1:35; cf. Ex 13:2, 12, 15); he was not presented to be redeemed. Rather, since the presence of the child at the temple was not required for the act of redemption, Jesus is presented in service to the Lord. This is his active obedience; he has no guilt, but is presented as the One who will freely take the guilt of the world upon himself (Is 53:4–6; Jn 1:29). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 1)

**2:22** *their purification.* Following the birth of a son, the mother had to wait 40 days before going to the temple to offer sacrifice for her purification. If she could not afford a lamb and a pigeon (or dove), then two pigeons (or doves) would be acceptable (Lev 12:2–8; cf. Lev 5:11). (CSB)

*to Jerusalem.* The distance from Bethlehem to Jerusalem was only about six miles. (CSB)

*present him to the Lord.* The firstborn of both man and animal were to be dedicated to the Lord (see v. 23; Ex 13:12–13). The animals were sacrificed, but the human beings were to serve God throughout their lives. The Levites actually served in the place of all the firstborn males in Israel (see Nu 3:11–13; 8:17–18). (CSB)

**2:24** *offer a sacrifice* – τοῦ δοῦναι θυσίαν—“To offer sacrifice” retains the language of sacrifice. (CC)

*a pair pf turtledoves or two young pigeons* – Lev. 12:8 allows this instead of a lamb, since not everyone could afford a lamb. This helps us to understand that Joseph and Mary were of a humble state (Luke 1:48), i.e., too poor to be able to afford a lamb. (CC)

Most modest of the different sacrifices that could be offered; suggests that Jesus’ parents were poor (Lv 12:8). (TLSB)

Most modest of the different sacrifices that could be offered; suggests that Jesus’ parents were poor (Lev. 12:8). (TLSB)

**2:25-32** Forty days after Jesus’ birth in Bethlehem His parents took Him to the Temple in Jerusalem to present him to the Lord, verses 22-24. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, Simeon came to the Temple just at the time when Mary and Joseph were there with the baby Jesus. He took the baby in his arms, praised God and spoke what we call *The Nunc Dimittis*. In keeping with God’s promise, Simeon saw God’s salvation with his own eyes. He declared Jesus as the Light of all the nations and the Person Who was Israel’s greatest glory. This brings us to verse 33. (Buls)

**2:25-28** After John’s birth, his destiny was revealed. Now behold (*kai idou* [v 25]) what Simeon will declare about Jesus. Like Zechariah (Lk 1:6), Simeon is described as *dikaios* (v 25), and as a devout man he has been waiting for the consolation of Israel (*paraklēsin*; LXX Is 49:13; 57:18; 61:2; cf. Gen 5:29). With the Spirit upon him, Simeon has been endowed with the ability to recognize the Child as the Christ (*ton christon* [v 26] foreshadows *keitai* [v 34]). The continued emphasis on the Holy Spirit reminds us that these events in the temple are not historical



coincidences, but are under the direction of the Lord. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 1)

**2:25-27** Simeon's watchfulness, discernment of the Messiah's presence, and consequent prophetic utterance were all the result of the Spirit's action. (TLSB)

**2:25** *whose name was Simeon* – There was nothing great and wonderful about him; he has no high office, standing or power. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 4, Part 1)

*was righteous and devout* – This speaks of his standing before God, the conscientiousness of his religious obligations and his reproachlessness in the of others. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 4, Part 1)

Aged persons who have long walked uprightly in piety towards God and good will towards men, often have, as they approach the close of life, remarkably clear and exalted views of the Savior – views that which disarm death of its terrors, and prepare them to ascribe “unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father,” “glory and dominion for ever and ever.” (CB)

*waiting* – “to wait for” heightens the sense of expectation. (CC)

προσδεχόμενος—“To wait for” heightens the sense of expectation. This word is also part of Luke's frame between Simeon and Anna, where she and others are waiting for the redemption of Jerusalem (2:38; cf. 23:51). (CC)

*the consolation of Israel.* The comfort the Messiah would bring to his people at his coming (see vv. 26, 38; 23:51; 24:21; Isa 40:1–2; Mt 5:4). (CSB)

This recalls the comfort Isaiah foretold. Synonymous with the Lord's salvation and forgiveness. (TLSB)

*the Holy Spirit was upon him.* Not in the way common to all believers after Pentecost. Simeon was given a special insight by the Spirit so that he would recognize the “Christ.” (CSB)

When Jesus speaks of the Holy Spirit as being “another Paraclete” (comforter) He calls Himself the first Paraclete who brought to Israel consolation here mentioned by Simeon. (Lenski)

**2:26** *revealed to him by the Holy Spirit* – Simeon wasn't carried away by a pious wish; it was revealed to him by the Holy Spirit. The manner of this revelation is not revealed. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 13, Part 1)

*would not see death* – The Spirit had revealed to Simeon that he would not die until he beheld the fulfillment of God's promise to send the Messiah. (TLSB)

*before he had seen the Lord's Christ* – Examples of Messianic hope are listed below:

Mark 15:43, “Joseph of Arimathea, a prominent member of the Council, who was himself waiting for the kingdom of God, went boldly to Pilate and asked for Jesus' body.”

Luke 2:38 – Anna

Luke 3:15, “The people were waiting expectantly and were all wondering in their hearts if John might possibly be the Christ.”

John 4:25, “The woman said, “I know that Messiah” (called Christ) “is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us.”

This Lukan motif of closed and open eyes refers not to physical vision but to an eschatological understanding of the work of Jesus. Throughout Luke’s gospel, “the eye” used metaphorically describe the understanding of God’s revelation in Jesus. (CC)

**2:27** *into the temple* – This apparently refers to the outer court of the temple, where women were allowed. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 4, Part 1)

Specific setting is likely the temple’s Court of Women, because both Mary and Anna (vv 36-38) were present. (TLSB)

The Holy Spirit not only gives Simeon a preview of what he is to experience, but also leads him to the right place at the right time to meet the world’s newborn Messiah. The temple courts included the whole temple compound. Women, for example, were not allowed in certain parts. The presentation of Jesus was part of the established duties for the firstborn. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 13, Part 1)

**2:28** *took him up in his arms* – Simeon literally takes Jesus in his arms (without any protest by His parents), but not to cuddle or coddle Him. Simeon breaks forth in a paean of praise. Simeon’s adrenalin must have started pumping real well! How poor does the world look to one that has Christ in his arms and salvation in his view! (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 13, Part 1)

**2:29-33** *nun* (v 29) highlights the presence of salvation. Having taken Jesus in his arms, Simeon confesses what he, the servant, has presently received from the Lord, his Master. Whether emphasizing departing this life (v 26) or release from sin (v 30), *to hrēma sou* (v 29) defines Simeon’s status before the Lord. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 1)

In full view of the peoples, God has come to save them. *kata prosōpon pantōn tōn laōn* (v 31) refers to all participants, Jews and Gentiles. Jesus, *phōs eis apokalupsin ethnōn* (v 32), will lead the nations out of their darkness (Is 42:6; 49:6; 60:3). “Nations” further anticipates the Baptism of Jesus (whose genealogy encompasses all humankind, Luke 3), the preaching of repentance and forgiveness of sins to all nations (Lk 24:47), and the mission in Acts. Meanwhile, Jesus is also *doxan laou sou Israēl* (v 32), the head of the people (Col 1:18), the pinnacle of the temple (Eph 2:20), the paramount gift of the Lord to Israel (Jn 4:22; Rom 9:5). The glory is dwelling with his people (Ex 40:34–38; 1 Sam 4:21–22). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 1)

**2:29–32** This hymn of Simeon has been called the Nunc Dimittis, from the first words of the Latin Vulgate translation, meaning “[You] now dismiss.”

Psalm 116:15, “Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints.”

Romans 14:8, “If we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord.”

The Nunc Dimittis has been used constantly in the liturgies of Christian churches for 14 centuries. The thought which runs through the hymn is: Simeon represents himself under the image of a sentinel, whom his master has placed in an elevated position and charged to look for the appearance of a star, and then to announce it to the world. (PC)

Are we watching as he watched not asleep in sin but diligent in the Lord's service and rejoicing in His praises. (PC)

There is a vast multitude of men who seek satisfaction in temporal things – in taking pleasure in making money, in wielding power, in gaining honor etc. But they do not find what they seek. (PC)

**2:29** *Lord* – despota is used infrequently with reference to God, denominates Him according to His unlimited power. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 4, Part 1)

*now* – This emphasizes that salvation is here now in this tiny child Simeon holds in his arms. (CC)

*letting your servant depart in peace* – The thought underlying its wording is of a slave who is instructed by his master to keep watch through the long, dark night on a high place to wait for the rising of a special star and then announce it. After wearisome hours of waiting he at last sees the star rising in all its brightness. He announces it and is then discharged from keeping watch any longer. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 4, Part 1)

Like Mary (1:48), Simeon identifies himself as God's servant while bursting forth in praise – a thematic link between the two songs. Simeon's song also continues to be sung as part of the Church's liturgy (LSB, pp 238-240). (TLSB)

**2:30** *your salvation* – Realized in the baby Jesus. (TLSB)

*in peace* – This expresses the feeling of his heart, perfect contentment which seeks no more...application is having the actual and complete salvation in Jesus for the rest of our lives. (Lenski)

With his own eyes Simeon saw Jesus, the Messiah, the embodiment of God's salvation who would make it a reality. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 13, Part 1)

**2:31** *you have prepared* – It is a done deed. There is no secret about His coming; it is in "the sight of all people." (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 13, Part 1)

*all peoples*. As a Gentile himself, Luke was careful to emphasize the truth that salvation was offered for the Gentiles (v. 32) as well as for Jews. (CSB)

**2:32** *light* – That is the kind of "light" the Gentiles needed, one that would reveal their dreadful condition and would show them God's grace in Christ for deliverance from sin and death. (Lenski)

φῶς—The image of light for revelation complements Luke's metaphor of eyes that see salvation. (CC)

Matthew 5:14-16, <sup>14</sup>“You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. <sup>15</sup>Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. <sup>16</sup>In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.”

Psalms 119:105, “Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path.”

*for revelation – εις ἀποκάλυψιν*—The verb ἀποκαλύπτω is repeated in 2:35, forming a frame to Simeon’s words and tying the two parts together. Revelation is one of the themes, if not the theme of Simeon’s hymn. (CC)

*to the Gentiles – Gentiles (instead of nations) anticipates the Gentile mission in Acts.* (CC)

*for glory to your people Israel – δόξαν λαοῦ σου Ἰσραήλ*—The angels announced glory to God, and now Simeon announces that the salvation and light in this child are for the glory of Israel. This strengthens the interpretation that the heavenly glory in 2:14 is also reflected on earth. Since δόξα is in the accusative, it goes with the preposition εις so that salvation/light (φῶς stands in apposition to τὸ σωτήριον) is for revelation to the Gentiles and is for glory to Israel. (CC)

The glory of Israel is her salvation. Because this salvation is for all people, it will come to shine upon every nation through the preaching of the Gospel. (TLSB)

**2:33 child’s father.** Luke, aware of the virgin birth of Jesus (1:26–35), is referring to Joseph as Jesus’ legal father. (CSB)

*marveled at what said –* When Simeon was telling such marvelous things concerning the child, his parents did not despise them, but believed them firmly. For this reason they stood, listened and marveled at his speech – how else could they react to it? (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 4, Part 1)

Note that AV and NKJV have the Koine reading "Joseph and his mother" whereas the others have "His father and mother." Joseph, Jesus' legal father, was regarded by people as His father. (Buls)

"Marvelled" is variously translated "marveling, amazed, wondering, surprised." They were astounded at what Simeon said concerning the baby.(Buls)

Bengel: They began to understand more and more how glorious the things were which had been spoken concerning Jesus, before He was born. And they were now hearing similar things from Simeon and others, whom they did not suppose as yet to be aware of the fact.(Buls)

Lenski: Simeon's words went beyond Matthew 1:21 and Luke 1:32.33 and 2:10, which referred only to Israel; Simeon included all the Gentile nations in the salvation that this child was bringing.(Buls)

Arndt: That Mary had conceived the Child through the action of the Holy Spirit they knew, and Gabriel's message and other information about Him they had pondered; but here additional matters, betokening that He would have a divine mission, are mentioned, and at that by a person who was a total stranger to them and who evidently spoke through divine revelation. (Buls)

Luke 2:51, "But His mother treasured all these things in her heart."

This includes all happenings in chapter 2 plus. The mysteries which were beyond her comprehension, yet she treasured them and sought not to penetrate as to draw the blessedness from them. (Lenski)

The same amazement that struck Zechariah, his friends and neighbors, and the shepherds is now experienced by Mary and Joseph. (CC)

**2:34-35** This Jesus—mark well, Joseph and Mary and all who would hear him and would follow him—is appointed by the Lord (*idou houtos keitai* [v 34]; cf. Phil 1:16; 1 Thess 3:3). The sufferings and opposition that Jesus will encounter are not incidental to the office of Messiah. Having followed the brightness of the star to the manger, to the infant Jesus, will we follow this Jesus to the darkness of his cross, and therefore to the darkness of our baptismal cross, trusting only in the Father? (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 1)

Jesus will scandalize many (*eis ptōsin* [v 34]), yet many will see the new Israel in him (*kai anastasin* [v 34]); some will reject, and others will believe (Jn 1:10–12; cf. Is 8:14; 28:16; Mk 12:10; Lk 20:17; Acts 4:11; Rom 9:32–33; 1 Pet 2:6–8). Judas despairs, but Peter repents; one robber blasphemes, but the other confesses. Men oppose this sign (*eis sēmeion antilegomenon* [v 34]), because they do not think Jesus is a real sign from God. This sign brings about a sharp division; he brings a sword (Mt 10:34; Jn 1:11; 6:66). This sign forces us to confront every self-satisfying preconception and every religious posturing. And the sword wielded in his preaching pierces our neatly wrapped and packaged lives, reaching into the very marrow of our thought and will. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 1)

Though maternal anguish cannot be discounted, Mary must confront the sword of Jesus' preaching (*sou [de] autēs tēn psuchēn* [v 35]); she also belongs to the family that hears the word of God (Lk 8:19–21). Note how the NIV has rearranged the sentence structure (v 35). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 1)

*hopōs an apokalupthōsin ek pollōn kardiōn dialogismoι* (v 35), dependent on *keitai*, states the purpose of Jesus' coming. Christ is the sign that requires people take certain action; through their stance toward Jesus, their inmost thoughts are expressed. In Luke, this begins in Nazareth (4:22–29; 5:21–22; 6:8; 9:46–47; 24:38). On the Last Day, the Father will not ask us if we enjoyed ourselves during Christmas, but whether we have done his will, believed in the incarnate Lord crucified and risen. Has our flesh revealed the birth and death and resurrection of the flesh of Christ? (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 1)

**2:34** *this child* – "Then" denotes something exceptional or remarkable. "This child" refers to Jesus, whom Simeon is holding in his arms (verse 28). "Is destined" means "is appointed, ordained (by God)." Cf. Philippians 1:16 and 1 Thessalonians 3:3. In keeping with the context, these Notes suggest that Simeon is speaking of two groups of people, not one. (Buls)

*fall and rising of many in Israel*. Christ raises up those who believe in him, but is a stumbling block for those who disbelieve (see 20:17–18; 1Co 1:23; 1Pe 2:6–8). (CSB)

Based on their reaction to Jesus, people will either stand or fall (cf 1 Peter 2:6, 8). (TLSB)

Christ is, as it were, a Rock placed in a road. Some people despise the Rock and dash against it in a rage. The result is that they are hurt and fall. It is not the fault of the Rock; it has been placed

in the road for people to rest on. But if one refuses to make the proper use of it and persists in that refusal, the results are disastrous. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 4, Part 1)

There is a reason for the poverty of the child. His humble birth is a sign of foreboding. Many Jews will fall and rise as they meet Jesus; He is a stumbling block to everyone, including His own disciples and family, because of the nature of His ministry and the nature of His kingdom. (CC)

Plummer: Notice Isaiah 8:14 where the same double destiny is expressed.(Buls)

The word "many" refers to both nouns, describing both the many who will fall and the many who will rise. He is speaking especially about Israel, the Covenant people. No one can be neutral to Jesus. The theologians distinguish the *voluntas Dei antecedens* and the *voluntas Dei consequens*. The first denotes God's saving will for all. The second denotes God's judgmental will toward those who reject Christ. Christ is destined to be the cause of the fall of those who reject Him, but they are to blame. Christ is destined to be the cause of the rise of those who repent and believe in Him. (Buls)

Bengel: It is to be observed that these things were not foretold in the prediction of the angel but were added by a holy man. (Buls)

Lenski: When men reject that grace in unbelief they fall, and it is God's will that they perish (Mark 16:16; Isaiah 8:14; Matthew 21:42.44; Romans 9:33). On the other hand, when God's grace in Christ wins men and makes them rise up from sin and death in a spiritual resurrection (Ephesians 2:5.6), this is again the effect of his consequent will but at the same time the execution of his *voluntas antecedens*. (Buls)

Plummer: Some welcome the Light; others love the darkness rather than the Light, because their works are evil (John 3:19) and are by their own conduct condemned. Judas despairs, Peter repents; one robber blasphemes, the other confesses (2 Corinthians 2:6). (Buls)

Geldenhuys: For the first time in the Gospel history the coming struggle and suffering are referred to. (Buls)

Arndt: The message of Christ and His work would arouse much opposition in Israel, and instead of being universally acclaimed as the Savior, Jesus would meet with much rejection. What is startling is that it is stated this has been ordained by God. (Buls)

*sign that is opposed.* Christ points to the Father and his love for sinners, and those who oppose him also oppose the Father. (CSB)

Jesus' rejection is foretold early in Luke. Before the infancy narrative ends, the cross begins to loom. (TLSB)

Secondly, Jesus is ordained by God for a sign which will be contradicted. (Buls)

Geldenhuys: This indicates a phenomenon which cannot escape notice, of which cognizance must be taken, and through which something else is made known. (Buls)

It refers to Jesus' entire person, Word and work. The Jews contradicted Jesus in words and deeds. Read Hebrews 12:3. Sinners spoke against and contradicted Him. It began at John 5:16-18. They

persecuted and wanted to kill Jesus because He did not keep the Sabbath and made Himself equal to God. John chapters 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10, plus Jesus' trial, condemnation and crucifixion make this thought clear. "He came to His own but His own received Him not." They spoke against Him. They contradicted Him. (Buls)

For nearly 3 centuries the name of Jesus of Nazareth and His followers was a name of shame, hateful and despised by the Romans and the Jews in their rabbinical schools. (PC)

You can't be neutral with Jesus. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 13, Part 1)

**2:35** *a sword will pierce your own soul* The word "too" indicates that Mary, as well as Jesus, would suffer deep anguish—the first reference in this Gospel to Christ's suffering and death. (CSB)

Mary will someday experience sorrow because of her Son's suffering and death (cf John 19:25-27). (TLSB)

You" means "also" implying that a sword would pierce Jesus' soul too. "Pierce your soul" is emphatic, and is, of course, metaphorical, denoting extreme pain. Note John 19:25 in the Nestle/Aland margin. Mary's pain reached its height when she stood under the cross. (Buls)

Mary *the woman*, as a part of Israel *and* as the mother of Jesus, will feel the pain of Jesus' words and his crucifixion. She herself will be pierced by Jesus' teaching, especially when he speaks about blood relationships giving way to the new family of the church. All believers (including Mary) will belong to this family, consisting of "those who hear the Word of God and do it" (8:19–21). And the mother of Jesus will be pierced at the cross as she watches her son die the humiliating death of crucifixion. Like every other participant in Jesus' life, Mary, Israelite and mother, will experience sharp pain because of Jesus' teaching and death. (CC)

*thoughts from many hearts may be revealed* – διαλογισμοί—Jesus will cause the "thoughts" of many to be revealed. This is fulfilled as Jesus' divine omniscience enables him to discern the "thoughts" of others in 5:21–22; 6:8; 9:46–47; 24:38 and in parables in 12:17; 20:14. Whenever this noun for "thoughts" or the verb διαλογίζομαι, "to think, debate," refers to Jesus' opponents, they are always contemplating evil thoughts that stem from unbelief. See the noun also in 5:22; 6:8 and the verb in 12:17; 20:14. The noun also refers to "doubts" of the apostles in 9:46–47; 24:38. However, the verb denotes sincere questioning or wondering by believers in 1:29 (Mary) and 3:15 (the people). (CC)

Note that the Nestle/Aland Greek text make the first part of this verse a parenthesis, as do AV, RSV, JB, NASB, NKJV. And TEV, NIV, and AAT place it last for the sake of clarity. Some commentators agree with this, some do not. We take it as a parenthesis. (Buls)

Bengel: When Jesus is presented for the first time in the temple, adversities are awaiting Him. When He was in the temple the last time He Himself spoke words not unlike those of Simeon. The sword may have pierced through her soul on the occasion mentioned at the end of verse 48, Mark 3:31, John 19:25. Her faith attained its height by proving victorious through the height of temptation. Something bitter is now announced even to her, who was blessed among women. All have to bear the part assigned to them in chastisement. (Buls)

Arndt: It adds a slight touch of contingency 'in every given case' whenever human hearts are confronted with Christ. (Buls)

A person's attitude to Jesus' person, Word and work, brings out the thoughts of that person's heart. (Buls)

Bengel: Both faith and unbelief are in the heart and are put forth by the mouth. Romans 10:8.9.21; 15:5.6; Acts 13:46; 2 Corinthians 4:13; 6:11; 2 Tim. 2:12.13.(Buls)

Geldenhuis: The appearance of Christ will cause a clear division between those who really serve Him and those who are hostile to Him. (Buls)

This verse is not saying that some hearts are better, by nature, than are others. Judas was lost. Peter repented. One malefactor was lost. The other was saved. In both instances, the former rejected the Christ and the latter, only by grace and mercy, repented. Read John 3:20.21 where we have the same thought in different words. Christ is was ordained by God to bring out this great distinction among men. This truth stands side by side, in Scripture, with the great truth of the universal atonement and God's serious desire that all men be saved, that they come to the knowledge of the Truth. (Buls)

**2:36-38** To confirm the words of Simeon, a second witness, Anna, is introduced (Deut 19:15). She, as did the women who saw the resurrected Jesus and as the shepherds who heard the good news, spread the message of hope. She spoke of his death as the redemption/ransom (Lk 21:28). Her presence confirms that Jesus is the hope for all Israel, for she, of the tribe of Asher, represents the ten tribes. Her constant presence in the temple, her piety (cf. Acts 14:23; 27:9; 2 Cor 6:5), and her waiting (cf. Is 4:2-6; Zeph 3:14-20) stand as an example for believers today. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 1)

Furthermore, with the presence of Simeon and Anna and their confession of God's redemption for all nations in Christ, divisions once in place (e.g., Gal 3:28) begin to fall. Before us is Jesus, who fulfills the purpose of the temple and who is the reconciliation between God and man. He is the Passover; he is the place of atonement; he is the High Priest. Those who belong to him as priests offer their living sacrifices. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 1)

**2:36** *prophetess*. Other prophetesses were Miriam (Ex 15:20), Deborah (Jdg 4:4), Huldah (2Ki 22:14) and the daughters of Philip (Ac 21:9). (CSB)

Note how similar the beginning of verses 25, 33, 36: Simeon, the parents, Anna. The first information, other than that from Gabriel, which the parents received, was from two elderly, pious, believing Jews. Likely they were not well-known. Mid all the empty ritual at the temple, these two shine. An example for us: though we are insignificant and often must live mid much mere ritual, God sustains us. (Buls)

Anna (Old Testament Hannah) was a prophetess. God caused her to speak His Word. Evidently she was known for this. She has been compared with Miriam, Deborah, Huldah and the daughters of Philip. She made God's will known to people. Her father's name is noted, not that of her husband. Obviously this is done to denote her descent. (Buls)

Before the Destruction of Jerusalem (and all records) Jews could trace their lineage. Asher was one of the ten tribes of the north which were lost. But God preserved one of their descendants as His child. "This one advanced in many days" obviously means she was quite elderly. This verse plainly means that her husband died after seven years of marriage. By the way, this verse can be



used in the interest of the ordination of women as little as verses 25-32 can be used in the interest of the ordination of men. (Buls)

The Holy Spirit was upon and guided both Simeon and Anna. These passages do not speak about or pertain to the holy ministry. God used these two elderly people for a specific purpose: to give further information about and to glorify this baby. (Buls)

Luke often has stories in pairs, and women figure prominently in the narrative. As in the Easter story, women play a key role in the events surrounding the Nativity. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 4, Part 1)

*Anna.* Same name as OT Hannah (1Sa 1:2), which means “gracious.” Anna praised God for the child Jesus as Hannah had praised God for the child Samuel (1Sa 2:1–10). (CSB)

She is either 84, or she had remained a widow for 84 years after 7 years of marriage, which probably would make her at least 105. Did she, perhaps, have a room in one of the buildings on the temple grounds? Nothing can be said with certainty, but in any case she was an exceptional saint. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 4, Part 1)

**2:37** *a widow* – A variety of widows exhibited exemplary devotion (1 Kings 17:8-24; Luke 21:1-4; cf 1 Tim. 5:3-10). Anna was an outstanding example of such a pious widow. (TLSB)

AV NKJV and JB read the Koine text: "She was a widow of *about* eighty-four years." All the other translations read "until." That causes a problem. It can mean either: "and as widow till she was eighty-four" RSV NIV AAT NEB NASB, or: "she had been a widow for eighty-four years" LB TEV. The former would mean that she was eighty-four, the latter that she was about 105 years old. In other words, the Koine reading makes the genitive a predicate genitive of description, whereas the Nestle reading gives it a temporal meaning (until). Frankly the Koine reading makes much more sense. The text very likely is saying that as a widow (the time between the death of her husband and this occasion) she devoted herself entirely to a sanctified life of fasting, supplication and testimony about Jesus. (Buls)

Verse 37 does not say that she lived in the Temple. (If the verse be pressed literally it would have to mean that she never left the Temple). In what sense did she not depart from the Temple? In serving day and night by fastings and supplications. A remarkably dedicated widow. (Buls)

*never left the temple.* Herod's temple was quite large and included rooms for various uses, and Anna may have been allowed to live in one of them. This statement, however, probably means that she spent her waking hours attending and worshiping in the temple. (CSB)

*worshiping...night and day* – To worship God in the OT liturgical perspective was to “serve Him with fasting and prayers. The same expression is used in 1:74. (CC)

**2:38** *coming up* – "At that very moment" a dative of time meaning: "at that very time," when the parents and the baby were in the Temple. "Coming up to them" means "appeared." By the way, this might indicate that she came into the Temple at that very time, but it can't be proved. (Buls)

"She gave thanks" is "she was acknowledging in return," in return for blessings received. She was a grateful penitent sinner. Both verbs in this verse are imperfect tense, denoting continued action. It has been suggested that she did this speaking *after* the parents left, but the text does not

say this. The text does not specify whether she did this before, during or after the parents came. But that she spoke of Jesus is clear. (Buls)

For the rest of this verse compare verse 25. It reads: "To all of those who were awaiting the redemption of Jerusalem." Its intended sense is that many people were awaiting the coming of the Messiah. Our text makes Jerusalem, as representative of all Israel, objective genitive. The context must be speaking of spiritual deliverance. NEB "the liberation of Jerusalem" sounds like political deliverance. So does AAT "were looking for Jerusalem to be set free." The context clearly calls for the spiritual deliverance gained by the Messiah, not political deliverance from Rome. (Buls)

*give thanks...to speak* – The imperfect tense may well mean that she continued her thanks also after Mary and Joseph had gone. (Lenski)

Anna continues the proclamation of the Good News that shepherds began at the birth of Jesus (2:15-20). (CC)

*Jerusalem*. The holy city of God's chosen people (Isa 40:2; 52:9); here it stands for Israel as a whole. (CSB)

*redemption of Jerusalem* – Echoing Simeon, Anna spoke to those who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem and said, "It is here in the person of this child." (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 4, Part 1)

λύτρωσιν—"Redemption" (as opposed to "deliverance") parallels 1:68 and emphasizes Luke's concern with atonement language. λύτρωσις/λυτρόω are part of Luke's larger Gospel frame, occurring in the final chapter of the gospel as the Emmaus disciples tell Jesus that they had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel (24:21). (CC)

**2:22–38** As confirmed by prophecy, Jesus is appointed as the Savior. Today, pray that the Lord would grant you the enduring faith of Simeon and Anna, to see the Lord's salvation and give Him thanks face-to-face in eternity. • Pray the Nunc Dimittis (vv 29–32; *LSB*, p 165). (TLSB)

*The Return to Nazareth*

**39 And when they had performed everything according to the Law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. 40 And the child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom. And the favor of God was upon him.**

**2:39-40** With *etelesan* (v 39), we are drawn ahead to Jesus' completion of everything according to the Father's will (Lk 24:44–49). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 1)

Truly human in every way is Jesus (cf. 1:80; 2:52; Heb 2:10–18; 4:15; 5:9). His wisdom, the ability and desire to use knowledge in relationship to the Father, anticipates the next narrative. His wisdom also set him as superior to John, for from childhood Jesus possessed both wisdom and grace. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 1)

Though the language differs, *charis theou ēn ep' auto* (v 40) evokes the Father's declaration at Jesus' Baptism and transfiguration. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 1)

**2:39** *they returned to Galilee*. Luke does not mention the coming of the Magi, the danger from Herod, or the flight to and return from Egypt (cf. Mt 2:1–23). (CSB)

"Had done everything" obviously refers to the ceremonial requirements noted in verses 21-24. "Returned" whence they had come, 2:4. Arndt is of the opinion that they returned immediately to Nazareth to move their belongings to Bethlehem to live there permanently. Most other commentators believe that Luke is abbreviating the account because the flight to Egypt intervened as according to Matthew. The latter is likely the true view. Whether or not Luke was aware of the flight into Egypt is beside the point. The accounts in Matthew and Luke do not contradict each other. (Buls)

Plummer: Luke appears to know nothing of the visit of the Magi. It would have suited his theme of the universality of the Gospel so well, that he would hardly have omitted it, if he had known it. In that case he was not familiar with our first Gospel, Matthew. From Matthew 2:11 we infer that the Holy Family, after the Purification, returned to Bethlehem and there occupied a house. (Buls)

In brief narratives like the present, intervening events are often passed over in silence. We know from Matthew that the wise men from the East found the Savior at Bethlehem; that afterwards He was carried into Egypt; and after a sojourn there of some time, to Nazareth in Galilee, whence Mary had come with Joseph to Bethlehem before His birth. (CB)

**2:40-52** Luke continues last week's emphasis on the presence of God and the temple. Jesus, born of woman, grew as man grows. But with the completion of everything according to the Law, Luke answers the question posed of John the Baptizer: What will this one be? How will this one increase and abound in wisdom? Luke provides this event as his response, to anticipate how Jesus will be about the Father's matters in his ministry. Or to view it from our Lord's eyes: "You brought me to the temple and I was dedicated to the service of the Lord. Did you not think that I would be in my Father's house?" This record demonstrates that Jesus always had set his face toward Jerusalem, his Father's matters at the temple. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 1)

Since the ministry of Jesus culminates as High Priest and the offering, completing the purpose of the temple, Luke has selected an event from Jesus' youth that characterizes this direction of his life. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 1)

**2:40** *child grew and became strong* – The lad attained more and more wisdom in the Biblical sense as the right knowledge of God and His salvation coupled with its application to life. In the case of Jesus this included the realization of His own relationship to God. (Lenski)

On this verse compare 1:80 and 2:52. This verse evidently describes Jesus' progress from infancy until the age twelve. He is called "child," a true human being. Note that both verbs are imperfect tense for obvious reasons. He grew as did any other child. Note the passive verbs denoting God as agent in both the mental and spiritual "filling." "Grace" does not denote saving grace, but the favor and approval of God. This verse is a remarkable commentary on the humanity of Jesus. (Buls)

Lenski: It is impossible for us to penetrate the mystery of this development in Jesus -- body and soul untouched by sin, unchecked and unretarded by any result of sin, his mind and soul absorbing the wisdom of God's Word as a bud drinks in the sunshine and expands. (Buls)

Geldenhuys: For the first time a human infant was realizing the ideal of humanity. (Buls)

The sinless Jesus grew and developed as do all other children. He did not need baptism as an infant. His baptism later, was a vicarious baptism, for us. He was not "contradicted" as a child, verse 34. That came only when He began to testify later, John 5:16-18. Though sinless, Jesus must have been a very normal child. (Buls)

*filled with wisdom* – Likely alludes to Is. 11:2, where the Messiah is characterized as one endowed by the Spirit with Wisdom. (TLSB)

**2:39–40** Jesus matures as a normal child and also has the blessings of God’s wisdom and favor. Today, pray for the children in your family or neighborhood, that they would grow in the knowledge of their Savior and receive His favor. He who has blessed and kept you in faith will likewise hear and bless them too. • I thank You, Holy Child, that You fulfilled the Law for me. Fill me with the wisdom only You can give. Amen. (TLSB)

### *The Boy Jesus at the Temple*

**41 Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover. 42 And when he was twelve years old, they went up according to custom. 43 And when the feast was ended, as they were returning, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. His parents did not know it, 44 but supposing him to be in the group they went a day's journey, but then they began to search for him among their relatives and acquaintances, 45 and when they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem, searching for him. 46 After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. 47 And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. 48 And when his parents saw him, they were astonished. And his mother said to him, “Son, why have you treated us so? Behold, your father and I have been searching for you in great distress.” 49 And he said to them, “Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?” 50 And they did not understand the saying that he spoke to them. 51 And he went down with them and came to Nazareth and was submissive to them. And his mother treasured up all these things in her heart. 52 And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature[i] and in favor with God and man.**

**2:41-42** Whereas many passages describe regulations about the Passover (Ex 23:14–17; cf. 34:22–23; Deut 16:16; see also 1 Sam 1:7; 2:1, 19), only here do we observe the One who willingly continues (vv 22–40) to submit himself to the Law. Luke does not relate whether this Passover was Jesus’ first time at the temple since childhood. However, this pilgrimage was according to the custom of the family; they fulfilled what the Law required (Ex 12:15; Lev 23:8; Deut 16:3). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 1)

**2:41** *Feast of the Passover.* Annual attendance at three feasts by all adult males (normally accompanied by their families) was commanded in the law: Passover, Pentecost and Tabernacles (see notes on Ex 23:14–17; Dt 16:16). Distance prevented many from attending all three, but most Jews tried to be at Passover. (CSB)

An annual pilgrimage to the Passover was required of all Israelites (Dt 16:6). Extended families and neighbors often traveled together, singing and picnicking along the way. (TLSB)

All male Jews were expected to travel to Jerusalem for the Passover (Ex 23:14–17; Deut 16:16). The celebration involved the liturgical slaying of the lamb at the temple and then a family meal of that lamb after sundown on the fifteenth day of Nisan (Mar/Ap). (CC)

The Passover in Jerusalem was exciting. There was a festive atmosphere and family reunions, pageantry, and ancient biblical liturgical traditions. A child would ponder the historical and theological components of this journey. The Passover meal began with child's question: "Why is this night different from all other nights?" The discussion of God's saving acts would often extend late into the night. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 2, Part 1)

The combination of the passion language of necessity (δεῖ) and the temporal context of the Passover is also significant. Only two Passovers are mentioned in Luke: here at the beginning of Jesus' life in the infancy narrative and at the end of his life in the passion narrative (Luke 22). Only Luke describes the day of the Last Supper as "the day of Unleavened Bread, on which it was necessary [ἔδει] that the Passover lamb be sacrificed" (22:7). Once again, the evangelist uses a simple frame of time, the Passover, and event, the passion, to help the hearer see how the infancy narrative anticipates Jesus' final days of passion and resurrection. (CC)

**2:42** *twelve years old.* At age 12 boys began preparing to take their places in the religious community the following year. (CSB)

Twelve years have passed since the previous episode. Remarkably, vv 41–52 is the only NT account of Jesus' later childhood. (TLSB)

At the age 12 boys were instructed and prepared for becoming adult members of the covenant community, which happened at age 13. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 2, Part 1)

**2:43-44** While the feast lasted seven days, some pilgrims left after two days. With *kai teleiōsantōn tas hēmeras* (v 43), Luke shows that this family was pious and devout (William Arndt, *Bible Commentary: The Gospel According to St. Luke*, Concordia Heritage Series [St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1956], 100). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 1)

Without delay and detail, Luke recounts the feast, but he notably slows the pace of the narrative when the search for Jesus begins. In a larger caravan, it would seem children were not always with parents but with extended family or townsfolk (Arndt, 100–101). This contrast should be recognized, however: Jesus was not found with the expected family and acquaintances, but he is with his Father (cf. Lk 8:19–21). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 1)

**2:43** AFTER THE FEAST WAS OVER – The two feasts of Passover and Unleavened Bread lasted a total of 7 days (Ex. 12:15; Lev. 23:8; Deut 16:3). According to Jewish tradition, pilgrims were only required to stay 2 days, but Joseph and Mary fulfilled the entire period. During this time, Jesus may have established a routine of being out of sight of his parents, which could have included his spending time in the temple with the rabbis. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 2, Part 1)

*went up* – ἀναβαίνοντων—One always goes up to Jerusalem, not only because of its height, but because this is Zion, the holy mountain where God will come for redemption (cf. 18:10, 31; 19:28). (CC)

**2:44** *search for him* – καὶ ἀνεζήτουν αὐτόν—Similar expressions are repeated with ἀναζητέω in 2:44–45 and ζητέω in 2:48–49, providing the language for a subtheme in the narrative: seeking and finding Jesus. Jesus knows his destiny and (as a sign) he remains (momentarily) where he should be. As Luke will later imply (2:50), Mary and Joseph do not fully understand where Jesus

must be and what he must do. They are continually seeking to discover the mission of their child. (CC)

**2:46** *three days*. One day traveling away from Jerusalem, a second traveling back and a third looking for him. (CSB)

The traveling to and fro from the great festivals in Jerusalem was done by those living at a distance in companies or caravans. Neighbors, friends, and relatives formed groups whose members could furnish assistance to one another in cases of illness or attacks by highwaymen. Naturally it was not necessary for them to travel in anything resembling military formation. Some of the group would walk more leisurely than others. In this instance the parents of Jesus, probably with a few special friends, traveled alone, knowing that at the meeting place agreed on as resting place for the night they would find their companions. (CC pp. 129-130)

Again observe the tempo of the account; Luke compels us to watch with judgment as Jesus guides this incident to its climax. The three days perhaps foreshadow Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection (Arthur A. Just Jr., *Luke 1:1–9:50*, Concordia Commentary [St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1996], 130). In Luke 2 and 24, Jesus remains hidden to human eyes until he has chosen the place and the time to reveal himself. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 1)

This event is not a one-to-one session; Jesus participates (*akouonta autōn kai eperōtōnta autous*) in the instruction of a public nature (*en tōi hierōi*), possibly under a portico (cf. Jn 10:23; 18:20). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 1)

*listening...asking question* – The type of rabbinic teaching was for both teachers and pupils to ask probing questions, and to use the answers as springboards for religious instruction. It is still a wonderful thing to listen to learned people talk intelligently about issues that matter. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 2, Part 1)

In order to stimulate more profound thinking, the rabbis often responded to people's questions by posing their own questions. Already as a child, Jesus was able to engage the best religious minds in this way. (TLSB)

*the teachers*. The rabbis, experts in Judaism. (CSB)

**2:47** *were amazed* – ἐξίσταντο—The amazement of the all who heard him is consistent with the wonder that has accompanied the events of his infancy and John's (1:21, 63; 2:18, 33). But here, the very words of Jesus cause amazement among the teachers and others in the temple. Luke will use ἐξίστημι in Lk 8:56; 24:22; Acts 2:7, 12; 8:9, 11, 13; 9:21; 10:45; 12:16. (CC)

Jesus is depicted as Rabbi par excellence, even from His youth. (TLSB)

Jesus' insightful responses demonstrate that he was filled with wisdom (2:40). The presence of the Holy Spirit remains hidden though understood in the phrase *epi tēi sunesei* (see Is 11:2 LXX). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 1)

**2:48-49** Mary again is about to confront the sword. In view of Jesus' actions, she must contend with the announcement from Gabriel, the words of the shepherds, and the words of Simeon. Though they had brought him to the temple at Mary's purification and now for this feast, Mary and Joseph cannot yet perceive that this Jesus will save his people from their sins or what that will entail. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 1)

Jesus' words manifest his awareness of his person and work. He confirms what Gabriel declared (1:32, 35). Whereas Mary spoke of *ho patēr sou* (Joseph), Jesus opens the door for his ministry with *en tois tou patros mou*. Whether that phrase is rendered “in my Father’s house” or “about my Father’s matters,” what Jesus does is his Father’s work, and that occurs in the temple. Jesus is always conscious of the Father (Jn 6:37–40, 57; 8:18, 28–29, 38–39, 49); he is one with the Father (Jn 10:30; 17:23). His first recorded words are about his Father, and his last words from the cross are about his Father, and everything in between is his Father’s matter. Jesus speaks of the divine necessity (*dei* [v 49]) eighteen times in Luke (for example, to preach [4:43]; suffer [9:22]; go on his way [13:33]; stay at home of Zacchaeus [19:5]; be delivered up, crucified, and rise again [24:7]; suffer these things and enter into glory [22:37]). As Jesus set his face toward Jerusalem, he taught his disciples that being about the matters of the Father is also the attitude required of all who would follow him (9:59–62; 14:26). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 1)

**2:48** *they were astonished* – ἐξεπλάγησαν—Immediately following the amazement of those in the temple, Luke uses an even stronger word for the astonishment of Jesus’ parents, who are struck that Jesus is in the temple with such an audience surrounding him and listening to his answers and his wisdom (cf. 4:32; 9:43; Acts 13:12). (CC)

*your father and I have been searching* – ὁ πατήρ σου κἀγὼ ... ἐζητοῦμέν σε—The anxious searching that aptly summarizes the activity of Mary and Joseph in 2:43–45 is now given voice by Mary in her question of Jesus. Mary says, “your father and I,” which will stand in sharp contrast to Jesus’ reply about his need to be about the things of *his Father*. (CC)

**2:49** *why were you looking for me* – τί ὅτι ἐζητεῖτέ με—These are Jesus’ first recorded words in the gospel. His response picks up Mary’s word for seeking. By using this expression, he implies that even his parents do not understand why he must be where he is, anticipating his next statement. All human participants in Jesus’ life will be seeking him and seeking to understand him. However, only after his resurrection will their eyes be opened (by God) so that they may perceive his identity, purpose, and accomplishment (e.g., 24:31, 35). (CC)

*I must be* – δεῖ—This theologically significant word is part of Luke’s passion vocabulary, denoting the necessity of God’s plan of salvation to be accomplished in Jerusalem. “It is necessary” emphasizes this destiny. *I must* lays down the law of devotion to His Father by which he was to walk even to the Cross’.” (CC)

Simeon has already predicted that Jesus is destined for the fall and resurrection of many in Israel, but little did the hearer expect and Mary and Joseph to be the first who stumble over the cross (see 20:17–18). “What Mary and Joseph did not understand was this: that in those first fateful words, ‘I must be in my Father’s home’, Jesus was darkly alluding to his future passion and Resurrection in the Holy City.” But the hearer is now alerted to look for how others will respond to the words of Jesus and for similar misunderstandings of his passion, particularly in the passion predictions (9:44–45; 18:31–34). This will set the stage for the great revelation at Emmaus. There, in the midst of profound confusion, Jesus interprets the OT Christologically for the Emmaus disciples and then their eyes are opened in the breaking of the bread; they see him *for the first time in the gospel as the crucified and risen Christ*. (CC)

*in my Father’s house*. Jesus pointed to his personal duty to his Father in heaven. He contrasted his “my Father” with Mary’s “Your father” (v. 48). At 12 years of age he was aware of his unique relationship to God. But he was also obedient to his earthly parents (v. 51). (CSB)

**2:50** *they did not understand* – Jesus’ very first words are misunderstood, a theme for his life. Since the necessity to be about the things of his Father has passion overtones, this misunderstanding fits well into the patterns of misunderstanding that accompanies the passion predictions (9:22; 9:44-45; 18:31-34). (CC pp. 131-132)

As in v 47, though Jesus comprehended the nature of his call, others did not. His own family failed to understand his calling, as did his disciples (Mt 16:22; Mk 9:10; Lk 8:19–21; 9:45). His work was hidden under the form of a servant. His calling remains a matter of faith for all who hear. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 1)

**2:51** *was submissive to them* – ἦν ὑποτασσόμενος αὐτοῖς—Jesus’ obedience to his parents is part of his active obedience. The periphrastic construction implies continual obedience. He let himself be placed in the proper divine ordering of the family. (CC)

Jesus responded as an obedient child to His mother’s scolding (v 48). He obeyed the divine Law and submitted to His earthly parents. (TLSB)

Jesus did not grasp for what had belonged to him but made himself servant, a child of the parents (Phil 2:6–7). This mind-set characterizes the people of God (Eph 5:21).

*dietērei* parallels *sunetērei* (2:19). Mary, mulling over these events and words constantly, does not know how to arrange these matters of her Son’s life into a comprehensible whole. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 1)

He willingly submitted to the authority of his parents since he was born under the laws to redeem those under the law, so that we might share in his sonship (Gal. 4:4-5) (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 2, Part 1)

*mother treasured* – διετήρει πάντα τὰ ῥήματα ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ αὐτῆς—Again, Luke uses τὰ ῥήματα to denote the words and actions of Jesus that Mary treasures in her heart. This is the second time Mary has done this (see 2:19). This strongly suggests that she is a source for the historical information in the infancy narrative in Luke. (CC)

**2:52** Luke appears to have borrowed the words of 1Sa 2:26. (CSB)

*And Jesus increased.* Although Jesus was God, there is no indication that he had all knowledge and wisdom from birth. He seems to have matured like any other boy. (CSB)

Chemnitz: “This advance pertained to the one [human] nature [of Christ]” (*LTh* 1:105). (TLSB)

*chariti* returns us to 1:80 and 2:40 (1 Sam 2:26; Prov 3:4). Spiritual maturity is in mind (Eph 3:16; 4:13). Jesus is ready for his ministry. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 1)

*with God and man* – παρὰ θεῶν καὶ ἀνθρώπων—The Emmaus disciples will use a similar expression of Jesus’ deeds and words during his ministry (24:19; ἐναντίον τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ παντὸς τοῦ λαοῦ). Throughout his boyhood and adult ministry, there was no doubt that Jesus was wise and full of understanding. The problem is his destiny in Jerusalem. (CC)

**2:41–52** Luke’s account of Jesus’ birth and childhood repeatedly sets the ordinary beside the miraculous (e.g., a youth from the hinterland stuns the Jerusalem rabbis with His wisdom). Given



the mysterious and often apparently ordinary ways God chooses to reveal Himself and His salvation—in the flesh of His Son, in words, in water, in bread and wine—we easily underestimate their power. Thankfully, the very common aspects of God’s gifts mean that they are never far from us. • Lord Jesus, open my eyes to Your life-giving presence. Through Your Word, Sacraments, and Spirit, bless my life, so that things that seem mundane become a foretaste of blessedness in Your eternal presence. Amen. (TLSB)