

'Luke' - Extra Teaching Points #3

Luke 2:1-52 (NASB)

Luke 2:1-7

*"Now in those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus, that a census be taken of all the inhabited earth. ² This was the first census taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³ And everyone was on his way to register for the census, each to his own city. ⁴ Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the city of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David, ⁵ in order to register along with Mary, who was engaged to him, and was with child. ⁶ While they were there, the days were completed for her to give birth. ⁷ And she gave birth to her firstborn son; and she wrapped Him in cloths, **and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.**"*

Extra Thoughts on the Nativity:

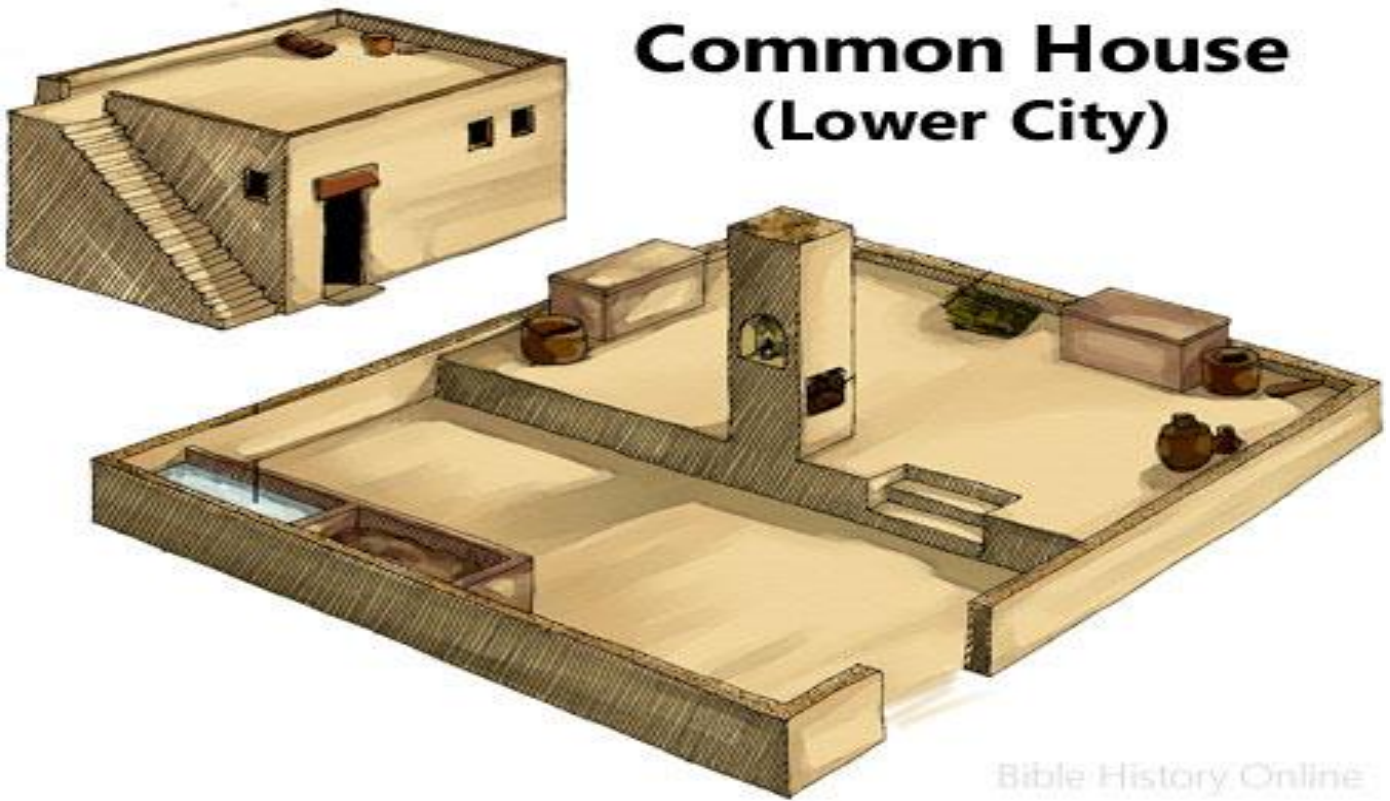
Because Jesus was laid in a manger it is often assumed He was born in a barn.

- A manger is a feeding trough for animals.
- Traditions going back as far as Justin Martyr say Jesus was born in a cave.
- Commentators often point out that caves were used as shelter for animals.

There is another (maybe even greater) possibility that Jesus was born in a house.

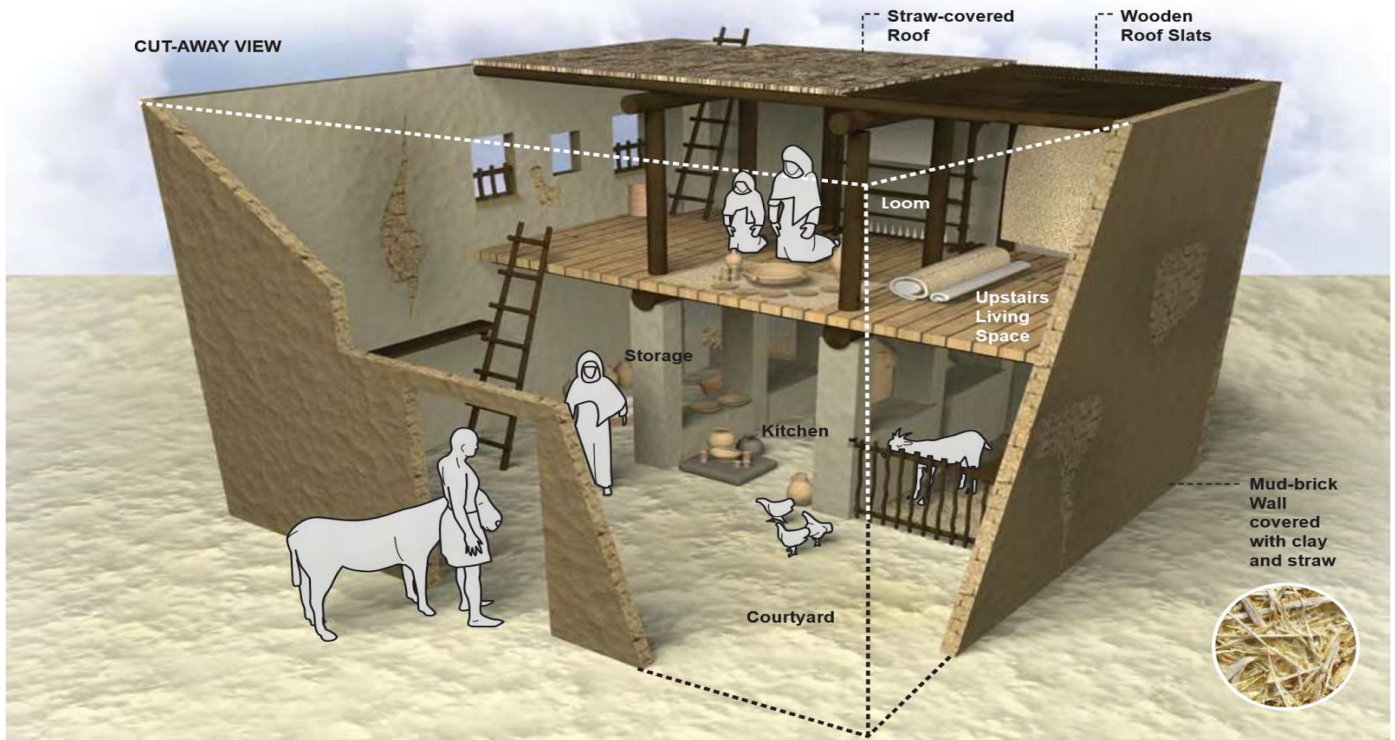
- *"...there was no room for them in the inn."*
 - We shouldn't think of an Inn as a hotel or commercial lodging.
 - Israelites usually had guest rooms (typically upstairs) they would call "Inns."
- Almost all families had a few animals (i.e., a cow for milk or a few sheep).
 - People would bring their animals into their house at night.
 - There was a lower section of the floor, which was usually the entryway into the house.
 - The higher level, which might only be a foot higher, was the living quarters for the family.
 - Joseph and Mary could have been at someone's house (maybe a relative?); but the guest room may have been taken, so they had to stay in a lower level entryway where the animals were kept.

Common House (Lower City)



Bible History Online

CUT-AWAY VIEW



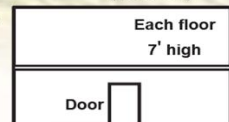
First-Century Israelite House

The homes of poor families were small and plain. They were built of rough stone (or mud-brick) walls and roofs of woven branches covered with clay. Living spaces were used for household work—cooking and weaving. At night, the family's domestic animals were housed in the lower level.

Size comparison:

First-century houses were smaller than modern double-wide trailers and accommodated an entire family.

Height
15'



Width 24', Length 24'

Double wide mobile home (front view)



Width 24', Length 60'

Luke 2:8-14

*"In the same region there were some shepherds staying out in the fields and keeping watch over their flock by night. ² And an angel of the Lord suddenly stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them; and they were terribly frightened. ¹⁰ But the angel said to them, **"Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which will be for all the people; ¹¹ for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.** ¹² "This will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." ¹³ And suddenly there appeared with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host **praising God and saying,** ¹⁴ "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased."*

Vs. 10 "good news of great joy." "Good News" is the Greek word "euaggelizō", which originally had a military flavor; not religious.

- The "euaggelizō" was the good news of a military victory.

Vs. 11 "for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord."

- Jesus was given all these titles at His birth... all the things the Jews were looking for were in Jesus **at His birth.**
 - Sometimes people suggest that Jesus was not the Christ until His baptism.
 - "Christ" is the Greek word for "Messiah" (the anointed one).
 - Jesus **is** the Messiah and **was** from the day of His birth.
- It is also pretty clear there is no distinction between "Savior" and "Lord."
 - It is impossible to accept Jesus as Savior and not as Lord, because there is no Jesus who is Savior and not also Lord.

Extra Info on Angels and Shepherds:

Q: Why would the angels announce Jesus' birth to shepherds in Bethlehem?

- The Jews really frowned on shepherds in general.
 - They were usually dirty, smelly kids who were pretty much social outcasts.
- **Possible Answer #1:** It might be that God brought the "Good News" to the outcasts first because association with the outcasts was something Jesus would be known for.
- **Possible Answer #2:** It could be because King David had been a shepherd in Bethlehem and Jesus was the new shepherd-King.
- **Possible Answer #3:** It could have been because these particular shepherds were pious—they had faith in God and were part of the faithful remnant.
 - God doesn't give what is holy to dogs ([Matt 7:6](#)), and many people in Israel were what Paul would later refer to as 'dogs' ([Phil 3:2](#)).

VS. 13 We usually think of the Angels singing, but nowhere in the Bible does it record that Angels sing... they SAY things... not sing things.

Luke 2:15-21

*"When the angels had gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds began saying to one another, "Let us go straight to Bethlehem then, and see this thing that has happened which the Lord has made known to us." ¹⁶ So they came in a hurry and found their way to Mary and Joseph, and the baby as He lay in the manger. ¹⁷ **When they had seen this, they made known the statement which had been told them about this Child.** ¹⁸ And all who heard it wondered at the things which were told them by the shepherds. ¹⁹ But **Mary treasured all these things, pondering them in her heart.** ²⁰ The shepherds went back, glorifying and praising God for all that they had heard and seen, just as had been told them. ²¹ And when eight days had passed, before His circumcision, His name was then called Jesus, the name given by the angel before He was conceived in the womb."*

Q: In [Luke 2:17](#) we are told, “When they had seen this, they made known the statement which had been told them about this Child.” What was the statement they made known?

- That Jesus was Savior, Christ, and Lord.

[Vs. 19](#) “Mary treasured all these things, pondering them in her heart.”

- Most moms in her shoes would be very proud and talking about the shepherds, angels, and identity of their child.
- **It says something about Mary’s character—that she kept these things to herself and tried to think it through, rather than boasting.**
 - She must have had a gentle and quiet spirit! ([1Peter 3:1-6](#))

Q: If the whole town of Bethlehem had been told the Messiah had been born, and was identified as Jesus, how could He grow up without people knowing He was the Messiah?

- In between this time and His adult life, Jesus disappeared for a while.
 - We don’t read about this in Luke, but in [Matt 2:13](#) we are told Herod was trying to kill Him; so Joseph and Mary took Him to Egypt as God directed them to.
- In [Matt 2:16](#) we read that Herod ordered boys 2 years old and younger to be killed.
 - This could mean Jesus was as much as two years old when the Magi arrived and He was taken to Egypt.
 - It is also possible that the gifts the Magi gave Joseph and Mary paid for their escape to Egypt.

[Luke 2:22](#)

“And when the days for their purification according to the law of Moses were completed, they brought Him up to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord”

- According to the Law, a woman was considered unclean for 7 days after giving birth, and must have no contact with anything holy for another 33 days. ([Lev 12:2-4](#))
- No doubt Joseph had touched Mary, so they both had to observe the purification requirements, which means they brought Jesus to the temple when He was 40 days old.

[Luke 2:23-24](#)

“(as it is written in the Law of the Lord, “EVERY firstborn MALE THAT OPENS THE WOMB SHALL BE CALLED HOLY TO THE LORD”), ²⁴ and to offer a sacrifice according to what was said in the Law of the Lord, “A PAIR OF TURTLEDOVES OR TWO YOUNG PIGEONS.”

- Any male child had to be brought to the Temple and presented to the Lord on the 40th day, but the firstborn male child had to be dedicated to the Lord in a special sense. ([Ex 13:2, 12, 15](#))
 - A sacrifice was required: a lamb and a pigeon or a dove. However, lambs were expensive and a provision in the Law allowed poor people to sacrifice two doves or pigeons if they couldn’t afford a lamb.
- Most Jews were poor, but could still afford a lamb. Mary and Joseph had to offer the sacrifice of the poor.
 - Apparently Joseph and Mary were exceptionally poor.
- This should tell us something of God’s opinion of earthly wealth and its value... He sent His son to be born to exceptionally poor people.
- This could also tell us that the Magi visited them and presented their rich gifts sometime after the first 40 days.

[Luke 2:25-35](#)

*“And there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was **Simeon**; and this man was righteous and devout, looking 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 carry out for Him the custom of the Law, ²⁸ then he took Him into his arms, and blessed God, and said, ²⁹ “Now Lord, You are releasing Your bond-servant to depart in peace, According to Your word; ³⁰ For my eyes have seen Your salvation, ³¹ Which You have prepared in the presence of all peoples, ³² **A LIGHT OF REVELATION TO THE GENTILES, And the glory of Your people Israel.**”

³³ And His father and mother were amazed at the things which were being said about Him. ³⁴ And Simeon blessed them and said to Mary His mother, “Behold, this Child is appointed for the fall and **rise of many in Israel**, and for a sign to be opposed — ³⁵ and a sword will pierce even your own soul — to the end that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed.”

Vs. 25 Simeon had the Holy Spirit upon Him, kind of like the prophets, but He was not a prophet.

- God probably spoke **TO** righteous and devoted people in the period between the Old and New Testaments, but didn't speak **THROUGH** them like He did the prophets.

Vs. 27 “**And he came in the Spirit into the temple**” probably means the Spirit led him to be in the temple that day.

- It is worth noting how much emphasis there is on the Holy Spirit in Luke's gospel.

Vs. 32 “**A LIGHT OF REVELATION TO THE GENTILES, And the glory of Your people Israel.**”

- This is the fulfillment of [Isaiah 60:1-3](#).
- This inclusion of Gentiles came up from time to time in the Old Testament, but it wasn't very well grasped by the Jews of Jesus' day.

Q: Vs.34 “Behold, this Child is appointed for the fall and **rise of many in Israel**, and for a sign to be opposed.” The Greek word translated “rise” is *anastasis*, which means resurrection. What was Simeon saying?

- “Falling” and “raising” are most likely metaphors (not literal) for some people coming alive in Christ and others falling deeper into rebellion.
 - In [John 5:24](#) Jesus says something very similar.
- Simeon is saying there will be division in Israel because of your son.
 - [Dan 12:2](#) may be saying the same thing.
 - Most believe this is a reference to the resurrection at the final judgment, but Daniel says *many* will be raised... not all.
 - In [John 5:28](#), Jesus said ALL in reference to the final resurrection.
 - “Sleeping in the dust” seems to be a metaphor for spiritually sleeping.
 - [Ezk 37:4-14](#) has the same flavor.

Luke 2:36-38

“And there was a prophetess, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was advanced in years and had lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, ³⁷ and then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. **She never left the temple, serving night and day with fastings and prayers.** ³⁸ At that **very moment** she came up and began giving thanks to God, and **continued to speak of Him to all those who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.**”

- Vs.37 Anna was definitely part of the faithful remnant like Simeon, Mary, and Joseph were.
- Vs. 38 She came into the temple as Simeon was speaking his prophesy, and gave thanks to the Lord, and talked of Him to all those who looked for redemption in Jerusalem.
 - She spoke to the faithful remnant in Jerusalem... she must have known them.
 - She was a prophetess, so they probably respected her.

Luke 2:39-40

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

- This is probably a summary of the next 12 years, because we have a story about Him when He was 12 years old that follows this.
- Some people speculate about Jesus doing signs and miracles during this time, however [John 2:11](#) says turning water into wine at the Wedding in Cana was the beginning of Jesus' signs.

Luke 2:41-52

"Now His parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover. ⁴² And when He became twelve, they went up there according to the custom of the Feast; ⁴³ and as they were returning, after spending the full number of days, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. But His parents were unaware of it, ⁴⁴ but supposed Him to be in the caravan, and went a day's journey; and they began looking for Him among their relatives and acquaintances. ⁴⁵ When they did not find Him, they returned to Jerusalem looking for Him. ⁴⁶ Then, after three days they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both listening to them and asking them questions. ⁴⁷ And all who heard Him were amazed at His understanding and His answers. ⁴⁸ When they saw Him, they were astonished; and His mother said to Him, "Son, why have You treated us this way? Behold, Your father and I have been anxiously looking for You." ⁴⁹ And He said to them, "Why is it that you were looking for Me? Did you not know that I had to be in My Father's house?" ⁵⁰ But they did not understand the statement which He had made to them. ⁵¹ And He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and He continued in submission to them; and His mother treasured all these things in her heart.

⁵² And Jesus kept increasing in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men."

Vs. 41-42 A Jewish boy did not have to go to the festivals until he was 12 years old.

- Jesus could have accompanied them every year, but the wording could indicate that Mary and Joseph went each year, and Jesus joined them when He was 12.
- It's also possible this was Jesus' bar mitzvah.

Q: Vs. 49 Jesus said He had to be in His father's house or about His father's business. What was His father's business?

- Jesus was busy talking to and asking questions of the leaders ([vs. 46](#)).

Vs. 46-47 Apparently Jesus would listen to them, ask them questions, and then give His answer.

- Everyone was amazed at His understanding and answers.
- He was probably asking them hard questions like He did when He was an adult... and this went on for 3 days.

Vs. 50 They didn't understand Him, probably because no one at that time ever thought of God as a Father.

- Rabbis never called God Father, but Jesus did all the time.
- **They knew He was conceived supernaturally, but they probably weren't able to conceive that God was His Father.**

Vs. 51 Jesus was obviously far more intelligent than His parents, but He submitted to them.

- Children were supposed to submit to their parents, so Jesus submitted.
 - Submission is very unpopular in our society, largely due to the presumption that a weaker or inferior person submits to someone superior.
 - Jesus was not inferior or weaker than His parents, yet He submitted to them.
- Submission is one of the keystone elements in the Kingdom of God ([Eph 5:21](#)).

Vs. 52 Jesus grew in wisdom..., which means He wasn't omniscient.

- God is omniscient, but Jesus, as a human, did not know everything ([Matt 24:36](#)).

Follow Up Assignment

Q: In [vs. 10](#) the angels brought ***“good news of great joy.”*** *“Good News”* is the Greek word *“euaggelizō”*, which had a military flavor. What does the “good news” mean to you?

Q: In [vs. 11](#) the shepherds were told, *“for today in the city of David there has been born for you a **Savior, who is Christ the Lord.**”* Jesus was given all these titles at His birth. What does each of these titles mean to you, and how do they impact your everyday life?

Q: In [vs. 49](#) Jesus said He had to be in His father’s house or about His father’s business, which was talking to and asking questions of the leaders ([vs. 46](#)). Are you about the father’s business like Jesus was? If not, who’s business are you about?