

Commentary on Luke chapter 2, by Chuck Smith 6.5.22

Pastor John Donovan, cell phone 508-380-0471

Pastor Terry Gerlarneau, cell phone 603-455-4399

Web site todbc.org email us at opendoorbiblechurch@todbc.org

June memory verse Romans 6:14&15 (NKJV)

¹⁴ For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.

¹⁵ What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? Certainly not!

Commentary on Luke chapter 2, by Chuck Smith 6.5.22

Now it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed. (And the taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syra.) And all went to be taxed, every one to his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, and unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, (because he was of the house and the lineage of David,) to be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, who at this point was great with child. And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should deliver her child. And she brought forth her first born son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn ([Luk 2:1-7](#)).

"It came to pass in those days, that there went forth a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed, and every man went to be taxed." Think of the power. Here is a guy sitting in Rome. Gradually he has gained this position of power, until he is able to issue a decree, and immediately the whole world must bow. There is no one to appeal to. One man makes a decree; the whole world must bow to that decree. For Rome had bludgeoned the world into submission.

It is interesting that in Egypt they have actually found records of these censuses that were made by the Roman government. They were made every fourteen years. And we have found the records of those censuses that were taken in Egypt every fourteen years.

And so it was necessary that at this point of pregnancy, which becomes quite miserable, as in the final days of waiting the birth of the child, so many things are happening within as far as the hormones are concerned, and there are so many physical responses and reactions, and yet, because this fellow in Rome has given a decree, Mary and Joseph, notwithstanding her pregnancy, have to make this long journey. Long in those days, because of the mode of transportation. Something like seventy miles or so from Nazareth to Bethlehem, just to fulfill the commandment, just in obedience to the commandment of this fellow in Rome.

Commentary on Luke chapter 2, by Chuck Smith 6.5.22

"And so it came to pass, that Joseph went up out of the city of Nazareth, there in Galilee, clear on down to Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be enrolled, or taxed with Mary his espoused wife being great with child. And while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her first born son, wrapped Him in swaddling clothes, laid Him in a manger. There was no room in the inn."

Seven hundred years before this event took place, before this young couple made their journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem, at this critical point of pregnancy. Seven hundred years earlier a prophet had said, "And thou Bethlehem, though you are little among the provinces in Judea, yet out of thee shall come He whose goings forth has been from everlasting" ([Micah 5:2](#)). The prophet had predicted that Bethlehem would be the birthplace of the Messiah.

So when I read in the text, "It came to pass in those days that Caesar Augustus gave a decree that all the world shall be taxed," and Joseph had to journey to Bethlehem in order to be taxed, I realize that because the Word of God had said that the Messiah must be born in Bethlehem, that it isn't really that little man sitting on the throne in Rome that is really in control of things, he is only a puppet. He has not gained what he desired--world rulership--but that child that is being born in Bethlehem is the one who will ultimately experience true dominance.

There is a lot of aloneness expressed in this. She brought forth her firstborn son and wrapped Him in swaddling clothes, and laid Him in a manger. Evidently she had no help at the birth of the child. Usually there was a midwife to take the child and to wrap it in its swaddling clothes and to take care of it. But no help. And so she herself--you remember now, sixteen and a half, seventeen years old, giving birth to a child in a manger, a stable.

Now there were in the same country shepherds who were abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flocks by night ([Luk 2:8](#)). Just a point--this means that He couldn't have been born on the twenty-fifth of December, because it gets too cold for the shepherds to stay out in the field in the winter month. And so the twenty-fifth of December was borrowed from the pagan holiday of Saturnalia, and more and more it is becoming a pagan holiday, which it originated as.

And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, the glory of the Lord shone round about them; and they were sore afraid ([Luk 2:9](#)).

These shepherds were temple shepherds, because they offered a lamb every morning and every evening, and had to be without spot and blemish. And so, in order that they would have enough lambs for the sacrifices, they had their own temple shepherds who kept the lambs for the temple sacrifices. And these shepherds were those who were watching those lambs that were to be used for sacrifices in the temple. This is of course

Commentary on Luke chapter 2, by Chuck Smith 6.5.22

significant, because they were the first ones to see the Lamb of God who was to take away the sins of the world.

And so they were out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. When the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them, and they were so afraid.

And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people ([Luk 2:10](#)). Good tidings, great joy, all people.

For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior [the Messiah], the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; you will find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly hosts praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men. And so it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into the heavens, the shepherds said one to another, Let's go now even to Bethlehem, and see this thing which has come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us ([Luk 2:11-15](#)).

And then, of course, there were other angels that suddenly appear, as they were praising God saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth...now the possibility of peace, and good will toward men."

And so they came with haste, and they found Mary and Joseph, and the babe. And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child. And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds. But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them. And when the eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the child, his name was called Jesus ([Luk 2:16-21](#)),

They usually named the boy on the day of the circumcision, which was always eight days after his birth, and it was such an important right, that even if it came on the Sabbath, they would go ahead and circumcise the child on the eighth day. It was one of the rare things that they would be allowed to do on even the Sabbath day.

They called His name Jesus, which was so named of the angel before he was conceived in the womb. And when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were accomplished ([Luk 2:21-22](#)),

She had a son; she had to go through forty days of purification. If she had a daughter, she would have gone through eighty days of purification. Sort of a punishment for having a girl. Forty days of purification were accomplished.

Commentary on Luke chapter 2, by Chuck Smith 6.5.22

then they brought him to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord ([Luk 2:22](#));

Now after the forty days, then they were to offer a sacrifice unto the Lord. A lamb and a dove. Or if they were poor, instead of the lamb, they could offer two turtledoves.

(For it was written in the law of the Lord, Every male that opens the womb should be called holy unto the Lord;) ([Luk 2:23](#))

Actually, the Lord claimed the firstborn. But it came to the place where the people could redeem the firstborn, and God finally chose the Levi's. And they would then pay the Levi's for the firstborn, redeeming their firstborn for being committed for serving the Lord. But they brought the firstborn, holy to the Lord.

And that to offer the sacrifice according to the law of the Lord, A pair of turtledoves ([Luk 2:24](#)),

That was for the poor people, and so it would indicate that Mary and Joseph were poor. Which to me is interesting, because Jesus perhaps grew up in a home filled with poverty. And he knows what it was to have those kind of struggles that we have, as we think about the payment of the bills, and where we're going to get this and that and the other, and thus, He can identify with us in our concerns for our needs.

And, behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon; and he was a just and a devout man, who was waiting for the consolation of Israel [the peace]: and the Holy Spirit was upon him. And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Spirit, that he should not die, until he had seen the Lord's Messiah ([Luk 2:25-26](#)).

Now here is a man who walked with God. A godly older man, and God said, "Look, you're not going to die until you have had the opportunity to see the Messiah."

And so he was led by the Spirit at that time into the temple: and when the parents of Jesus brought him in, in order that they might fulfill the customs of the law, he took him up in his arms, and he blessed God, and he said, Oh Lord, now let your servant depart in peace, according to your word: for my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared before the face of all people; A light to lighten [who?] the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel ([Luk 2:27-32](#)).

So here in the prophecy He was to be a light, not just to Israel alone, but to the world, to the gentiles.

And Joseph and his mother marveled at those things which were spoken of the child. And Simeon blessed them, and said to Mary his mother, Behold, this child is set for the fall in the rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against; (Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also;) that the thoughts of many hearts shall be revealed ([Luk 2:33-35](#)).

Commentary on Luke chapter 2, by Chuck Smith 6.5.22

And so he is telling Mary, "Look, this child is set for great blessings to the people, but it's going to pierce as a sword through your own soul." Preparing her for the agony and the pain that she would experience, as she would watch one day this child, hanging on the cross.

Now there was a lady by the name of Anna, who was a prophetess, she was the daughter Phanael, she was of the tribe of Asher: she was of great age, [actually she was eighty-four years old] and she lived with the same husband from the seven years after her marriage ([Luk 2:36](#));

and she departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings, and prayers night and day ([Luk 2:37](#)).

One of those beautiful, godly saints.

And she coming in that instant, gave thanks likewise to the Lord, and spoke of Him to all that looked for redemption in Jerusalem. Now when they had performed all of the things according to the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own city of Nazareth. And the Child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him. Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the Passover. And when He was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem after the custom to the feast ([Luk 2:38-42](#)).

Probably the first time He was able to go to the feast, because He was now twelve and getting time for His bar mitzvah.

And so when they had fulfilled the days, as they were returning ([Luk 2:43](#)),

That is, the days of the feast of the Passover, they went every year; they were a devout couple as they had fulfilled the days, they returned.

and the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and Joseph and his mother did not know of it ([Luk 2:43](#)).

Now hundreds of people would travel together. And usually the women would take off first because they traveled slower. And the men would take off later, and would always catch up with them by night; they make camp for the evening. And so they took off for Nazareth with all of their friends and the families, and all. And when they started making camp at night, and Joseph probably caught up with them, he said, "Where is Jesus?" And she said, "Well, isn't He with you?" "No, I thought He was with you." And so they looked around. They inquired from all of the relatives, "No, we haven't seen Him." And so they each thought that He was probably in the company of other people.

Commentary on Luke chapter 2, by Chuck Smith 6.5.22

and when they sought for him among the kinsfolk and their acquaintances, no one had seen Him. So when they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem, looking for Him ([Luk 2:44-45](#)).

Now here is a little twelve-year-old fellow. He thinks, "Oh, my, my parents are gone," and he be all concerned and worried.

And it came to pass, after three days they found him ([Luk 2:46](#)),

They didn't find Him when they first got back. And when they found Him, he was in the temple. Sitting in the midst of the doctors, as he was listening to them and asking them questions. And all of those that heard him were astonished at his understanding and his answers. And when they saw him, they were amazed: and his mother said unto him, Son, why have you dealt with us like this? behold, your father and I have sought you sorrowing ([Luk 2:46-48](#)).

Notice, "your father and I," referring to Joseph. He is quick to correct her.

And he said unto them, How is it that you were looking for me? did you not know that I must be about my Father's business? ([Luk 2:49](#))

He didn't recognize Joseph as His father at this point. "I must be about my Father's business."

Now these are the first recorded words of Jesus. They are important, because they express the purpose of His existence. What is it? "I must be about my Father's business."

And they did not understand the saying that he spoke to them. But he went down with them, and they came to Nazareth, and he was subject unto them: but his mother kept all of these sayings in her heart. And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, [grew up strong, big fellow] and in favor with God and man ([Luk 2:50-52](#)).

So in the first two chapters get the background now, and in chapter 3 we begin with the ministry of John the Baptist, and that of Jesus.

May the Lord bless and increase your knowledge and understanding of His truth, as we have this opportunity of sharing together in God's Word, growing, and learning. And may we also be increased in wisdom and in favor with God, and with man.