

An Exposition of Luke 1:1 – 2:39

By Harold Camping

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By Harold Camping

Luke Chapter 1

Luke 1:1-4

Verses 1-4 are the preamble to the book of Luke. Luke had an eminent friend, Theophilus (see Luke 1:3 and Acts 1:1). God has this account for the Gentile world of the events which led up to the birth of Christ and of His life.

1:1 Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us,

According to this verse, a number of disciples (many) had attempted to write an account of Christ's life and testimony. However, only 4 were actually inspired – the ones written by Matthew, Mark, Luke and John are included by God in the Bible.

1:2 Even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eyewitnesses, and ministers of the word;

They didn't just wait around for God to tell them what to say, rather, they diligently searched and interviewed eyewitnesses to make sure of the accuracy of what they were writing about Christ.

1:3 It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus,

Luke was guided by the Holy Spirit to have perfect understanding in order to write an accurate account of the Lord Jesus. This is the same way that the Old Testament prophets were guided by the Holy Spirit that they might write exactly what God would have them say:

For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. [2 Peter 1:21]

1:4 That thou mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed.

The purpose of the Bible is to lead us into Truth. Luke wrote this account that Theophilus might know the certainty of the Truth of Christ. And God is writing this account through Luke that we, too, might be instructed in the Truth of Christ. We read in John 20:31,

But these things are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.

Likewise, we read in Romans 10:17,

So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

Luke 1:5-10

1:5 There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judaea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the course of Abia: and his wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elisabeth.

God, through Luke, goes right into the account. It says, "In the days of Herod, the king of Judaea". This was at the end of the Old Testament when Israel was spiritually bereft. Heaven had been silent for about 400 years (inasmuch as God had not brought any additional revelation) and Israel had a king who was an Edomite (he was a descendent of Idumea). Israel's apostate condition with a foreign king ruling over them typifies the state of the apostate church at the end of time when Satan will actually rule over it.

Zacharias and Elisabeth were in the priestly line of Aaron, of the Levitical priesthood. "Zacharias" means "Remembered of God" and typifies the fact that, although God had been silent for over 400 years and it seemed as if the Messiah was not going to come, God does remember His promises. "Elisabeth" is taken from "Eli" and "Zabeth". "Eli" means "My God". Matthew 27:46 reads,

And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say,

My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

"Zabeth", which is pronounced "Sheba" in the Hebrew language, means either "Oath" or "Seven". So "Elisabeth" means either "My God of Oath" where God is now going to fulfill His oath in bringing the promised Messiah, or "My God-seven" which typifies the perfection of God's plan of salvation and the perfection of all God does (inasmuch as the number seven in the Bible represents the perfection of God). Aaron's wife was also named Elisabeth, or as it is pronounced in the Hebrew, "Elisheba":

And Aaron took him Elisheba, daughter of Amminadab, sister of Naashon, to wife... [Exodus 6:23]

Since both Zacharias and Elisabeth were descendants of Aaron, of the Levitical priesthood, that means their son, John the Baptist, was a priest of the first rank. Verse 5 also says that Zacharias was "of the course of Abia". Back in the Old Testament, King David had divided the priesthood into 24 courses and Abia was the 8th course. I Chronicles 24:1-3,7-10 reads,

Now these are the divisions of the sons of Aaron. The sons of Aaron; Nadab, and Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar. But Nadab and Abihu died before their father, and had no children: therefore Eleazar and Ithamar executed the priest's office. And David distributed them, both Zadock of the sons of Eleazar, and Ahimelech of the sons of Ithamar, according to their offices in their service....Now the first lot came forth to Jehoiarib, the second to Jedaiah, The third to Harim, the fourth to Seorim, The fifth to Malchijah, the sixth to Mijamin, The seventh to Hakkoz, the eighth to Abijah....

"Abia" means "Jehovah is Father" and refers to the fact that God is Father and Redeemer (Jehovah is the name God uses to refer to Himself as Redeemer). Isaiah wrote in Isaiah 63:16:

Doubtless thou art our father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not: thou, O LORD, art our father, our redeemer; thy name is from everlasting.

1:6 And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.

This verse indicates that both Zacharias and Elisabeth were saved, they were God's children. The only reason that they can be spoken of as righteous before God is because they had been covered by Christ's robe of righteousness. They had been given a new heart and an obedient spirit by the grace of God.

1:7 And they had no child, because that Elisabeth was barren, and they both were now well stricken in years.

The fact that they were well-stricken in years and Elisabeth was barren is an illustration of Israel in their day. Israel was an old nation and it was barren. No Seed (Christ) had come out of Israel. It seemed past the time for child-bearing and the Son had not come. This reminds us of Sarah, who was past the age of childbearing even though God has promised Abraham and Sarah that they would bear seed.

1:8-10 And it came to pass, that while he executed the priest's office before God in the order of his course, According to the custom of the priest's office, his lot was to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord. And the whole multitude of the people were praying without at the time of incense.

The priests went daily into the temple (by course – and Zacharias was of the 8th course of Abia – see verse 6) to burn incense. The priest that was privileged to go in was chosen by lot, which means that he was ultimately chosen by God. Therefore, God chose Zacharias on this particular day. The burning of incense was a figure of the ascension of prayer by Israel. Psalm 141:2 reads,

Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense; and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.

Likewise, Revelation 8:3-4 reads,

And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayer of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand.

The prayer of the people was a sweet smelling savor and for those who really loved the Lord it was focused on and looking forward to the coming Messiah.

Luke 1:11-15

1:11-12 And there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense. And when Zacharias saw him, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him.

Any time we stand before holy God we're fearful, we're exposed in our sin and shame. Verses 28-30 of this same chapter read,

And the angel came in unto her [Mary], and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women. And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be. And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God.

However, if we're saved there is not an abject terror of hell.

1:13 But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John.

Their prayer was first of all for the coming Messiah, not for a son. Normally, they were too old to have a son. Therefore, their prayer is heard in that now the time has come for the Messiah and the messenger of the Messiah (John the Baptist) must first be born. This messenger is spoken about in Malachi 3:1:

Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts.

This verse also indicates that they were indeed seeking and delighting in the coming Messiah. The messenger of the Messiah is also spoken of in Malachi 4:5-6:

Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD: And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.

The name John means "God is gracious" and illustrates that God is pouring out His grace in bringing the promised Messiah and visiting His people with salvation.

1:14 And thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth.

This gladness and rejoicing was far more than that of the birth of a son. John's birth heralded the fact that the time of the Messiah had come. This son was the fulfillment of Malachi's prophecy.

1:15 For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb.

That he didn't drink wine nor strong drink refers to the fact that he is a priest before God. In Leviticus 10:8-9 we read,

And the LORD spake unto Aaron, saying, Do not drink wine nor strong drink, thou, nor thy sons with thee, when ye go into the tabernacle of the congregation, lest ye die: it shall be a statute for ever throughout your generations:

Likewise, Ephesians 5:18-19 read,

And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord....

John had a priestly function (remember his father, Zacharias, is a priest). He is to be a great priest filled with the Holy Ghost (which means that he is a designated temple-builder who will proclaim the Gospel) from his mother's womb. Thus, he was saved from his mother's womb.

A temple-builder is one who proclaims the Gospel and builds the church, which is the spiritual temple of God. And it requires the Spirit of God, which God gives in order to qualify us for the work. This was typified by the building of the physical temple in the Old Testament in Exodus 35:30-35, which reads,

And Moses said unto the children of Israel, See, the LORD hath called by name Bezaleel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah; And he hath filled him with the spirit of God, in wisdom, in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship; And to devise curious works, to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass, And in the cutting of stones, to set them, and in carving of wood, to make any manner of cunning work. And he hath put in his heart that he may teach, both he, and Aholiab, the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan. Them hath he filled with wisdom of heart, to work all manner of work, of the engraver, and of the cunning workman, and of the embroiderer, in blue, and in purple, in scarlet, and in fine linen, and of the weaver, even of them that do any work, and of those that devise cunning work.

Notice that the work of building the physical temple, which is a picture of building the spiritual temple (the church) required the Spirit of God in order for the men to be qualified. Thus, John the Baptist was especially qualified as a temple-builder from his mother's womb.

Luke 1:16-20

1:16 And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God.

As a priest John the Baptist will declare the Gospel and God will bless him mightily. And he will turn many of the children of Israel – that is, many believers, to God as he witnesses to them.

1:17 And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.

Again, John is to be the messenger of Malachi 3:1 and 4:5-6. Quoting again from Malachi 4:5-6, we see parallel language:

Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD:
And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.

Elijah was a type or figure of John. In his day, too, very few were saved and Israel was spiritually dark. So John was used of God to save the disobedient. Looking at the phrase "to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children", see Isaiah 29:22-24, which reads,

Therefore thus saith the LORD, who redeemed Abraham, concerning the house of Jacob, Jacob shall not now be ashamed, neither shall his face now wax pale. But when he seeth his children, the work of mine hands, in the midst of him, they shall sanctify my name, and sanctify the Holy One of Jacob, and shall fear the God of Israel. They also that erred in spirit shall come to understanding, and they that murmured shall learn doctrine.

If Abraham, Isaac and Jacob could have looked down through time, they would have seen Israel (their physical seed) in woeful rebellion against God most of the time. However, if they could see the great coming of Christ then they would rejoice in their children because all who become saved are their true children in a spiritual sense. Thus, the hearts of the fathers (Abraham, Isaac and Jacob) are turned to the children (all those who are saved in Christ). And all of God's promises to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob concerning their seed come to pass in Christ, Whom John is going to announce. In a larger sense, though, the fathers can also refer to God Himself because He is ultimately the Father of every believer.

The phrase "to make ready a people prepared for the Lord" is a reference from Isaiah 40:3-4, which reads,

The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain: And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it.

John the Baptist is the voice that cries in the wilderness of this spiritually dark world as he announces the Lord Jesus Christ. And the message that he brings is that we must repent and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. The glory of the LORD is none other than Christ Himself, before Whom we had better be prepared

1:18 And Zacharias said unto the angel, Whereby shall I know this? for I am an old man, and my wife well stricken in years.

Again, Zacharias and Elizabeth are a figure of national Israel in their day. They were old and Elisabeth was without seed. Elisabeth was beyond the normal age of childbearing. Likewise, Israel was old and the promised Seed, the Messiah, had not come. And it appeared that no Messiah was going to come after all. This fact is also represented in Revelation 12:1-2, which reads,

And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars: And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered....And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne.

This woman who is pained to be delivered is a picture of national Israel as it pained to be delivered of the coming Messiah. And the man child that was caught up unto God and to His throne is, of course, Christ Himself. Another passage which speaks about Christ coming out of a barren Israel is Isaiah 53:2, which speaks about Him coming as a Root out of dry (or barren) ground:

For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him.

1:19 And the angel answering said unto him, I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God; and am sent to speak unto thee, and to shew thee these glad tidings.

Gabriel means "Mighty God". And the word "angel" in this verse can be equally translated from the Greek

as "messenger". So Gabriel is most likely Christ Himself coming as a Messenger. The word "angel" is therefore an improper translation because Christ is not an angel. Rather, He is the Messenger bringing this message to Zacharias. The fact that Christ is a Messenger is seen in Malachi 3:1:

Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts.

There's also an implication that Gabriel is Christ Himself in Daniel 8:16-17, which says,

And I heard a man's voice between the banks of Ulai, which called, and said, Gabriel, make this man to understand the vision. So he came near where I stood: and when he came, I was afraid, and fell upon my face: but he said unto me, Understand, O son of man: for at the time of the end shall be the vision.

In this passage Daniel fell prostrate before Gabriel, which is an act of worship. But when the apostle John did the same thing in Revelation 19:10 we read,

And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.

John was warned not to worship because the only One we are to worship is God alone. But when Daniel fell upon his face before Gabriel we do not see such a warning from Gabriel. Thus, there is at least an implication here that Gabriel, "Mighty God", is indeed Christ coming as a Messenger (and not an angel).

There are other instances in the Bible when an angel of the Lord refers to God Himself as Messenger. For example, in Judges 13:15-23 the angel of the LORD appeared to Manoah and his wife:

And Manoah said unto the angel of the LORD, I pray thee, let us detain thee, until we shall have made ready a kid for thee. And the angel of the LORD said unto Manoah, Though thou detain me, I will not eat of thy bread: and if thou wilt offer a burnt offering, thou must offer it unto the LORD. For Manoah knew not that he was an angel of the LORD. And Manoah said unto the angel of the LORD, What is thy name, that when thy sayings come to pass we may do thee honour? And the angel of the LORD said unto him, Why askest thou thus after my name, seeing it is secret? So Manoah took a kid with a meat offering, and offered it upon a rock unto the LORD: and the angel did wondrously; and Manoah and his wife looked on. For it came to pass, when the flame went up toward heaven from off the altar, that the angel of the LORD ascended in the flame of the altar. And Manoah and his wife looked on it, and fell on their faces to the ground. But the angel of the LORD did not more appear to Manoah and to his wife. Then Manoah knew that he was an angel of the LORD. And Manoah said unto his wife, We shall surely die, because we have seen God. But his wife said unto him, If the LORD were pleased to kill us, he would not have received a burnt offering and a meat offering at our hands, neither would he have shewed us all these things, nor would as at this time have told us such things as these.

In this passage, we see that the angel (or messenger) of the LORD received the burnt offering and meat offering of Manoah and his wife. Previously, the messenger of the LORD had said, "...if thou wilt offer a burnt offering, thou must offer it unto the LORD." And then He Himself received the offering. Moreover, when Manoah inquired of the messenger's name, he replied, "Why askest thou thus after my name, seeing it is secret?" The word "secret" here is an improper translation from the Hebrew. It should have been translated "wonderful". And wonderful is one of the names or attributes of Christ Himself. Isaiah 9:6 reads.

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

Lastly, we see that when the messenger of the LORD ascended in the flame of the altar Manoah and his wife fell on their faces to the ground in an act of worship. Manoah then realized that the messenger of the LORD was, in fact, God Himself – saying to his wife, "We shall surely die, because we have seen God".

It's interesting to note his wife's reply. She said, "If the LORD were pleased to kill us, he would not have received a burnt offering and a meat offering at our hands, neither would he have shewed us all these things, nor would as at this time have told us such things as these." This is a picture of the fact that God has provided the offering (Christ) to spare the believers from death and He shows or tells them the mystery of the Gospel.

Therefore, it is seen that the angel (or messenger) of the LORD is actually God Himself and not an actual angel. It must also be stated that as with the Greek, the Hebrew word for angel (*malak*) can also be equally translated as "angel" or "messenger".

1:20 And, behold, thou shalt be dumb, and not able to speak, until the day that these things shall be

performed, because thou believest not my words, which shall be fulfilled in their season.

In verse 18 Zacharias had asked for a sign. So God gave him one in chastisement for his unbelief by causing him to be dumb. In verse 62 it is seen that Zacharias was also made deaf because his cousins and neighbors had to make signs to him in order to communicate with him. Through this God underscores the silence that has existed for over 400 years as a result of Israel's spiritual condition in unbelief. But when John is born then Zacharias will speak and hear! There will be no more silence from God as the Gospel goes forth into all the world. But now Israel is deaf and dumb as a nation – there is no Gospel coming to or from them.

Luke 1:21-25

1:21-23 And the people waited for Zacharias, and marvelled that he tarried so long in the temple. And when he came out, he could not speak unto them: and they perceived that he had seen a vision in the temple: for he beckoned unto them, and remained speechless. And it came to pass, that, as soon as the days of his ministration were accomplished, he departed to his own house.

So Zacharias came out of the temple after a long time and returned to his house after his service was complete.

1:24-25 And after those days his wife Elisabeth conceived, and hid herself five months, saying, Thus hath the Lord dealt with me in the days wherein he looked on me, to take away my reproach among men.

Elisabeth hid herself instead of loudly proclaiming her state. She again typifies national Israel's spiritual condition. The number 5 in the Bible represents the grace of God, so here Elisabeth's hiding herself for 5 months signifies that God's grace has been hidden from Israel. But Elisabeth is expecting – so she typifies the fact that Christ is coming. He is soon going to be born into Israel. God has looked upon them to take away Israel's reproach. And just as John was born to an old, barren woman, so Christ came as a Root out of dry ground, out of barren national Israel.

Luke 1:26-30

1:26 And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, God now shifts the scene to Nazareth. Gabriel, "Mighty God", is seen again. The fact that Gabriel was sent from God does not prove that Gabriel isn't really Christ because Christ was sent from God.

1:27 To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary.

David was of the tribe of Judah, so the house of David here is the tribe of Judah, which is the kingly tribe. And Christ, who is the King, came from this line. John, on the other hand, was of the house of Aaron, the tribe of Levi, which is the priestly tribe. The name "Mary" means "Bitterness". In Ruth 1:20 we read,

And she (Naomi) said unto them, Call me not Naomi, call me Mara (Mary): for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me.

Likewise, we read in Exodus 15:23,

And when they came to Marah (Mary), they could not drink of the waters of Marah, for they were bitter: therefore the name of it was called Marah.

There were many women named "Mary" in that day which reflected the sad, bitter spiritual condition of Israel and the fact that the Messiah had not yet come after so long a time.

1:28 And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women.

The phrase "highly favoured" is the same Greek word that is translated "accepted" in Ephesians 1:6 which pertains to all believers. There we read,

To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted [highly favored] in the beloved.

This is a statement of God's grace upon sinners. Therefore, Mary is highly favored, or graciously accepted, or much graced – which means that she is a child of God. The phrase "the Lord is with thee" is also used in reference to every believer.

The verse closes with "blessed art thou among women". This phrase has been used in an attempt to prove that Mary is somehow elevated above the rest of the human race instead of being a sinner saved by

grace. However, a comparison with other verses proves that this is not the case. In the beatitudes in Matthew 5:3-12, for example, we read concerning all the believers:

Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled. Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God. Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

In fact, the Lord Jesus Himself reveals the unimportance of his mother as compared with being saved in Luke 11:27-28, which reads,

And it came to pass, as he [Jesus] spake these things, a certain woman of the company lifted up her voice, and said unto him, Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked. But he said, Yea rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it.

He does the same in Luke 8:19-21:

Then came to him his mother and his brethren, and could not come at him for the press. And it was told him by certain which said, Thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to see thee. And he answered and said unto them, My mother and my brethren are these which hear the word of God, and do it.

1:29 And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be.

Mary is troubled being in the very presence of this heavenly being. (See again verse 12.)

1:30 And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God.

But Gabriel, "Mighty God", reassures her. She has found favor (grace in the Greek rendering) with God. Speaking of grace, Ephesians 2:8 reads,

For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:

So Mary has assurance that she is God's. She has found grace in the eyes of the Lord. She does not have to fear.

Luke 1:31-35

1:31 And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS.

Gabriel gets right to the point of His mission. She's the one God has chosen to bear the Messiah, the Savior, Jesus – the One for Whom she and all others who fear God have waited. And the name Jesus means "Savior". In Matthew 1:21 the angel (or messenger) which appeared to Joseph in a dream said,

And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.

1:32-33 He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

This language is speaking about Christ, eternal God Himself. He is the Highest. In order to understand what God is saying about this throne of David which is over the house of Jacob forever we must look at 2 Samuel 7:12-14. There God is speaking to King David about his seed who would be born and would sit upon his throne forever:

And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever. I will be his father, and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men:

The Lord Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of this verse. Christ is the Seed of David in that He came from the lineage of David through Mary. And He is the One Whose throne lasts forever. He is the One who is God's Son.

The house of Jacob that is spoken of is the whole body of believers. They are spiritually the house of

Abraham, Isaac and Jacob through faith in Christ:

For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God. [Romans 2:28-29]

...For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel: Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, in Isaac shall thy seed be called. That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed. [Romans 9:6-8]

And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. [Galatians 3:29]

So it's the house of Jacob, the body of believers, that Christ rules over throughout eternity.

1:34 Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?

Mary didn't ask for a sign in unbelief as did Zacharias in verse 18. Instead, she is asking in faith, wondering how God is going to bring His Word to pass. We know this because she was not rebuked as Zacharias was. Moreover, when we see her humble response in verse 38 and her words of joy and praise in the Magnificat of verses 46-55, we will see that Mary indeed had great faith.

1:35 And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.

The Holy Spirit is active in every conception and act of creation. Right from the beginning of creation we read in Genesis 1:2,

And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

And in Psalm 104:30,

Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are created: and thou renewest the face of the earth.

But in this instance there is not going to be an earthly father. Instead the power of the Highest (God the Father) overshadowed her. Therefore, Christ is the Son of the Highest (v32). While Christ was on the Mount of Transfiguration in Matthew 17:5, God declares,

While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.

This verse also typifies our salvation – we're born from above, there is no earthly father and we become sons of the Highest. John 1:12-13 reads,

But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

This is the believer's identification with Christ.

Luke 1:36-40

1:36 And, behold, thy cousin Elisabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age: and this is the sixth month with her, who was called barren.

Since Elisabeth was Mary's cousin, perhaps Mary's mother was of the tribe of Levi as Elisabeth was. (Mary's father was of the tribe of Judah according to the genealogy of Luke 3.) If so, then the blood of the Levites (the priestly tribe) also flowed in the blood of Jesus as well as the tribe of Judah (the kingly tribe). Christ is both King and Priest. Legally, though, Christ is of the tribe of Judah and not of the tribe of Levi. Nevertheless, God is tying the two tribes together in a mysterious way here.

Mary didn't know about Elisabeth's conception before this because Elisabeth had hid herself for 5 months (v24). Therefore, this is a guidepost for her to find Elisabeth, whose conception is also significant in that she, too, has miraculously conceived a son.

1:37 For with God nothing shall be impossible.

In the immediate context both Mary's and Elisabeth's conception was impossible. They were both miracles. Elisabeth was a barren old woman and Mary was a virgin. Likewise, our salvation is an impossible act except with God. Therefore, God demonstrates that salvation will come to those He planned to save through His giving Elisabeth and Mary conception in these miraculous ways. A parallel

verse to this which relates to salvation is Mark 10:26-27:

And they were astonished out of measure, saying among themselves, Who then can be saved? And Jesus looking upon them saith, With men it is impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible.

Additionally, another miraculous birth – the birth of Isaac to Sarah – is shown to relate to our salvation. Sarah, like Elizabeth, was beyond the age of childbearing. Galatians 4:22-31 reads,

For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman. But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman was by promise. Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar. For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all. For it is written, Rejoice, thou barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not: for the desolate hath many more children than she with hath an husband. Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise. But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now. Nevertheless what saith the scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the free. So the, brethren, we are not the children of the bondwoman, but of the free.

God had promised that Abraham would have a son and that through him he would be a father of many nations. But, just as national Israel travailed to be delivered, that is, just as Israel waited and waited until it seemed that the Messiah was not going to come, so Abraham waited but no son was born to him. His wife Sarah did not give birth and she eventually passed the normal age of childbearing. So Abraham and Sarah attempted to make the promise of God come to pass through their own action. Sarah gave her Egyptian servant woman, Hagar, to Abraham so that she might bear him children. They reasoned that perhaps God would bring His promise to pass through her. And indeed Hagar did bear a son, Ishmael. But that did not fulfill the promise of God because it was a result of sin and unbelief.

Fourteen years later, God miraculously brought His promise to pass in giving Sarah a son, Isaac, though she was well beyond the age of childbearing. And it is through Isaac's line that Christ eventually came. Therefore, God's promises to Abraham that he would be a father of many nations is fulfilled in Christ, who came from the line of Isaac. It is in Christ that all the believers around the world come into the salvation promise that God has made. And so all true believers are spiritually the seed of Isaac because they are in Christ.

Thus, the Egyptian servant-woman, Hagar, is a picture of attempting to make God's promises come to pass by our own works and our own actions. Whereas Sarah is a picture of how God miraculously brings to pass His promises of salvation. Just as it was impossible that Sarah would bear a child, so it is impossible that we can save ourselves. But with God nothing is impossible. This is why we read in Genesis 18:10-14,

And he [God] said, I will certainly return unto thee according to the time of life; and, lo, Sarah thy wife shall have a son. And Sarah heard it in the tent door, which was behind him. Now Abraham and Sarah were old and well stricken in age; and it ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women. Therefore Sarah laughed within herself, saying, After I am waxed old shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also? And the LORD said unto Abraham, Wherefore did Sarah laugh, saying, Shall I of a surety bear a child, which am old? Is anything too hard for the LORD? At the time appointed I will return unto thee, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son.

1:38 And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her.

This is a beautiful statement of complete submission. The word "handmaid" here is from a feminine Greek word meaning "bond servant". This is a picture of the believers who do the will of God. They are bondservants of Christ. Mary says, "...be it unto me according to thy word." But in the meantime Mary very probably suffered ridicule and slander because of her being with child while unmarried. Likewise, the believers suffer persecution and slander as they carry out the will of God for their lives.

1:39 And Mary arose in those days, and went into the hill country with haste, into a city of Juda;

Gabriel had indicated to Mary that Elisabeth had conceived a son in her old age so she went to her. And Elisabeth was in the hill country of Judah (see also v65). The hill country of Judah refers to the city of Hebron. In Joshua 20:7 we read,

And they appointed Kedesh in Galilee in mount Naphtali, and Shechem in mount Ephraim, and Kirjath-arba, which is Hebron, in the mountain of Judah.

And in Joshua 21:11,

And they gave them the city of Arba the father of Anak, which city is Hebron, in the hill country of Judah, with the suburbs thereof round about it.

Moreover, Hebron was a City of Refuge. Joshua 20:1-7 reads,

The LORD also spake unto Joshua, saying, Speak to the children of Israel, saying, Appoint out for you cities of refuge, whereof I spake unto you by the hand of Moses: That the slayer that killeth any person unawares and unwittingly may flee thither: and they shall be your refuge from the avenger of blood. And when he that doth flee unto one of those cities shall stand at the entering of the gate of the city, and shall declare his cause in the ears of the elders of that city, they shall take him into the city unto them, and give him place, that he may dwell among them. And if the avenger of blood pursue after him, then they shall not deliver the slayer up into his hand; because he smote his neighbour unwittingly, and hated him not beforetime. And he shall dwell in that city, until he stand before the congregation for judgment, and until the death of the high priest that shall be in those days: then shall the slayer return, and come unto his own city, and unto his own house, unto the city from whence he fled. And they appointed Kedesh in Galilee in mount Naphtali, and Shechem in mount Ephraim, and Kirjath-arba, which is Hebron, in the mountain of Judah.

According to this passage, if someone killed a person by accident then there were cities of Refuge to which the slayer could flee from retribution. God had laid down a law in Genesis 9:5-6 concerning the taking of another's life:

And surely your blood of your lives will I require; at the hand of every beast will I require it, and at the hand of man; at the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of man. Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man.

So if someone killed another person then he was to forfeit his own life. But if there was an accidental killing, the slayer could escape to the city of Refuge until his case could be heard. Spiritually, Mary is acting out what a believer does in response to the Gospel. She arose (believers are raised with Christ) and went to a city of refuge – which typifies Christ to Whom we flee. Hebrews 6:18 reads,

Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us:

And Mary went with haste – which indicates how we flee to Christ (our City of Refuge). We flee with haste in order to escape the avenger of blood, who is God. Unless we flee to Christ, God will recompense our murderous sins and will send us to hell. Moreover, the City of Refuge here was one of Judah just as Christ was of Judah.

1:40 And entered into the house of Zacharias, and saluted Elisabeth.

Zacharias, being a priest, typifies Christ. And when we're saved we enter into the house of Christ, our eternal High Priest. Elisabeth, Zacharias' wife, typifies the believers who are the bride (wife) of Christ. Therefore, Mary's greeting Elisabeth is a picture of the fellowship that exists between believers

Luke 1:41-45

1:41 And it came to pass, that, when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost:

The babe's leap was a leap for joy (see v44)! Luke 6:22-23 also speaks about leaping for joy:

Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake. Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy: for, behold, your reward is great in heaven: for in the like manner did their fathers unto the prophets.

Therefore John, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, is already identifying with the kingdom of God. He surely suffered reproach and martyrdom. Remember – John is a priest particularly qualified from the womb. Here, also, Elisabeth is filled with the Holy Ghost to speak God's Word.

1:42 And she spake out with a loud voice, and said, Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of

thy womb.

Again, this verse does not teach that we're to worship Mary just because it says she is blessed among women (see verse 28). However, when Elisabeth says, "...blessed is the fruit of thy womb" it is speaking about Christ, Who came to sit upon the throne of David. And He is blessed God Himself. Psalm 132:11 reads,

The LORD hath sworn in truth unto David; he will not turn from it; Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne.

1:43 And whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?

Mary was used of God to give Jesus a human nature. Jesus was not, however, created in Mary. Christ is the Creator and is from everlasting. Ephesians 3:9 reads,

And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ:

And Hebrews 1:2,

[God] Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;

And in Colossians 1:16-17, we read about Christ:

For by him [Jesus] were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.

1:44 For, lo, as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in mine ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy.

It was seen in verse 41 that John, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, is already identifying with the kingdom of God in his mother's womb. He leaped for joy. And this was seen to relate to salvation – that believers leap for joy because Christ has saved them and their names are written in heaven. This also shows that God can save someone in the womb just as readily as someone on their deathbed. Verse 15 of this same chapter records,

For he [John] shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb.

The fact that he was filled with the Holy Ghost meant that he was a child of God. He was set apart for the service of God as a priest and temple-builder from the very beginning.

1:45 And blessed is she that believed: for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord.

Mary is again a figure of all the believers. Therefore, this verse is to all believers – not just to Mary. And what God has spoken will be brought to pass. Again, this verse indicates that Mary believed God. She did not doubt the message that was brought to her by Gabriel as did Zacharias.

Luke 1:46-50

1:46 And Mary said, My soul doth magnify the Lord,

This verse begins the Magnificat. Most of what Mary says is from the Old Testament. She was a student of God's Word and hid it in her heart. Psalm 34:2-4 reads,

My soul shall make her boast in the LORD: the humble shall hear thereof, and be glad. O magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt his name together. I sought the LORD, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears.

Mary's focus is not on the fact that God has chosen to use her; rather, it's on the fact that God is faithful to His promises to save. This is the theme of Psalm 34.2-4 as well as Mary's Magnificat.

1:47 And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.

Again, Mary's focus is on God's salvation. She praises God – not focusing on herself. She recognizes God as her Savior. Therefore, she acknowledges her sinfulness and her need of salvation here. And it's in her soul and spirit that she fully rejoices. She reminds us of Hannah in I Samuel 2:1:

And Hannah prayed, and said, My heart rejoiceth in the LORD, mine horn is exalted in the LORD: my mouth is enlarged over mine enemies; because I rejoice in thy salvation.

1:48 For he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden: for, behold, from henceforth all generations

shall call me blessed.

The phrase "low estate" means "vile" or "humiliation". The word "handmaiden" here, as in verse 38, means "bondservant" or "slave". God has, by His grace, regarded our humiliation and made us Christ's bondservants. He did this in sending the Messiah and Mary recognizes this. Therefore Mary is blessed – she's a child of God. And she knew God's Word was unfolding so that all believers would know of this event and of her salvation so that all would call her blessed.

1:49 For he that is mighty hath done to me great things; and holy is his name.

The "great things" again has to do with the fact that she's saved, not necessarily that God is using her to give Christ a human nature. And again, she is quoting from the Word of God. Psalm 71.19-20, speaking about salvation, reads,

Thy righteousness also, O God, is very high, who hast done great things: O God, who is like unto thee!
Thou, which hast shewed me great and sore troubles, shalt quicken me [make me alive] again, and shalt bring me up again from the depths of the earth.

And in Psalm 126.1-3,

When the LORD turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream. Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing: then said they among the heathen, The LORD hath done great things for them. The LORD hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad.

So Mary is not focusing on how greatly God is using her (see also her humble response in verse 38). The phrase "Holy is his name" also has to do with salvation, which is what Mary is praising God for. Psalm 111.9 reads,

He sent redemption unto his people: he hath commanded his covenant for ever: holy and reverend is his name.

God is the holy Savior bringing redemption in Christ.

1:50 And his mercy is on them that fear him from generation to generation.

Again, this verse focuses on salvation, for which Mary is praising God. Psalm 103:17 reads,

But the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children....

And God promises to be a God to us and to our children ("generation to generation"). Jeremiah 3.14 reads,

Turn, O backsliding children, saith the LORD; for I am married unto you: and I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion.

That God will take just one of a city illustrates that God saves only a remnant of people out of the human race. But the fact that God will take two of a family illustrates the principle that God works particularly through believing families. Similarly, Acts 2:39 reads,

For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.

Therefore, Mary recognizes that since Christ is her Savior, so there will likely be salvation for her children and her children's children. And, indeed, James and Jude, brothers of the Lord Jesus, did become saved.

Luke 1:51-55

1:51 He hath shewed strength with his arm; he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.

The phrase "He hath shewed strength with his arm" also has to do with salvation. Psalm 98.1-3 reads,

O sing unto the LORD a new song; for he hath done marvellous things: his right hand, and his holy arm, hath gotten him the victory. The LORD hath made known his salvation: his righteousness hath he openly shewed in the sight of the heathen. He hath remembered his mercy and his truth toward the house of Israel: all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.

And the arm of God is related to the will of God – that God has the strength and might to save people. Acts 1.8 reads,

But ye shall receive power [or might], after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

In the second half of Luke 1:51, "he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts," the proud are Satan and his kingdom of unbelievers. God vanquishes Satan's kingdom and commits them to hell. And their hearts refer to their very essence of being. But God frees (or saves) the believers from captivity to Satan (the proud). Therefore, here also Mary is praising God for her salvation.

1:52 He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree.

The first half of this verse continues the thought of the last half of the previous verse. Hannah prayed a similar prayer in I Samuel 2:4:

The bows of the mighty men are broken, and they that stumbled are girded with strength.

Here, Satan's rule and authority (his seat) is vanquished whereas vile sinners ("them of low degree") are saved ("exalted"). Again in I Samuel 2, verse 8, we read,

He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory: for the pillars of the earth are the LORD's and he hath set the world upon them.

All of this can take place because of Christ.

1:53 He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich he hath sent empty away.

The phrase "he hath filled the hungry with good things" is a reference to the fact that God fills us with eternal life, that He gives us salvation. Matthew 5:6 reads,

Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

And in John 6:35,

And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.

In verse 49 we saw that the phrase "great things" (or good things) refers to salvation. Two passages were referenced for that verse in speaking about salvation, as follows:

Thy righteousness also, O God, is very high, who hast done great things O God, who is like unto thee! Thou, which hast shewed me great and sore troubles, shalt quicken me [make me alive] again, and shalt bring me up again from the depths of the earth. [Psalm 71:19-20]

When the LORD turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream. Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing: then said they among the heathen, The LORD hath done great things for them. The LORD hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad. [Psalm 126:1-3]

Also, in Psalm 98:1-2 we read about "marvellous things":

O sing unto the LORD a new song; for he hath done marvellous things: his right hand, and his holy arm, hath gotten him the victory. The LORD hath made known his salvation....

But the phrase "and the rich he hath sent empty away" in v53 refers to the "rich" who trust in this world who will end up in hell. Mark 10:24-25 reads,

...But Jesus answereth again, and saith unto them, Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.

We must be rich in Christ, not in this sin-cursed world. Luke 12:15-21, 34 reads,

And he [Jesus] said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth. And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God....For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

Also in Luke 17:32-33,

Remember Lot's wife. Whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it.

Remember that Lot's wife was turned into a pillar of salt – a judgment of God upon her – because she looked back at the city of Sodom in her love for this world when God destroyed it by fire.

Another parallel passage to verse 53 is Luke 16.19-25, which reads,

There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.

Here we see a rich man who ended up in hell fire because he was not rich toward God. Moreover, there are false prophets who are convinced that they're saved but who actually find their riches in their false religions and in the world. Revelation 3:14-17, which is directed to the church of Laodicea and ultimately to all congregations that follow in the same path, says:

And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God; I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear....

Unfortunately, there are also many in today's churches who consider themselves to be rich but who will be sent empty away into hell like the rich man of Luke 16.

1:54 He hath holpen his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy;

This verse is teaching that God has provided salvation to His people in His mercy. Psalm 98.3 reads,

He hath remembered his mercy and his truth toward the house of Israel: all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.

And the Israel in view here is the Israel of God – the true believers. They are the ones who are given salvation in Christ. That is why the next verse says "...to Abraham, and to his seed for ever." The forever lasting or eternal Israel is made up of the elect of God, as Romans 2:6-8 declares:

...For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel: Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called. That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed.

1:55 As he spake to our fathers, to Abraham, and to his seed for ever.

This verse is speaking about salvation – which lasts for ever. In Genesis 17.5-7, we read about what He spoke to Abraham and to his seed:

Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be called Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee. And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee. And I will establish between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee.

Notice that God made an everlasting covenant with Abraham and his seed. This is the Gospel of everlasting salvation. And the seed of Abraham are the believers, not the physical descendants of Abraham. Galatians 3.28-29 reads,

There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

Therefore, the Israel in view in verse 54 is the Israel of God - or the spiritual Israel - the believers.

Luke 1:56-60

1:56 And Mary abode with her about three months, and returned to her own house.

Most likely Mary stayed until John was born since she arrived after Elizabeth was 6 months with child (v36). Now, the rest of Luke 1 deals again with Elisabeth, Zacharias and the birth of John the Baptist.

1:57 Now Elisabeth's full time came that she should be delivered; and she brought forth a son.

It says that John was born when Elisabeth's full time had come. This typifies the fact that he came at God's full time. God has a precise timetable for everything that comes to pass. For example, in Galatians 4.4 we read,

But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.

The same is seen regarding the birth of Isaac, which was a fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham:

But my covenant will I establish with Isaac, which Sarah shall bear unto thee at this set time in the next year. [Genesis 17:21]

Is anything too hard for the LORD? At the time appointed I will return unto thee, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son. [Genesis 18:14]

For Sarah conceived, and bare Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken to him. [Genesis 21:2]

So again and again God underscores that He has a precise timetable for bringing to pass His will.

1:58 And her neighbors and her cousins heard how the Lord had shewed great mercy upon her; and they rejoiced with her.

Remember verse 14? It read,

And thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth.

Thus we see first of all that verse 14 is coming to fruition. Likewise, all believers rejoice at this because it's time for the Messiah! God has remembered His promises to Israel (the believers) in His faithfulness to save us! He has showed great mercy!

1:59 And it came to pass, that on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child; and they called him Zacharias, after the name of his father.

All Jewish males were circumcised at 8 days. The cutting off of the foreskin of the reproductive organ typified that Christ is the seed of Israel that was cut off so that the believers' sins would be cut off (that they would become circumcised in heart). This truth is seen in Daniel 9:26, which reads,

And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself...

To be "cut off" is a figure of being under the wrath and judgment of God – more specifically, to be cut off from God. Many verses illustrate this, but one will be given here. Psalm 37:9 reads,

For evildoers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the LORD, they shall inherit the earth.

And Christ was cut off, that is, He bore the wrath of God for the sins of the believers. The fact that Christ is the Seed is seen in Galatians 3:16:

Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.

So the rite of circumcision, which also resulted in a shedding of blood, pointed to the work of the Lord Jesus Christ Who came to shed His blood on behalf of the believers. It also pointed to the fact that our sins are to be cut off, that is, that we are to be circumcised in our hearts. Romans 2:28-29 reads,

For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart....

And so at the close of the verse they named the son of Elisabeth after his father, Zacharias.

1:60 And his mother answered and said, Not so; but he shall be called John.

But Elisabeth said that his name was to be John in accordance with the messenger Gabriel's instruction to Zacharias in verse 13:

But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John.

And remember that the name John means "God is gracious" which illustrates that God is pouring out His grace in bringing the promised Messiah and visiting His people with salvation.

Luke 1:61-65

1:61 And they said unto her, There is none of thy kindred that is called by this name.

John was a peculiar and unfamiliar name to them. It was unusual that Elisabeth would select a name that was not after a relative.

1:62 And they made signs to his father, how he would have him called.

Not only was Zacharias mute but he had also been made deaf. They couldn't just speak to him. He typifies how Israel in his day was spiritually deaf.

1:63-64 And he asked for a writing table, and wrote, saying, His name is John. And they marvelled all. And his mouth was opened immediately, and his tongue loosed, and he spake, and praised God.

The moment he writes his name he dramatically regains his speech in praise to God. Spiritually, the time has come! Messiah is coming and dumb mouths and deaf ears will be healed! In speaking about salvation in Christ, Isaiah 35.5-6 reads,

Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert.

The world had waited 11,000 years for God's Promise to be fulfilled while observing all kinds of types and figures and ceremonial laws and now the time had come that the Messiah would arrive.

1:65 And fear came on all that dwelt round about them: and all these sayings were noised abroad throughout all the hill country of Judea.

For 400 years God had been silent and now these mysterious events were happening suddenly. Therefore, they feared. The hill country of Judea was in and around Hebron, a city of refuge (see v39). It represented Christ Himself. Therefore, spiritually, this verse is saying that all who are identified with Christ (typified by those in the hill country) hear the news about John and Christ.

The word "noised" here means noised by speaking. The news was spread abroad by word of mouth. Thus, this is a picture of how the Gospel is proclaimed to and by the believers.

Luke 2:66-70

1:66 And all they that heard them laid them up in their hearts, saying, What manner of child shall this be! And the hand of the Lord was with him.

John is indeed very special. He is God's messenger/priest. (Remember, his father Zacharias was a priest - he was of the line of Aaron).

The phrase "the hand of the Lord", like the "arm of God", is a phrase which refers to the will of God. So this verse is saying that John was born and raised up in the will of God as His messenger to announce the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is also an indication that John was a believer from birth, that is, he was saved.

1:67 And his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Ghost, and prophesied, saying,

God qualifies Zacharias to declare God's Word in a very special way in the following verses. Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit he speaks about God's salvation through the coming Messiah. Zacharias does not focus on his miraculous son, but his eyes are altogether focused on Christ as were Mary's in verses 46-55.

1:68 Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people,

Again, John's role was insignificant compared to Christ's. Therefore, Zacharias is praising God for what He is doing to save His people. His priorities are straight. The word "visited" is also used in Exodus 3.16 where God set Israel free from the 400-year bondage to Egypt. Likewise, here God had been silent for 400 years and has come to free the Israel of God from bondage to sin and Satan – the reality to which the exodus from Egypt pointed.

1:69 And hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David;

The word "horn" has to do with ruling or reigning. For example, in Revelation 17.12 we read,

And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast.

This verse is parallel to Daniel 7:24, which says,

And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise: and another shall rise after them; and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings.

The 10 horns are 10 kings. And a king is a supreme ruler. So here in verse 69 the horn refers to Christ because He is the horn (King or ruler) of salvation. He sits on the Throne of David.

1:70 As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began;

God has anticipated his salvation program from the beginning of Scripture. In Genesis 1.1-3 we read,

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.

2 Corinthians 4.6 assures us that this is a figure of salvation:

For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

Moreover, Enoch, who was the seventh from Adam, warned the people of his day about the coming day of judgment. Jude 14-15 reads,

And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.

Indeed, the message of salvation in Christ can be seen like a golden thread that runs through every page of the Bible starting right from the beginning.

Luke 1:71-75

1:71 That we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us;

This is why Christ came – to save us from our spiritual enemies – from the unsaved and from Satan. In Genesis 22.17 God made a covenant promise with Abraham, saying,

That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies;

And the seed of Abraham is Christ Himself and the believers who are in Christ. Galatians 3:16,29 read,

Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ....And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

So the fulfillment of the promise is seen in that Christ vanquished Satan at the cross so that we're saved from the hand (that is, from the will) of all that hate us.

1:72 To perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant;

God promised to show mercy and to provide salvation to people in every nation. Psalm 98.3 reads,

He hath remembered his mercy and his truth toward the house of Israel: all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.

And the promise of God is seen in Hebrews 6.13-14, 17:

For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself, Saying, surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee....Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath....

And God's covenant is one of mercy, redemption and salvation.

1:73 The oath which he sware to our father Abraham,

Here again is the oath or promise referred to in the previous passage. The oath spoken of in Hebrews is from Genesis 22:15-18, which reads,

And the angel of the LORD called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time, And said, By myself have I sworn, saith the LORD, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies;

And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice.

And the covenant which God made with Abraham is an everlasting one:

And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. [Genesis 17.7]

The phrase "to our father Abraham" in Luke 1.73 shows that the covenant promised to Abraham was actually to the believers through Christ. They are the true seed of Abraham, as Romans 4.11-12 and Galatians 3.29 reveal:

And he [Abraham] received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also: And the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had being yet uncircumcised. [Romans 4.11-12]

And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. [Galatians 3.29]

1:74 That he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear,

Again, we are saved from the hand (that is, from the will) of our enemies (from Satan and the unsaved). A parallel passage to this is Psalm 18.46-50:

The LORD liveth; and blessed be my rock; and let the God of my salvation be exalted. It is God that avengeth me, and subdueth the people under me. He delivereth me from mine enemies: yea, thou liftest me up above those that rise up against me: thou hast delivered me from the violent man. Therefore will I give thanks unto thee, O LORD, among the heathen, and sing praises unto thy name. Great deliverance giveth he to his king; and sheweth mercy to his anointed, to David, and to his seed for evermore.

And Psalm 107:2 reads,

Let the redeemed of the LORD say so, whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy

1:75 In holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life.

Once saved we are righteous before God because we're covered by Christ's robe righteousness. Isaiah 61:10 alludes to this fact:

I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels

And the days of the life of a believer last for ever and ever because each believer has eternal life!

Notice that this is not a political promise. God does not promise physical, political freedom as we live out our life in this present world.

Luke 1:76-80

1:76 And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways;

Zacharias is very familiar with the Old Testament. This declaration is a reference to Malachi 3.1, which reads,

Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts.

John is a prophet of the Highest, that is, of eternal God Himself; and he will be the one who announces Christ.

1:77 To give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins,

This verse tells how John will prepare the way of the Lord – he will proclaim, "Repent! You're sinners under the wrath of God and in need of forgiveness!" He will proclaim that sin needs to be washed away. In one sense he is a picture of the Law which shows us our desperate condition and our need of a Savior.

All believers, like John, are prophets of the Highest as they bring the Gospel. But our message is far more glorious because now Christ has been victorious over Satan. So in another sense John is a picture of all believers as they declare the Gospel.

The phrase "his people" refers to the elect of God, those to whom God will give the knowledge of salvation, those for whom Christ came to save. Matthew 1:21 records:

And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.

1:78 Through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us,

How merciful God is. Our dominant eternal need is for salvation. And Christ is the Dayspring spoken of in this verse. He is the Sunrising:

But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall. [Malachi 4.2]

We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your heart: [2 Peter 1:19]

I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star. [Revelation 22.16]

1:79 To give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.

Before salvation we all sit in spiritual darkness. The sentence of condemnation to hell hangs over our heads. But when we're saved we're delivered from that darkness of sin and death. Colossians 1:13 reads,

Who [Jesus] hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:

The Lord Jesus is the Light who frees us from that darkness through the Light of the Gospel. Isaiah 60.1-4 reads,

Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the LORD shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising. Lift up thine eyes round about, and see: all they gather themselves together, they come to thee: thy sons shall come from far, and thy daughters shall be nursed at thy side.

Again there is language of Christ as the Dayspring or the Sunrising. Another parallel verse is 2 Corinthians 4:6:

For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

Also in John 8:12, Jesus said,

Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth after me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.

Returning to Luke 1:79, the phrase "to guide our feet into the way of peace" refers to salvation and Christ Himself. He is the Way of peace in which He guides our feet. Christ brought peace with God for us by paying for our sins. John 14.6 reads,

Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

And He accomplishes this through His Word. Psalm 119:105 reads,

Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.

Actually, Christ is the Word personified:

And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth. [John 1:14]

Christ is the very essence of the Gospel, so the Bible speaks of Christ and the Word as a light (or lamp) and as the Way.

1:80 And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his shewing unto Israel.

Since Zacharias and Elisabeth were elderly they may have died soon after John's birth. And since he was saved from the womb and had a special purpose in God's plan he may have spent much time communing with God from an early age in the wilderness. He later came out of the wilderness proclaiming, "Repent!" Spiritually, he represents Israel and the world of that day which was a wilderness and desert – a spiritually dry place with no Gospel into which Christ came that there might be life and vegetation. In speaking about

Christ coming out of dry, barren Israel, Isaiah 53.2 reads,

For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of dry ground....

But Christ came to bring living Water. Isaiah 12.3 records,

Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation.

Likewise, John 4:14 reads concerning the Gospel,

...whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.

And as a result of that living Water, much vegetation sprouts forth where once there was barrenness. Isaiah 58.11 says:

And the LORD shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not

Also in Psalm 1.1-3:

Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.

And in I Corinthians 3.9:

For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building.

Luke Chapter 2

Luke 2:1-4

2:1 And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed.

The word "taxed" would be better translated "enrolled". A census was taken and the people were numbered for taxation purposes. Of course, this decree of Caesar Augustus ultimately served God's purpose that Christ be born in Bethlehem because this census brought Joseph and Mary to Bethlehem.

The phrase "all the world" really refers to all the Roman world of that day. The Chinese, for example, were not numbered in this census. Therefore, the word "all" is defined by the context in which it is found. This is an important principle in the Bible. In I Corinthians 15.22 we read,

For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

The first "all" in this verse refers to every single human being who has lived and ever shall live. But the second "all" can only refer to the believers, that is, to the elect of God, because the Bible clearly teaches that there will be many who are not made alive but will instead spend an eternity in hell.

Returning to Luke 2:1, this verse is a picture of the fact that all of the elect are numbered in and with Christ. A picture of the believers' enrollment in Christ is seen in Exodus 30.11-13:

And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, When thou takest the sum of the children of Israel after their number, then shall they give every man a ransom for his soul unto the LORD, when thou numberest them; that there be no plague among them, when thou numberest them. This they shall give, every one that passeth among them that are numbered, half a shekel after the shekel of the sanctuary....

Spiritually, it is Christ (typified by Moses here) who came to pay the ransom for His people. So this is a picture of the believers as they are numbered with Christ. Another verse that relates to the numbering or enrolling of the believers is Psalm 87:5-6, which reads,

And of Zion it shall be said, This and that man was born in her: and the highest himself shall establish her. The LORD shall count, when he writeth up the people, that this man was born there. Selah.

This verse is speaking about the believers (the spiritual Zion) who are born from above into the city of God. And in this context God says that He will count (or register, as in a census) when He writes up the people (the believers), which refers to the fact that the believers' names are written in Heaven in the Lamb's Book of Life.

The word "world" in Luke 2.1 is a word which relates to a house. So again, the believers, who are the house of God, are spiritually in view as the ones who are being numbered. So this is why, spiritually

speaking, Christ was born during this enrollment.

2:2 And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.

Jesus was **not** born in the second reign of Cyrenius as governor of Syria in AD 6-7, as some contend. That is an impossibility because Herod, who slew all the children of Bethlehem 2 years old and under in an attempt to destroy Christ, died in the year 4 BC.

2:3 And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city.

So everyone went into his city of residence for the enrollment – with Joseph and Mary going to Bethlehem where Jesus was to be born. Spiritually, the believers are enrolled in their own city, the New Jerusalem, as we read in Galatians 4:26,

But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.

2:4 And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:)

This verse indicates that Joseph was of the house and lineage of David. This is confirmed in the genealogy of Matthew 1. Also, verse 20 of Matthew 1 reads,

But while he [Joseph] thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.

According to the genealogy of Luke 3, Mary was also of the house and lineage of David.

So Joseph and Mary went to Bethlehem in order to be enrolled. And, as the next two verses in Luke 2 will indicate, the time had come that Christ would be born. The fact that Christ was to be born in Bethlehem is seen in Micah 5:2:

But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.

This is the same verse that the chief priests and scribes quoted in Matthew 2:3-6, when Herod demanded of them where Christ was to be born:

When Herod the king had heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born. And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judaea: for thus it is written by the prophet, And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel.

And just as Joseph and Mary went to Bethlehem (which means, "house of bread") to be enrolled, so we go to Christ, the Bread of Life (John 6:35) to be enrolled.

Luke 2:5-10

2:5-6 To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child. And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered.

Joseph and Mary were officially engaged to be married and Mary was about to give birth to Christ. This passage indicates that Mary probably carried Christ to full-term. In Luke 1:57 we saw that Elisabeth also carried John to full-term:

Now Elisabeth's full time came that she should be delivered; and she brought forth a son.

This information gives us a clue to the approximate time of the birth of Christ. Remember that Elisabeth's husband, Zacharias, was a priest of the course of Abia serving in the temple at the time Gabriel appeared to him. And there were 24 courses in all – with two courses serving in the temple per month. Thus, the course of Abia, which we saw was the 8th course, would have completed its service at the end of the fourth month. And this likely coincided closely in time with the conception of John the Baptist – perhaps in the 4th or 5th month. Luke 1:23-24 reads,

And it came to pass, that, as soon as the days of his [Zacharias'] ministration were accomplished, he departed to his own house. And after those days his wife Elisabeth conceived, and hid herself five months....

Then Luke 1:36 informs us that Elisabeth was in her 6th month of pregnancy when Mary was told that she would be with child of the Holy Spirit:

And, behold, thy cousin Elisabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age: and this is the sixth month with her, who was called barren.

So it would have been in the 10th or the 11th month (6 months after the conception of John the Baptist) that Christ was conceived of the Holy Spirit. And the end of the 10th month in the Jewish calendar coincides with the beginning of January in our calendar. Therefore, nine months later Christ would have been born in late September or early October because the Bible indicates Christ was carried to full term.

2:7 And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.

Christ was not only Mary's firstborn, He was the firstborn of creation. Colossians 1.15-18 reads,

Who [Jesus] is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.

Moreover, when we're saved we're born again. And we can become born again only because Christ first rose from the dead. This includes Old Testament believers because in principle Christ died from before the foundation of the earth (Rev 13:8). That is, what God plans to do is as good as done. So the salvation of the Old Testament believers also rested entirely upon the finished work of Christ which was yet to come, so that in principle He is the first to rise. Moreover, all of the Old Testament firstborn sacrifices pointed to the Lord Jesus Christ.

The phrase "and wrapped him in swaddling clothes" indicates that Christ was just born. It also emphasizes His humanity. He is "God with us" (Matthew 1:23) - having come to pay for the sins of His people.

The phrase "and laid him in a manger" illustrates that Christ had a lowly birth in a cow shed. He was laid in a feeding bin. Spiritually, it emphasizes that God has humbled Himself, emptying Himself of His glory. Only the lowest and poorest would be born like this – but Christ was numbered with the transgressors who are headed for hell. Ephesians 4:9 reads,

Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth?

And Philippians 2.5-8:

Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery [something to be grasped] to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

The manger, which was a feeding bin for animals, also emphasized that Christ came to redeem creation, too. Romans 8:19-23 reads,

For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.

Back to Luke 2:7, the phrase "because there was no room for them in the inn" shows that Israel was so wicked that no one would give them room – even for a woman close to delivery.

However, because Christ was born on or about the Day of Atonement (which was also close to the Feast of Trumpets and the Feast of Tabernacles) people would have come from all parts of Israel to Jerusalem in order to celebrate the feast days. And because Bethlehem was so close to Jerusalem in proximity, it's not surprising that there was no room in the inn. Of course, all of this fulfilled God's purpose that Christ have a lowly birth in a stable.

The word "inn" here is a Greek word that is translated "guestchamber" in Luke 22:11:

And ye shall say unto the goodman of the house, The Master saith unto thee, Where is the guestchamber, where I shall eat the passover with my disciples?

The guestchamber was the place where Christ ate the Passover with His disciples. So the fact that there was no room in the inn (the guestchamber) typifies how Israel had no interest in Christ as the One Who identified with the Passover. Christ was not welcome, they didn't want Him. In John 1:11 we read,

He came unto his own, and his own received him not.

Furthermore, the whole world does not want Christ on His terms. There's no room for Christ insofar as mankind is concerned.

2:8 And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.

God announced the coming of Christ to these lowly shepherds – He did not select learned theologians (i.e. the Sanhedrin, Pharisees, etc.). Abel, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, the nation of Israel in Egypt, Moses, David and Christ were all shepherds, as are all believers, spiritually speaking. John 21:15-16 reads,

So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs. He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep.

Like Peter and the shepherds watching their flock by night, all believers are called to be shepherds where the Gospel seed is sown in this dark field of the world (by night) of sin and woe.

2:9 And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid.

This typifies what happens when believers become saved. When we begin to see the glory of the Lord in the Scriptures and that we are headed for an eternity in hell then we begin to be sore afraid so that we cry to God for mercy.

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

The believers need not fear hell - they're safe in Christ by the Gospel. The phrase "good tidings", of course, refers to the Gospel. The word gospel itself means "glad tidings". So the announcement of the coming of Christ is the very essence of the Gospel – that He has come to pay for our sins. The phrase "to all people" means to all the elect of God (see again Luke 2:1 and I Corinthians 15:22). Herod, the high priest and the Pharisees surely didn't find Christ's birth to be a great joy. Only God's elect do.

Luke 2:11-14

2:11 For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

For 2000 years the believers in Israel had looked for and trusted in the coming Messiah and now His time has come. And He came "unto you", that is, unto the shepherds that typify the believers (see v8). The phrase "this day" typifies Christ. In speaking of Christ, Psalm 118:22-24 reads,

The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner. This is the LORD's doing; it is marvellous in our eyes. This is the day which the LORD hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it.

Moreover, the 7th day Sabbath of the Old Testament pointed to the rest (salvation) that the believers have in Christ. It was a day of rest in which there was to be no work (illustrating that we do no work unto salvation but rest solely in Christ alone). So it pointed to Christ as our Day of rest. And the number 7 signifies perfection. So the 7th day Sabbath also typified Christ as the perfect Day.

Remember in Malachi 4:2 that Christ is called the Sun of Righteousness and in John 14.6 Christ identifies Himself as the Light of the world? Thus He is totally identified with the Day. This is why I Thessalonians 5:5 reads,

Ye are all the children of the light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness.

The phrase "the city of David", historically speaking, is Bethlehem, which means "house of bread". Spiritually, Christ came to reign on David's throne forever as the Bread of Life, as Jesus said in John 6:35:

...I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.

The word "Saviour" indicates what Christ came to do. He came to save the elect. As a matter of fact, the name Jesus itself means Savior. Matthew 1:21 reads,

And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.

And the fact that Jesus is the Savior proves that He is God, because God is our only Savior. Isaiah

43:11,14 read,

I, even I, am the LORD; and beside me there is no saviour....Thus saith the LORD, your redeemer, the Holy One of Israel....

"Christ" is the Greek word for the Hebrew word "Messiah", which means "the anointed one". It indicates that Christ is the fulfillment of all the Old Testament promises of salvation.

2:12 And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

This clue told the shepherds what to look for. It's a sign also to us that God took on a human nature and identified with us (see v7). This verse also indicates that Christ is the sign that the shepherds are to look for. Later on in verse 34 of this chapter, Simeon takes the baby Jesus up in his arms and declares under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit:

And Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary his mother, Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against...

We will see that Christ is the only sign that we are to seek for salvation.

2:13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,

Handel's Messiah can't compare with this glory. There is a vast number of angels. Revelation 5:11 says,

And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands;

Therefore this is a glorious message (possibly singing) as they praise God that the Messiah has come.

2:14 Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

This is the message of the heavenly host. Eternal God receives all the glory for our salvation. Ephesians 1:4-6 reads,

According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.

Verses 11-12 continue:

In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.

Salvation is for His glory.

The phrase "and on earth, peace, good will toward men" reads differently in the Greek. It would be more accurately translated "and on earth, peace in men of good will". The phrase "good will" is translated "good pleasure" in Ephesians 1:5-6:

Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.

It's the good pleasure of God to save the believers to the praise of His own glory. Likewise, Ephesians 1:9 reads,

Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to the good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself:

So in Luke 2:14 it's saying "on earth, peace in men of (God's) good pleasure" – those whom God came to save. They're the ones who will experience peace with God. This is why Matthew 1:21 records:

...and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.

Again, the peace spoken of here has nothing to do with political peace! Peace in the Bible relates to salvation – to peace with God.

Luke 2:15-20

2:15-16 And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us. And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a

manger.

The shepherds go with great excitement (probably leaving all the sheep). This typifies the believers who leave all to flee to Christ with haste when they hear the Gospel. We go to Bethlehem, the "House of Bread", when God makes the Gospel known to us and we do so with haste (Bethlehem typifies Christ Himself). The babe lying in a manger represents that Christ emptied Himself of His glory to become man to pay for our sins and it's His work that the believers see and rely on for salvation.

2:17 And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child.

This typifies how the believers go into all the world with the Gospel, the message of salvation. The shepherds (who typify the believers) shared what they had heard and seen concerning Christ. They were witnessing.

2:18-19 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.

Everyone marvelled. There were more than 2 or 3 witnesses so their information was likely accurate in others' eyes. But they only wondered – whereas "Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart". Spiritually, verse 18 typifies the world's reaction to the Gospel. But Mary typifies the believers who keep and ponder God's Word. They contemplate and meditate upon it. Psalm 119:97,99,129 and 167 read:

O how I love thy law! it is my meditation all the day....I have more understanding than all my teachers: for thy testimonies are my meditation....Thy testimonies are wonderful: therefore doth my soul keep them....My soul hath kept thy testimonies; and I love them exceedingly.

That Mary meditated on God's Word was seen in her Magnificat in chapter 1:46-55. And in verse 51 of this chapter we read:

And he [Jesus] went down with them [Joseph and Mary], and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them: but his mother kept all these sayings in her heart.

God's Word must be kept in the heart.

2:20 And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.

This is the natural reaction of someone who has spiritually been to Bethlehem, the "House of Bread", and has fed on the Word. Praise and glory wells up in the hearts and lives of the believers for God.

Luke 2:21-24

2:21 And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcision of the child, his name was called JESUS, which was so named of the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

Christ Himself had to be circumcised even though the rite pointed to His own work at the cross. Joseph had to be the one who took Jesus into the temple to be circumcised because Mary was still ceremonially unclean and could not enter into the temple. Leviticus 12:1-4 reads,

And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, If a woman have conceived seed, and born a man child: then she shall be unclean seven days; according to the days of the separation for her infirmity shall she be unclean. And in the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised. And she shall then continue in the blood of her purifying three and thirty days; she shall touch no hallowed thing, nor come into the sanctuary, until the days of her purifying be fulfilled.

When a baby boy was born, the mother was unclean for 40 days and could not enter into the temple for the duration. Therefore, when the time came for the baby to be circumcised on the 8th day the Father would have had to take the child into the temple for the circumcision.

2:22 And when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were accomplished, they brought him to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord;

The word "her" is a mistranslation here. In the Greek it's "their" (plural). Therefore it means that Mary and Christ had to be purified.

According to the law, a woman who gave birth was unclean for the period of her separation (7 days if a male was born, 14 days if a female was born). During this period, whoever touched her would also be unclean. Therefore, while a mother nursed her newborn child during this period the child would also be unclean. And the baby would, of course, be nursed every day. After the initial period of separation, however, while the woman herself remained ceremonially unclean for a period of time (33 days if a male

was born, 66 days if a female was born), she could be touched by others and they would not become unclean themselves. Therefore, a nursing child remained unclean only during the period of her separation. Nevertheless, Luke 2:22 says that when the days of their purification were accomplished Jesus was brought to Jerusalem to be presented to the Lord. It typifies how Christ became sin for the believers, becoming totally identified with them as sinners, and enduring the equivalent of hell for them. (Of course, Mary's uncleanness was her own and her purification looked toward the just-arrived Redeemer).

2:23 (As it is written in the law of the Lord, Every male that openeth the womb shall be called holy to the Lord;)

When this says, "As it is written," it points to the Old Testament law where the firstborn was to be set apart for the service of the Lord. Exodus 13:2 reads,

Sanctify unto me all the firstborn, whatsoever openeth the womb among the children of Israel, both of man and of beast: it is mine.

This again points to Christ Who is THE Firstborn. Romans 8:29 reads,

For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

And Colossians 1:13-15, 18 reads,

Who [God] hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins: Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature.....And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.

2:24 And to offer a sacrifice according to that which is said in the law of the Lord, A pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons.

This was the sacrifice of the very poor. In Leviticus 12:8, we read concerning purification after a childbirth,

And if she be not able to bring a lamb, then she shall bring two turtles, or two young pigeons; the one for the burnt offering, and the other for a sin offering: and the priest shall make an atonement for her, and she shall be clean.

The normal offering was a lamb and one young pigeon or a turtledove. But if she was not able to bring a lamb because she was too poor, then she was to bring two turtledoves or two young pigeons. This again illustrates that Christ completely emptied Himself of His glory – coming as the lowest of the low. It also illustrates the humility that the believers are to have – that they are to walk very humbly in this world as Christ did.

The sacrifices and offerings, of course, also pointed to the Lord Jesus Christ as THE Sacrifice Who purifies us of our sins. He is our sin and burnt offering. Returning to Luke 2:22 for a moment, the word "present" (where Joseph and Mary brought Jesus to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord) is found in Romans 12:1:

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

Again, Christ came into the world to be presented as the Sacrifice. It is therefore that we, as a thank offering, are to present our bodies as a living sacrifice – we've been bought. Therefore, this is the climax of their purification. So, Christ had to be purified just as every baby because He became one of us and took on our sins. Ephesians 4:9 says,

Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth.

This verse illustrates that Christ became identified with us sinners who were condemned to hell and that He suffered God's wrath in our place.

Luke 2:25-30

2:25-26 And, behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon; and the same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was upon him. And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ.

Simeon, too, was aware of the impending birth of Christ (like the shepherds watching their flocks by night). He was a believer (he was just and devout – by Christ's work). He was waiting for the Consolation of Israel, which is Christ Himself. Concerning the consolation (or comfort) of Christ, Isaiah 40:1-5 records:

Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the LORD's hand double for all her sins. The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain: And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it.

Likewise, 2 Corinthians 1:5 reads,

For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ.

And 2 Thessalonians 2:16-17 declares:

Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace, Comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work.

So Christ is the Consolation of Israel that Simeon was waiting for. Simeon knew Christ was coming and that he would be able to see him before His death And only a very select few knew of the birth of the Messiah. (Others who knew of His birth were Anna, an old widow (verses 36-38 of this chapter), the wise men from the East, Zacharias, Elizabeth, Joseph, Mary and the shepherds who were watching their flocks by night.)

Simeon's name was the same as a son of Jacob who headed up one of the tribes of Israel. When Jacob was approaching the time of his death, he gathered his sons together to tell them what would become of them in the latter days. Regarding the tribe of Simeon, Jacob declared in Genesis 49:5-7:

Simeon and Levi are brethren; instruments of cruelty are in their habitations. O my soul, come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honour be not thou united: for in their anger they slew a man, and in their selfwill they digged down a wall. Cursed be thine anger, for it was fierce; and their wrath, for it was cruel: I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel.

This statement refers back to Genesis 34 where Simeon and Levi practiced terrible deceit in using God's holy sign of circumcision as the device whereby they might commit ruthless murder. In this context, prince Shechem defiled their sister, Dinah, and then desired of them to have her for his wife. But as a condition, Simeon, Levi and their brothers said that all of the men of Shechem's city had to be circumcised before he could have her to wife. The men of the city agreed to this, but while they were still sore from the circumcision, Simeon and Levi slew all them in revenge for the defiling of Dinah.

Looking again at Genesis 49:5-7, Simeon and Levi were murderers and they were to be scattered in Israel. To be scattered is a figure of being under the wrath of God (i.e. the men who built the tower of Babel were scattered for their sin, the nation of Israel was scattered for its rebellion, etc.). In fact, we read earlier in Luke 1:51, "He hath shewed strength with his arm; he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts." So Simeon and Levi typify the unsaved of the world who are murderers in heart and who will be scattered on Judgment Day.

Later on in Judges 19:1, when the nation of Israel had come into the promised land and the land was divided amongst the 12 tribes, it is discovered that the descendants of Simeon did not have an independent inheritance. Instead, their inheritance was within the inheritance of Judah. Verse 1 reads:

And the second lot came forth to Simeon, even for the tribe of the children of Simeon according to their families: and their inheritance was within the inheritance of the children of Judah.

The fact that the inheritance of Simeon was within that of the children of Judah is a picture of how the believers' inheritance is within Christ's. The believers, like Simeon, are sinners. Before salvation they are murderers in heart and have no inheritance with God but are instead doomed to be scattered, or cast into Hell, for an eternity. They are under the wrath of God. But because Christ has paid the penalty that the believers deserve, they find their inheritance altogether in Christ. He is ultimately the true Heir of all the blessings the believers receive. That is why Romans 8:16-17 records:

The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ....

So the believers are joint-heirs with Christ. That is, their inheritance is found within the inheritance of Christ. Moreover, Christ was of the tribe of Judah. So the fact that Simeon found its inheritance within the tribe of Judah further underscores that the believers find their inheritance in Christ!

Lastly, Simeon means "hearing", which also typifies the believers. The believers have been given the

spiritual ears to hear the Word of God. In Matthew 13:16, Jesus said to his disciples,

But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear.

And then in John 10: 27 He said concerning the believers:

My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:

So returning to Luke 2, then, Simeon typifies the believers in that he is named after the tribe of Simeon, which is a picture of those who become saved by the Lord Jesus Christ. And everyone who becomes saved, like Simeon, sees Christ before he dies (spiritually speaking). Each believer waits for the Consolation of Israel.

2:27-30 And he came by the Spirit into the temple: and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him after the custom of the law, Then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said, Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: For mine eyes have seen thy salvation,

Jesus suffered utter humiliation – the Messiah, the King of kings and Lord of lords – came as a helpless baby in a manger to take on our sins and is now being ceremonially cleansed. And He is held up by a sinful man. No wonder Simeon praised and blessed God and is now ready to die. Simeon knew this baby was the Messiah because he had the eyes of faith, just as the believers see the salvation of God in the pages of Scripture. Christ was everything to Simeon. He is ready to die. He is at peace with God and his sins have been paid for. When Simeon took Christ up in his arms it is an illustration of the believers who receive Christ. Mark 9:36-37 reads,

And he [Jesus] took a child, and set him in the midst of them: and when he had taken him in his arms, he said unto them, Whosoever shall receive one of such children in my name, receiveth me: and whosoever shall receive me, receiveth not me, but him that sent me.

And as Simeon took Christ up in his arms he blessed God as all believers do for their salvation. He knew full well that Christ was God's salvation, as he said, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: For mine eyes have seen thy salvation." We read concerning Christ in Isaiah 49:6:

And he said, It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth.

Luke 2:31-35

2:31-32 Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.

Now Simeon, a type of the believers, talks about the nature of salvation and how it is for people of every nation. This is referred to in Isaiah 42:6-7, which reads:

I the LORD have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles; To open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house.

And even though Christ is the glory of national Israel, He is especially the Glory of the eternal Israel – made up of all the true believers from every nation:

...they are not all Israel, which are of Israel...That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed. [Romans 9:6,8]

2:33 And Joseph and his mother marvelled at those things which were spoken of him.

Joseph and Mary also knew who Christ was. Christ is the King, the Anointed of the Lord (v26 – "Christ" means "Anointed"). All the Old Testament promises which focused on the FIRST coming of Christ are now being fulfilled.

2:34 And Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary his mother, Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against.

The Gospel is a double-edged sword. It breaks and saves some people, and others it hardens and condemns. Concerning this fact, 2 Corinthians 2:16 says,

To the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life....

That the Gospel is a savor of life unto the elect but a savor of death to those who remain hardened in their sins is also seen in 1 Peter 2:7-8:

Unto you therefore which believe he [Christ] is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone

which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed.

So the word "rising" in Luke 2:34 refers to salvation, as Ephesians 2:6 confirms:

And [God] hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

The believers are given new life, they are raised from the dead in their spirit essence. Luke 2:34 then says that Christ is a Sign which shall be spoken against. Similarly, in speaking of Christ as a sign, Isaiah 7:14 reads:

Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

And again Isaiah 11:10-12 speaks about Christ as the Sign of salvation:

And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth.

Moreover, Matthew 12:39-40 reads,

But he [Jesus] answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas: For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

Jesus is saying here that His work at the cross is the only sign that we are to consider. But, as Luke 2:34 indicates, Christ is the sign Who is spoken against. When the apostle Paul arrived in Rome, for example, the Jews who were living there desired to hear him concerning the Gospel. Acts 28:22 records their statement:

But we desire to hear of thee what thou thinkest: for as concerning this sect, we know that everywhere it is spoken against.

The Jews of Rome had heard that the Gospel of Christ was spoken against by people everywhere. And, of course, the Gospel is totally identified with Christ Himself. He is the Word. Moreover, in 1 Peter 4:14 we read:

If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified.

When the believers are reproached (or spoken against), Christ is spoken against. And He is spoken against by the unsaved because they are the spiritual enemies of Christ.

2:35 (Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also,) that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.

The sword is the Gospel which reveals the thoughts of many hearts. Hebrews 4:12 reads,

For the word of God is quick [living], and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

Thus, this verse teaches that Mary's own soul (as well as the souls of many others) was pierced by the Gospel and by Christ. She, like all believers, was a sinner saved by the grace of God through the atoning work of Christ.

Luke 2:36-39

2:36-37 And there was one Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Aser: she was of great age, and had lived with an husband seven years from her virginity; And she was a widow of about fourscore and four years, which departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day.

Anna, too, was aware of the coming Messiah like the shepherds who were watching their flocks by night and like Simeon. And she was the daughter of Phanuel, which means "Face of God". It's the same name found in Genesis 32:30 where Jacob saw God face to face as he wrestled with Him, prevailing with God and receiving God's blessing. It was at that time that God gave Jacob ("Supplanter") the name Israel

("Prince of God"). Genesis 32:24-30 reads:

And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day. And when he saw that he prevailed not against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh; and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint, as he wrestled with him. And he said, Let me go, for the day breaketh. And he said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me. And he said unto him, What is thy name? And he said, Jacob. And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed. And Jacob asked him, and said, Tell me, I pray thee, thy name. And he said, Why is it that thou dost ask after my name? And he blessed him there. And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel [Face of God]: for I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved.

Returning to Luke 2:37, the tribe of Aser (or Asher) typifies the believers who bring the Gospel. When Jacob was prophesying concerning the tribe of Asher in Genesis 49:20 he declared,

Out of Asher his bread shall be fat, and he shall yield royal dainties.

This verse anticipates the rich Gospel (the "bread" – John 6:35) coming out of the church (typified by Asher) and how many are saved as a result ("shall yield royal dainties"). Later on in Deuteronomy 33:24-25 Moses spoke these words regarding Asher:

And of Asher he said, Let Asher be blessed with children; let him be acceptable to his brethren, and let him dip his foot in oil. Thy shoes shall be iron and brass; and as thy days, so shall thy strength be.

This verse is a picture of the children of God that come forth as the Gospel goes out from Asher (the believers). The oil is a picture of the "Oil of Anointing" – or the anointing of the Holy Spirit which every child of God receives. To dip his foot in oil is therefore a representation of the path or walk that the believers take as they are anointed by the Holy Spirit. That the shoes of Asher shall be as iron and brass indicates that the believers have the strength to overcome sin and Satan because our feet are now covered by Christ's righteousness. (A bare foot signifies nakedness and exposure in sin – see Isaiah 20:2-3). And just as Christ's days are infinite, so is His strength. And His strength is the strength of the believers.

So Anna is a picture of Israel, which in turn is a picture of the church. She was the daughter of Phanuel "Face of God" illustrating that Israel (or Jacob) saw God face to face as he wrestled with Him. And she was of the tribe of Asher, out of whom the Gospel came. She was married for 7 years and widowed for 84 years. This represents the fact that national Israel was married to God for the perfection of time (the number 7 signifies perfection) but was later cut off by God. God declares in Hosea 2:2 concerning national Israel:

Plead with your mother, plead: for she is not my wife, neither am I her husband.....

A widow is someone who is desolate – someone with no help, with no husband. Spiritually, this is a picture of someone without God as Husband. Therefore, Anna's 84-year widowhood typifies the fact that Israel was cut off by God.

The number 84 equals 7 X 12 which signifies the perfection (7) of the fullness (12) of God. Christ came in the fullness of time, and that's when Israel's widowhood ended. The tribe of Asher had signal blessings and it was out of Israel that Christ came. So Anna typifies national Israel that produced the Christ so that redemption would come to the world. Her widowhood, spiritually speaking, is coming to an end. She is no longer without a Husband.

Also, 8400 days are in 23 years, which was the duration of time that Israel spent under captivity and bondage to Babylon (a judgment of God upon Israel for their rebellion). This is a picture of the church (the spiritual Israel) at the end of time as it comes into bondage to the kingdom of Satan (the spiritual Babylon) and the Gospel is effectively silenced. Thus, the widowhood of the church at the end of time when God will cut it off for rebellion is featured again by the number 84 in the 8400 days of Israel's captivity to Babylon..

And in Revelation 11 the two witnesses are killed for 3-1/2 days which is exactly 84 hours. When the two witnesses are killed, it also is a picture of the church as it succumbs to Satan at the end of time and the Gospel is effectively silenced. So again, the number 84 signifies the widowhood of the church at the end of time.

2:38 And she coming in that instant gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem.

Anna spoke of Christ to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem. Here again, she is a picture of national Israel (through whom the Bible came) as it was used of God to bring the Word which speaks to all the believers (who are the "New Jerusalem" as in Rev 22:2) about Christ.

2:39 And when they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to

their own city Nazareth.

In Matthew 2:13-15 it says that they went to Egypt before going to Nazareth (as it was decreed by God in the Old Testament that "Out of Egypt have I called my Son"). Therefore, when this verse says, "when they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord," it includes their going into Egypt.

* * *

Background Information

Family Radio

The following information was copied from the Family Radio Web site:

The Ministry of Family Radio

Broadcasting Christ-centered programs to the United States and around the world!

Committed to the Person and Work of Jesus Christ

Family Radio is committed to the Person and salvation work of Jesus Christ as revealed in God's divine Word, the Bible. We are a nonprofit, nondenominational, educational organization dedicated to obeying our Lord's command to preach the Gospel to every creature (Mark 16:15). Family Radio programs include no commercial advertisements. Air time for other Christian broadcasters on Family Radio is free of charge. The ministry relies solely upon God working through listeners for the financial support of day-to-day operations. We as a ministry desire to be entirely faithful to God's divine, infallible Word, the Bible. Every effort is made to accurately present the Gospel of the Bible. In purpose and belief, we stand out from other radio and TV ministries in our faithful reliance on the Bible as the ONLY infallible authority.

First Broadcast in 1959

Family Radio was organized in 1958 under our official name, Family Stations, Inc., and began to broadcast February 4, 1959, over KEAR FM in San Francisco. Since then, God has enabled the ministry to purchase a number of powerful AM and FM stations and several smaller educational facilities and translators around the country. Our domestic broadcasts reach metropolitan areas such as Birmingham, Charleston, Chicago, Cleveland, Jacksonville, Los Angeles, Milwaukee, New York, Omaha, Philadelphia, Sacramento, Salt Lake City, San Diego, San Francisco, Seattle, and Washington, D.C.

International Broadcasts

An important addition came in 1973 with the purchase of an international short-wave station, which we called WYFR, in Scituate, Massachusetts. With the use of many transmitters and antennas, the Gospel is proclaimed in ten languages from thy WYFR facility, now located in Okeechobee, Florida. In 1982, our international outreach was expanded to India and the Far East with the use of powerful transmitters in Taiwan. Family Radio has become a worldwide ministry; our broadcasts now span the globe so "That all the people of the earth may know that the Lord is God, and that there is none else" (1 Kings 8:60).

A Diversified Outreach

In addition to the broadcasts, Family Radio offers Bible-based pamphlets and tracts to teach and exhort and other diverse means of spreading the Gospel, including the following.

Family Radio School of the Bible

Primarily a correspondence school, Family Radio School of the Bible courses are designed to help laymen and professionals to minister in the church, on the job, and at home through the study of various subjects and certificate and degree programs. The school operates on the principle of Matthew 10:8, "freely ye have received, freely give." In accordance with this principle, the FRSB does not charge tuition; it is dependent upon the generosity of students and friends.

Missionary Tours

Family Radio sponsors "Missionary Tours" which provide opportunities for staff members and listeners (at their own expense) to help spread the Gospel through tract distribution. Our ambassadors for Christ have visited cities in North America, South America, Europe, Asia, Africa, and Australia (every continent except Antarctica).

On the Internet

Our Christ-centered programs are now available worldwide, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, on the Internet. Access to the Internet may be via computer or television (with the proper equipment). In addition to the programs on the Internet, Bible studies such as "The Glorious Garden of Eden" and "The Seventy Weeks of Daniel 9" are on our Home Page. Downloadable books include "What God Hath Joined Together" and "God's Magnificent Salvation Plan." The Internet also has our program guide, short-wave schedule, and The Bible. Tell your friends and family that they can find Family Radio on the Internet at: <http://www.familyradio.com>

Supporting Family Radio

If you believe God would have you financially support Family Radio you can send your tax-deductible gift to:

Family Radio

Oakland, CA 94621 USA

Or use our "Secure Internet Check Form!"

End of Web site information.

For biblically based answers to your questions, you can listen to the *Open Forum* on Family Radio stations in many locations in the USA on Monday through Friday evenings at 8:30-10:00 p.m. Eastern Time (5:30-7:00 p.m. Pacific Time) or call 800-322-5385 (from within the USA and Canada) or 408-741-0219 (from outside the USA and Canada) during the program to ask a question or make a comment. You can also listen to live broadcasts on Family Radio's Web site at <http://www.familyradio.com/> during those hours. There are also recordings of past programs available on this Web site.

The Open Forum is translated from English into nine other languages and broadcast by short-wave radio around the world. You can also listen to prerecorded short-wave broadcasts on the Web site. Write to Family Radio at the above address to obtain a short-wave broadcasting schedule for your area or call these numbers:

Toll Free: 800-543-1495 (from within the USA and Canada)

Toll Call: 501-568-6200 (from outside the USA and Canada)

This Study (Ver:1010 4/30/2001)

This study of Luke 1-2:39 was transcribed from radio broadcasts of the *Family Bible Study* program, edited, and made available online by a Family Radio listener. It has neither been reviewed nor approved by Mr. Camping or Family Radio. This edition was downloaded and reformatted by the following Family Radio listeners who have grown in the knowledge of their Lord and Savior over the years (with help from the questions and answers about the Bible as heard on the *Open Forum* program and other Family Radio materials) and who desire the same for others.

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