

Episode: Luke Series No. 2

Narrator: Mary

Primary Scriptures: Luke 2

Story Summary: Story of the birth of Jesus

Location: Nazareth

Time: Circa 5-1 BC

Suggested Memory Scriptures: Luke 2:4, 2:11, 2:38, 2:40, 2:49, or 2:51-52

Luke tells many details of the births and early childhoods of Jesus and John the Baptist that Matthew did not give. It is likely that Luke had the opportunity to meet Mary in person and learn much about those early lives. As a doctor, Luke would likely have been fascinated with the many unusual aspects of their stories only Mary could provide.

In the gospel of Matthew, it is recorded that the wise men came to the baby Jesus in a house.¹ Although some traditions indicate Jesus was born in a cave or a barn, it is equally as likely that he was born in a guest house that had an interior manger. That might fit better with the idea that Joseph was of David's family and would have deserved hospitality in the small village of Bethlehem.

Luke stresses that Jesus' parents followed the Laws of Moses precisely when they offered a sacrifice for him. While at the Temple, two reliable prophets, Simeon and Anna, foretold many things about Jesus. From that point on, surely his parents must have been aware they had a special baby who would change the future of Israel.

Luke had the benefit of hindsight as he wrote about the birth and early life of Jesus. He also knew his target audience needed to be convinced of the legitimacy of Luke's rather outlandish story. He apparently chose his material accordingly. In the classic thinking, it was as important to note what was *not* said, as much as what was said!

¹ Matthew 2:11

Discussion Questions:

1. How would Luke have learned the small details of the birth stories of Jesus and John the Baptist?
 2. How would Mary have likely reacted when Gabriel appeared?
 3. What is one reason why Mary could have easily accepted that she was to have a baby even though she was a virgin?
 4. When Jesus was eight days old, Joseph and Mary sacrificed a pair of doves or pigeons. What does that say about their economic circumstances? How did being poor affect Jesus?
 5. What sorts of things did Luke *not* talk about?
1. Possibly from Mary herself. 2. She lived in a small town where everybody knew about everybody's business. She was probably astonished, but also worried about her reputation. 3. She was very likely familiar with Isaiah's prophecy about a virgin having a child². 4. That was a sacrifice poor people made. Joseph and Mary must have been poor.

Application Questions:

1. Zacharias questioned Gabriel and was struck mute because of it. Have you ever distrusted God so much that he should have disciplined you?
2. God entrusted Jesus to Joseph and Mary. Joseph and Mary were poor. Did God choose them even though they were poor, or because they were poor? Do you let your financial circumstances limit what you think God can do through you?
3. What qualities did Joseph and Mary have that you should cultivate in your own life?
4. What qualities of your children did they get from watching your example?

Application Questions for Teens:

1. Have you ever prejudged someone and then found out you were wrong? Has anybody ever prejudged you incorrectly? How did that make you feel?
2. When have you ever given someone the benefit of the doubt? What qualities of theirs made you do it?
3. Luke 2:51 says Jesus was submissive to his parents. What does that mean to you? Are you willing to be submissive to your parents even when you think they are wrong?
4. Mary was hugely affected by the story of Jesus being lost and being found at the Temple. She remembered being frantic to find Jesus, but remembered more that he considered the Temple his father's house where he should be. What would it take for you to feel like church is your home away from home? How could you make it feel like that for others that you know?

² Isaiah 7:14