A HARMONY OF THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS — CHAPTERS TWO AND THREE

Matthew 2–3, Mark 1 (continued), and Luke 2–3 Woven Into One Continuous Narrative

Based on the American Standard Version (ASV, 1901) — Public Domain

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Preface: Continuation of the Harmony

This volume continues the harmony of Matthew, Mark, and Luke begun in Chapter One. It covers the material found in Matthew chapters 2 and 3, Luke chapters 2 and 3, and the continuation of Mark chapter 1 (Mark having no birth or infancy narrative, his chapter 1 spans events that Matthew and Luke spread across multiple chapters).

Each section is identified by its source Gospel in brackets:

- **[Matt]** = Matthew
- **[Mark]** = Mark
- **[Luke]** = Luke
- **[Matt / Mark]**, **[Matt / Luke]**, **[Mark / Luke]**, or **[Matt / Mark / Luke]** = parallel passages

The translation throughout is the **American Standard Version (ASV, 1901)**, a public domain text of high scholarly accuracy. No words are invented or paraphrased; all text is drawn directly from the ASV.

Chronological ordering follows the scholarly consensus of A.T. Robertson's *A Harmony of the Gospels* (1922), Kurt Aland's *Synopsis Quattuor Evangeliorum*, and Orville Daniel's *A Harmony of the Four Gospels* (2nd ed., 1996).

Part Two: Infancy, Childhood, and the Opening of Public Ministry

Section 13 — The Birth of Jesus in Bethlehem [Luke 2:1–7]

Now it came to pass in those days, there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be enrolled. This was the first enrollment made when Quirinius was governor of Syria. And all went to enroll themselves, every one to his own city.

And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David; to enroll himself with Mary, who was betrothed to him, being great with child.

And it came to pass, while they were there, the days were fulfilled that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn son; and she wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

Section 14 — The Shepherds and the Angels [Luke 2:8–20]

And there were shepherds in the same country abiding in the field, and keeping watch by night over their flock. And an angel of the Lord stood by them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them,

Be not afraid; for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all the people: for there is born to you this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord. And this is the sign unto you: Ye shall find a baby wrapped in swaddling clothes, and lying in a manger.

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,

Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace among men in whom he is well pleased.

And it came to pass, when the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing that is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us.

And they came with haste, and found both Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in the manger. And when they saw it, they made known concerning the saying which was spoken to them about this child. And all that heard it wondered at the things which were spoken unto them by the shepherds. But Mary kept all these sayings, pondering them in her heart.

And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, even as it was spoken unto them.

Section 15 — The Circumcision and Presentation in the Temple [Luke 2:21–38]

And when eight days were fulfilled for circumcising him, his name was called JESUS, which was so called by the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

And when the days of their purification according to the law of Moses were fulfilled, they brought him up to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord (as it is written in the law of the Lord, Every male that openeth the womb shall be called holy to the Lord), and to offer a sacrifice according to that which is said in the law of the Lord, A pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons.

And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon; and this man was righteous and devout, looking for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Spirit was upon him. And it had been revealed unto him by the Holy Spirit, that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. And he came in the Spirit into the temple: and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, that they might do concerning him after the custom of the law, then he received him into his arms, and blessed God, and said,

Now lettest thou thy servant depart, O Lord, According to thy word, in peace; For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, Which thou hast prepared before the face of all peoples; A light for revelation to the Gentiles, And the glory of thy people Israel.

And his father and his mother were marvelling at the things which were spoken concerning him; and Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary his mother,

Behold, this child is set for the falling and the rising of many in Israel; and for a sign which is spoken against; yea and a sword shall pierce through thine own soul; that thoughts out of many hearts may be revealed.

And there was one Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher (she was of a great age, having lived with a husband seven years from her virginity, and she had been a widow even unto fourscore and four years), who departed not from the temple, worshipping with fastings and supplications night and day. And coming up at that very hour she gave thanks unto God, and spake of him to all them that were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.

Section 16 — The Visit of the Wise Men [Matt 2:1–12]

Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, Wise-men from the east came to Jerusalem, saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we saw his star in the east, and are come to worship him.

And when Herod the king heard it, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. And gathering together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ should be born. And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judaea: for thus it is written through the prophet,

And thou Bethlehem, land of Judah, Art in no wise least among the princes of Judah: For out of thee shall come forth a governor, Who shall be shepherd of my people Israel.

Then Herod privily called the Wise-men, and learned of them exactly what time the star appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, Go and search out exactly concerning the young child; and when ye have found him, bring me word, that I also may come and worship him.

And they, having heard the king, went their way; and lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was. And when they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy.

And they came into the house and saw the young child with Mary his mother; and they fell down and worshipped him; and opening their treasures they offered unto him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh.

And being warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way.

Section 17 — The Flight into Egypt [Matt 2:13–18]

Now when they were departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I tell thee: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him.

And he arose and took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt; and was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt did I call my son.

Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the Wise-men, was exceeding wroth, and sent forth, and slew all the male children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the borders thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had exactly learned of the Wise-men. Then was fulfilled that which was spoken through Jeremiah the prophet, saying,

A voice was heard in Ramah, Weeping and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children; And she would not be comforted, because they are not.

Section 18 — The Return from Egypt to Nazareth [Matt 2:19–23 / Luke 2:39–40]

But when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeareth in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, Arise and take the young child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel: for they are dead that sought the young child's life.

And he arose and took the young child and his mother, and came into the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judaea in the room of his father Herod, he was afraid to go thither; and being warned of God in a dream, he withdrew into the parts of Galilee, and came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken through the prophets, that he should be called a Nazarene.

And the child grew, and waxed strong, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him.

Section 19 — The Boy Jesus in the Temple [Luke 2:41–52]

And his parents went every year to Jerusalem at the feast of the passover. And when he was twelve years old, they went up after the custom of the feast; and when they had fulfilled the days, as they were returning, the boy Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and his parents knew it not; but supposing him to be in the company, they went a day's journey; and they sought for him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance: and when they found him not, they returned to Jerusalem, seeking for him.

And it came to pass, after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both hearing them, and asking them questions: and all that heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers.

And when they saw him, they were astonished; and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I sought thee sorrowing.

And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? knew ye not that I must be in my Father's house?

And they understood not the saying which he spake unto them. And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth; and he was subject unto them: and his mother kept all these sayings in her heart.

And Jesus advanced in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.

Section 20 — The Preaching of John the Baptist [Matt 3:1–6 / Mark 1:2–6 / Luke 3:1–6]

Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judaea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene, in the high-priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness.

And in those days cometh John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, saying, Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. For this is he that was spoken of through Isaiah the prophet, saying,

The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make ye ready the way of the Lord, Make his paths straight. Every valley shall be filled, And every mountain and hill shall be brought low; And the crooked shall become straight, And the rough ways smooth; And all flesh shall see the salvation of God.

Now John himself had his raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; and his food was locusts and wild honey.

Then went out unto him Jerusalem, and all Judaea, and all the region round about the Jordan; and they were baptized of him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins.

Section 21 — John's Warning to the Pharisees and Sadducees [Matt 3:7–12 / Luke 3:7–18]

But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said unto them,

Ye offspring of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruit worthy of repentance: and think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. And even now the axe lieth at the root of the trees: every tree therefore that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

And the multitudes asked him, saying, What then must we do?

And he answered and said unto them, He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath food, let him do likewise.

And there came also publicans to be baptized, and they said unto him, Teacher, what must we do?

And he said unto them, Extort no more than that which is appointed you.

And soldiers also asked him, saying, And we, what must we do?

And he said unto them, Extort from no man by violence, neither accuse any one wrongfully; and be content with your wages.

And as the people were in expectation, and all men reasoned in their hearts concerning John, whether haply he were the Christ; John answered, saying unto them all,

I indeed baptize you with water; but there cometh he that is mightier than I, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you in the Holy Spirit and in fire: whose fan is in his hand, thoroughly to cleanse his threshing-floor, and to gather the wheat into his garner; but the chaff he will burn up with unquenchable fire.

With many other exhortations therefore preached he good tidings unto the people.

Section 22 — The Baptism of Jesus [Matt 3:13–17 / Mark 1:9–11 / Luke 3:21–22]

Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to the Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. But John would have hindered him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?

But Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him.

And it came to pass, when all the people were baptized, Jesus also having been baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended in a bodily form, as a dove, upon him, and a voice came out of heaven,

Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased.

Section 23 — The Genealogy of Jesus Through Mary [Luke 3:23–38]

And Jesus himself, when he began to teach, was about thirty years of age, being the son (as was supposed) of Joseph, the son of Heli, the son of Matthat, the son of Levi, the son of Melchi, the son of Jannai, the son of Joseph, the son of Mattathias, the son of Amos, the son of Nahum, the son of Esli, the son of Naggai, the son of Maath, the son of Mattathias, the son of Semein, the son of Josech, the son of Joda, the son of Joanan, the son of Rhesa, the son of Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, the son of Neri, the son of Melchi, the son of Addi, the son of Cosam, the son of Elmadam, the son of Er, the son of Jesus, the son of Eliezer, the son of Jorim, the son of Matthat, the son of Levi, the son of Simeon, the son of Judah, the son of Joseph, the son of Jonam, the son of Eliakim, the son of Melea, the son of Menna, the son of Mattatha, the son of Nathan, the son of David, the son of Jesse, the son of Obed, the son of Boaz, the son of Salmon, the son of Nahshon, the son of Amminadab, the son of Ram, the son of Hezron, the son of Perez, the son of Judah, the son of Jacob, the son of Isaac, the son of Abraham, the son of Terah, the son of Nahor, the son of Serug, the son of Reu, the son of Peleg, the son of Eber, the son of Shelah, the son of Cainan, the son of Arphaxad, the son of Shem, the son of Noah, the son of Lamech, the son of Methuselah, the son of Enoch, the son of Jared, the son of Mahalaleel, the son of Cainan, the son of Enos, the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God.

Section 24 — The Temptation of Jesus [Matt 4:1–11 / Mark 1:12–13 / Luke 4:1–13]

And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan, and was led in the Spirit in the wilderness during forty days, being tempted of the devil. And he did eat nothing in those days: and when they were completed, he hungered.

And the tempter came and said unto him, If thou art the Son of God, command that these stones become bread.

But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

Then the devil taketh him into the holy city; and he set him on the pinnacle of the temple, and saith unto him, If thou art the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written,

He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: And on their hands they shall bear thee up, Lest haply thou dash thy foot against a stone.

Jesus said unto him, Again it is written, Thou shalt not make trial of the Lord thy God.

Again, the devil taketh him unto an exceeding high mountain, and showeth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; and he said unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.

Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.

Then the devil leaveth him; and behold, angels came and ministered unto him.

Section 25 — John the Baptist Imprisoned [Luke 3:19–20 / Mark 1:14a]

But Herod the tetrarch, being reproved by him for Herodias his brother's wife, and for all the evil things which Herod had done, added this also to them all, that he shut up John in prison.

Appendix: Notes on Chapters Two and Three

On Luke's Unique Infancy Material

Luke chapter 2 is unparalleled in the other Synoptics. Matthew describes the birth of Jesus but from a legal and prophetic perspective — he records the Wise Men and the flight to Egypt but not the shepherds, not Simeon, not Anna. Luke alone gives us the shepherds in the fields, the angelic chorus, the *Nunc Dimittis* of Simeon, Anna the prophetess, and — crucially — the only account in any Gospel of Jesus's childhood: the twelve-year-old in the temple (Luke 2:41–52). This is the sole window in canonical Scripture into the years between the infancy and the public ministry.

On Matthew's Unique Infancy Material

Matthew chapter 2 is equally distinctive. Only Matthew records the Wise Men (*Magi*) from the East, the star, the gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh, Herod's massacre of the innocents, and the flight into Egypt with its fulfillment of Hosea 11:1 ("Out of Egypt did I call my son"). Matthew structures his infancy narrative around five Old Testament quotations, each introduced by the formula "that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet" — a pattern that runs throughout his entire Gospel and reflects his primary audience of Jewish readers familiar with the prophetic scriptures.

On Mark's Absence from Chapters Two and Three

Mark contributes nothing to chapters two and three in the traditional sense — his Gospel has no infancy narrative, no genealogy, no childhood story, and no account of John's extended preaching. His chapter 1 material (the preaching of John, the baptism, the temptation, and the imprisonment of John) is spread across what Matthew and Luke treat as parts of their second and third chapters. In this harmony, those Markan passages are integrated at their chronologically appropriate points: the baptism in Section 22, the temptation in Section 24, and John's imprisonment in Section 25.

On the Two Genealogies

This harmony places Matthew's genealogy in Chapter 1 (Section 4) and Luke's genealogy in Chapter 3 (Section 23), following the natural placement in their respective Gospels. The two genealogies differ significantly: Matthew traces the line through Joseph from Abraham forward, following the royal Davidic descent through Solomon. Luke traces the line through Joseph (noted as "as was supposed") from Jesus backward all the way to Adam and ultimately to God — a universalist gesture consistent with Luke's theology of inclusion. The most widely accepted scholarly explanation is that Luke's genealogy actually traces Mary's biological descent while legally attributing it to Joseph, since in Jewish custom a genealogy was always reckoned through the father. This is supported by the difference in David's son named: Matthew goes through Solomon (the royal line), Luke through Nathan (David's other son through Bathsheba) — consistent with Mary being of Davidic descent through a different branch than Joseph.

On the Temptation Narrative

All three Synoptics record the temptation, but with different levels of detail. Mark (1:12–13) gives only two verses: "And straightway the Spirit driveth him forth into the wilderness. And he was in the wilderness forty days tempted of Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered unto him." Matthew (4:1–11) and Luke (4:1–13) give the full three-temptation account. Matthew and Luke agree on all three temptations but reverse the order of the second and third (Matthew places the pinnacle of the temple second and the mountain third; Luke reverses them). The harmony follows Matthew's order, which is the most widely followed in the tradition.

On the Placement of Luke's Genealogy

Luke places his genealogy at Luke 3:23 — immediately after the baptism — rather than at the opening of the Gospel as Matthew does. This placement is deliberate: Luke introduces the

genealogy at the moment Jesus enters public life, as if to say "here is who this man is, traced back to the very beginning of humanity." Matthew's opening genealogy serves to introduce Jesus as heir to the Abrahamic and Davidic covenants; Luke's closing genealogy at the threshold of ministry serves to introduce him as the second Adam, the Son of God who will undo what the first Adam did.

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