



*Quaker Universalist Voice*

## Luke 1–2: The Birth of John and Jesus by Luke ~

### A Christmas Gift of the Gift of Christmas

Translated for Children

by J.M. Spears

#### **Luke, Chapter 1:**

Luke 1:1. Many people have tried to write about events which took place among us. 2. They wrote what we in the Christian family were told by those who, from the beginning, saw and helped God's plan and purpose for people. 3. For a long time, I have followed and checked out all things carefully. I have decided to write an orderly account for you, honorable Theophilus. 4. I do this, so you can be sure about the things that you have been taught.

5. When Herod was king of Judea, there was a priest, a person whose job was to communicate with God for the people of Israel\*. The priest's name was Zechariah. He was one of the Abijah group of priests. His wife, Elizabeth, was from the family of Aaron. 6. They both lived their lives following God's laws. They carefully kept all the commands and rules of Yahweh, their God. 7. They did not have a child. Elizabeth was not able to have children. They were both very old.

8. Zechariah was serving as a priest before God during the time that his group was on duty in the Temple\*. 9. It was the custom for priests to be chosen by chance to do different jobs. It was by chance that Zechariah was given the honor of going into the Temple\* of Yahweh to burn incense\*. 10. While Zechariah was inside the holy\* place, the crowd of people was praying outside, 11. and Zechariah became aware of a messenger of Yahweh standing on the right side of the altar\* of incense\*. 12. Zechariah was upset when he saw the messenger. 13. But, the messenger said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your request was heard. Your wife, Elizabeth, will have a child. You will name the child John, which means 'Yahweh had shown approval and affection.' 14. And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at the birth. 15. He will be a great person of Yahweh. He shall not drink wine nor beer. He will be filled with God's creative force even before he is born. 16. And he will turn many children of Israel\* to Yahweh their God. 17. He will lead forth for God with the spirit and power of Elijah. His job will be to turn the hearts of parents to children. He will turn those who disobey God to understanding like those who obey God's laws. He will get people ready and fit for Yahweh."

18. But, Zechariah said to the messenger, “How can I know this? I am an old man, and my wife is very old.”

19. The messenger answered him, “I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God. I have been sent to speak to you and to tell you this good news. 20. Now listen! You will be silent because you did not believe my words. They will happen at the right time anyway. You will not be able to speak until the day these things happen.”

21. The people were still waiting for Zechariah. They wondered why he was taking so long in the temple sanctuary\*. When Zechariah did come out, he could not speak to them. They realized that while he was in the Temple\*, he had understood something directly from God. 22. Zechariah made signs to them, but was not able to speak.

23. When his time of service was ended, he went back to his home town.

24. Later, Elizabeth, Zechariah’s wife, became pregnant. She kept it to herself for five months. 25. “This is the way Yahweh acted for me. In time, God was concerned enough to take away the disapproval of people which I have faced because I had no children.”

26. Elizabeth had been pregnant for six months. Then, the messenger, Gabriel, was sent from God to Nazareth, a town in Galilee. 27. The messenger was sent to a young woman who was engaged to a man named Joseph David. The woman’s name was Mary.

28. The messenger came toward her and said, “Rejoice! You have received God’s undeserved gift of approval and affection! Yahweh is with you.”

29. But, Mary was very confused and troubled by what was said. She tried to figure out what kind of wonderful greeting this could be.

30. The messenger said to her, “Don’t be afraid, Mary, for you have discovered the undeserved approval and affection of being near to God. 31. Now, listen! You will become pregnant and give birth to a child. You shall name the child Jesus. Jesus is the one who will be great and will be called the child of the Most High. 32. And to this child, Yahweh God will give the throne of his ancestor, David. 33. And this child will reign over the descendants of Jacob forever. That reign will never end.”

34. Mary said to the messenger, “How can this be, since I do not have sexual intercourse with a man?” 35. The messenger answered her saying, “God’s creative force will come to you and the power of the Most High will be present with you. Therefore, the child to be born will be holy\* and will be called Child of God. 36. Now listen! In her old age, Elizabeth, who is related to you, has also become pregnant. This is her sixth month of pregnancy. It was said she could not have children. 37. With God, all things will be possible.”

38. Then, Mary said “Now listen! I am the servant of Yahweh. May it happen to me just as you say.” Then the messenger left her.

39. Soon after that, Mary got ready and hurried to a town in the hill country of Judah. 40. She went into the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. 41. When Elizabeth heard of Mary's greeting, the baby jumped with joy inside her. And Elizabeth was filled with a holy spirit\*, God's creative force. 42. In a loud voice, Elizabeth cried out, "You among women are gifted of God and gifted of God is your child that is to be born. 43. Who am I that the mother of my divine\* ruler should come to me? 44. Now listen! When I heard the sound of your greeting, the baby in my uterus jumped with joy-filled delight. 45. Good for the one who believes that the words of Yahweh, spoken to her, will really happen."

46. And Mary said, "With my life itself, I declare the greatness of Yahweh. 47. And I am delighted in God my Savior\* because God has remembered me, God's poor servant. 48. And, listen! From now on, all people will say 'Good for her', 49. because of the great things the Mighty One has done for me, the One whose name is holy\*. 50. God's motherly love and help is for grandparents and parents, for children and grandchildren, and their grandchildren. This help is given to all those who trust God. 51. God's arm has shown strength. God has scattered the haughty in their own conceit. 52. God has put down the powerful rulers from their thrones and has lifted up the lowly. 53. God has filled the hungry with good things and has sent the rich away empty. 54. Remembering motherly love, God has helped Israel\*, God's servant. 55. This is just as God told our ancestors, Abraham and Sarah and their children and the children's children forever."

56. Mary stayed with Elizabeth about three months. Then, Mary went back home.

57. The time came for Elizabeth to have her baby. The baby was a boy. 58. Her neighbors and relatives heard that Yahweh had shown great motherly love to Elizabeth. They all rejoiced together. 59. On the eighth day, they came to mark the child with the sign of the covenant\* by circumcision\*. They were going to name the child Zechariah. 60. But, the child's mother spoke up saying, "No! he is to be called John." 61. They said, "But, no one in your family has that name!" 62. Then, they nodded to the father as if to say, "What do you want the child to be called?" 63. He asked for a writing pad and, to the surprise of everyone, he wrote, "His name is to be John." 64. And, instantly, he opened his mouth and moved his tongue. He spoke, thanking God.

65. An awe-filled respect came over all their neighbors. All these things became the talk of the entire hill country of Judea. 66. Everyone who heard about it thought about it and wondered, "Now, what is to become of this child?", for the power of Yahweh was indeed with him.

67. But, his father, Zechariah, was filled with God's creative force and spoke for God as a prophet\*, 68. "Thanks and praise to Yahweh, the God of Israel who stayed with God's people and has set them free, 69. and has built strength in David's family, which served God in order to save us, 70. just as God spoke through the holy prophets\* a long time ago, 71. so that we should be saved from our enemies and from all who hate us. 72. God gave motherly love and help to our ancestors, remembering the promises that God had

made. 73. That was the vow that God made to Abraham, our father. God was to give us a gift 74. so that we could be safe from our enemies. 75. Without being afraid, we can live all of our life with God. 76. And you, child, will be called the prophet\* of the Most High\*, for you will go for Yahweh to get ready for God's way of life. 77. You will let God's people know about being saved by being forgiven for living without God. 78. Because God is full of motherly love and concern for us, the rising light from God will come. 79. It will shine on those who are in deep darkness and gloom to guide our feet into the way of peace."

80. And the child grew up. With God's creative force, he became strong. He was in the desert until the day he was called to Israel.

## **Chapter 2:**

1. In those days, a law was made and sent out by a Roman ruler, Caesar Augustus. It ordered everyone, everywhere, to register and be counted. 2. This was the first census to be taken while Quirenius was ruling over Syria. 3. And all the people had to go to their own home city to be registered.

4. Joseph and Mary also went together from the city of Nazareth in Galilee. They went to David's city in Judea, which is called Bethlehem. They went there because Joseph was a member of the David family.

5. Mary, who had made the first promises of marriage to Joseph, was pregnant when they went to be registered. 6. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born. 7. Mary gave birth to their first child. She wrapped the baby up. Then, she placed the baby in the animals' feeding place, because there was no room for them in the guest house.

8. There were shepherds living out in the fields near Bethlehem. They took turns guarding their sheep at night. 9. A special messenger came to them. The light of God shown around them. They were afraid. They were even terrified.

10. God's messenger said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring good news to you. It is news of great joy. It is joy-filled news that is for all people. It is for everyone. 11. For you, a savior\* Christ\*, the divine ruler\*, was born today in David's city. 12. And there will be a sign for you. You will find a baby all wrapped up. The baby will be laying in a manger\*."

13. And, suddenly, there was with the messenger a larger group of God's messengers. They were thanking God. They were saying, 14. "Great honor to God among the highest and for everyone, peace among people with whom God is pleased."

15. Then, the messengers left and returned to their home with God.

The shepherds said to one another, "Quick! Let's go to Bethlehem. Let us see this happening that God has made known to us."

16. They went very quickly and found Mary and Joseph. And there was the baby laying in the manger\*. 17. And when they saw, they made known what was told to them about the child. 18. And all who heard them were amazed by the things the shepherds told them.

19. Mary remembered everything and thought about it a lot.

20. The shepherds returned, honoring and thanking God because they had seen and heard everything just as it had been told to them.

21. And eight days later, the time came to mark the child with the sign of the covenant\* by circumcision\*. Then, the child was named Jesus. That was the name the messenger used before the child was conceived and started to grow in the uterus.

22. And then it was time according to the rule Moses had given, for the Washing Ceremony. The parents took Jesus up to Jerusalem, to bring Jesus before Yahweh. 23. This was just as it is written in the law of Yahweh: "Every boy who is born first will be specially called to serve Yahweh."

24. They also brought a sacrifice\* offering of a pair of doves or two young pigeons, just as it is said in the law of Yahweh.

25. Listen, now. A person named Simeon was in Jerusalem. Simeon lived his life following God's laws and doing what was right. Simeon watched and waited for the salvation\* of Israel\*. Simeon was led by God's creative force. 26. He knew from this holy spirit\* that he would not die before seeing Yahweh's Messiah. 27. And so, led by the Spirit\*, Simeon came into the Temple\* area.

The parents brought their child in, to do for Jesus what was usually done, just as the Law said was to be done.

28. And Simeon received the child into his arms and gave thanks to God and said, 29. "Now is the time, Owner of all Creation. Now, you may let your servant die in peace, since you have kept your promise. 30. I have seen with my own eyes your salvation\*, 31. which you have made ready in full view of all people. 32. Your salvation\* is a light to show your way to other nations and honor for your people Israel\*."

33. Jesus' father and mother were really surprised by what was being said about their child.

34. Simeon asked for God's power to be with them and said to Mary, the mother of Jesus, "Listen! This child is put here for the falling down and the rising up of many in Israel\*, and as a sign that will be opposed. 35. And even you will feel like a double-edged sword has gone through you. All of this will happen so that the attitudes and decisions of many will show their real selves."

36. And a prophet, Anna, was there. Anna was the daughter of Phaneul Asher. She was very old. She had lived with her husband several years after marriage. 37. She was an 84-year-old widow who did not leave the Temple. She worshipped God day and night with fasting and prayer. 38. At that very moment, she also came up to them and gave thanks to God. And she spoke about the child to all those waiting for the price to be paid for freedom\* in Jerusalem.

39. They finished all their duties, just as the Law of Yahweh said. Then, they went back to Galilee and to their own city of Nazareth. 40. And the child grew up and became strong in spirit and filled with wisdom. God's freely given approval and affection was upon him.

41. Now every year, Jesus' parents used to go to Jerusalem for the Passover\* to celebrate God's freeing Israel from slavery. 42. And when Jesus was twelve years old, they went up to the celebration as usual. 43. And when the days of celebration were over, they started to go back home. But, Jesus stayed in Jerusalem. His parents did not know this. 44. They thought he was with the group that was traveling together. They had travelled a whole day before they began to look for Jesus. They started to look for him with their relatives and friends. 45. When they did not find him, they went back to Jerusalem to look for him.

46. Finally, after three days, they found him in the Temple\* area sitting in the middle of the teachers. He was listening to them and asking them questions. 47. Everyone who heard Jesus was amazed at how much he understood and the answers he gave.

48. When Jesus' parents saw him, they were astonished. "Child," his mother said, "why have you done this to us? Listen, now! Your father and I have been terribly worried and looking for you."

49. "Why were you two looking for me?" Jesus asked them. "Didn't you know that I had to be within the house of my God?" 50. But, they did not understand what Jesus said to them.

51. Then, Jesus went back down with them to Nazareth and with love obeyed them. Jesus' mother remembered everything. And Jesus made progress in wisdom, maturity, and acceptance and approval of God and people.