

# Lifting Up The STANDARD

“When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the LORD shall lift up a standard against him” (Isaiah 59:19).



Challenging And Encouraging God's Remnant To Remain Faithful

## Article # 3

# Lessons From LUKE



## Chapter Two

### Luke 2:1-7,

*“And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed. 2 (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.) 3 And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city. 4 And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:;) 5 To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child. 6 And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. 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.”*

The Bible has many prophecies in the Old Testament concerning Christ being born into this world. It was prophesied that He would be of the line of David, He'd be born of a virgin, He'd be born in Bethlehem, that John the Baptist would announce His coming, that he would live in poverty, that He would do miracles.

We are told in the Old Testament about the massacre of the children by Herod. The Bible tells us that the Child would flee into Egypt with His parents. It talks about Christ's Galilean ministry. It says He would be from the tribe of Judah and that He would be presented with gifts and so on. We could go on and on about the Bible prophecies in the Old Testament concerning the birth, the ministry, and the death of Christ. All the details are there, and it came to pass.

### Luke 2:7,

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

God said this would happen and it happened. The next thing on God's program is the return of Jesus Christ. It also will happen!

## God Uses People

If we look back in the Old Testament we see that God used Pharaoh, He used kings in the Old Testament to come against Israel to judge them.

We are in the most interesting time we have ever lived in in our lifetime concerning politics and what is going on politically today. The political situation today is lining up with Bible prophecy as never before. The return of Jesus Christ is right around the corner, and that's why so many things are happening in the political world that are happening today.

Two-thousand years ago God used politicians to get Joseph and Mary to Bethlehem. We read in verse two, *“this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.”* Verses 3-4 tells us, *“And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:;)”*

Politicians passed a decree and Joseph and Mary had to travel almost a hundred miles when Mary was late into her pregnancy—a terrible trip. God had a plan, and He didn't check with Joseph and Mary to see whether they liked His plans or not. He also has a plan today, and that plan is going according to schedule.

### **“No Room For Them”**

So Joseph went to Jerusalem and to Bethlehem, verse five, *“To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child,”* and verse six and seven says that *“while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. 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”* (Luke 2:7). It doesn't say there was no room in the inn. It says there was *“no room for them.”* Nothing much has changed.

At Easter time I was speaking at a senior's lodge in Sarnia, and I asked one of the ladies in the meeting, *“What is Easter?”* I said, *“What is that all about?”* She said, *“You don't know?”* I said, *“Yes, I know. I was wondering if you knew.”* She said, *“Well, that was when Jesus rose from the dead.”* I said, *“this place is all decorated for Easter. I see Easter bunnies and I see chocolate eggs that were supposedly laid by a bunny. I don't see any Bibles; I don't see anything to do with Jesus.”* I asked, *“why is it that Jesus isn't represented if we're supposed to be representing that He rose from the dead?”* Her answer was *“well, we can't judge.”* That sounds like some fundamental independent Baptists I know.

The world has replace the resurrection of Christ with Easter bunnies and fictitious things. The same thing is true concerning Christmas. The greatest thing about Christmas is we focus on the birth of Christ, but what do we have there? Some fat man they call Santa Claus, we put him in an imaginary sleigh and troop him around the world to give gifts to everybody and all that nonsense. That's where we are today. We have no room for Christ. Let's just get Him out of the resurrection and let's just get Him out of the birth story and get Him out of our schools — get Him out of everywhere. There's no room for Christ.

### **The Focus On The Shepherds**

Reading down through verse eight, the attention turns to the shepherds, and all the way down through to verse eighteen, even down to verse twenty, the focus is on the

shepherds. That's a lot of verses that God give to the shepherds.

#### **Luke 2:8,**

*“And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.”*

The word *“pastor”* is in the New Testament only a couple of times. In fact, *“pastor”* is there once and the plural is there once, but the Greek word is there seventeen times and has been translated *“shepherd.”* We read, *“There were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.”* Now, that's what God wants for us as pastors to be doing—**keeping watch over the flock.**

#### **Luke 2:9-10:**

*“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. 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 Insignificant Remnant**

It is interesting that the announcement came to these shepherds. God always has had a remnant. We've talked about this many times before, and I want to bring it up here again. God has always had a remnant. We can go all the way back to the days of Noah. How many people got on that ark? There were millions of people in the world at that time, but there was a small remnant, only eight people, that got on the ark. And when Jesus was born, how many people knew about it? A few shepherds out in the field—they knew about it—and as we get down through the story here, we'll see that a few other people knew about it, but very few people knew about the birth of Christ compared to how many were living and going through the motions of religious activity there in Bethlehem and Jerusalem at that time. It says the angel of the Lord came upon them and the glory of the Lord shone round about them, and the angel said, *“I bring you good tidings of great joy...For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you...”*

There was no sign for all the big shots downtown in Jerusalem and all the religious hypocrites that are going to later crucify Jesus. God gives a sign to these humble shepherds out in the field.

**Verses 12-14,**

*“Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.”*

While the majority of the people were going through the motions of what they do, making money, and their religious activities, and everything else they thought was important, they missed the important thing.

**Verse 15,**

*“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.”*

They must have been humbled by it.

**Verses 16-19,**

*“And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child. And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds. But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart.”*

**The Religious And The Remnant.**

The religious had no clue what was happening; however, the remnant “wonder at those things.” Mary, “kept all these things and pondered them in her heart.” The shepherds, “returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them” (v.20).

**No Trip To Egypt Here****Verses 21-22,**

*“And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the child, his name was called JESUS, which was so named of the angel before he was conceived in the womb. And when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were accomplished, they brought him to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord.”*

I get so sick of how we mess things up with our tradition. Tradition says that Mary and Joseph travelled a hundred miles from Nazareth, Mary had the Baby in the middle of the night, and then got up and fled into Egypt the next morning.

**No.** Eight days later they were still there, and the eight days were accomplished for the circumcision of the Child, it says, and then thirty days later, verse twenty-two we read,

*“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;(As it is written in the law of the Lord, Every male that openeth the womb shall be called holy to the Lord;) 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.”*

**Only Two People In The Temple Knew What Was Happening**

Here again we have part of that remnant. We read in verse twenty-five, “*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,*”

The story continues down through verse thirty-five where Simeon talked to Joseph, and he talked to Mary. Simeon knew what was going on. There were a lot of people in the Temple that didn't have a clue what was going on, and there are a lot of people in our churches today who do not have a clue what is going on either.

Simeon says to Joseph and Mary in verse thirty-two that Jesus would be “*A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.*” Now, it's very important—very important—to rightly divide the Word of God.

We need to know when the Bible is talking about something that the Lord is doing concerning the **Gentiles** and when the Word of God is talking about something that God is doing that has to do with the nation of **Israel**. They are two different things. When I was a young Christian I remember sitting in Sunday school, and they would sing that little song, “*Every promise in the Book is mine/Every chapter, every verse, every line*”—a nice little chorus, except it isn't true. God made some promises to Israel that He didn't make to the Gentiles, and He made some promises to the Gentiles that He didn't make to Israel, and it's very important to rightly divide the Word of Truth.

**Verse 33,**

*“And Joseph and his mother marvelled at those things which were spoken.”*

We need to keep in mind how young these two people were. Young ladies married when they were twelve or thirteen years of age.

### A Tremendous Confirmation

When Mary and Joseph got married, Joseph was probably fourteen or fifteen years old, and this time in the temple would be a tremendous confirmation for Joseph concerning the fact that Mary was a virgin when she conceived this Child. We should put ourselves in Joseph's place. There's no indication that he didn't believe Mary, but would you or I? I'm sure the Devil came along and questioned it in Joseph's mind many times.

### Back To Nazareth

#### Verse 39,

*“And when they”—that is, Joseph and Mary— “had performed all things according to the law of the Lord (that’s important) they returned into Galilee, to their own city Nazareth.”*

Again, they did not go running off to Egypt as tradition teaches us. This all took place thirty days after Christ was born, and then they went to their own city Nazareth. *“And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him”* (v 40).

### “Supposing Him To Be In The Company

Here is one of the most amazing portions of Scripture in the entire Word of God.

#### Luke 2:41-52,

*41 Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the passover.*

*42 And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast.*

*43 And when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and Joseph and his mother knew not of it.*

*44 But they, supposing him to have been in the company, went a day's journey; and they sought him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance.*

*45 And when they found him not, they turned back again to Jerusalem, seeking him.*

*46 And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions.*

*47 And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers.”*

*48 And when they saw him, they were amazed: and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing.*

*49 And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?*

*50 And they understood not the saying which he spake unto them.*

*51 And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them: but his mother kept all these sayings in her heart.*

*52 And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.”*

**Verse 41 tells us His parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover.** Jesus was twelve years old. He had been going down to Jerusalem every year with Joseph and His mother for the last twelve years. When He was twelve years old, they went to Jerusalem, it says in verse forty-two, they went **“after the custom”** of the feast. Now, here's part of the problem—a big part of the problem. They went **“after the custom.”** The dictionary says a "custom" is **“something that one does habitually.”** It had just become a habit for Joseph and Mary. They were going through the motions. Verse forty-three tells us **“they had fulfilled the days...”**

They had **“fulfilled the days”** and were anxious to get back to their own plans. Their attitude was much like most people in our fundamental independent Baptist churches as the Sunday morning sermon is coming to an end. **“Let’s hope he finishes on time or we won’t be able to beat the church crowds to the restaurant for lunch.”**

**Verse forty-three tells us they didn’t bother to check to see if Jesus was leaving with them.** We read, **“...as they returned, the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and Joseph and his mother knew not of it. But they, supposing him to have been in the company, went a day's journey; and they sought him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance.”** They went eighteen or twenty miles out into the badlands on a very dangerous journey without Jesus, supposing Him to be in the company.

When Jesus was first born, we can imagine how protective they would have been knowing that this is the Son of God. We can imagine that when Jesus was maybe two or three years old playing in the yard Mary would be looking out the window every ten seconds to make sure



He was okay? Now, they went to Jerusalem *“after the custom, fulfilling the days, supposing Jesus to be in the company.”*

**Verse 45-46,**

*“And when they found him not”—amongst His relatives—“they turned back again to Jerusalem, seeking him. And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions.”*

**After three days they decided to check the Temple?**

Where were they looking for Him? Verse forty-eight tells us, *“And when they saw him”—that is, when Joseph and Mary saw Jesus—“they were amazed: and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us?”*

Oh, Mary, you better be careful about how you're talking to God.

**Verses 48-49,**

*“And when they saw him, they were amazed: and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing. 49 And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?”*

Notice the word "father" in verse forty-eight, has a small "f" on the word "father." Jesus said unto them in verse forty-nine, *“How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?”*—with a capital "F" on that word "Father."

**If anybody knew that Joseph was not the father of Jesus, it was Mary.** But she was now just kind of going through the custom, just after the fulfilling of the days, supposing Jesus to be in the company, journeying along without Him. She just kind of got used to it. I think we do that.

Well, it says in verse fifty that Joseph and Mary *“understood not the saying which he spake unto them.”* How amazing is that? Jesus said in verse 49, *“How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business? And they understood not the saying which he spake unto them.”* That Greek word is found three times in this story. It says in verse 43 that they *“knew not”* that Jesus was not with them as they're traveling along. Jesus said in verse forty-nine, *“...wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?”* That's the same Greek word.

And then in verse fifty we read, *“...they understood not the saying which he spake unto them.”* That's what happens when we are just going through the motions.

Paul the apostle said, *“Take heed...Ye did run well; who did hinder you...?”* I think most of the time the answer to that question is the person we see in the mirror when we get up in the morning.

Now, here's an amazing verse. Verse fifty-one says Jesus, *“...went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them...”* The only thing we read about Jesus when He was a teenager is that He was subject unto Mary and Joseph and He grew in wisdom and stature and favor with God and man. If Jesus could be subject unto these two, any teenager today can be subject unto their parents if their parents are trying to lead them in a godly way. Verse 51, 52 says, *“...but his mother kept all these sayings in her heart. And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.”*

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## The TRUTH



### Five Important Audio Messages

1. "Buy The Truth And Sell It Not"
2. "The Knowledge of The Truth"
3. "They Shall Be Turned From The Truth"
4. Exposing Those Who Oppose The Truth
5. Speaking The Truth In Love"



## The Life of GIPSY SMITH

Without a doubt, my favourite preacher of the past is Gipsy Smith. The one book in my library I value the most (other than the Bible) is an autographed copy of his autobiography. In this article we will focus on his ministry and much of the information we will consider comes from his own story of his life.

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