

**Reading Together**  
**New Testament Bible Reading**  
**July 18 – July 24**

**Monday, July 18 – Luke 2: 1 – 20**

When you read a passage of Scripture that is very familiar like this one, it is easy to just gloss over it without thinking too hard about it. Take time as you read this to let the story really sink in. Think about why God had Caesar Augustus issue the decree for the census. Jesus was supposed to come from King David's family line. Where was King David born (1 Samuel 16)? Where did the prophets say that the Messiah would be born (Micah 5:2)? Why do you think God had the message of the savior proclaimed to shepherds who tended to be outcasts in that society? What clues does that give to you concerning the mission of Christ (Luke 19:10; Luke 4:18)? What do the shepherds do after they saw the baby in the manger? Why? Are you so excited about who Jesus is and what Jesus has done for you that you feel like you need to run and tell everyone? If you are not, what are you not seeing about Jesus that the shepherds saw?

**Tuesday, July 19 – Luke 2: 21 – 52**

In these verses there are two stories about Jesus being in the temple as a young child, which is interesting because Jesus and the New Testament both refer to Jesus as the true temple. In verses 21-40, Jesus is taken as an eight day old baby to the temple to be circumcised as was required by the law God had given to Moses. You can see the poverty of Mary and Joseph as all they had to present as a sacrifice was two doves or pigeons. While Mary and Joseph are at the temple they meet a man named Simeon and a woman named Anna, who are both very devout. Through the Holy Spirit, both Anna and Simeon recognize the baby Jesus as the long awaited Messiah of Israel. Notice particularly what Simeon says about Jesus in verses 29-32 and 34-35. Clearly Simeon can see that Jesus has come as the Messiah for all, both Jew and Gentile, and Simeon can also see how Jesus' life is going to end with the words he speaks to Mary that "a sword will pierce your own soul too." Put yourself in Mary's and Joseph's shoes as they try to process all of these things that are said about their 8 day old child.

Verses 41-52 often cause people to question Mary and Joseph's parenting, and Jesus' obedience. So as you read these verses try to

understand how things would have been during their visit to the temple and the feast. They would have gone to this event with their extended family, and it would have been easy for Jesus to have been left alone at the temple because Mary and Joseph would have just assumed that he was with other family members. Jesus didn't run away from them; he just got caught up in a discussion in the temple with the Jewish religious leaders. Rather than getting hung up about parenting and obedience think instead about a 12 year old "home schooled" boy who can amaze people with his understanding (verse 47).

### **Wednesday, July 20 – Luke 3: 1 – 20**

These verses detail John the Baptist's ministry preparing the way for Jesus. As you read these verses think about John's message. It is a message of coming judgment and the need to repent before the judgment comes. In some ways that message doesn't seem to line up with what Jesus came to do. In John 3: 17, Jesus says he didn't come to condemn (judge) the world but to save it. So why does John preach about judgment and repentance? Because you cannot understand your need for a savior unless you see your need to be saved, and you can't receive Jesus as your savior unless you first repent (turn away) from your sin, so that you can turn to him to be your savior. Notice that everything John tells his listeners to do involves a change in the way they think—a turning away from their selfishness and sin (verses 10-14) and turning to Christ (verses 15-18).

### **Thursday, July 21 – Luke 3: 21 – 38**

In these verses Luke gives us some very important background information on Jesus as he begins his earthly ministry. Luke tells us how old Jesus was at the start of his ministry (verse 23), and that Jesus was baptized like all of the other people were being baptized. Baptism was symbolic of the washing away of sin, but Jesus was without sin, so why was he baptized? Jesus had no sin in himself, but he took sin on himself so that our sins could be washed away. Luke further points out that at this same time the Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus, which in a sense equipped Jesus for the task that lay ahead. Finally, the voice of God spoke and confirmed that Jesus was the one who would take away the sin of the world.

Next, Luke gives us the genealogy of Jesus. Luke's genealogy is slightly different from Matthew's. The first difference is that Luke's genealogy

traces Jesus' family tree all the way back to Adam to show that Jesus came to be the savior of all mankind. Matthew's genealogy only goes back to Abraham because his focus is on the fact that Jesus was the long expected messiah of the Jews. There is no contradiction, because Jesus was both. There are other differences as well. Some of the differences are because Matthew did not include every generation in his genealogy. It is also possible that Matthew's genealogy traces Jesus back through Joseph's side of the family tree, and Luke's family tree traces Jesus' lineage through Mary's side of the family. Notice that both genealogies go through David in fulfillment of God's promise to David that someone from his family would always sit on the throne of Israel.

### **Friday, July 22 – Luke 4: 1 – 30**

Next Luke moves on to the temptation of Jesus in verses 1-13. Satan first tempts Jesus through Jesus' physical desires (he was hungry after fasting 40 days), then Satan tempts Jesus with power as he offers Jesus the kingdoms of the world. Finally, Satan tempts Jesus with vanity (being the center of attention) as he tells Jesus to put on a show by jumping off the highest point on the temple and having the angels save his life. Jesus was tempted with the same things that tempt us: physical desires, desire for power, and vanity, but Jesus never sinned. Rather than succumbing to Satan's temptations, Jesus answered each of them with Scripture.

After being baptized and tempted, Jesus returned to his home town of Nazareth and went to the synagogue. As was the custom in Jesus' day, Jesus was invited to read from a scroll a passage from the book of Isaiah. The passage referred to what the messiah would do he when came (verses 18-19; Isaiah 61:1-2). Jesus proclaimed to all who were there that he had come to fulfill that prophecy, but rather than embracing Jesus as the Messiah, the crowd rejected him and was even ready to take Jesus and throw him off a cliff.

### **Saturday, July 23 – Luke 4: 31 – 5: 11**

Jesus moved on to the town of Capernaum where he began to perform many miracles. These miracles included driving out demons proving that Jesus had power over them, and healing the sick (including Peter's mother-in-law). Notice also Jesus' focus on the mission he had been given to preach the good news of the Kingdom of God (verse 43). As Jesus continues his ministry, he begins to call specific people to come

and learn from him and minister with him. More than likely these first disciples had already met Jesus and spent time with Jesus when he called them. Remember in Luke 4: 38-39 Jesus had healed Simon's mother-in-law; now in Luke 5: 1-11, Jesus calls Simon (Peter) to be a disciple. Notice that as Jesus displays the power he has over nature, Peter realizes that Jesus is more than just a man. Peter becomes aware that he is in the presence of God and as a result he becomes deeply aware of his own sinfulness (5: 8). That is what always happens to humans when they come into the presence of God. That's why we need Jesus and his righteousness to cover us if we ever hope to have a relationship with God.

### **Sunday, July 24 – Luke 5: 12 – 32**

Leprosy was a horrible skin disease that literally made parts of your body deteriorate. It was highly contagious and deadly. Most people would run the other way when they saw a leper coming toward them, but Jesus allows the man to come near him. As the man approaches Jesus, he acknowledges the power of Jesus and asks Jesus to heal him. After Jesus heals him, Jesus tells the man not to tell anyone other than priests, who he was required to tell so he could be pronounced clean and able to be part of society again. The reason why Jesus tells the man this becomes clear as crowds flock to Jesus to be healed.

In fact the crowds become so large around Jesus that it is hard for the next healing to even take place. In order to get a lame man into Jesus' presence, the lame man's friends have to lower him through an opening in the roof. Jesus heals the lame man by first telling him that his sins are forgiven, and then telling him that he should get up and walk. Jesus telling the man his sins are forgiven scandalizes the Pharisees, because they know only God has the power to forgive sins.

Jesus continues to scandalize the Pharisees as he calls his next disciple, Levi (Matthew). Matthew was a tax collector and that made him hated by all of Jewish society. Tax collectors were tools of the Roman government, and often times cheated the people they were collecting the taxes from. Jesus' answer to the Pharisees is very revealing of what his ministry here on earth was all about—saving sinners from their sin.