



Two Groups of Seven Contrasted Luke 2:41-3:2

Those great in the world may be of no account in God's sight. The living God, in wondrous ways, honors those who honor Him, but He will not think highly of those who despise Him: "for them that honor Me I will honor, and they that despise Me shall be lightly esteemed" (1 Sam. 2:30). Those who are famous in the history books of the world are often absent from God's hall of fame. Many who are unknown to the world are known and loved by God.

As August Van Ryn points out, there are two series of seven characters mentioned by name in the first three chapters of Luke. Note the unlikely "stars" of the nativity: Zacharias, Elizabeth, Mary, Joseph, Simeon, Anna, John the Baptist. These seven represent the faithful ones among the people of God. Even though the world took little notice of them, they were very precious to God, and He appeared to them as "Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us" (Matt. 1:23).

Tiberias Caesar, Pilate, Herod, Philip, Lysanias, Annas, Caiaphas—these names are listed in Luke 3:1-2. With these seven we see the whole world in its might and glory: the Roman Emperor and the empire over which he ruled; the Roman governor and all Judea, Herod and his licentious court; Annas and Caiaphas and with them the apostate nation that would soon crucify its Lord. The world filled its books with the history, exploits, and achievements of these people, but God in these early chapters in Luke gives them just one and one-half verses, while the other seven are found in 152 verses.

The first seven are the stars of the nativity story because of their relationship to His beloved Son. The second seven are all but ignored, because whoever does not know and love Christ is of no account in God's sight.

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