

## COMMENTARY

### Chapter 1:

- vs. 5 Zechariah and Elizabeth were both from the tribe of Levi. This tribe of Israel had been chosen by God in the days of Moses, to be the ones who would be the priests among the Jewish people. Aaron was the first High Priest and Elizabeth was one of his descendants. Zechariah was of the descendants of Abijah and is from that particular division of Levi.
- vs. 8,9 Those of the tribe of Levi who were qualified to serve as priests took turns and would serve for one week, two times each year. At this time Zechariah was chosen to offer the incense (a special privilege as one could only offer it once in their life) and would have helped in the lighting of the candlestick, and would have partook of the shewbread. (For more information on these see Ex. 25:30; Leviticus 24:1-9).
- vs. 11 (For the floor plan of the temple see chart # 1)
- vs. 15 This is a part of the Jewish Nazirite vow (Numbers 6:1-21) which was taken to set oneself apart to the service of God.
- vs. 17 Elijah was a prophet in Old Testament times who tried to turn Israel back to God ( I Kings 18:16-46).
- vs. 25 Among the Jews; the number of children (especially boys) was a type of social status. Those who were childless were usually looked down upon by others.
- vs. 27 Mary and Joseph were pledged to be married. This was more permanent than our engagements today. The betrothal could only be broken by a divorce and any infidelity was considered the same as adultery.
- vs. 32-33 Mary is promised that her son will fulfill the prophecy of the Messiah (Isaiah 9:7). David was King during Israel's greatest years. The Jews felt that the Messiah would restore Israel to a world power. The Samaritans felt he would be a great teacher. When Jesus came, He was rejected by many Jews because He did not at that time fulfill their preconceived notions.
- vs. 59,60 The Jews named their children after other family members and relatives. Elizabeth and Zechariah were breaking tradition and people were shocked.



## COMMENTARY

### Chapter 2

- vs. 1,2      Although the events of Jesus' life take place mainly in Palestine we see the Romans had an influence. They were the rulers of that area; much to the chagrin of the Jews. The Jews felt that the Romans were "heathen" and the Romans despised the Jews because of their "better than you" attitude and their wealth. Even so, God used the Romans to accomplish the prophecy of His Son being born in Bethlehem (see Chart # 3 for the prophecy and Chart # 4 for the location of Bethlehem).
- vs. 8      These flocks were the ones that would eventually be offered as sacrifices in the temple. Jewish tradition said that these shepherds of the temple flock would be the first to hear of the Messiah's birth.
- vs. 21      The practice of circumcision was instituted among the Jews by God (Genesis 17:9-14). This was a token of the covenant (agreement) between God and His people.
- vs. 22      The purification that is spoken of would be of Mary according to the Jewish custom (Leviticus 12:1-8).
- vs. 23      Jesus was presented to the Lord according to the Jewish practice as God had commanded the Israelites (Exodus 13:2,11-16).
- vs. 30-32      Simeon realized that Jesus would fulfill the prophecy that is found in Isaiah 52:10. Even though the prophets had spoken of Gentiles being accepted by God the Jews were reluctant to accept it.
- vs. 41      The Passover was one of the three feasts that Jewish families were to observe (if possible they were to go to Jerusalem). This feast of Passover was instituted by God for the Hebrews (Exodus 12).

## STUDY GUIDE

### Chapter 1

1. What had many undertaken? Why was Luke going to write?
2. Tell what you can about Zechariah and Elizabeth prior to their being told of the birth of their child.
3. What was John going to do according to the angel?
4. Because of Zechariah's unbelief, what sign was given to convince him?
5. Who was related to Elizabeth and what was special about the relative?
6. What sign was given to Elizabeth at Mary's appearance and how did she respond?
7. List the reasons Mary praised God.
8. What sign was given to the neighbors to show that John was special?
9. What was John going to do according to Zechariah's prophecy?

### BONUS:

1. List what you can that shows these people to be Jewish and that they served God.
2. What signs were given to show that John and Jesus were to be special men from God?
3. How can this chapter help Christians today?



## STUDY GUIDE

### Chapter 2

1. Who issued a decree and what was it?
2. Where was Joseph living and where did he have to go?
3. Why was Jesus placed in a manger?
4. What was the good news the angel had for the shepherds and what was to be a sign to them?
5. How did the shepherds respond?
6. What Jewish practices did Joseph and Mary keep in regards to their son, Jesus?
7. If Joseph and Mary had been wealthy what would they have taken for a sacrifice (see Leviticus 12:8)?
8. What was Simeon's response when holding Jesus?
9. After the family returns to Nazareth, when and where do we hear of Jesus next?
10. How did Jesus grow?

### Bonus:

1. Give example how God can use unbelievers to accomplish His will.
2. How are the shepherd, Simeon, and Anna examples for us today?
3. How are Joseph and Mary examples to parents today?