

^a 1:58 Gn 19:19
^b 1:59 Gn 17:12; Lv 12:3; Lk 2:21; Php 3:5
^c 1:60 Lk 1:13, 63
^d 1:62 Lk 1:22
^e 1:64 Lk 1:20
^f 1:66 Ac 11:21
^g 1:67 Lk 1:41
^h 1:28
ⁱ 1:68 Ps 41:13
^j Lk 1:71; 2:38; Heb 9:12
^k 1:69 1Sm 2:1,10; Ps 18:2; 89:17; 132:17; Ezk 29:21
^l 2Sm 7:26; Ps 89:3,20; Ezk 34:23-24; 37:24-25
^m 1:70 2Kg 21:10; Hs 12:10; Ac 3:21; Rm 1:2; Heb 1:1
ⁿ 1:72 Mc 7:20
^o Ps 105:8-9,42; 106:45
^p 1:73 Gn 22:16-17; Heb 6:13

^q 1:76 Mt 11:9
^r Lk 1:17; Is 40:3; Mal 3:1
^s 1:77 Jr 31:34; Mk 1:4
^t 1:78 Is 58:8; Jr 23:5; Zch 3:8; 6:12 LXX; Mal 4:2; Lk 24:49; Eph 4:8; 2Pt 1:19
^u 1:79 Is 9:2; 60:2-3
^v 1:80 Lk 2:40
^w 2:1 Mt 22:17; Lk 3:1
^x 2:2 Mt 4:24
^y 2:4 Mt 2:23; 4:13; 21:11; Jn 1:45
^z Gn 35:19; 48:7; Jos 19:15; Jdg 12:10; 17:7-9; Ru 1:1; 1Sm 16:1; Mc 5:2
^{aa} Lk 1:27

Lord had shown her his great mercy,^a and they rejoiced with her.

⁵⁹ When they came to circumcise the child on the eighth day,^b they were going to name him Zechariah, after his father.

⁶⁰ But his mother responded, “No. He will be called John.”^c

⁶¹ Then they said to her, “None of your relatives has that name.”^d ⁶² So they motioned to his father^e to find out what he wanted him to be called. ⁶³ He asked for a writing tablet and wrote: “His name is John.” And they were all amazed. ⁶⁴ Immediately his mouth was opened^f and his tongue set free, and he began to speak, praising God. ⁶⁵ Fear came on all those who lived around them, and all these things were being talked about throughout the hill country of Judea. ⁶⁶ All who heard about him^g took it to heart, saying, “What then will this child become?” For, indeed, the Lord’s hand was with him.

ZECHARIAH’S PROPHECY

⁶⁷ Then his father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit^g and prophesied:^h

⁶⁸ Blessed is the Lord, the God of Israel,ⁱ because he has visited and provided redemption for his people.^j

⁶⁹ He has raised up a horn of salvation for us^k in the house of his servant David,^l just as he spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets in ancient times;^m salvation from our enemies and from the hand of those who hate us.

⁷⁰ He has dealt mercifully with our fathersⁿ and remembered his holy covenant^o —

⁷¹ the oath that he swore to our father Abraham.^p

⁷² He has given us the privilege, since we have been rescued from the hand of our enemies, to serve him without fear

⁷⁵ in holiness and righteousness in his presence all our days.

⁷⁶ And you, child, will be called a prophet of the Most High,^q for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways,^r

⁷⁷ to give his people knowledge of salvation through the forgiveness of their sins.^s

⁷⁸ Because of our God’s merciful compassion, the dawn from on high^t will visit us

⁷⁹ to shine on those who live in darkness and the shadow of death,^u to guide our feet into the way of peace.

⁸⁰ The child grew up and became spiritually strong,^v and he was in the wilderness until the day of his public appearance to Israel.

THE BIRTH OF JESUS

² In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus^w that the whole empire^x should be registered. ² This first registration took place while^y Quirinius was governing Syria.^x ³ So everyone went to be registered, each to his own town.

⁴ Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth^y in Galilee, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem,^z because he was of the house and family line of David,^{aa} ⁵ to be registered along with Mary, who was engaged to him^c and was pregnant. ⁶ While they were there, the time came for her to give birth. ⁷ Then she gave birth to her firstborn son, and she wrapped him tightly in cloth and laid him in a manger,^o because there was no guest room available for them.

THE SHEPHERDS AND THE ANGELS

⁸ In the same region, shepherds were staying out in the fields and keeping watch at

^A 2:1 Or the whole inhabited world ^B 2:2 Or This registration was the first while, or This registration was before ^C 2:5 Lit betrothed ^D 2:7 Or feeding trough, also in vv. 12,16

1:67-79 Zechariah’s prophecy of praise is called the *Benedictus*, which is the first word of the Latin rendering of **ble**sse**d is the Lord, the God of Israel** (1:68): *Benedictus Dominus Deus Israel*. He worshiped God for the **sal**vation he was providing for his people through the Messiah, just as he had promised (1:68-75). As for Zechariah’s son John, he would be a **prophet** who would **go before the Lord to prepare his ways** as the Old Testament prophets foretold

(1:76; see Isa 40:3; Mal 3:1). He would introduce Israel to the Messiah (see John 1:29-36). **2:1 Caesar Augustus** ruled from 31 BC to AD 14. **2:4 Bethlehem** was David’s hometown (see 1 Sam 16:1). The distance between it and Nazareth was about ninety miles. **2:7 A manger** was a feeding trough for animals. The King of creation, who deserved all honor and glory, was born into the humblest of circumstances.

2:8-11 God chose to announce his Son’s birth—not to the political or religious leaders of the day—but to a group of humble **shepherds** (2:8). Why? He would be a Messiah **for all the people** (2:10) and offered as a sacrificial Lamb like those cared for by the shepherds. **The city of David** is another name for Bethlehem, King David’s hometown (2:11).

night over their flock. ⁹ Then an angel of the Lord^b stood before them,^b and the glory of the Lord^c shone around them, and they were terrified.^a ¹⁰ But the angel said to them, “Don’t be afraid,^g for look, I proclaim to you good news of great joy that will be for all the people.^b ¹¹ Today in the city of David a Savior^e was born for you, who is the Messiah,^f the Lord.^g ¹² This will be the sign for you:^h You will find a baby wrapped tightly in cloth and lying in a manger.”

¹³ Suddenly there was a multitude of the heavenly host^c with the angel, praising God and saying:

¹⁴ Glory to God in the highest heaven,ⁱ and peace on earth^j to people he favors!^{d,e,k}

¹⁵ When the angels had left them and returned to heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let’s go straight to Bethlehem and see what has happened, which the Lord has made known to us.”

¹⁶ They hurried off and found both Mary and Joseph, and the baby who was lying in the manger. ¹⁷ After seeing them, they reported the message they were told about this child,¹⁸ and all who heard it were amazed^l at what the shepherds said to them. ¹⁹ But Mary was treasuring up all these things in her heart^m and meditating on them. ²⁰ The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising Godⁿ for all the things they had seen and heard, which were just as they had been told.

THE CIRCUMCISION AND PRESENTATION OF JESUS

²¹ When the eight days were completed for his circumcision,^o he was named Jesus^p — the name given by the angel before he was conceived. ²² And when the days of their purification according to the law of

Moses were finished,^q they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord²³ (just as it is written in the law of the Lord, **Every firstborn male will be dedicated^f to the Lord²⁴**)²⁴ and to offer a sacrifice (according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, **a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons^{h,5}**).

SIMEON’S PROPHETIC PRAISE

²⁵ There was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon. This man was righteous and devout,^t looking forward to Israel’s consolation,^u and the Holy Spirit it was on him. ²⁶ It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit^v that he would not see death before he saw the Lord’s Messiah.^w ²⁷ Guided by the Spirit, he entered the temple. When the parents brought in the child Jesus to perform for him what was customary under the law,²⁸ Simeon took him up in his arms, praised God, and said,

²⁹ Now, Master, you can dismiss your servant in peace, as you promised.

³⁰ For my eyes have seen your salvation.^x

³¹ You have prepared it in the presence of all peoples —

³² a light for revelation to the Gentiles,^y and glory to your people Israel.^z

³³ His father and mother^l were amazed at what was being said about him. ³⁴ Then Simeon blessed them and told his mother Mary: “Indeed, this child is destined to cause the fall and rise of many in Israel^{aa} and to be a sign that will be opposed^k — ³⁵ and a sword will pierce your own soul — that the thoughts^l of many hearts may be revealed.”

^A 2:9 Lit they feared a great fear ^B 2:10 Or the whole nation ^C 2:13 Lit heavenly army ^D 2:14 Other mss read earth good will to people ^E 2:14 Or earth to men of good will ^F 2:23 Lit be called holy ^G 2:23 Ex 13:2,12 ^H 2:24 Lv 5:11; 12:8 ^I 2:32 Or the nations ^J 2:33 Other mss read But Joseph and his mother ^K 2:34 Or spoken against ^L 2:35 Or schemes

2:12 The shepherds were responsible for making sure that newborn lambs had no defects since the sacrificial animals had to be without spot or wrinkle. So the shepherds would tightly wrap the lambs in cloth to keep them from becoming blemished and injuring themselves. This explains why Luke makes the point that Jesus was **wrapped tightly in cloth**, since at his birth he was the sinless Lamb of God whose substitutionary sacrifice would take away the sin of the entire world (see John 1:29; 2 Cor 5:21; 1 Pet 1:19-20; 1 John 2:2).

2:14 Peace on earth to people he favors is a reference to all those who would submit themselves to the Messiah. Importantly,

though, this angelic announcement of “peace on earth” that’s repeated so often at Christmastime is not about quiet tranquility or merely the absence of animosity between people. It is a declaration of the coming end of hostilities between a holy God and sinful humanity through the atoning work of the Messiah. Only when “we have been declared righteous by faith,” can “we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Rom 5:1). Peace among people is possible when humanity is living at peace with God and submitting to his kingdom rule.

2:21-24 Joseph and Mary fulfilled the law by circumcising their son “on the eighth day” (Lev

12:3). They further kept God’s commands by presenting Jesus to the Lord in fulfillment of Exodus 13:2,12, and by offering a sacrifice in fulfillment of Leviticus 12:6-8. The kind of animals they offered indicates the couple was poor.

2:34 Indeed, some would **fall** by rejecting Jesus, and others would put their faith in him and **rise** to abundant and eternal life. **2:35** Simeon told Mary: a **sword will pierce your own soul**. Mary would misunderstand her son (2:41-50), think he was “out of his mind” (Mark 3:21), and experience the grief of his crucifixion (John 19:25-27). But later, after his resurrection, she would know joy (Acts 1:14).

^a 2:9 Mt 1:20; 2:13,19; 28:2; Lk 1:11; Ac 5:19; 8:26; 12:7; 12:23
^b Lk 24:4; Ac 12:7
^c Ex 24:16; 40:34-35; Lv 9:6,23; Nm 20:6; 1Kg 8:11; Is 35:2; 40:5; 60:1
^d 2:10 Mt 14:27
^e 2:11 Mt 1:21; Jn 4:42; Ac 5:31
^f Mt 1:16; 16:16,20; Jn 11:27
^g Lk 1:43; Ac 2:36; 10:36
^h 2:12 1Sm 2:34; 2Kg 19:29; 20:8-9; Is 7:11,14
ⁱ 2:14 Mt 21:9; Lk 19:38
^j Lk 12:51
^k Lk 3:22; Eph 1:9; Php 2:13
^l 2:18 Lk 1:63; 2:33; 4:22; 8:25; 9:43; 11:14,38; 20:26; 24:12,41
^m 2:19 Lk 2:51
ⁿ 2:20 Mt 9:8
^o 2:21 Lk 1:59
^p Lk 1:31

^q 2:22 Lv 12:6-8
^r 2:23 Ex 11:5; 12:12,29; 13:2,12; 34:19; Dt 15:19
^s 2:24 Lv 5:11; 12:8
^t 2:25 Lk 1:6
^u Ps 135:14; Is 40:1-2,11; 49:10,13; 51:3,12; 57:18; 61:2; 66:13; Jr 31:9; Mk 15:43; Lk 2:38; 23:51
^v 2:26 Mt 2:12
^w Ps 89:48; Jn 8:51; Heb 11:5
^x 2:30 Ps 119:166,174; Is 52:10; Lk 3:6
^y 2:32 Is 42:6; 49:6,9; Ac 13:47; 26:23
^z Is 46:13 LXX
^{aa} 2:34 Mt 21:44; 1Co 1:23; 2Co 2:16; 1Pt 2:8