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AN ANALYTICAL AND ALLITERATED OUTLINE OF LUKE 1, 2 AND MATTHEW 1, 2

- **Gabriel's Revelation to Zacharias (Lk. 1:5-25)**

- A. Zacharias's spouse (Lk. 1:5-7)

1. Elisabeth is blameless (Lk. 1:5, 6): *"Righteous in God's eyes, careful to obey all of the Lord's commandments."*

Both Zacharias and Elisabeth had, like Abraham and David, been justified by faith:

- a. As seen in the life of Abraham

"And he believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness" (Gen. 15:6).

"For what does the Scripture say? 'Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness'" (Rom. 4:3).

- b. As seen in the life of David

"Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man to whom the LORD does not impute iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit" (Psa. 32:1, 2).

". . . just as David also describes the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness apart from works" (Rom. 4:6).

2. Elisabeth is barren (Lk. 1:7): She is a childless old woman.

- B. Zacharias's service (Lk. 1:8-10)—He prepares the burnt incense on the altar of incense as the people wait and pray outside.

The burning of incense in the Bible is a type of prayer:

"LORD, I cry out to You; make haste to me! Give ear to my voice when I cry out to You. Let my prayer be set before You as incense, the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice" (Psa. 141:1, 2).

"Now when He had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each having a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. Then another angel, having a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. He was given much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, ascended before God from the angel's hand" (Rev. 5:8; 8:3, 4).

- C. Zacharias's shock (Lk. 1:11-25)

1. The reason (Lk. 1:11, 12): He sees the angel Gabriel standing at the right side of the altar!

2. The revelation (Lk. 1:13-17): Gabriel tells Zacharias that Elisabeth will bear a son.
 - a. He will be called John (Lk. 1:13, 14).
 - b. He will become a Nazarite (Lk. 1:15).
 - c. He will serve as the Messiah's forerunner (Lk. 1:16, 17).
 3. The reluctance (Lk. 1:18): Zacharias finds all this hard to believe.
 4. The rebuke (Lk. 1:19, 20): Gabriel says that due to his unbelief, Zacharias will be unable to speak until the child is born!
 5. The restraint (Lk. 1:21, 22): Upon leaving the Temple, Zacharias is unable to pronounce the priestly blessing for the waiting crowd.
 6. The rejoicing (Lk. 1:23-25): The barren Elisabeth soon becomes pregnant, causing great joy in the household.
- **Gabriel's Revelation to Mary (Lk. 1:26-38)**
 - A. The salutation to Mary (Lk. 1:26-37): She receives a heavenly visit.
 1. The messenger (Lk. 1:26-28): The angel Gabriel appears to this virgin girl in Nazareth; Mary is engaged to Joseph the carpenter.
 2. The message (Lk. 1:29-33):
 - a. Gabriel's assurance (Lk. 1:29, 30): He comforts Mary, saying she has found favor with God.
 - b. Gabriel's announcement (Lk. 1:31-33): Mary will give birth to Jesus, the Messiah, whose kingdom and reign over Israel will never end!
 3. The mystery (Lk. 1:34): Being a virgin, Mary is perplexed, wondering how this can be accomplished.
 4. The method (Lk. 1:35): Gabriel tells her that the Holy Spirit will father the baby!
 5. The miracle (Lk. 1:36, 37): Mary now learns that her aged relative Elisabeth is already six months into her pregnancy!
 - B. The submission by Mary (Lk. 1:38): *"I am the Lord's servant, and I am willing to accept whatever he wants."*

Mary's prayer here was, in essence, a foreshadow of A. A. Pollard's beautiful hymn, written some eighteen centuries later:

*Have Thine own way, Lord! Have Thine own way!
 Thou art the Potter, I am the clay.
 Mold me and make me after Thy will,
 While I am waiting, yielded and still.*

*Have Thine own way, Lord! Have Thine own way!
Search me and try me, Master, today!
Whiter than snow, Lord, wash me just now,
As in Thy presence humbly I bow.*

*Have Thine own way, Lord! Have Thine own way!
Wounded and weary, help me, I pray!
Power, all power, surely is Thine!
Touch me and heal me, Savior divine.*

*Have Thine own way, Lord! Have Thine own way!
Hold o'er my being absolute sway!
Fill with Thy Spirit till all shall see
Christ only, always, living in me.*

- **The Visit Between Mary and Elisabeth (Lk. 1:39-56)**

We now hear regarding two notes of praise:

A. The praise of Elisabeth to God (Lk. 1:39-45)

1. The babe within Elisabeth (Lk. 1:39-41): Mary visits Elisabeth, and upon hearing Mary's voice, Elisabeth's child leaps within her womb, and she is filled with the Holy Spirit.
2. The blessing from Elisabeth (Lk. 1:42-45): She tells Mary what an honor it is to be visited by the mother of the Messiah!

B. The praise of Mary to God (Lk. 1:46-56)

1. The testimony (Lk. 1:46-55): Mary thanks God for six things:
 - a. His condescension (Lk. 1:46-48): God took notice of her.
 - b. His holiness (Lk. 1:49): He has done great things for her.
 - c. His mercy (Lk. 1:50): His mercy goes on from generation to generation.
 - d. His power (Lk. 1:51): He does tremendous things with His power.
 - e. His sovereignty (Lk. 1:52, 53): He humbles the proud and exalts the lowly.
 - f. His faithfulness (Lk. 1:54, 55): He has kept all His promises to Israel.
2. The time (Lk. 1:56): Mary stays with Elisabeth for three months, then returns home.

- **Gabriel's Revelation to Joseph (Mt. 1:18-25)**

A. Joseph's distress (Mt. 1:18): He is heartbroken assuming his pregnant wife-to-be has been unfaithful.

For some unrecorded reason Mary did not inform Joseph regarding the nature of the Babe within her. The most likely answer was she might have concluded he simply

would not have believed her. After all, what faith it would have taken to believe that his pregnant virgin wife to be was carrying the Son of God Himself! This would far surpass that kind of faith required to move mountains that her unborn Son would later talk about!

“So Jesus said to them, ‘Because of your unbelief, for assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, Move from here to there, and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you’” (Matt. 17:20).

B. Joseph’s decision (Mt. 1:19): Not wanting to disgrace Mary, he determines to break their engagement secretly.

C. Joseph’s dream (Mt. 1:20-25):

1. The message in the dream (Mt. 1:20-23)

a. Concerning the purity of Mary (Mt. 1:20): Joseph is reassured that Mary’s pregnancy is caused by the Holy Spirit.

b. Concerning the Person within Mary (Mt. 1:21): The Angel of the Lord tells Joseph that Mary will bear a Son and that He shall be named Jesus.

c. Concerning the prophecy about Mary (Mt. 1:22, 23): This Son, conceived without the aid of a human father, is the fulfillment of Isaiah’s prophecy (Isa. 7:14).

2. The marriage following the dream (Mt. 1:24, 25): Joseph takes Mary to be his wife.

• **Birth of John, Followed by Zacharias’s Prayer of Praise and Prophecy (Lk. 1:57-80)**

A. Zacharias, the father (Lk. 1:57-66)

1. He is seen writing (Lk.:57-63)

a. The celebration (Lk. 1:57, 58): John’s parents, neighbors, and relatives meet and rejoice at his birth.

b. The circumcision (Lk. 1:59): This is performed on the eighth day.

c. The confusion (Lk. 1:60, 61): People are puzzled that the baby will be named John. Does the mute Zacharias agree with this?

d. The confirmation (Lk. 1:62, 63): Calling for a tablet, Zacharias writes, *“His name is John!”*

2. He is seen worshiping (Lk. 1:64-66): Zacharias is suddenly able to speak again and begins praising God!

B. Zacharias, the foreteller (Lk. 1:67-80)

1. His prophecy concerning his Savior (Lk. 1:67-75)

a. The birth of Jesus assures the fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant (Lk. 1:67-72).

b. The birth of Jesus assures the fulfillment of the Abrahamic Covenant (Lk. 1:73-75).

These two covenants had to do with (1) seed, (2) soil, and (3) a sovereign King!

The Abrahamic Covenant (Gen. 12:2, 3, 7; 13:14-17; 15:5, 18; 17:8)

In essence it said:

- That God would make Abraham the founder of a great nation
- That God would someday give Palestine forever to Abraham's seed. This was unconditional.

The Davidic Covenant (1 Chron. 13:5; 2 Sam. 7:12-16; 23:5)

This promised a child born to Mary, a descendant of David, who would rule over that seed upon that soil (Lk. 1:30-33).

2. His prophecy concerning his son (Lk. 1:76-80)
 - a. He will prepare the way of the Lord (Lk. 1:76).
 - b. He will proclaim the words of the Lord (Lk. 1:77-80).

- **Birth of Jesus (Lk. 2:1-20)**

A. Jehovah's Son is born (Lk. 2:1-7)

1. The decree by Caesar (Lk. 2:1-5)
 - a. The law (Lk. 2:1-3): All are required to return to their ancestral homes because of a census.
 - b. The location (Lk. 2:4, 5): Joseph and Mary must travel to Bethlehem.
2. The delivery by Mary (Lk. 2:6, 7): While in Bethlehem, Mary gives birth to Jesus.

B. Judah's shepherds are briefed (Lk. 2:8-21)

1. They watch (Lk. 2:8): They are in the fields guarding their sheep.
2. The wonder (Lk. 2:9-14): The shepherds are confused and terrified when the horizon is suddenly filled with God's glory!
 - a. The reassurance by the angel of the Lord (Lk. 2:9, 10): *"Don't be afraid! I bring you good news of great joy for everyone!"*
 - b. The revelation by the angel of the Lord (Lk. 2:11, 12)
 - (1) In regard to God's Son (Lk. 2:11): The Messiah has just been born in Bethlehem.
 - (2) In regard to God's sign (Lk. 2:12): They will find Him wrapped in strips of cloth, lying in a manger.
 - c. The rejoicing by the angels of the Lord (Lk. 2:13, 14): *"Glory to God in the highest heaven and peace on earth to all whom God favors."*
3. They worship (Lk. 2:15, 16): The shepherds kneel before the Babe in the manger.

This marks but the first in many New Testament occasions when both individuals and angels would kneel before Him. To list but a few:

a. Simon Peter

“When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus’ knees, saying, ‘Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!’” (Lk. 5:8).

b. Stephen

“And they stoned Stephen as he was calling on God and saying, ‘Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.’ Then he knelt down and cried out with a loud voice, ‘Lord, do not charge them with this sin.’ And when he had said this, he fell asleep” (Acts 7:59, 60).

c. All in heaven

“Now when He had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each having a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. And they sang a new song, saying: ‘You are worthy to take the scroll, and to open its seals; for You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and have made us kings and priests to our God; and we shall reign on the earth.’ Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne, the living creatures, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice: Worthy is the Lamb who was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom, and strength and honor and glory and blessing!” (Rev. 5:8-12).

d. All who ever lived on earth, both saved and lost

“For it is written: ‘As I live, says the LORD, every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall confess to God’” (Rom. 14:11).

“Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth” (Phil. 2:9, 10).

“And every creature which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, I heard saying: ‘Blessing and honor and glory and power be to Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, forever and ever!’ Then the four living creatures said, ‘Amen!’ And the twenty-four elders fell down and worshiped Him who lives forever and ever” (Rev. 5:13, 14).

4. They witness (Lk. 2:17-21)

a. The confirming (Lk. 2:17, 18, 20): When they leave, they tell everyone what has happened.

b. The contemplating (Lk. 2:19): Mary treasures these things in her heart and thinks about them.

- c. The circumcising (Lk. 2:21): On the eighth day, the Babe is circumcised and named Jesus, in accordance with what the angel said before the Baby was even conceived.

Jesus is by far the most common name for the Savior, referred to over 700 times in the New Testament.

It opens up the pages of the New Testament with this name (Matt. 1:1) and closes it likewise (Rev. 22:21). It is the name associated with His first coming (Matt. 1:21) and with His second coming (Acts 1:11).

The book of Hebrews tells us this name (1) has always been, (2) is today, and (3) forever will be . . . Jesus!

“Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever” (Heb. 13:8).

Thus, at His departure the disciples were assured that it would be “. . . *this same Jesus who was taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven*” (Acts 1:11).

Perhaps the little gospel chorus says it best:

*Jesus is the sweetest **name** I know,
And He’s just the **same** as His lovely name,
And that’s the reason why I love Him so;
For Jesus is the sweetest name I know.*

- **Dedication of Jesus in the Jerusalem Temple (Lk. 2:22-38)**

Upon their arrival He was greeted and praised by two individuals:

A. The testimony of Simeon (Lk. 2:25-35):

1. His reassurance (Lk. 2:25, 26): This devout man has been promised by the Holy Spirit that he would live to see the Messiah.
2. His recognition (Lk. 2:27-32): The Holy Spirit tells him that Mary’s Baby is the Messiah.
3. His revelation (Lk. 2:33-35):
 - a. Concerning the Messiah (Lk. 2:33-34): He will cause the rising and falling of many in Israel.
 - b. Concerning the mother (Lk. 2:35): He says a sword will someday pierce the soul of Mary.

B. The testimony of Anna (Lk. 2:36-38): This aged and godly widow joins Simeon in praising God for Israel’s Messiah.

- **Visit by the Wise Men (Mt. 2:1-12)**

A. The wise men’s journey (Mt. 2:1-8): They travel to Jerusalem.

1. Their public meeting with King Herod (Mt. 2:1-6)
 - a. The magi's request (Mt. 2:1, 2): *"Where is the newborn King of the Jews?"*
 - b. The monarch's reaction (Mt. 2:3, 4)
 - (1) His concern (Mt. 2:3): Herod is greatly troubled.
 - (2) His command (Mt. 2:4): Herod demands that the Jewish priests tell him where the Messiah will be born.
 - c. The ministers' reply (Mt. 2:5, 6)
 - (1) The place (Mt. 2:5): In Bethlehem.
 - (2) The prophecy (Mt. 2:6): This was the prediction of Micah the prophet (Mic. 5:2).
2. Their private meeting with King Herod (Mt. 2:7, 8)
 - a. Herod's demand (Mt. 2:7): He asks them when they first saw the star.
 - b. Herod's deception (Mt. 2:8): He says, *"When you find the child, tell me, so that I can worship him, too."*

B. The wise men's joy (Mt. 2:9-12): They rejoice when they find the Child.

1. The witness of the star (Mt. 2:9): It leads them to the very house where Jesus is living.
2. The worship by the wise men (Mt. 2:10, 11): They present Him with gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.
3. The warning from the Lord (Mt. 2:12): They are told to bypass Herod en route to their home.

• **Flight Into Egypt and Return to Nazareth (Mt. 2:13-23)**

A. The reasons for the trip (Mt. 2:13-15)

1. To flee the wrath of Herod (Mt. 2:13, 14): Joseph is warned by God in a dream that Herod will try to kill Jesus.
2. To fulfill the words of Hosea (Mt. 2:15): This Old Testament prophet foretold the trip to Egypt (Hos. 11:1).

Two cruel monarchs seem to be in mind as referred to in these passages.

○ The two passages

- (1) *"Thus says the LORD: 'A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation and bitter weeping, Rachel weeping for her children, refusing to be comforted for her children, because they are no more'"* (Jer. 31:15).
- (2) *"Then was fulfilled what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying: 'A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation, weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, refusing to be comforted, because they are no more'"* (Matt. 2:17, 18).

- The two cruel monarchs

Jeremiah refers to the Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar.

Matthew refers to the Roman King Herod.

- The two events

(1) *Jeremiah* tells of a tragic event occurring at Ramah, a small settlement just southwest of Jerusalem. This seemed to be the place where Nebuchadnezzar killed many old people and small children who were unable to make the difficult journey to Babylon following his destruction of Jerusalem in 586 B.C. The name Rachel may stand for all those Israelite mothers who watched their children being killed.

(2) *Matthew* then described the second murderous event.

B. The retaliation during the trip (Mt. 2:16-18)

1. The purge of Herod (Mt. 2:16): He kills all the male babies in Bethlehem in an attempt to eliminate Jesus.
2. The prophecy of Jeremiah (Mt. 2:17, 18): This Old Testament prophet predicted the Bethlehem massacre (Jer. 31:15).

C. The return from the trip (Mt. 2:19-23): Joseph receives two more dreams.

1. First dream (Mt. 2:19-21): Joseph is told that Herod is now dead and that he should depart from Egypt with his family.
2. Second dream (. 2:22, 23): Joseph is told that he should dwell in Nazareth.