

**Women's Bible Study, April 25, 2025**  
**Holy Trinity Ev. Lutheran Church**  
**The Gospel of Luke**  
**Luke 2 (Lesson 1 [part 2])**

1. Luke 2:1-7, The Birth of the Christ Child

a. Contrasts: Great significance in this most humble of beginnings

*\*\* (See photo of painting under "References" last page of these notes.)*

1) Great significance: "No event in the history of the world has been so celebrated in word and song as the birth of Jesus Christ! Yet this story is told by Luke in a totally undramatic fashion. The significance of what happens here in Bethlehem's manger was already revealed in chapter 1 with the angel's announcement to Mary... [The] true significance: Here is the Word of God made flesh for us and for our salvation." (TPB p.20, p.21)

2) Humble beginnings: "The actual birth of the babe is told in the simplest words: '*she gave birth to her firstborn, a son.*' So the Son of God [great significance] enters our world in utter humility and without fanfare." (TPB p.20)

b. Luke lays out the historic scene (2:1-4), in which God takes care of the details in fulfilling His promises.

1) Government involvement, but God is in the details

a) Caesar Augustus [great-nephew of Julius Caesar who eventually adopted him] -- Ruler of the Roman Empire (27 B.C. to A.D.14) ...Recall that "Luke is the only Gospel writer who relates his narrative to dates of world history." [CSB 2:1])

"In 27 B.C., the Roman Senate conferred on Octavian, the reigning Caesar, the title 'Augustus' (meaning '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." (TLSB 2:1)

b) A census ordered (for taxation purposes); back to geographic family/home roots...

2) Geographic involvement: Nazareth, 80 miles (at least a 3-day trip, [CSB 2:4]) to Bethlehem (*town of David*); God in the details...

a) Why Bethlehem? See Matthew 2:5-6

b) What this proves about the Bible, see Micah 5:2

c) "...the ancient city of Bethlehem, family home of the famous King David. Here this child, whose kingdom would be far greater than that of his ancestor, was born. It was to fulfill God's Old Testament promise that the Messiah was born in Bethlehem, not Nazareth." (TPB p.20)

d) "Bethlehem was the birthplace of David (1 Samuel 16:1-13). Both Joseph (as foster father) and Mary (as Jesus' mother) were descendents of King David. Thus, legally, through Joseph (Matthew 1:16-17; Luke 2:4), and biologically, through Mary (Luke 1:32-33), Jesus is David's Son (Matthew 1:1; 22:41-42). Jesus' birth in Bethlehem fulfills Micah's prophecy (5:2) and further proves the Bible's reliability." (**SG pp. 10, 78 [#10]**)

c. Discuss the humble circumstances surrounding Jesus' birth (such as the manger, a feeding trough for animals; this is the only indication we have that Christ was born in a stable [probably a cave] CSB 2:7). Then consider why Jesus was born in such humble circumstances (**SG pp.10, 78 [#11]**):

1) 2 Corinthians 8:9 - "*For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, so that you by His poverty might become rich.*"

2) John 1:14 - "*The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us,...*"

3) "The Son of God left the riches of heaven and took on the poverty of humanity by becoming man. He did this so that, freed from sin by His life, death, and resurrection, we might enjoy the riches of Heaven. The servant attitude of the Master is also that of the believer (see Philippians 2:5-11)." (SG p. 78, [#11])

4) Also, as we will read next, the angel's message is "*good news of great joy*" (Luke 2:10) because through this humble little child God richly grants "*peace*" (2:14). (SG p. 79, [#11])

## 2. Luke 2:8-20, The Shepherds and the Angels

### a. God goes public with the good news

"We must assume that very few people in Bethlehem were aware of that baby lying in a manger; only Mary and Joseph were in on the secret of His divine origin. That all changes as God goes public with the good news... Jesus Christ is the Savior of all people." (TPB p.22)

### b. Shepherds, the first to learn of this good news

1) Shepherds were usually regarded as unclean, social outcasts. A great symbol of where Jesus will go as the Good Shepherd during his entire ministry... He goes to the lowly, the unclean, the outcast and downcast. (EW 2:9-11; 30-Minutes in the NT, 1517 podcast, Luke 2:8-52, Episode 133)

2) Watching over their flock - "against thieves and predatory animals" (CSB 2:8)

3) The flock - Bethlehem's shepherds were known to care for the temple flock. These men may have also protected and cared for the lambs used in temple sacrifice. (CSB 2:8; EW 2:8)

4) Historic perspective - The Judean countryside had long been used for grazing sheep. David himself had been a shepherd in these fields (1 Samuel 16:11), (TLSB 2:8). And the greater Shepherd, the Good Shepherd was now born; the Lamb of God who would be the final Sacrifice for the sins of the world.

c. An angel of the Lord, and then the heavenly host/angels - Once again messengers of the Gospel.

1) Notice the several times the Lord's angels were used throughout the birth narratives, and this is the third appearance of angels in Luke's gospel. (Luke 1:11,1:26, 2:9; Matthew 1:20, 2:13, 2:19). (CSB 2:9)

2) Good news (Gospel) was given first to the shepherds, these social outcasts.

3) The angel's message - Gospel. For all people (the scope of Jesus' salvation, for all the world). The Savior who would deliver from sin and death (Matt. 1:21; John 4:42) is Christ (the Messiah, the Anointed One) the Lord. This is the first occurrence of the name Christ in Luke's gospel. (CSB 2:11; 30-Minutes in the NT, Episode 133; TPB p. 23) This is, indeed, good news of great joy!

#### 4) The angels' song -

a) The third canticle of four in Luke 1-2. Familiar to us in our worship services liturgy, the *Gloria in Excelsis* (Glory to God in the Highest). (TPB p. 23) (Christian Worship Hymnal pp. 157, 176, 191)

b) Praising God in the heavenly realms and here for the shepherds to witness: Angels rejoicing that in Christ God is pleased with man, in Christ God's favor and grace rests, so that on earth there is peace for people on whom God's favor rests, God's "good will toward men" (KJV), (TPB p.23; 30- Minutes in the NT, Episode 133). "This emphasizes not human goodwill but God's grace and the peace it brings us" (TLSB 2:14)

d. "Let's go see what the Lord has told us!" (Faith to go see; and seeing Christ keeps us in faith)

1) This shows a genuine urgency. They didn't hesitate at all.

2) They had the sign, a baby in a feeding trough. Found Him, just as the angel had said.

3) The shepherds who looked after the Temple lambs were the first to see the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. (EW 2:15-17)

#### e. The Good News about Jesus is contagious (TLSB 2:17)

1) They couldn't keep such good news to themselves!

2) I love the NKJV translation (v.17) - "...they made widely known the saying which was told them concerning this Child."

3) "Their message was not so much about the baby in a manger; rather, they shared the angel's message... And they echoed the angels' praise" (TPB p.24). They shared the Gospel, pure and simple, and kept the Gospel "front and center" (recalling the importance of this from our study of the Pastoral Epistles, 2 Timothy 2:15). And (v.20) their exuberance remained with them as they returned to their everyday lives, for this Good News had changed their lives. Their Messiah had come, they saw God's Word fulfilled.

4) The shepherds good news amazed all who heard it. Even if they didn't really understand it, they recognized that something significant had happened. Yes, indeed... Significant. Humbly. (Follow the contrasts)

f. Mary's Treasures (not earthly relics)

1) Mary's reaction to all these happenings is much more subdued than the exuberance of the shepherds (TPB p.24). But her praise was just as powerful. Hers was a faith given, a grace given, a love given, and upon which she pondered throughout her life, and that she cherished in her heart (the same heart from which she humbly sang her Magnificat). She deeply loved her child and loved her Lord and Savior. His grace dwelled within her heart.

2) Regarding her "pondering"... This "detail points to Mary as one of Luke's sources for the Gospel," one he would have interviewed and received firsthand, trustworthy eyewitness accounts. (TLSB 2:19)

3. Luke 2:21, Eight days old, Jesus circumcised

a. Galatians 4:4-5 - Jesus was "born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons."

1) "As our substitute, Jesus fully and perfectly submitted to God's Law to keep and fulfill it for us... Jesus circumcision [here in Luke 2:21] and presentation in the temple [Luke 2:22-24] bear witness to this fact." (**SG pp.11, 79 [#14]**)

2) "The circumcision is a part of Christ's active obedience: he fulfilled the law perfectly in our place. And his circumcision brings to an end the need for us New Testament Christians to practice circumcision as a religious rite in fulfillment of the Old Testament law. In this sense, Christ is truly the end of the law (Romans 10:4 ['For to everyone who believes, Christ is the end of the law, resulting in righteousness.' EHV])." (TPB p.26)

b. "The circumcision also served as the occasion for naming the child; Jesus' name (and its meaning: 'Yahweh saves') given by the angel Gabriel (Luke 1:31; Matthew 1:21) points to His Divine origin." (SG p.79 #14) And points to why this would be His name; it reveals His purpose: "He will save His people from their sins." (Matthew 1:21)

c. Circumcision took place where Mary & Joseph were staying while they remained in Bethlehem following his birth. We assume they were able to find better shelter than where she had given birth, after the crowds of people probably had left Bethlehem after the Census registration. (TPB p. 26)

d. And they undoubtedly stayed longer than the others, for after 40 days there would be a need to present Jesus in the temple in Jerusalem (only about six miles from Bethlehem, CSB 2:22)...

4. Luke 2:22-38, Forty days old, Jesus presented in the temple: Simeon and Anna

a. The law of purification (in Leviticus 12) -- 40 days for purification after the birth of a son, they were required to go to the temple to offer a sacrifice for "*their purification*" (the mother's purification, and the son's consecration). The purification ceremony was a reminder that we are all born in sin (Ps. 51:5). (CSB 2:22, TLSB 2:22, TPB p.26, EW 2:22)

1) However, recall from our last lesson (study notes p.8), Jesus was not born with the same sinful line of humanity, he was not born with our sin nature. He is truly the sinless, spotless Lamb of God. And yet, submitting himself under the law, he identified with sinners even as a baby. Jesus *could* have been excused because He was not born in sin. Yet, we see Him even as a baby, identifying with sinners and submitting himself under the law for our sake, as He also later did at His baptism and on the cross. (EW 2:22)

2) The type of sacrifice given would suggest that Mary and Joseph were poor. (TLSB 2:22)

b. The law of consecration of a firstborn son (Exodus 13:2) -- Required that a firstborn male was to be presented and dedicated to the Lord, as God had adopted Israel as His firstborn, and had delivered every firstborn son among the Israelites...from the tenth plague (CSB Ex.13:2). As we know, Jesus was truly consecrated to the Lord in the fullest possible way. (TPB p.26)

c. Luke 2:25-35, Simeon meets his Savior

1) vv. 25-27, God's promise to Simeon fulfilled; Seeing Christ...our salvation

a) Waiting for the consolation/comfort of Israel; waiting for the Lord's salvation and forgiveness which the Messiah would bring his people at His coming. (CSB 2:25, TLSB 2:25)

b) The Holy Spirit had promised Simeon that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Christ (the Messiah). "Simeon's watchfulness, discernment of the Messiah's presence, and consequent prophetic utterance were all the result of the Spirit's action." (TLSB 2:25-27)

c) The Spirit led him into the temple courts when Mary & Joseph entered, and he knew this was the Christ. Simeon took the baby Jesus in his arms and was filled with love for his Savior. He hardly knew Jesus, and yet by seeing Him, looking at Him, Simeon truly knew Him now. (Keep our eyes fixed on Jesus alone, the author and perfecter of this faith, Hebrews 12:2)

2) vv. 28-32, Song of Simeon (the *Nunc Dimittis*) -- (Latin, "[You] now dismiss") (CSB 2:29-32)

(A canticle of praise for seeing the Christ child; Theme: Seeing Christ, seeing salvation in Him alone)

a) v. 29, "Lord, now let your servant depart in peace..." -- "Simeon is not really making a request of the Lord--he is making a statement of fact: 'You now dismiss your servant in peace.' Simeon's service in the temple as a watchman waiting for the fulfillment of the Old Testament promises is at an end. The watch is over; the servant can retire in peace. With the eyes of faith, Simeon sees more than a babe in arms, he sees a Savior dying on the cross; he sees salvation for all people, both Israelite and Gentile." (TPB p.27)

b) vv.30-31, "For my eyes have seen Your salvation, which you have prepared in the sight of all people."

\* Our salvation is Christ! Don't look at yourself, don't look at your sin, don't look at your righteousness. Look at Christ! Simeon is actually looking at Christ, his salvation. Christ is his salvation. (That's why John the Baptist tells people to 'Look, behold the Lamb of God...' John 1:29). If you want to look for your salvation, do not be tricked (swayed by false teachings) into looking anywhere else. Don't look inward, don't look at world philosophies, don't look at your goodness or good deeds. Look to Christ alone. (30-Minutes in the NT, Episode 133)

c) vv. 31-32, Christ came for all people to see Him, the salvation for all people ("in the sight of all people," "a light for revelation for the Gentiles"). As a Gentile himself, Luke was careful to emphasize the truth that salvation was offered for the Gentiles, as well as for the Jews. For all people of all nations. (CSB 2:31; TLSB 2:32; 30-Minutes in the NT, Episode 133)

d) What a wonderful song in our liturgy as a post-communion canticle (CW 1993, p.24), and sung at Close of Day (CW 2021, pp. 231, 247) . "Just as Simeon and Anna beheld (and in Simeon's case, touched) the Lord in the temple, so, too, do we depart with thanks following our experience with the risen Christ in His Word and in His true body and true blood of His holy Supper." (**SG pp.11, 79 [#15]**)

3) vv. 33-35, Simeon's blessing and prophecy --

\*Simeon gives a blessing upon Joseph & Mary. Then through insight from the Holy Spirit, he gives further revelation concerning the destiny of this child: "Israel would be divided over Jesus--He would cause some to fall and some to rise. For some, Jesus would be a rock of offense over which they would stumble; for others, he would be the living stone of salvation. Mary would herself witness his suffering on the cross, her own soul would be pierced with the sword" (TPB p.27). The deepest of pain, yet the richest of joys in Him, joy eternal.

d. Good article to summarize:

### **The glory of God's presence:**

God's glory indicates His presence for the good of His people. His glory appeared in the cloud by which He led the people of Israel out of Egypt (Ex. 16:10); from a cloud of glory, He spoke to the people of Israel and gave them the Ten Commandments (Ex. 19–20). In the tabernacle built by Moses and in the temple Solomon built, God descended in a cloud of glory to indicate His blessing and presence among His people (Ex. 40:34–38; 1 Kings 8:10–11).

The departure of His glory from the temple meant that He had abandoned Israel as surely as a parent abandons a wayward child — only after years of longsuffering patience, warning and admonition.

But God did not leave his people without hope, giving his prophets his promise to return through the Messiah. The prophet Ezekiel received a vision of the glory of the Lord returning to the temple. And Simeon saw the fulfillment of this vision and sang the song we now know as the Nunc Dimittis; God's glory has returned.

### **Old Testament rites:**

The rites of purification mark the woman's privilege of participating in the divine blessing of childbirth, of the lineage of the Savior promised to Eve and — as hindsight reveals — delivered through Mary. The rites of purification, therefore, moved the woman from her own cycles and timeline to God's time and His order.

The consecration of firstborn sons took place for the same reason. All the firstborn children of Israelite women point to and are completed in the birth of the Child from the womb of the Virgin Mary. Whereas the former sons were tainted by the sin of their fathers, this Child was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of a woman who had not known a man. This Child was not born with original sin.

And yet, despite His purity and perfection, He lived under the laws and requirements of those who were not pure, who were tainted by sin. As sinful men circumcised His flesh, He was preparing to set apart those who would receive Him with a circumcision not made by hands, but in the heart by the hand of God.

In short, all the rituals and rites, all the lineage from Abraham to Joseph, all the practices and worship of God that His people and priests in the Old Testament had abandoned and for which God abandoned the temple, pointed to the Child born of Mary — the infant Simeon took in his arms and for which he blessed God.

### **Simeon's Song:**

With eyes opened by the Holy Spirit, Simeon sees the glory of God returning to the temple... the glory of God rests in the tabernacle of human flesh (John 1:14), in the baby Simeon held in his arms.

The glory of God, which once abandoned the temple because of the failure of the Israelite people to follow His commands and their failure to circumcise not merely the flesh but also the heart, now returns to the temple. God Himself undergoes the law's demands. The One who chose Israel out of all nations and gave them the mark of circumcision as the sign of His choosing now undergoes circumcision Himself. His



mother who received the fulfillment of the promise made to Eve now receives purification and reincorporation into the household of God. Not, ultimately, because of the turtledoves she offers as a poor woman, but because of the Son she birthed.

This is the glory of God: the law fulfilled by His own hand. The presence of God, now no longer found in houses made by men, is found in the flesh born of the Virgin Mary and that would be crucified by hands of men. It was this glory the Holy Spirit led Simeon to see and therefore sing about in what we now know as the Nunc Dimittis:

Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace, according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to your people Israel. (Luke 2:29–32)

[Excerpts from article taken from the Lutheran Witness  
*Nunc Dimittis*, December 1, 2021]

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e. Luke 2:36-38, Anna becomes an evangelist

1) Anna was a remarkable woman. As a widow she knew great pain and loss but had not become bitter. As an elderly woman she had not lost hope. She was a woman of *worship* and a woman of *prayer*.

2) While Simeon sees Jesus and then is ready to depart, Anna sees Jesus and is ready to witness. In a sense she becomes an evangelist particularly to those who were waiting for the redemption of Israel. She has good news to tell them...He is here! Great news! (30-Minutes in the NT, Episode 133)

e. Devotional moment: "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." (TLSB 2:22-38)

5. Luke 2:39-40, The Return to Nazareth

a. Joseph and Mary had much to discuss as they proceeded on their way back to Bethlehem following their visit to the temple. For the time being, they decided to stay in Bethlehem. (TPB p.28)

b. Notice that Luke skips over the story of the coming of the wise men and the flight into Egypt (Matthew 2). He simply reports that after doing everything required by the law of the Lord (from the very beginning Jesus was keeping the Law of the Lord for our

sake!), they returned to their hometown of Nazareth (probably via a time away in Egypt). (TPB p.28)

c. Jesus grew up, becoming stronger every day and was filled with wisdom and the grace of God. (See Isaiah 11:2, the Messiah is characterized as one endowed by the Spirit with wisdom.) (TPB p.28; TLSB 2:40)

1) "Jesus grew and developed as other children; yet His *spiritual* development is here first noted. We might say that Jesus was aware of His identity and His calling as appropriate to His age development. At age 5 He did not have the understanding of a 30-year-old; but had the greatest capacity for understanding appropriate for a 5 year-old." (EW 2:40)

2) Fully God and fully human from the beginning... hard to comprehend, but by faith we believe and trust even that which goes beyond our understanding.

3) Devotional moment: "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 2:39-40)

## 6. Luke 2:41-52, The Child Jesus in the Temple Courts

a. v. 41, Attending the annual feast of the Passover in Jerusalem.

1) Traveling from Nazareth (about 80 miles north of Jerusalem). Yet Scripture always mentions going "up to Jerusalem." We've studied this before, but it's good to recall...

a) We often think of going "up" to someplace as meaning geographically heading north. We often refer to going "up north" when traveling in Michigan. But in Scripture there are two reasons why going to Jerusalem is always referred to as going "up."

\*First, Jerusalem is located literally "up," in a range of hills, on top of a high hill called Mt. Zion. It's the same mount where Abraham had brought Isaac for sacrifice 2000 years earlier. Traveling to Jerusalem involved a journey up in altitude.

\*\*But Jerusalem was also theologically/spiritually "up." For that's where the temple of God was, the house of the Lord, the dwelling place of God with His people. Scripture also speaks of Mt. Zion (Jerusalem) as a heavenly place, a Holy City in Heaven. Think of this now in context of Jesus' earthly life. And as we learned earlier (see last handout "Themes" p.2) one of Luke's themes throughout the gospel is the Temple theme, with "the shift in location of God's presence from the temple [in Jerusalem] to the body of Jesus as God's temple." Through Christ God dwells with us. Christ is Immanuel ("God with us.")

b) An annual pilgrimage for the Passover was required of all Israelite men, and their families normally accompanied them. Extended families and neighbors often traveled together, singing and picnicking along the way. It is interesting to note that Psalms 120-134 are known as the "Psalms of Ascents." The exact meaning for the title is not known, but it could refer to the religious pilgrimages each year going up to Jerusalem. These psalms would be sung as the worshipers approached Jerusalem's hills, as they made their ascent up to Jerusalem. (The Psalms of Ascents have no single theme, though they are all short and frequently mention Zion and Jerusalem.) (TLSB 2:41; TLSB Ps. 120-134 footnote; CSB 2:41; TPB p.30)

2) The Passover feast celebrated the redemption of the people of Israel from Egypt and was observed in the spring of the year. It was the most important of the Jewish festivals. (There were three different festivals that were held annually: Passover, Pentecost, and the Tabernacles. Distance prevented many from attending all three, but most Jews tried to be at the Passover.) (TPB p.30; CSB 2:41)

b. v.42, Twelve year old boy Jesus

1) Twelve years have passed since the previous episode in Jesus' life as an infant (birth, circumcision, purification). There are no other accounts that we have of his childhood (although many claimed extra knowledge of his youth; they were all made up stories). "This is the only incident recorded for us about Jesus' childhood in all the Gospels." (30-Minutes in the NT, Episode 133; TLSB 2:42)

2) "At age 12, boys began preparing to take their places in the religious community the following year" (CSB 2:42). "At the age when many children today are prepared for confirmation, Jesus studied the Holy Scriptures. Even as a boy, He faithfully applied God's Word... At twelve, a Jewish boy assumed full responsibility for his spiritual life." Note how this is similar to our own confirmation practice in training and preparing our young people. (SG pp.12,79 [#16])

c. vv.43-47, Jesus stays at the temple in Jerusalem

1) Traveling with a large group of people, family, cousins... Parents would have assumed he was with other relatives. These were different times and in a different culture ("well before the time of helicopter parenting"), and it would have been normal to assume their son was with others, cousins, uncles, etc. (30-Minutes in the NT, Episode 133)

2) The child who was presented and consecrated unto the Lord in the temple 12 years previously, now takes a seat in the courts of the temple among the teachers of the Word of God, much to the amazement of the onlookers. (TPB p.30)

a) "In order to stimulate more profound thinking, the rabbis [teachers] 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. [No wonder they were all "amazed at His understanding and his answers."] Jesus is depicted as Rabbi par excellence, even from His youth." (TLSB 2:46-47)

b) "This is something like a middle-school child discussing physics with a rocket scientist. Jesus did have a unique advantage, having a special relationship with the writer of God's Word." His doctrine was right! He could have said that He wrote all the Scriptures of which they were discussing, and so, yes, he understood Scripture completely (But obviously he had great wisdom not to say that!). (EW 2:46-47; 30-Minutes in the NT, Episode 133)

d. vv.48-52, Jesus' and his parents' interaction

1) Mary and Joseph were initially frantic when they could not find Jesus. Then they were astonished when they saw him and heard him teaching. And because they were concerned parents, "Mary gently chided Jesus for causing them worry." (SG p.79 [#17]; TPB pp.30-31)

2) Jesus' first recorded words in the Gospels are here (v.49) in his response to his mother. Jesus responds with two questions. "Jesus gently chided His mother for assuming the Son could be 'lost' in His Father's house." (**SG pp.12,79 [#17]**)

a) "These first words of Jesus are no sign of disrespect to His earthly parents, but rather show that even at his age He recognized His deity." (**SG pp.12,79 [#17]**)

b) "Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" (ESV); Did you not know that I must be taking care of my Father's business?" (EHV)

"In that day, there was nothing more natural than a son taking up his father's business. Jesus did follow in Joseph's footsteps as a carpenter, but His words here show that He was at least *beginning* to understand His unique relationship to His Father. [In Judaism of that day, a boy began to

learn his father's trade at about 12 years of age. Jesus fulfilled this in regards to his heavenly Father's "trade" by instructing the teachers in the temple.]

"It is impossible to say when, in the context of the self-imposed limitations of His humanity, Jesus realized who He was and what He was sent to do, but it was early – this is probably not when it began, but when it was in full flower." (EW 2:49)

### 3) Mary's perspective

a) What did Mary think when they couldn't find Jesus? She lost her son; she lost the Messiah! Did she feel like a failure for not keeping closer watch over her son?

b) Regarding Jesus' gentle rebuke for Mary: "She was tempted at times to think of Jesus as an ordinary child, one over whom she had complete control... Mary had to learn, as also later at the wedding at Cana, that Jesus was directed by a greater will, the will of the heavenly Father, in a way no other child was directed. This was something that Mary and Joseph did not understand, [but they were learning along the way]." (TPB p.31)

c) And once again, Mary "treasured up all these things in her heart" (v.51).

\*And we recall that Luke probably heard of all this (and of the events about John's and Jesus' births) in personal interviews with Mary as he compiled his Gospel via the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

### 4) Jesus went home with his parents.

a) The knowledge of who He was (God's Son) did not make Jesus proud or haughty; Jesus was obedient to his parents. He continued to faithfully obey the Law (for our sake) by perfectly "honoring his father and mother." (TLSB 2:51; 30-Minutes in the NT, Episode 133)

b) Growing up in Nazareth, Jesus would mature in boyhood and then in his young adulthood. He would fulfill the responsibilities expected of an eldest son; and then at some time Joseph disappeared from the scene and Jesus became the "man of the family." He worked his trade, supported his family, loved God, and proved himself utterly faithful in a thousand small things before he formally entered his appointed ministry. (EW 2:51)

\* "One assumes that Jesus spent the next 18 years of his life in and around Nazareth working as a carpenter (Mark 6:3). We will next hear of Jesus when he is baptized by John in the Jordan River at about 30 years of age (3:23)." (TPB p.31)

5) v.52, "Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men."

a) This pertains to the human nature of Christ. While Jesus was fully God (and fully human), "there is no indication that he had all knowledge and wisdom from birth. He seems to have matured like any other boy." (TLSB 2:52; CSB 2:52)

b) "He is growing up! Literally, in stature. And he's increasing in wisdom. People have the idea that Jesus as a little baby, because he is God he knew everything. There's a simultaneous thing that goes on with Christ...He actually has to learn things; it's built into the humanity, where he learns to speak, he learns to read, and he's going to increase in everyday wisdom the way that anybody else would. He's not going to become any more righteous (he's perfectly righteous from Day 1), but he is going to grow in his understanding of life and of how things function just like any other kid does." (30-Minutes in the NT, Episode 133)

c) Jesus grew ...in favor with God and men:

\* He grew (as fully human) in a close relationship with His heavenly Father (with whom as fully God he is already in perfect relationship), and He also grew in His human friendships and relationships. The word translated "favor" is the same word translated "*grace*" in the rest of the New Testament, but this was not *saving grace* in the pattern of grace extended to sinners. "The good pleasure of God was upon Him," would be the best way to render the text. ("in whom He is well pleased.") (EW 2:52)

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**References:**

SG = Study Guide used in our Women's Bible Study (by participants in-person and via Zoom): "*Luke: To All Nations*" Revised from material by J. M. Weidenschilling with contributions by Robert C. Baker. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, MO. 2006. (This is part of the Bible study series "*God's Word for Today*")

TPB = "*The People's Bible (Commentary): Luke*" 2nd edition, by Victor H. Prange. Northwestern Publishing House, Milwaukee, WI. 2000 (2nd ed.). (Originally published 1988).

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CSB = *Concordia Self-Study Bible, New International Version*, General editor Robert G. Hoerber. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis MO. 1986.

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The Lutheran Witness, *Nunc Dimittis*, (article excerpts), December 1, 2021.

Bible translations used:

EHV = Evangelical Heritage Version

ESV = English Standard Version

NIV = New International Version



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"Destined for the cross"