

than his own son John at this point. **A TN Grk** “from the ages,” “from eternity.” **B TN Grk** “from long ago, salvation.” **C SN** The theme of being saved from our enemies is like the release Jesus preached in Luke 4:18-19. Luke’s narrative shows that one of the enemies in view is Satan and his cohorts, with the grip they have on humanity.

D TN The words “He has done this” (referring to the raising up of the horn of salvation from David’s house) are not in the Greek text, but are supplied to allow a new sentence to be started in the translation. The Greek sentence is lengthy and complex at this point, while contemporary English uses much shorter sentences. **E SN** Mercy refers to God’s loyal love (steadfast love) by which he completes his promises. See Luke 1:50.

F TN Or “our forefathers”; **Grk** “our fathers.” This begins with the promise to Abraham (vv. 55, 73), and thus refers to many generations of ancestors. **G SN** The promises of God can be summarized as being found in the one promise (the oath that he swore) to Abraham (Gen 12:1-3).

H TN This is linked back grammatically by apposition to “covenant” in v. 72, specifying which covenant is meant. **I TN** Or “forefather”; **Grk** “father.”

J TN Again for reasons of English style, the infinitival clause “to grant us” has been translated “This oath grants” and made the beginning of a new sentence in the translation.

K TC Many significant early MSS (א B L W [0130] f^{1,13} 565 892) lack “our,” while most (A C D [K] Θ Ψ 0177 33 39) supply it. Although the addition is most likely not authentic, “our” has been included in the translation due to English stylistic requirements.

L TN This phrase in Greek is actually thrown forward to the front of the verse to give it emphasis.

M SN The phrases that we...might serve him...in holiness and righteousness from Luke 1:74-75 well summarize a basic goal for a believer in the eyes of Luke. Salvation frees us up to serve God without fear through a life full of ethical integrity. **N TN Grk** “all our days.”

O SN Now Zechariah describes his son John (you, child) through v. 77.

P TN Or “a prophet,” but since Greek nouns can be definite without the

70 as he spoke through the mouth of his holy prophets from long ago,^A
71 that we should be saved^B from our enemies,^C and from the hand of all who hate us.
72 He has done this^D to show mercy^E to our ancestors,^F and to remember his holy covenant^G—
73 the oath^H that he swore to our ancestor^I Abraham. This oath grants^J
74 that we, being rescued from the hand of our^K enemies, may serve him without fear,^L
75 in holiness and righteousness^M before him for as long as we live.^N
76 And you, child,^O will be called the prophet^P of the Most High.^Q For you will go before^R the Lord to prepare his ways,^S
77 to give his people knowledge of salvation^T through the forgiveness^U of their sins. Because of^V our God’s tender mercy^W
78 the dawn^X will break^Y upon us from on high to give light to those who sit in darkness
79 and in the shadow of death,^Z to guide our feet into the way^a of peace.”

80 And the child kept growing^b and becoming strong^c in spirit, and he was in the wilderness^d until the day he was revealed^e to Israel.

The Census and the Birth of Jesus

2 Now^f in those days a decree^g went out from Caesar^h Augustusⁱ to register^j all the empire^k for taxes. 2 This was the first registration, taken when Quirinius was governor^l

article, and since in context this is a reference to the eschatological forerunner of the Messiah (cf. John 1:17), the concept is better conveyed to the English reader by the use of the definite article “the.” **Q SN** In other words, John is a prophet of God; see 1:32 and 7:22-23, 28. **R TC** Most MSS, especially the later ones (A C D L Θ Ψ 0130 f^{1,13} 33 39 sy), have πρό προσώπου κυρίου (pro prosōpou kuriou, “before the face of the Lord”), but the translation follows the reading ἐνώπιον κυρίου (enōpion kuriou, “before the Lord”), which has earlier and better ms support (Ψ^a א B W 0177) and is thus more likely to be authentic. **S TN** This term is often translated in the singular, looking specifically to the forerunner role, but the plural suggests the many elements in that salvation.

SN On the phrase prepare his ways see Isa 40:3-5 and Luke 3:1-6. **T SN** John’s role, to give his people knowledge of salvation, is similar to that of Jesus (Luke 3:1-14; 5:31-32). **U SN** Forgiveness is another major Lukan theme (Luke 4:18; 24:47; Acts 10:37). **V TN** For reasons of style, a new sentence has been started in the translation at this point. God’s mercy is ultimately seen in the deliverance John points to, so v. 78a is placed with the reference to Jesus as the light of dawning day.

W SN God’s loyal love (steadfast love) is again the topic, reflected in the phrase tender mercy; see Luke 1:72. **X SN** The Greek term translated dawn (ἀνατολή, anatolē) can be a reference

to the morning star or to the sun. The Messiah is pictured as a saving light that shows the way. The Greek term was also used to translate the Hebrew word for “branch” or “sprout,” so some see a double entendre here with messianic overtones (see Isa 11:1-10; Jer 23:5; 33:15; Zech 3:8; 6:12).

Y TN Grk “shall visit us.” **Z SN** On the phrases who sit in darkness...and...death see Isa 9:1-2; 42:7; 49:9-10. **a TN** Or “the path.” **b TN** This verb is imperfect. **c TN** This verb is also imperfect. **d TN** Or “desert.” **e TN Grk** “until the day of his revealing.” **f TN Grk** “Now it happened that.” The introductory phrase ἐγένετο (egeneto, “it happened that”), common in Luke (69 times) and Acts (54 times), is redundant in contemporary English and has not been

translated. **g SN** This decree was a formal decree from the Roman Senate. **h TN** Or “from the emperor” (“Caesar” is a title for the Roman emperor). **i SN** Caesar Augustus refers to Octavian, who was Caesar from 27 B.C. to A.D. 14. He was known for his administrative prowess.

j TN Grk “to be registered.” The passive infinitive ἀπογραφῆσθαι (apographesthai) has been rendered as an active in the translation to improve the English style. The verb is regarded as a technical term for official registration in tax lists (BDAG 108 S.V. ἀπογράφω α). **SN** This census (a decree...to register all the empire) is one of the more disputed historical remarks in Luke. Josephus (Ant. 18.11 [18.1-2]) only mentions a census in A.D. 6, too late for this setting. Such a census would have been a massive undertaking; it could have started under one ruler and emerged under another, to whose name it became attached. This is one possibility to explain the data. Another is that Quirinius, who became governor in Syria for the later census, may have been merely an administrator for this census. See also Luke 2:2.

k TN Grk “the whole (inhabited) world,” but this was a way to refer to the Roman empire (L&N 1.83). **l TN** Or “was a minister of Syria.” This term could simply refer to an administrative role Quirinius held as opposed to being governor (Josephus, Ant. 18.4.2 [18.88]). See also Luke 2:1.

A TN Grk “And everyone.” Here καί (kai) has not been translated because of differences between Greek and English style.

B TN Or “hometown” (so CEV). **C TN** Here καί (kai) has been translated as “so” to indicate the consequential nature of the action. **D SN** On Nazareth see Luke 1:26. **E TN** Or “town.” The translation “city” is used here because of its collocation with “of David,” suggesting its importance, though not its size. **F SN** The journey from Nazareth to the city of David called Bethlehem was a journey of about 90 mi (150 km). Bethlehem was a small village located about 7 miles south-southwest of Jerusalem.

G SN Luke’s use of the term “house” probably alludes to the original promise made to David outlined in the Nathan oracle of 2 Sam 7:12-16, especially in light of earlier connections between Jesus and David made in Luke 1:32. Further, the mention of Bethlehem reminds one of the promise of Mic 5:2, namely, that a great king would emerge from Bethlehem to rule over God’s people.

H TN Or “family,” “lineage.” **I TN** The words “He went” are not in the Greek text, but have been supplied to begin a new sentence in the translation. The Greek sentence is longer and more complex than normal contemporary English usage.

J TN Traditionally, “Mary, his betrothed.” Although often rendered in contemporary English as “Mary, who was engaged to him,” this may give the modern reader a wrong impression, since Jewish marriages in this period were typically arranged marriages. The term ἐμνηστευμένη (emnēsteuēnē) may suggest that the marriage is not yet consummated, not necessarily that they are not currently married. Some MSS read “the betrothed to him wife”; others, simply “his wife.” These readings, though probably not autographic, may give the right sense.

K TN Grk “And it happened that while.” The introductory phrase ἐγένετο (egeneto, “it happened that”), common in Luke (69 times) and Acts (54 times), is redundant in contemporary English and has not been translated. Here καί (kai) has not been translated because of differences between Greek and English style. **L TN** The words “her child” are not in the Greek text, but have been supplied to clarify what was being delivered. The wording here is like Luke 1:57. **Grk** “the days for her to give birth were fulfilled.” **M SN** The strips of cloth (traditionally, “swaddling cloths”) were strips of linen that would be wrapped around the arms

of Syria. 3 Everyone^A went to his own town^B to be registered. 4 So^C Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth^D in Galilee to Judea, to the city^E of David called Bethlehem,^F because he was of the house^G and family line^H of David. 5 He went^I to be registered with Mary, who was promised in marriage to him,^J and who was expecting a child. 6 While^K they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child.^L 7 And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in strips of cloth^M and laid him in a manger,^N because there was no place for them in the inn.^O

The Shepherds’ Visit

8 Now^P there were shepherds^Q nearby^R living out in the field, keeping guard^S over their flock at night. 9 An^T angel of the Lord^U appeared to^V them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were absolutely terrified.^W 10 But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid! Listen carefully,^X for I proclaim to you good news^Y that brings great joy to all the people: 11 Today^Z your Savior is born in the city^a of David.^b He is Christ^c the Lord. 12 This^d will be a sign^e for you: You will find a baby wrapped in strips of cloth and lying in a manger.”^f 13 Suddenly^g

and legs of an infant to keep the limbs protected. **N TN** Or “a feeding trough.”

O TN The Greek word κατάλυμα is flexible, and usage in the LXX and NT refers to a variety of places for lodging (see BDAG 521 S.V.). Most likely Joseph and Mary sought lodging in the public accommodations in the city of Bethlehem (see J. Nolland, Luke [WBC], 1:105), which would have been crude shelters for people and animals. However, it has been suggested by various scholars that Joseph and Mary were staying with relatives in Bethlehem (e.g., C. S. Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament*, 194; B. Witherington, “Birth of Jesus,” *DJG*, 69-70); if that were so the term would refer to the guest room in the relatives’ house, which would have been filled beyond capacity with all the other relatives who had to journey to Bethlehem for the census.

SN There was no place for them in the inn. There is no drama in how this is told. There is no search for a variety of places to stay or a heartless innkeeper. (Such items are later, nonbiblical embellishments.) Bethlehem was not large and there was simply no other place to stay. The humble surroundings of the birth are ironic in view of the birth’s significance. **P TN** Here καί (kai) has been translated as “now” to indicate the transition to a new topic. **Q SN** Some argue that shepherds were among the culturally despised, but the evidence for this view of shepherds is late, coming from 5th century Jewish materials. December 25 as the celebrated date of Jesus’ birth arose around the time of Constantine (ca. A.D. 306-337), though it is mentioned in material from Hippolytus (A.D. 165-235). Some think that the reason for celebration on this date was that it coincided with the pagan Roman festival of Saturnalia, and Christians could celebrate their own festival at this time without fear of persecution. On the basis of the statement that the shepherds were living out in the field, keeping guard over their flock at night it is often

suggested that Jesus’ birth took place in early spring, since it was only at lambing time that shepherds stood guard over their flocks in the field. This is not absolutely certain, however.

R TN Grk “in that region.” **S TN Grk** “living in the field (see BDAG 15 S.V. ἀγρωλήτω) and guarding their flock.”

T TN Here καί (kai) has not been translated because of differences between Greek and English style. **U TN** Or “the angel of the Lord.” See the note on the word “Lord” in 1:11.

V TN Or “stood in front of.” **W TN Grk** “they feared a great fear” (a Semitic idiom which intensifies the main idea, in this case their fear).

X SN Terrified. See similar responses in Luke 1:12, 29.

Y TN Grk “I evangelize to you great joy.”

Z SN The Greek word for today (σήμερον, sēmeron) occurs eleven times in the Gospel of Luke (2:11; 4:21; 5:26; 12:28; 13:32-33; 19:5, 9; 22:34, 61; 23:43) and nine times in Acts. Its use, especially in passages such as 2:11; 4:21; 5:26; 19:5, 9, signifies the dawning of the era of messianic salvation and the fulfillment of the plan of God. Not only does it underscore the idea of present fulfillment in Jesus’ ministry, but it also indicates salvific fulfillment present in the church (cf. Acts 1:6; 3:18; D. L. Bock, *Luke* [BECNT], 1:412; I. H. Marshall, *Luke*, [NIGTC], 873).

a TN Or “town.” See the note on “city” in v. 4.

b TN This is another indication of a royal, messianic connection.

c TN Or “Messiah”; both “Christ” (Greek) and “Messiah” (Hebrew and Aramaic) mean “one who has been anointed.”

SN The term χριστός (christos) was originally an adjective (“anointed”), developing in LXX into a substantive (“an anointed one”), then developing still further into a technical generic term (“the anointed one”). In the intertestamental period it developed further into a technical term referring to the hoped-for anointed one, that is, a specific individual. In the NT the development starts there (technical-specific), is so used in the gospels, and then develops in Paul to mean virtually Jesus’ last name.

d TN Grk “And this.” Here καί (kai) has not been translated because of differences between Greek and English style.

e SN The sign functions for the shepherds like Elizabeth’s conception served for Mary in 1:36.

f TN Or “a feeding trough,” see Luke 2:7.

g TN Grk “And suddenly.” Here καί (kai) has not been translated because of differences between Greek and English style.