



Famous Chapter 2's of The New Testament

Luke 2

What part of the Bible has the Jesus story? Better yet, what is the Jesus story? Is Jesus about angels, shepherds, and wisemen? Is it about Mary or God? It's easy to miss point of the story when you're only looking for baby Jesus. It's not that Jesus is unimportant to the story. Duh! It's the Jesus birth story. However, the real story is surrounding Jesus. The Matthew birth narrative is all about Herod, the Magi, and God. The Luke account is more about shepherds, Joseph, and Elisabeth (John the Baptist mother), her husband, and Mary. Yet, swirling around this whole scene are visitations from angels and the Holy Spirit. This birth narrative is far more than just a Jesus story.

I would like to mention that Matthew does acknowledge some of the angelic visitations. I do feel that Luke ramps up these visitations to the next level. Joseph is visited twice. A man named Simeon is visited. I suspect a prophet of the Lord Anna had a visit. John the Baptist father meets an angel. Mary encounters an angel. I even suspect John's mother Elisabeth was divinely contacted to give the name John for her boy. This does not include the shepherds who definitely had an encounter. This is such a spiritual book.

People like to quote the birth story in Luke 2. This chapter is famous directly because of this event. I mean the heading in the Bible says "birth of Jesus." Yet, both Matthew and Luke only give us a few verses each. The birth is not a miracle half as much as how God pulled it off.

In those days they traveled to their home town to pay tax. Mary happened to be pregnant at the time. They had come from Nazareth to Bethlehem. In the meantime, Shepherds are visited by angels. They are so moved by this heavenly visitation that they scurry down to Bethlehem to worship the child. Notice the Magi are not in this scene. Most believe that they came much later.

Then the narrative changes. Verses 21-24 of Luke 2 give us Jewish law. Moses was told by God to offer certain sacrifices for sin or uncleanness. Mary had to pay a temple offering tax for birthing. For the poor, it was considered two doves or pigeons. That alludes to the fact they were poor. It also says that these two were devoted Jews adhering to the law. They also circumcised Jesus after eight days. Again, very Jewish. Then we have two strange but great stories of Simeon and Anna. Simeon was promised by God to see the messiah before he died. Then in comes the baby Jesus and he feels blessed. At the same place we have Anna (a Prophetess) who picks Jesus out of the crowd and prophesies to Mary about him. Both Joseph and Mary are stunned by the attention. This is the Luke birth Story of Jesus. Even though Jesus childhood years seem to be missing, there is one small account in this famous chapter 2.

Yes, we know nothing of Jesus youth except this one event found in Luke 2. There are several things I'd like to point out. The first is his youth. Some scholars have questioned when Jesus knew he was the Messiah? When Jesus got the Holy Spirit. When Jesus began his ministry. This Gospel of Luke is very Jewish. It goes out of its way to prove Jesus grew up Jewish. Hence, we have them going to the Passover feast. Secondly, Jesus goes to the synagogue. He teaches the word of God in the synagogue. Then Jesus is obedient to his father God and his parents. It's all very Jewish and law centered.

Secondly, Jesus is twelve. The journey for a boy begins at thirteen. It is by no mistake that Jesus disappears from the scene after this event in Luke 2. It is by no mistake that Joseph

also mysteriously disappears from the pages of the Bible at this point. I believe Joseph dies but we just don't know. The Holy Spirit and God are now Jesus' mentors (Father). Did Jesus (at twelve years old) know he was God? This line in Luke 2:49 confirms that he did know his relationship with God His father. *"Why were you searching for me?" he asked. "Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?"* This connects to verse 52 that says Jesus increased in stature with God. This whole scene mirrors a Jewish custom to dedicate your first born to God. Many times, parents send their child off to be mentored in the church for years. God was working on the human Jesus in those missing youth years.

Luke 2 is famous because of the birth story. However, clearly the writer is bent on confirming Jesus' stature as a Jew and His stature with God. Though all this we have Mary keeping these things in her heart all through this narrative. If you look at both sides of Luke 2 you will see consistency. Luke 1 is giving context to Prophecy. Luke 3 is continuing this theme with John the Baptist. The baptism of Jesus is more conformation of who Jesus is to God. Luke should be given credit for talking about the birth of Jesus. He should also be given credit for filling in some of the context of why this child would grow up to be the Jewish Messiah. That is why this chapter is more than famous.