

- Song 133 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD

- **“Young Ones—Are You Growing Spiritually?”:** (10 min.)
 Lu 2:41, 42—Jesus attended the annual Passover festival with his parents (*nwtsty* study note on Lu 2:41)
 Lu 2:46, 47—Jesus listened to the religious leaders and asked them questions (*nwtsty* study notes)
 Lu 2:51, 52—Jesus “continued subject” to his parents and gained favor with God and men (*nwtsty* study note)
- **Digging for Spiritual Gems:** (8 min.)
 Lu 2:14—What is the meaning of this verse? (*nwtsty* study notes)

Lu 3:23—Who was Joseph’s father? (*wp16.3 9 ¶1-3*)

What has this week’s Bible reading taught you about Jehovah?

What other spiritual gems have you discovered in this week’s Bible reading?

- **Bible Reading:** (4 min. or less) Lu 2:1-20

APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

- **Initial Call:** (2 min. or less) Begin with the sample conversation. Then respond to an objection that is common in your territory.
- **Second Return Visit Video:** (5 min.) Play and discuss the video.
- **Talk:** (6 min. or less) *w14 2/15 26-27*—Theme: What Basis Did First-Century Jews Have for Being “in Expectation” of the Messiah?

LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

- Song 134
- **“Parents, Give Your Children the Best Chance to Succeed”:** (15 min.) Discussion. Play the video *They Took Every Opportunity* (video category INTERVIEWS AND EXPERIENCES).
- **Congregation Bible Study:** (30 min.) *jy* chap. 25
- Review Followed by Preview of Next Week (3 min.)
- Song 17 and Prayer

LUKE 2-3 | Young Ones—Are You Growing Spiritually?

From childhood on, Jesus set a fine example in seeking spiritual interests and in showing respect to his parents.

 Young ones, how can you imitate Jesus in each of the following ways?



2:41, 42

Participating in spiritual activities:



2:46, 47

Growing in spiritual understanding:



2:51, 52

Respecting your parents:

133 *Worship Jehovah During Youth* (Ecclesiastes 12:1)

1. Precious to God, we are daughters and sons,
 Giving our strength as his faithful young ones.
Loving attention to us he will give,
 Blessing our days for as long as we live.
2. Honoring parents who care for our lives
 Helps us express what we're feeling inside.
Then we find favor with God and with men,
 Drawing us close to Jehovah, our Friend.
3. May we remember our God in our youth,
 Growing each day in our love of the truth.
Giving our best to our God, we will bring
 Joy to the heart of Jehovah, our King.

erance.^a **69** And he has raised up a horn of salvation*^b for us in the house of David his servant,^c **70** just as he has spoken through the mouth of his holy prophets from of old,^d **71** of a salvation from our enemies and from the hand of all those hating us;^e **72** to show mercy in connection with our forefathers and to call to mind his holy covenant,^f **73** the oath that he swore to Abraham our forefather,^g **74** to grant us, after we have been rescued from the hands of enemies, the privilege of fearlessly rendering sacred service to him **75** with loyalty and righteousness before him all our days. **76** But as for you, young child, you will be called a prophet of the Most High, for you will go ahead of Jehovah* to prepare his ways,^h **77** to give knowledge of salvation to his people by forgiveness of their sins,ⁱ **78** because of the tender compassion of our God. With this compassion a day-break will visit us from on high, **79** to give light to those sitting in darkness and death's shadow^j and to guide our feet in the way of peace."

80 And the young child grew up and became strong in spirit, and he continued in the desert until the day he showed himself openly to Israel.

2 Now in those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus for all the inhabited earth to be registered. **2** (This first registration took place when Qui-rin'i-us was governor of Syria.) **3** And all the people went to be registered, each one to his own city. **4** Of course, Joseph^k also went up from Gal-i-lee, from the city of Naz'a-reth, into Ju-de'a, to David's city, which is called Beth'le-hem,^l be-

1:69 *Or "a powerful savior." See Glossary, "Horn."

cause of his being a member of the house and family of David.

5 He went to get registered with Mary, who had been given him in marriage as promised^a and who was soon to give birth.^b

6 While they were there, the time came for her to give birth.

7 And she gave birth to her son, the firstborn,^c and she wrapped him in strips of cloth and laid him in a manger,^d because there was no room for them in the lodging place.

8 There were also in the same region shepherds living out of doors and keeping watch in the night over their flocks.

9 Suddenly Jehovah's* angel stood before them, and Jehovah's* glory gleamed around them, and they became very fearful. **10** But the angel said to them: "Do not be afraid, for look! I am declaring to you good news of a great joy that all the people will have.

11 For today there was born to you in David's city^e a savior,^f who is Christ the Lord.^g

12 And this is a sign for you: You will find an infant wrapped in strips of cloth and lying in a manger."

13 Suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly army,^h praising God and saying:

14 "Glory in the heights above to God, and on earth peace among men of goodwill."*

15 So when the angels had departed from them into heaven, the shepherds began saying to one another:

"Let us by all means go over to Beth-le-hem and see what has taken place, which Jehovah* has made known to us."

16 And they went quickly and found Mary as well as Joseph, and the infant lying in the manger.

17 When they saw this, they made known the message that they had been

2:9, 15, 22-24, 26 *See App. A5. 2:14

*Or "people whom he approves."

LUKE 2:5-31

told concerning this young child. **18** And all who heard were astonished at what the shepherds told them, **19** but Mary began to preserve all these sayings, drawing conclusions in her heart.^a **20** Then the shepherds went back, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, just as it had been told to them.

21 After eight days, when it was time to circumcise him,^b he was named Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived.^c

22 Also, when the time came for purifying them according to the Law of Moses,^d they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to Jehovah,* **23** just as it is written in Jehovah's* Law: "Every firstborn male[#] must be called holy to Jehovah."*^e

24 And they offered a sacrifice according to what is said in the Law of Jehovah:* "a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons."^f

25 And look! there was a man in Jerusalem named Sim'e-on, and this man was righteous and devout, waiting for Israel's consolation,^g and holy spirit was upon him. **26** Furthermore, it had been divinely revealed to him by the holy spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Christ of Jehovah.*

27 Under the power of the spirit, he now came into the temple, and as the parents brought the young child Jesus in to do for him according to the customary practice of the Law,^h **28** he took the child into his arms and praised God and said: **29** "Now, Sovereign Lord, you are letting your slave go in peaceⁱ according to your declaration, **30** because my eyes have seen your means of salvation^j **31** that you

2:23 [#]Lit., "Every male opening the womb."

LUKE 2:32-3:1

have prepared in the sight of all the peoples,^a **32** a light^b for removing the veil from the nations^c and a glory of your people Israel.” **33** And the child’s father and mother continued wondering at the things being spoken about him. **34** Also, Sim’e-on blessed them and said to Mary, the child’s mother: “Look! This child is appointed for the falling^d and the rising again of many in Israel^e and for a sign to be spoken against^f **35** (yes, a long sword will be run through you*),^g in order that the reasonings of many hearts may be revealed.”

36 Now there was a prophetess, Anna the daughter of Phan’u-el, of Ash’er’s tribe. This woman was well along in years and had lived with her husband for seven years after they were married,* **37** and she was a widow now 84 years old. She was never missing from the temple, rendering sacred service night and day with fasting and supplications. **38** In that very hour she came near and began giving thanks to God and speaking about the child to all who were waiting for Jerusalem’s deliverance.^h

39 So when they had carried out all the things according to the Law of Jehovah,^{*i} they went back into Gal’i-lee to their own city, Naz’a-reth.^j **40** And the young child continued growing and getting strong, being filled with wisdom, and God’s favor continued upon him.^k

41 Now his parents were accustomed to go from year to year to Jerusalem for the festival of the Passover.^l **42** And when he was 12 years old, they went up according to the custom of the festival.^m **43** When the

2:35 *Or “your own soul.” 2:36 *Lit., “from her virginity.” 2:39 *See App. A5.

days of the festival were over and they were returning, the boy Jesus remained behind in Jerusalem, and his parents did not notice it. **44** Assuming that he was in the group traveling together, they went a day's journey and then began to search for him among the relatives and acquaintances. **45** But not finding him, they returned to Jerusalem and made a diligent search for him. **46** Well, after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers and listening to them and asking them questions. **47** But all those listening to him were in constant amazement at his understanding and his answers.^a **48** Now when his parents saw him, they were astounded, and his mother said to him: "Child, why did you treat us this way? Here your father and I have been frantically looking for you." **49** But he said to them: "Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in the house of my Father?"^b **50** However, they did not understand what he was saying to them.

51 Then he went down with them and returned to Naz'a-reth, and he continued subject* to them.^c Also, his mother carefully kept all these sayings in her heart.^d **52** And Jesus went on progressing in wisdom and in physical growth and in favor with God and men.

3 In the 15th year of the reign of Ti-be'ri-us Caesar, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Ju-de'a, Herod*^e was district ruler[#] of Gal'i-lee, Philip his brother was district ruler of the country of It-u-rae'a and Trach-o-ni'tis, and Ly-sa'ni-as was dis-

2:51 *Or "remained obedient." 3:1

*That is, Herod Antipas. See Glossary.

#Lit., "the tetrarch."

strict ruler of Ab·i·le'ne, **2** in the days of chief priest An'nas and of Ca'ia·phas,^a God's declaration came to John^b the son of Zech·a·ri'ah in the wilderness.^c

3 So he went into all the country around the Jordan, preaching baptism in symbol of repentance for forgiveness of sins,^d **4** just as it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet: "A voice of one crying out in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of Jehovah!* Make his roads straight.^e **5** Every valley must be filled up, and every mountain and hill leveled; the crooked ways must become straight, and the rough ways smooth; **6** and all flesh* will see the salvation of God.'"#f

7 So he began to say to the crowds coming out to be baptized by him: "You offspring of vipers, who has warned you to flee from the coming wrath?^g **8** Therefore, produce fruits that befit repentance. Do not start saying to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I say to you that God is able to raise up children for Abraham from these stones. **9** Indeed, the ax is already lying at the root of the trees. Every tree, then, that does not produce fine fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire."^h

10 And the crowds were asking him: "What, then, should we do?" **11** In reply he said to them: "Let the man who has two garments* share with the man who has none, and let the one who has something to eat do the same."ⁱ **12** Even tax collectors came to be baptized,^j and they said to him: "Teacher, what should we do?" **13** He said to them: "Do not demand*

3:4 *See App. A5. **3:6** *Or "all humans." #Or "the saving means of God." **3:11** *Or "an extra garment." **3:13** *Or "collect."

LUKE 3:2-23

anything more than the tax rate.”^a **14** Also, those in military service were asking him: “What should we do?” And he said to them: “Do not harass* anybody or accuse anybody falsely,^b but be satisfied with your provisions.”[#]

15 Now the people were in expectation and all of them were reasoning in their hearts about John, “May he perhaps be the Christ?”^c **16** John gave the answer, saying to all: “I, for my part, baptize you with water, but the one stronger than I am is coming, the lace of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie.^d He will baptize you with holy spirit and with fire.^e **17** His winnowing shovel is in his hand to clean up his threshing floor completely and to gather the wheat into his storehouse, but the chaff he will burn up with fire that cannot be put out.”

18 He also gave many other exhortations and continued declaring good news to the people. **19** But Herod the district ruler, because of being reproved by John concerning He-ro'di-as the wife of his brother and concerning all the wicked deeds that Herod had done, **20** added this also to all those deeds: He locked John up in prison.^f

21 Now when all the people were baptized, Jesus too was baptized.^g As he was praying, the heaven was opened up,^h **22** and the holy spirit in bodily form like a dove came down upon him, and a voice came out of heaven: “You are my Son, the beloved; I have approved you.”ⁱ

23 When Jesus^j began his work, he was about 30 years old,^k being the son, as the opinion was,

of Joseph,^l
son of He'li,

3:14 *Or “extort from.” #Or “wages.”

LUKE 3:24-4:8

- 24** son of Mat'that,
son of Le'vi,
son of Mel'chi,
son of Jan'na-i,
son of Joseph,
- 25** son of Mat-ta-thi'as,
son of A'mos,
son of Na'hum,
son of Es'li,
son of Nag'ga-i,
- 26** son of Ma'ath,
son of Mat-ta-thi'as,
son of Sem'e-in,
son of Jo'sech,
son of Jo'da,
- 27** son of Jo-an'an,
son of Rhe'sa,
son of Ze-rub'ba-bel,^a
son of She-al'ti-el,^b
son of Ne'ri,
- 28** son of Mel'chi,
son of Ad'di,
son of Co'sam,
son of El-ma'dam,
son of Er,
- 29** son of Jesus,
son of E-li-e'zer,
son of Jo'rim,
son of Mat'that,
son of Le'vi,
- 30** son of Sym'e-on,
son of Judas,
son of Joseph,
son of Jo'nam,
son of E-li'a-kim,
- 31** son of Me'le-a,
son of Men'na,
son of Mat'ta-tha,
son of Nathan,^c
son of David,^d
- 32** son of Jes'se,^e
son of O'bed,^f
son of Bo'az,^g
son of Sal'mon,^h
son of Nah'shon,ⁱ
- 33** son of Am-min'a-dab,
son of Ar'ni,
son of Hez'ron,
son of Pe'rez,^j
son of Judah,^k

- 34** son of Jacob,^a
 son of Isaac,^b
 son of Abraham,^c
 son of Te'rah,^d
 son of Na'hor,^e
35 son of Se'rug,^f
 son of Re'u,^g
 son of Pe'leg,^h
 son of E'ber,ⁱ
 son of She'lah,^j
36 son of Ca-i'nan,
 son of Ar-pach'shad,^k
 son of Shem,^l
 son of Noah,^m
 son of La'mech,ⁿ
37 son of Me-thu'se-lah,^o
 son of E'noch,
 son of Ja'red,^p
 son of Ma-ha'la-le-el,^q
 son of Ca-i'nan,^r
38 son of E'nosh,^s
 son of Seth,^t
 son of Adam,^u
 son of God.

4 Then Jesus, full of holy spirit, turned away from the Jordan, and he was led about by the spirit in the wilderness^v **2** for 40 days, being tempted by the Devil.^w And he ate nothing in those days, so when they had ended, he felt hungry. **3** At this the Devil said to him: "If you are a son of God, tell this stone to become a loaf of bread." **4** But Jesus answered him: "**It is written, 'Man must not live on bread alone.'**"^x

5 So he brought him up and showed him all the kingdoms of the inhabited earth in an instant of time.^y **6** Then the Devil said to him: "I will give you all this authority and their glory, because it has been handed over to me,^z and I give it to whomever I wish. **7** If you, therefore, do an act of worship before me, it will all be yours." **8** In reply Jesus said to him: "**It is written, 'It is Jehovah***

4:8 * See App. A5.

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- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

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LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

- Song 134
- **“Parents, Give Your Children the Best Chance to Succeed”:** (15 min.) Discussion. Play the video *They Took Every Opportunity* (video category INTERVIEWS AND EXPERIENCES).
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LUKE 2-3 | Young Ones—Are You Growing Spiritually?

From childhood on, Jesus set a fine example in seeking spiritual interests and in showing respect to his parents.

 Young ones, how can you imitate Jesus in each of the following ways?



2:41, 42

Participating in spiritual activities:



2:46, 47

Growing in spiritual understanding:



2:51, 52

Respecting your parents:

June 18-24

Treasures From God's Word

Luke 2:41, 42—Jesus attended the annual Passover festival with his parents

Luke 2:41, 42 Now his parents were accustomed to go from year to year to Jerusalem for the festival of the Passover. And when he was 12 years old, they went up according to the custom of the festival.

“his parents were accustomed” study note on Luke 2:41, *nwtsty*

his parents were accustomed: The Law did not require women to attend the Passover celebration. Yet, it was Mary's custom to accompany Joseph on the annual journey to Jerusalem for the festival. (Exodus 23:17; 34:23) Each year, they made the round-trip of nearly 300 kilometers (190 miles) with their growing family.

Luke 2:46, 47—Jesus listened to the religious leaders and asked them questions

Luke 2:46, 47 Well, after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers and listening to them and asking them questions. But all those listening to him were in constant amazement at his understanding and his answers.

“asking them questions” study notes on Luke 2:46, *nwtsty*

asking them questions: As shown by the reaction of those listening to Jesus, his questions were not merely those of a boy seeking to satisfy his curiosity. (Luke 2:47) The Greek word rendered “asking . . . questions” could in some contexts refer to the type of questioning and counterquestioning used in a judicial examination. (Matthew 27:11; Mark 14:60, 61; 15:2, 4; Acts 5:27) Historians say

that some of the foremost religious leaders would customarily remain at the temple after festivals and teach at one of the spacious porches there. People could sit at the feet of those men to listen and to ask questions.

“were in constant amazement” study notes on Luke 2:47, *nwtsty*

were in constant amazement: Here the form of the Greek verb for “be amazed” may denote continued or repeated astonishment.

Luke 2:51, 52—Jesus “continued subject” to his parents and gained favor with God and men

Luke 2:51, 52 Then he went down with them and returned to Nazareth, and he continued subject to them. Also, his mother carefully kept all these sayings in her heart. And Jesus went on progressing in wisdom and in physical growth and in favor with God and men.

“continued subject” study note on Luke 2:51, *nwtsty*

continued subject: Or “remained in subjection; remained obedient.” The continuous form of the Greek verb indicates that after impressing the teachers at the temple with his knowledge of God’s Word, Jesus went home and humbly subjected himself to his parents. This obedience was more significant than that of any other child; it was part of his fulfilling the Mosaic Law in every detail.—Exodus 20:12; Galatians 4:4.

Digging for Spiritual Gems

Luke 2:14—What is the meaning of this verse?

Luke 2:14 “Glory in the heights above to God, and on earth peace among men of goodwill.”

“and on earth peace among men of goodwill” study notes on Luke 2:14, *nwtsty*

and on earth peace among men of goodwill: Some manuscripts have readings that could be rendered “and on earth peace, goodwill toward men,” and this wording is reflected in some Bible translations. But the reading employed by the *New World Translation* has much stronger manuscript support. This angelic announcement did not refer to an expression of God’s goodwill toward all humans regardless of their attitudes and actions. Rather, it refers to those who will receive his goodwill because they display genuine faith in him and become followers of his Son.—See study note on **men of goodwill** in this verse.

“men of goodwill” study notes on Luke 2:14, *nwtsty*

men of goodwill: The “goodwill” referred to in this angelic statement is evidently that displayed by God, not by humans. The Greek word *eudoki'a* can also be rendered “favor; good pleasure; approval.” The related verb *eudoke'o* is used at Matthew 3:17; Mark 1:11; and Luke 3:22 (see study notes on Matthew 3:17; Mark 1:11), where God addresses his Son right after his baptism. It conveys the basic meaning, “to approve; to be well-pleased with; to regard favorably; to take delight in.” In line with this usage, the expression “men of goodwill” (*anthro'pois eudoki'as*) refers to people who have God’s approval and goodwill, and it could also be rendered “people whom he approves; people with whom he is well-pleased.” So this angelic statement was referring to God’s goodwill, not toward men in general, but toward those who would please him by their genuine faith in him and by becoming followers of his Son. Although the

Greek word *eudoki'a* in some contexts can refer to the goodwill of humans (Romans 10:1; Philippians 1:15), it is frequently used with regard to God's goodwill, or good pleasure, or to the way approved by him (Matthew 11:26; Luke 10:21; Ephesians 1:5, 9; Philippians 2:13; 2 Thessalonians 1:11). In the *Septuagint* at Psalm 51:18 [50:20, LXX], the word is used about the "goodwill" of God.

Luke 3:23—Who was Joseph's father?

Luke 3:23 When Jesus began his work, he was about 30 years old, being the son, as the opinion was, of Joseph, son of Heli.

wp16.3 9 paragraphs 1-3

Joseph, the carpenter of Nazareth, was the adoptive father of Jesus. But who was Joseph's father? Jesus' genealogy in Matthew's Gospel names a certain Jacob, whereas Luke's says that Joseph was "son of Heli." Why the seeming discrepancy?—Luke 3:23; Matthew 1:16.

Matthew's account reads: "Jacob *became father to* Joseph," employing a Greek term indicating clearly that Jacob was Joseph's natural father. So Matthew was tracing Joseph's natural genealogy, the kingly line of David, through which the legal right to the throne passed to Joseph's adoptive son, Jesus.

On the other hand, Luke's account says: "Joseph, son of Heli." That expression, "son of," can be understood as "son-in-law of." A similar case is found at Luke 3:27, where Shealtiel, whose real father was Jeconiah, is listed as "son of Neri." (1 Chronicles 3:17; Matthew 1:12) Shealtiel was likely married to an unnamed daughter of Neri, thus becoming his son-in-law. Joseph was in the same sense "son" of Heli, as he married Heli's daughter Mary. So Luke traces Jesus' natural lineage "according to the flesh," through his biological mother, Mary. (Romans 1:3) The Bible thus gives us two distinct and useful genealogies for Jesus.

LUKE

Study Notes—Chapter 2

2:1

Caesar: Or “Emperor.” The Greek word *Kai’sar* corresponds to the Latin term *Caesar*. (See Glossary.) The name **Augustus**, a Latin word meaning “August One,” was first given by the Roman Senate as a title to Gaius Octavius, the first Roman emperor, in the year 27 B.C.E. He thus became known as **Caesar Augustus**. His **decree** resulted in Jesus’ being born in Bethlehem, in fulfillment of Bible prophecy.—Da 11:20; Mic 5:2.

the inhabited earth: In a broad sense, the Greek word for “inhabited earth” (*oi-kou-me’ne*) refers to the earth as the dwelling place of mankind. (Lu 4:5; Ac 17:31; Ro 10:18; Re 12:9; 16:14) In the first century, this term was also used in reference to the vast Roman Empire, where the Jews had been dispersed.—Ac 24:5.

to be registered: Augustus likely issued this decree because a census would help him to tax his subjects and conscript men for military service. In doing so, Augustus evidently fulfilled Daniel’s prophecy about a ruler “who causes an exactor to pass through the splendid kingdom.” Daniel further foretold that during the reign of that ruler’s successor, “a despised one,” something momentous would happen: “The Leader of the covenant,” or the Messiah, would be “broken,” or put to death. (Da 11:20-22) Jesus was executed during the reign of Augustus’ successor, Tiberius.

2:2

Quirinius . . . governor of Syria: Publius Sulpicius Quirinius, a distinguished Roman senator, is mentioned only once in the Bible. Scholars initially claimed that Quirinius served only one term of governorship over the Roman province of Syria in about

6 C.E., during which a rebellion broke out in response to a census. As a result, they attacked this passage and cast doubt on Luke's account by reasoning that Quirinius was governor in 6 or 7 C.E., whereas Jesus' birth was earlier. However, in 1764 an inscription was found that strongly suggests that Quirinius served as governor (or, legate) in Syria for two distinct terms. Other inscriptions too have led some historians to acknowledge that Quirinius served a term as governor of Syria earlier, in the B.C.E. period. It was evidently during this term that the **first registration**, mentioned in this verse, took place. Furthermore, the critics' reasoning ignores three key facts. First, Luke acknowledges that there was more than one census, calling this the "*first registration.*" He was evidently aware of a later registration, which occurred about 6 C.E. That registration was mentioned by Luke in the book of Acts (5:37) and by Josephus. Second, Bible chronology rules out the possibility that Jesus was born during Quirinius' second term. However, it does harmonize with Jesus' being born during Quirinius' first term, which was somewhere between the years 4 and 1 B.C.E. Third, Luke is well-known as a meticulous historian, one who lived in the era of many of the events he described. (Lu 1:3) In addition, he was inspired by holy spirit.—2Ti 3:16.

2:4

went up from Galilee: There was a town named Bethlehem just 11 km (7 mi) from Nazareth, but prophecy specified that the Messiah would come from "Bethlehem Ephrathah." (Mic 5:2) That **Bethlehem**, referred to as **David's city**, was located in **Judea**, in the south. (1Sa 16:1, 11, 13) The direct distance (as the crow flies) from Nazareth to Bethlehem Ephrathah is about 110 km (69 mi). The actual travel distance through Samaria (based on present-day roads) may have been up to 150 km (93 mi). The

route passes through hilly country, and the journey would have been an arduous one, taking several days.

2:7

the firstborn: This expression implies that Mary later had other children.—Mt 13:55, 56; Mr 6:3.

manger: The Greek word *phat'ne*, rendered “manger,” means “feeding place.” It may have been some kind of feeding trough for animals, though the Greek word *phat'ne* can also refer to the stall in which animals are kept. (Compare Lu 13:15, where this Greek word is rendered “stall.”) In this context, it appears to refer to a feeding place, though the Bible does not specify whether this manger was an outdoor or an indoor trough or one connected with a stall.

lodging place: The Greek word could also be rendered “guest room,” as at Mr 14:14 and Lu 22:11.

2:8

shepherds: A large number of sheep were regularly needed for offerings at Jerusalem’s temple, so it is quite possible that some of the sheep raised around Bethlehem were intended for this purpose.

living out of doors: The Greek expression comes from a verb that combines *a·gros'* (“field”) and *au·le'* (“place open to the air”), so the word means “to live in the fields, to live under the open sky,” and implies spending the night outdoors. Sheep may be led out to pasture during the daytime in any season of the year. However, the shepherds were spending the night out in the fields with their flocks. So this indicates the time of Jesus’ birth. The rainy season in Israel begins about mid-October and lasts several months. By December, Bethlehem, like Jerusalem, frequently experiences frost at night. The fact that Bethlehem’s

shepherds were in the fields at night points to a season prior to the start of the rains.—See App. B15.

2:9

Jehovah's angel: This expression occurs many times in the Hebrew Scriptures, starting at Ge 16:7. When it occurs in early copies of the *Septuagint*, the Greek word *ag'ge·los* (angel; messenger) is followed by the divine name written in Hebrew characters. That is how the expression is handled at Zec 3:5, 6 in a copy of the *Septuagint* found in a cave in Nahal Hever, Israel, in the Judean Desert. This fragment is dated between 50 B.C.E. and 50 C.E. It is noteworthy that when later copies of the Greek *Septuagint* replaced the divine name with *Ky'ri·os* in this and many other verses, the definite article was not included where it would be expected according to standard grammatical usage. This may be another indication that *Ky'ri·os* replaces the divine name here and in similar contexts. A number of Bible translations retain the divine name when rendering the expression “Jehovah's angel” in this verse.—See App. C.

Jehovah's glory: The first two chapters of Luke's account are rich with references to and allusions to passages and expressions from the Hebrew Scriptures where the divine name occurs. Although existing Greek manuscripts use the word *Ky'ri·os* (Lord) in this verse, there are good reasons for using the divine name in the main text. In the Hebrew Scriptures, the corresponding Hebrew expression for “glory” occurs along with the Tetragrammaton more than 30 times. (Some examples are found at Ex 16:7; 40:34; Le 9:6, 23; Nu 14:10; 16:19; 20:6; 1Ki 8:11; 2Ch 5:14; 7:1; Ps 104:31; 138:5; Isa 35:2; 40:5; 60:1; Eze 1:28; 3:12; 10:4; 43:4; Hab 2:14.) An early copy of the Greek *Septuagint*, found in a cave in Nahal Hever in the Judean Desert near the Dead Sea, dated between 50 B.C.E. and 50 C.E., contains the Tetragrammaton written in ancient Hebrew characters within the

Greek text at Hab 2:14. Also, it is noteworthy that when later copies of the *Septuagint* replaced the divine name with *Ky'ri-os* in this and many other verses, the definite article was not included where it would be expected according to standard grammatical usage, making *Ky'ri-os* tantamount to a proper name. So in view of the Hebrew Scripture background as well as the absence of the Greek definite article, the divine name has been used in the main text of Lu 2:9.—See study notes on Lu 1:6; 1:9 and App. C.

2:11

who is Christ: The angel's use of this title was evidently prophetic, since the outpouring of holy spirit at the time of Jesus' baptism marked the time of his becoming in actual fact the Messiah, or Christ.—Mt 3:16, 17; Mr 1:9-11; Lu 3:21, 22.

Christ the Lord: The Greek expression here rendered "Christ the Lord" (*Khri-stos' ky'ri-os*, lit., "Christ Lord") occurs only here in the Christian Greek Scriptures. The angel's use of these titles was evidently prophetic, and the clause could therefore be rendered "who was to be Christ the Lord." (See study note on **who is Christ** in this verse.) Under inspiration, Peter explains at Ac 2:36 that God had made Jesus "both Lord and Christ." However, the expression rendered "Christ the Lord" has also been understood in other ways. Some scholars have suggested the rendering "the anointed Lord." Others have considered this combination of titles to mean "the Lord's Christ," which is the reading found in a few Latin and Syriac translations of Lu 2:11. Along these lines, some translations of the Christian Greek Scriptures into Hebrew (referred to as J^{5-8, 10} in App. C) use the rendering *ma-shi'ach Yeho-wah'*, that is, "Jehovah's Christ." For these and other reasons, some have understood the term at Lu 2:11 in a way similar to the Greek expression rendered "the Christ of Jehovah" at Lu 2:26.

2:14

and on earth peace among men of goodwill: Some manuscripts have readings that could be rendered “and on earth peace, goodwill toward men,” and this wording is reflected in some Bible translations. But the reading employed by the *New World Translation* has much stronger manuscript support. This angelic announcement did not refer to an expression of God’s goodwill toward all humans regardless of their attitudes and actions. Rather, it refers to those who will receive his goodwill because they display genuine faith in him and become followers of his Son.—See study note on **men of goodwill** in this verse.

men of goodwill: The “goodwill” referred to in this angelic statement is evidently that displayed by God, not by humans. The Greek word *eu·do·ki'a* can also be rendered “favor; good pleasure; approval.” The related verb *eu·do·ke'o* is used at Mt 3:17; Mr 1:11; and Lu 3:22 (see study notes on Mt 3:17; Mr 1:11), where God addresses his Son right after his baptism. It conveys the basic meaning, “to approve; to be well-pleased with; to regard favorably; to take delight in.” In line with this usage, the expression “men of goodwill” (*an·thro'pois eu·do·ki'as*) refers to people who have God’s approval and goodwill, and it could also be rendered “people whom he approves; people with whom he is well-pleased.” So this angelic statement was referring to God’s goodwill, not toward men in general, but toward those who would please him by their genuine faith in him and by becoming followers of his Son. Although the Greek word *eu·do·ki'a* in some contexts can refer to the goodwill of humans (Ro 10:1; Php 1:15), it is frequently used with regard to God’s goodwill, or good pleasure, or to the way approved by him (Mt 11:26; Lu 10:21; Eph 1:5, 9; Php 2:13; 2Th 1:11). In the *Septuagint* at Ps 51:18 [50:20, *LXX*], the word is used about the “goodwill” of God.

2:15

which Jehovah has made known to us: The angels conveyed the message, but the shepherds recognized the source as being Jehovah God. Although existing Greek manuscripts use *Ky'ri-os* (Lord) here, there are good reasons for using the divine name in the main text. In the *Septuagint*, the Greek verb rendered “has made known” is used to translate a corresponding Hebrew verb in contexts where Jehovah communicates his will to humans or where humans want to know his will. In such scriptures, the original Hebrew text often uses the Tetragrammaton. (Ps 25:4; 39:4; 98:2; 103:6, 7) Therefore, it would be natural to connect the divine name with what the Jewish shepherds are here saying.— See study note on Lu 1:6 and App. C.

2:21

Jesus: Corresponds to the Hebrew name Jeshua or Joshua, a shortened form of Jehoshua, meaning “Jehovah Is Salvation.”

2:22

the time . . . for purifying them: That is, the time for them to be ceremonially cleansed for worship. The Mosaic Law required that a mother undergo purification for 40 days after giving birth to a male. (Le 12:1-4) This law evidently taught, not a demeaning view of women and childbirth, but a vital spiritual truth: Through the process of childbirth, the sin of Adam is transmitted from one generation to the next. Mary was no exception, contrary to claims made by religious scholars. (Ro 5:12) Luke would not have used the pronoun “them” in this verse to include Jesus, for he knew that holy spirit had shielded Jesus from the sinful condition of his imperfect human mother, so he did not need cleansing. (Lu 1:34, 35) Because Joseph arranged for the trip and as family head was

responsible for seeing that the sacrifice was offered, Luke may have included Jesus' adoptive father in the word "them."

Jehovah: Existing Greek manuscripts use the word *Ky'ri-os* (Lord) here, but there are good reasons for using the divine name in the main text. As the following verse shows, Jesus' being brought to the temple after his birth is in accord with Jehovah's words to Moses at Ex 13:1, 2, 12, where parents were commanded to "devote to Jehovah every firstborn male." Also, the expression **to present him to Jehovah** is similar to what is described at 1Sa 1:22-28, where young Samuel is presented "before Jehovah" and dedicated to His service. In view of the context and the Hebrew Scripture background, the divine name is used in the main text of Lu 2:22.—See study notes on Lu 1:6; 2:23 and App. C.

2:23

Jehovah's Law: Although existing Greek manuscripts read *no'mo Ky'ri'ou*, "Lord's Law," there are good reasons for using the divine name in the main text. This expression occurs many times in the Hebrew Scriptures as a combination of the Hebrew word for "law" and the Tetragrammaton. (For example: Ex 13:9; 2Ki 10:31; 1Ch 16:40; 22:12; 2Ch 17:9; 31:3; Ne 9:3; Ps 1:2; 119:1; Isa 5:24; Jer 8:8; Am 2:4.) The expression **just as it is written** is a common introduction to Hebrew Scripture quotes in the Christian Greek Scriptures. (Mr 1:2; Ac 7:42; 15:15; Ro 1:17; 10:15) It is also used in the *Septuagint* at 2Ki 14:6 to introduce a scripture quote. The full expression "just as it is written in Jehovah's Law" reflects an expression in the Hebrew Scriptures that can be found at 2Ch 31:3 and 35:26, where the divine name is used. Additionally, scholars have noted that the Greek definite article is not included before *Ky'ri-os* where it would be expected according to standard grammatical usage, making *Ky'ri-os*

tantamount to a proper name in this context. In view of the context, the Hebrew Scripture background, and the absence of the Greek definite article, there are good reasons to use the divine name in the main text of Lu 2:23.—See study note on Lu 1:6 and App. C.

Jehovah: This quote is based on Ex 13:2, 12, where the divine name, represented by four Hebrew consonants (transliterated *YHWH*), occurs in the original Hebrew text.—See App. C.

2:24

they offered a sacrifice: Under the Mosaic Law, a woman remained ceremonially unclean for a set length of time after giving birth. Once the time had elapsed, a burnt offering and a sin offering were made for her.—Le 12:1-8.

the Law of Jehovah: Although existing Greek manuscripts read *no'mo Ky-ri'ou*, “Lord’s Law,” there are good reasons for using the divine name in the main text. This expression occurs many times in the Hebrew Scriptures as a combination of the Hebrew word for “law” and the Tetragrammaton. (For example: Ex 13:9; 2Ki 10:31; 1Ch 16:40; 22:12; 2Ch 17:9; 31:3; Ne 9:3; Ps 1:2; 119:1; Isa 5:24; Jer 8:8; Am 2:4.) The expression **just as it is written** is a common introduction to Hebrew Scripture quotes in the Christian Greek Scriptures. (Mr 1:2; Ac 7:42; 15:15; Ro 1:17; 10:15) It is also used in the *Septuagint* at 2Ki 14:6 to introduce a scripture quote. The full expression “just as it is written in Jehovah’s Law” reflects an expression in the Hebrew Scriptures that can be found at 2Ch 31:3 and 35:26, where the divine name is used. Additionally, scholars have noted that the Greek definite article is not included before *Ky-ri-os* where it would be expected according to standard grammatical usage, making *Ky-ri-os* tantamount to a proper name in this context. In view of the context, the Hebrew Scripture background, and the absence of

the Greek definite article, there are good reasons to use the divine name in the main text of Lu 2:23.—See study note on Lu 1:6 and App. C.

a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons: The Law allowed for women of little means to offer birds instead of a sheep, which would have been far costlier. (Le 12:6, 8) Clearly, Joseph and Mary were poor at this time, which shows that the astrologers came, not when Jesus was a newborn, but when he was older. (Mt 2:9-11) If Joseph and Mary had already received the costly gifts that those men brought, the couple could readily have afforded a sheep for sacrifice when they went to the temple.

2:25

Simeon: This name comes from a Hebrew verb meaning “to hear; to listen.” Like Zechariah and Elizabeth, Simeon is described as **righteous**. (Lu 1:5, 6) He is also called **devout**, a rendering of the Greek word *eu·la·bes'*, which is used in the Christian Greek Scriptures to denote being careful and conscientious in matters of worship.—Ac 2:5; 8:2; 22:12.

2:26

the Christ: Or “the Anointed One; the Messiah.” The title “Christ” is derived from the Greek word *Khri·stos'* and is equivalent to the title “Messiah” (from Hebrew *Ma·shi'ach*), both meaning “Anointed One.”—See study note on Mt 1:1 and on **the Christ of Jehovah** in this verse.

the Christ of Jehovah: There are good reasons for using the divine name in the main text, although available Greek manuscripts literally read “the Christ of Lord” (*ton khri·ston' Ky·ri'ou*). In existing copies of the *Septuagint*, this expression corresponds to the Hebrew term *ma·shi'ach YHWH*, that is, “anointed (one) of Jehovah,” used 11 times in the Hebrew

Scriptures. (1Sa 24:6 [twice], 10; 26:9, 11, 16, 23; 2Sa 1:14, 16; 19:21; La 4:20) In connection with both Luke's account and the *Septuagint*, scholars have noted that the Greek definite article was not included before *Ky'ri-os* where it would be expected according to standard grammatical usage, making *Ky'ri-os* in these contexts tantamount to a proper name. Therefore, both the Hebrew Scripture background and the absence of the Greek article are valid reasons for treating *Ky'ri-os* in these expressions, not as a title, but as an equivalent of the divine name. A number of Bible translations use such renderings as Jehovah, Yahveh, Yahweh, יהוה (*YHWH*, or the Tetragrammaton), LORD, and ADONAI in the main text or in footnotes and marginal notes to indicate that this is a reference to Jehovah God. A number of reference works support this view.—See App. C.

2:29

Sovereign Lord: The Greek word *de-spo'tes* has the basic meaning “lord; master; owner.” (1Ti 6:1; Tit 2:9; 1Pe 2:18) When used in direct address to God, as here and at Ac 4:24 and Re 6:10, it is rendered “Sovereign Lord” to denote the excellence of his lordship. Other translations have used such terms as “Lord,” “Master,” “Sovereign,” or “Ruler of all.” Many translations of the Christian Greek Scriptures into Hebrew use the Hebrew term *'Adho-nai'* (Sovereign Lord), but at least two such translations (referred to as J^{9, 18} in App. C) here use the divine name, Jehovah.

letting your slave go: The Greek word for “to let go” literally means “to set free; to release; to dismiss.” Here it is used as a euphemism for “to let die.” For a person to die **in peace** could mean his dying a tranquil death after having enjoyed a full life or after the realization of a cherished hope. (Compare Ge 15:15; 1Ki 2:6.) God's promise to Simeon had now been fulfilled; he had

seen the promised “Christ of Jehovah,” God’s means of salvation. Simeon could now feel an inner peace and tranquillity and be content with sleeping in death until the resurrection.—Lu 2:26.

2:32

for removing the veil from the nations: Or “for revelation to the nations.” The Greek term *a·po·ka'ly·psis*, rendered “removing the veil,” denotes “an uncovering” or “a disclosure” and is often used regarding revelations of spiritual matters or of God’s will and purposes. (Ro 16:25; Eph 3:3; Re 1:1) Aged Simeon here referred to the child Jesus as **a light**, and he indicated that spiritual enlightenment was also to benefit the non-Jewish **nations**, not just the natural Jews and proselytes. Simeon’s prophetic words were in agreement with prophecies in the Hebrew Scriptures, such as those recorded at Isa 42:6 and 49:6.

2:34

the rising again: The Greek word *a·na'sta·sis* used here is usually rendered “resurrection” in the Christian Greek Scriptures. (See study note on Mt 22:23.) Simeon’s words in this verse indicate that people would react to Jesus in different ways, uncovering the reasonings of their hearts. (Lu 2:35) To unbelievers, Jesus would be **a sign to be spoken against**, or an object of contempt. Such faithless ones would reject him, stumble over him, and fall. As foretold, Jesus proved to be a stone of stumbling to many Jews. (Isa 8:14) Others, however, would put faith in Jesus. (Isa 28:16) They would be figuratively resurrected, or raised up, from a state of being “dead in [their] trespasses and sins” and would come to enjoy a righteous standing with God.—Eph 2:1.

2:35

a long sword: Since there is no Scriptural indication that Mary had an actual sword run through her, this expression evidently refers to the pain, suffering, and sorrow that Mary would undergo in connection with her son's death on a torture stake.—Joh 19:25.

you: Or “your own soul; your life.”—See Glossary, “Soul.”

2:36

Anna: The Greek form of the Hebrew name Hannah, meaning “Favor; Grace.” By speaking about young Jesus to all those waiting for Jerusalem's deliverance, she acted as **a prophetess**. The basic sense of the term “prophesying” is the declaring of inspired messages from God, the revealing of the divine will.

2:37

never missing from the temple: Anna was constantly at the temple, possibly from the time the temple gates were opened in the morning until they were closed in the evening. Her **sacred service** included **fasting and supplications**, indicating that she mourned over the prevailing conditions and longed for change, like other faithful servants of God. (Ezr 10:1; Ne 1:4; La 1:16) For centuries the Jews had been subject to foreign powers, and deteriorating religious conditions had reached even to the temple and its priesthood. Those conditions could well explain why Anna and others were earnestly “waiting for Jerusalem's deliverance.”—Lu 2:38.

rendering sacred service: Or “worshipping.”— The Greek verb *la-treu'o* basically denotes serving. As used in the Scriptures, it refers to rendering service to God or in connection with the worship of him (Mt 4:10; Lu 2:37; 4:8; Ac 7:7; Ro 1:9; Php 3:3; 2Ti 1:3; Heb 9:14; 12:28; Re 7:15; 22:3) or to rendering service

at the sanctuary or temple (Heb 8:5; 9:9; 10:2; 13:10). Thus, in some contexts the expression can also be rendered “to worship.” In a few cases, it is used in connection with false worship—rendering service to, or worshipping, created things.—Ac 7:42; Ro 1:25.

2:38

God: The earliest Greek manuscripts here use *The·os'* (God). However, other Greek manuscripts and translations into Latin and Syriac use the term for “the Lord.” A number of translations of the Christian Greek Scriptures into Hebrew (referred to as J^{5, 7-17, 28} in App. C) use the divine name, and the phrase can be rendered “giving thanks to Jehovah.”

2:39

the Law of Jehovah: Although existing Greek manuscripts read *no'mon Ky'ri'ou*, “Lord’s Law,” there are good reasons for using the divine name in the main text. This expression occurs many times in the Hebrew Scriptures as a combination of the Hebrew word for “law” and the Tetragrammaton. (For example: Ex 13:9; 2Ki 10:31; 1Ch 16:40; 22:12; 2Ch 17:9; 31:3; Ne 9:3; Ps 1:2; 119:1; Isa 5:24; Jer 8:8; Am 2:4.) It is also noteworthy that the Greek definite article is not included before *Ky'ri-os* where it would be expected according to standard grammatical usage, making *Ky'ri-os* tantamount to a proper name in this context. In view of the Hebrew Scripture background and the absence of the Greek definite article, the divine name is used in the main text.—See study notes on Lu 1:6; 2:23 and App. C.

they went back into Galilee: Although this statement may seem to indicate that Joseph and Mary went straight to Nazareth after presenting Jesus at the temple, Luke’s account is highly condensed. Matthew’s account (2:1-23) provides additional

details regarding the visit of the astrologers, Joseph and Mary's flight to Egypt to escape King Herod's murderous plan, Herod's death, and the family's return to Nazareth.

2:41

his parents were accustomed: The Law did not require women to attend the Passover celebration. Yet, it was Mary's custom to accompany Joseph on the annual journey to Jerusalem for the festival. (Ex 23:17; 34:23) Each year, they made the round-trip of nearly 300 km (190 mi) with their growing family.

2:42

went up: That is, they went up to Jerusalem, a journey that involved ascending through hilly and mountainous terrain.—See study note on Lu 2:4.

2:46

asking them questions: As shown by the reaction of those listening to Jesus, his questions were not merely those of a boy seeking to satisfy his curiosity. (Lu 2:47) The Greek word rendered "asking . . . questions" could in some contexts refer to the type of questioning and counterquestioning used in a judicial examination. (Mt 27:11; Mr 14:60, 61; 15:2, 4; Ac 5:27) Historians say that some of the foremost religious leaders would customarily remain at the temple after festivals and teach at one of the spacious porches there. People could sit at the feet of those men to listen and to ask questions.

2:47

were in constant amazement: Here the form of the Greek verb for "be amazed" may denote continued or repeated astonishment.

2:49

he said to them: The words that follow are Jesus' first words recorded in the Bible. As a young boy, Jesus was evidently not fully aware of his prehuman existence. (See study notes on Mt 3:16; Lu 3:21.) Yet, it seems reasonable that his mother and his adoptive father had passed on to him the information received during angelic visitations as well as through the prophecies of Simeon and Anna, spoken during the family's trip to Jerusalem 40 days after Jesus' birth. (Mt 1:20-25; 2:13, 14, 19-21; Lu 1:26-38; 2:8-38) Jesus' reply indicates that he to some extent understood the miraculous nature of his birth and his special personal relationship with his heavenly Father, Jehovah.

I must be in the house of my Father: The Greek expression for "in the house of my Father" is literally rendered "in the [things] of my Father." The context shows that Joseph and Mary were concerned about Jesus' whereabouts, so it is most natural to understand these words to refer to a location, or place, that is, "the house [or "dwelling; courts"] of my Father." (Lu 2:44-46) Later, during his ministry, Jesus specifically referred to the temple as "the house of my Father." (Joh 2:16) According to some scholars, though, this expression could also be understood more broadly as, "I need to be concerned [or, "busy"] with the things of my Father."

2:51

he went down: Jerusalem was about 750 m (2,500 ft) above sea level. The term 'go down' is used here of leaving Jerusalem.—Lu 10:30, 31; Ac 24:1; 25:7; compare study notes on Mt 20:17; Lu 2:4, 42.

continued subject: Or "remained in subjection; remained obedient." The continuous form of the Greek verb indicates that

after impressing the teachers at the temple with his knowledge of God's Word, Jesus went home and humbly subjected himself to his parents. This obedience was more significant than that of any other child; it was part of his fulfilling the Mosaic Law in every detail.—Ex 20:12; Ga 4:4.

sayings: Or “things.”— The Greek word *rhe'ma*, rendered “declaration,” can refer to “a word; a saying; a declaration.” Or it can refer to “a thing; the thing spoken of,” whether an event, an action described, or the result of what has been declared. Although the Greek text could be rendered in different ways, the overall meaning remains the same, namely, that nothing is impossible as far as God is concerned or with respect to any of his promises. The wording here is similar to the *Septuagint* rendering of Ge 18:14, where Jehovah assured Abraham that his wife, Sarah, would give birth to Isaac in her old age.

LUKE

Study Notes—Chapter 3

3:1

the 15th year of the reign of Tiberius: Caesar Augustus died on August 17, 14 C.E. (Gregorian calendar). On September 15, Tiberius allowed the Roman Senate to proclaim him emperor. If the years were counted from the death of Augustus, the 15th year of Tiberius' reign ran from August 28 C.E. to August 29 C.E. If counted from when he was formally proclaimed emperor, the 15th year ran from September 28 C.E. to September 29 C.E. John evidently began his ministry in the spring (in the northern hemisphere) of 29 C.E., which is within the 15th year of the reign of Tiberius. In Tiberius' 15th year, John would have been about 30 years old, which was the age when the Levite priests began

their service at the temple. (Nu 4:2, 3) Similarly, when Jesus was baptized by John and “began his work,” according to Lu 3:21-23, “he was about 30 years old.” Jesus’ death took place in the spring month of Nisan, so his three-and-a-half-year ministry evidently began in the *fall*, about the month of Ethanim (September/October). John was likely six months older than Jesus and evidently began his ministry six months before Jesus did. (Lu, chap. 1) Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that John began his ministry in the spring of 29 C.E.—See study notes on Lu 3:23; Joh 2:13.

Herod: That is, Herod Antipas, son of Herod the Great.—See Glossary.

was district ruler: Lit., “was tetrarch,” that is, a minor district ruler or territorial prince ruling only with the approval of the Roman authorities.—See study notes on Mt 14:1; Mr 6:14.

Philip his brother: That is, a half brother of Herod Antipas. Philip was a son of Herod the Great by his wife Cleopatra of Jerusalem. He is sometimes referred to as Philip the tetrarch to distinguish him from his half brother also named Philip (sometimes called Herod Philip), mentioned at Mt 14:3 and Mr 6:17.—See also study note on Mt 16:13.

Ituraea: A small territory of varying and undefined boundaries located NE of the Sea of Galilee, evidently in the vicinity of the Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon mountain ranges.—See App. B10.

Trachonitis: The name comes from a Greek root meaning “rough,” probably a reference to the roughness of the terrain in that area. Trachonitis was part of the territory previously known as Bashan (De 3:3-14) located E of Ituraea, and it measured only about 900 sq km (350 sq mi) in area. The northern limits of this territory reached to some 40 km (25 mi) SE of Damascus.

Lysanias: According to Luke’s account, Lysanias “was district ruler [lit., “was tetrarch”]” of the Roman district of Abilene at the time when John the Baptist began his ministry. An inscription found at Abila, the capital of Abilene, near Damascus of Syria (see App. B10), confirms that a tetrarch named Lysanias ruled at the same time as the Roman Emperor Tiberius. This finding refuted the claim made by some critics who had insisted that Luke confused this Lysanias with a king named Lysanias, who ruled in nearby Chalcis and was put to death about 34 B.C.E., decades earlier than the time Luke mentions.

Abilene: A Roman district, or tetrarchy, named after its capital Abila and located in the region of the Anti-Lebanon Mountains N of Mount Hermon.—See Glossary, “Lebanon Mountain range.”

3:2

chief priest Annas and . . . Caiaphas: When pinpointing the beginning of the ministry of John the Baptist, Luke refers to **the days** when the Jewish priesthood was being dominated by two powerful men. Annas was appointed high priest about 6 or 7 C.E. by Quirinius, the Roman governor of Syria, and served until about 15 C.E. Even after Annas was deposed by the Romans and no longer held the official title of high priest, he evidently continued to exercise great power and influence as high priest emeritus and the predominant voice of the Jewish hierarchy. Five of his sons held the office of high priest, and his son-in-law Caiaphas served as high priest from about 18 C.E. to about 36 C.E. So although Caiaphas served as high priest in 29 C.E., Annas could rightly be designated a “chief priest” because of his dominant position.—Joh 18:13, 24; Ac 4:6.

John: Only in Luke’s account is John introduced as **the son of Zechariah**. (See study note on Lu 1:5.) Also, Luke alone mentions that **God’s declaration came** to John, using wording

similar to that found in the *Septuagint* regarding the prophet Elijah (1Ki 17:2; 20:28; 21:28), who pictured John. (Mt 11:14; 17:10-13) All three synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) locate John **in the wilderness**, but Matthew specifies it as “the wilderness of Judea,” that is, the generally uninhabited, barren eastern slope of the Judean mountains stretching down—a drop of some 1,200 m (3,900 ft)—toward the western bank of the Jordan River and the Dead Sea.—See study note on Mt 3:1.

3:3

baptism in symbol of repentance: Lit., “baptism of repentance.” Baptism did not wash away sins. Rather, those baptized by John publicly repented over sins against the Law, showing their determination to change their behavior. This repentant attitude helped lead them to the Christ. (Ga 3:24) John was thereby preparing a people to see “the salvation” that God had provided.—Lu 3:3-6; see study notes on Mt 3:2, 8, 11 and Glossary, “Baptism; Baptize”; “Repentance.”

3:4

Jehovah: At Isa 40:3, quoted here, the divine name, represented by four Hebrew consonants (transliterated *YHWH*), occurs in the original Hebrew text. (See App. C.) Luke applies this prophecy to John the Baptist. John would **prepare the way of Jehovah** in that he would be the forerunner of Jesus, who would *represent* his Father and come in his Father’s name. (Joh 5:43; 8:29) In the apostle John’s Gospel, John the Baptist applies this prophecy to himself.—Joh 1:23.

3:7

baptized: Or “immersed; dipped.”— The Greek word *ba·pti'zo* means “to dip; to plunge.” Other Biblical references indicate that baptism involves complete immersion. On one occasion, John

was baptizing at a location in the Jordan Valley near Salim “because there was a great quantity of water there.” (Joh 3:23) When Philip baptized the Ethiopian eunuch, they both “went down into the water.” (Ac 8:38) The same Greek word is used in the *Septuagint* at 2Ki 5:14 when describing that Naaman “plunged into the Jordan seven times.”

3:8

fruits that befit repentance: Refers to evidence and actions that would indicate a change of mind or attitude on the part of those listening to John.—Mt 3:8; Ac 26:20; see study notes on Mt 3:2, 11 and Glossary, “Repentance.”

3:12

tax collectors: Many Jews collected taxes for the Roman authorities. People hated such Jews because they not only collaborated with a resented foreign power but also extorted more than the official tax rate. Tax collectors were generally shunned by fellow Jews, who put them on the same level as sinners and prostitutes.—Mt 11:19;

3:14

those in military service: These were evidently native Jewish soldiers who may have been engaged in a type of police inspection, collecting customs or other taxes. Jewish soldiers were in a covenant relationship with Jehovah God. If they desired to be baptized in symbol of repentance of sins, they were obliged to change their conduct and no longer be guilty of extortion and other crimes for which soldiers were notorious.—Mt 3:8.

accuse anybody falsely: The Greek term translated “accuse . . . falsely” (*sy·ko·phan·te'o*) used here is rendered “extorted” or “extorted by false accusation” at Lu 19:8. (See study note on Lu 19:8.) The literal meaning of the verb has been explained to be

“to take by fig-showing.” There are various explanations of the origin of this word. One is that in ancient Athens, the exporting of figs from the province was prohibited. Therefore, someone who denounced others by accusing them of attempting to export figs was termed a “fig-shower.” The term came to designate a person who accused others falsely for the sake of gain, or a blackmailer.

provisions: Or “wages; pay.” The expression is used here as a military technical term, referring to a soldier’s pay, ration money, or allowance. Originally, food and other provisions may have been included as part of a soldier’s allowance. The Jewish soldiers who came to John were possibly engaged in a type of police inspection, especially in connection with customs, or the collection of taxes. John may have given this counsel because the pay given to most soldiers was low, and there evidently was a tendency for soldiers to abuse their power in order to supplement their income. The term is also used in the expression “at his own expense” at 1Co 9:7, where Paul refers to the pay to which a Christian “soldier” is entitled.

3:15

were in expectation: Or “were waiting expectantly.” Such anticipation may have resulted from the angels’ announcement of Jesus’ birth and the shepherds’ subsequent proclamation of that message. (Lu 2:8-11, 17, 18) Thereafter, at the temple, the prophetess Anna spoke freely about the child. (Lu 2:36-38) Also, the astrologers’ statement that they had come to do obeisance to “the one born king of the Jews” had an impact on Herod, the chief priests, the scribes, and all in Jerusalem.—Mt 2:1-4.

3:16

baptize you: Or “immerse you.” The Greek word *ba·pti'zo* means “to dip; to plunge.” Other Biblical references indicate that baptism

involves complete immersion. On one occasion, John was baptizing at a location in the Jordan Valley near Salim “because there was a great quantity of water there.” (Joh 3:23) When Philip baptized the Ethiopian eunuch, they both “went down into the water.” (Ac 8:38) The same Greek word is used in the *Septuagint* at 2Ki 5:14 when describing that Naaman “plunged into the Jordan seven times.”

3:19

district ruler: Lit., “tetrarch” (meaning “ruler over one fourth” of a province), a term applied to a minor district ruler or territorial prince ruling only with the approval of the Roman authorities. The tetrarchy of Herod Antipas consisted of Galilee and Perea.— Compare study note on Mr 6:14.

3:21

As he was praying: In his Gospel, Luke gives the matter of prayer special attention. Only Luke mentions a number of Jesus’ prayers. For example, here Luke adds the detail that Jesus was praying at the time of his baptism. Some of the significant words that he used in his prayer on that occasion were apparently later recorded by Paul. (Heb 10:5-9) Other instances in which Luke alone mentions Jesus’ praying are Lu 5:16; 6:12; 9:18, 28; 11:1; 23:46.

the heaven was opened up: God evidently caused Jesus to perceive heavenly matters, which may well have included the memory of his prehuman life. Jesus’ own expressions after his baptism, particularly his intimate prayer on Passover night, 33 C.E., show that he knew of his prehuman existence, recalled the things he heard and saw his Father say and do, and remembered the glory that he himself had enjoyed in heaven. (Joh 6:46; 7:28, 29; 8:26, 28, 38; 14:2; 17:5) These memories

may have been restored to Jesus at the time of his baptism and anointing.

3:22

like a dove: Doves had both a sacred use and a symbolic meaning. They were offered as sacrifices. (Mr 11:15; Joh 2:14-16) They symbolized innocence and purity. (Mt 10:16) A dove released by Noah brought an olive leaf back to the ark, indicating that the floodwaters were receding (Ge 8:11) and that a time of rest and peace was at hand (Ge 5:29). Thus, at Jesus' baptism, Jehovah may have used the dove to call attention to the role of Jesus as the Messiah, the pure and sinless Son of God who would sacrifice his life for mankind and lay the basis for a period of rest and peace during his rule as King. The way that God's **holy spirit**, or active force, **came down upon** Jesus at his baptism may have looked like the fluttering of a dove as it nears its perch.

a voice came out of heaven: The first of three instances in the Gospel accounts where Jehovah is reported as speaking audibly to humans.—See study notes on Lu 9:35; Joh 12:28.

You are my Son: As a spirit creature, Jesus was God's Son. (Joh 3:16) From the time of his birth as a human, Jesus was a "son of God" just as perfect Adam had been. (Lu 1:35; 3:38) However, it seems reasonable that God's words here go beyond a mere statement of Jesus' identity. By this declaration accompanied by the outpouring of holy spirit, God evidently indicated that the man Jesus was begotten as His spiritual Son, "born again" with the hope of returning to life in heaven and anointed by spirit to be God's appointed King and High Priest.—Joh 3:3-6; 6:51; compare Lu 1:31-33; Heb 2:17; 5:1, 4-10; 7:1-3.

I have approved you: Or “I am well-pleased with you; I take great delight in you.” The same expression is used at Mt 12:18, which is a quotation from Isa 42:1 regarding the promised Messiah, or Christ. The outpouring of holy spirit and God’s declaration concerning his Son were a clear identification of Jesus as the promised Messiah.—See study notes on Mt 3:17; 12:18.

3:23

began his work: Or “began his ministry; started to teach.” Lit., “began; started.” Luke uses the same Greek expression at Ac 1:21, 22 and 10:37, 38 when referring to the start of Jesus’ earthly ministry. His public ministry involved preaching, teaching, and disciple-making.

being the son, as the opinion was, of Joseph: Joseph was actually Jesus’ adoptive father, since Jesus was begotten by holy spirit. However, the people in Nazareth saw Joseph and Mary raise Jesus, so they naturally considered him to be Joseph’s son. This is indicated by other scriptures, such as Mt 13:55 and Lu 4:22, where the inhabitants of Nazareth refer to Jesus as “the carpenter’s son” and “a son of Joseph.” On one occasion, people who stumbled at Jesus remarked: “Is this not Jesus the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know?” (Joh 6:42) Also, Philip told Nathanael: “We have found . . . Jesus, the son of Joseph.” (Joh 1:45) Luke’s account here confirms that Jesus’ being called “the son of Joseph” was simply current opinion.

as the opinion was: Or possibly, “as it was established by law.” This rendering has been suggested by a few scholars, since the Greek term allows for this idea. In this context, that rendering would convey the thought of being legally established according to genealogical reckonings available at the time. However, the

rendering in the main text of the *New World Translation* is supported by most scholars.

Joseph, son of Heli: According to Mt 1:16, “Jacob became father to Joseph the husband of Mary.” In Luke’s account, Joseph is called the “son of Heli,” evidently meaning that he is Heli’s son-in-law. (For a similar case, see the study note on Lu 3:27.) When tracing the bloodline from a grandfather to a grandson through a daughter, it was customary for the Jews to focus on the men in the genealogies, which may be why Luke omits the daughter’s name and lists her husband as a son. Luke evidently traces Jesus’ descent through Mary, so it would seem that Heli was Mary’s father and the maternal grandfather of Jesus.—See study notes on Mt 1:1, 16; Lu 3:27.

3:27

Zerubbabel, son of Shealtiel: Although Zerubbabel is frequently called “the son of Shealtiel” (Ezr 3:2, 8; 5:2; Ne 12:1; Hag 1:1, 12, 14; 2:2, 23; Mt 1:12), he is once identified as one of “the sons of Pedaiah,” a brother of Shealtiel. (1Ch 3:17-19) Zerubbabel was likely the natural son of Pedaiah, but it seems that he was legally reckoned as the son of Shealtiel. If Pedaiah died when his son Zerubbabel was a boy, Pedaiah’s oldest brother, Shealtiel, might have raised Zerubbabel as his own son. Or if Shealtiel died childless and Pedaiah performed levirate marriage on his behalf, the son of Pedaiah by Shealtiel’s wife would have been reckoned as Shealtiel’s legal heir.

Shealtiel, son of Neri: According to 1Ch 3:17 and Mt 1:12, Shealtiel was the son of Jeconiah, not Neri. Perhaps Shealtiel married Neri’s daughter, thus becoming his son-in-law, and could therefore be called the “son of Neri.” It was not uncommon in Hebrew genealogical listings to speak of a son-in-law as a son. In

a similar way, Luke apparently called Joseph “son of Heli,” Mary’s father.—See study note on Lu 3:23.

3:29

Jesus: Or “Joshua (Jeshua).” Some ancient manuscripts here read “Jose(s).”—Corresponds to the Hebrew name Jeshua or Joshua, a shortened form of Jehoshua, meaning “Jehovah Is Salvation.”

3:31

Nathan: The son of David by Bath-sheba from whom Mary descended. (2Sa 5:13, 14; 1Ch 3:5.) In the Christian Greek Scriptures, he is mentioned only here. Luke’s genealogy of Jesus differs from Matthew’s, but the difference in nearly all the names in Luke’s account can be resolved when realizing that Luke traced the line through David’s son *Nathan*, whereas Matthew traced the line through David’s son *Solomon*. (Mt 1:6, 7) Luke apparently follows the ancestry of Mary, thus showing Jesus’ *natural* descent from David, while Matthew shows Jesus’ *legal* right to the throne of David by descent from Solomon through Joseph, who was *legally* Jesus’ father. Both Matthew and Luke indicate that Joseph was Jesus’ adoptive father.—See study notes on Mt 1:1, 16; Lu 3:23.

3:32

Salmon: The Greek spelling is “Sala” in some ancient manuscripts and “Salmon” in others. Salmon married Rahab of Jericho, by whom he fathered Boaz. (Ru 4:20-22; Mt 1:4, 5) 1Ch 2:11 uses a different Hebrew spelling of his name. It says: “Salma became father to Boaz.”

3:33

Arni: This is a variant form of the name Ram (Greek, *A·ram*) found at Mt 1:3, 4. At 1Ch 2:9, Ram is listed as one of “the sons

of Hezron,” and Ru 4:19 says: “Hezron became father to Ram.” Some manuscripts use “Ram” here in Luke’s account, but there is good manuscript support for using the variant form “Arni.”

3:36

son of Cainan: A few ancient manuscripts omit “son of Cainan” here. This omission is in harmony with the Masoretic text of Ge 10:24; 11:12, 13; and 1Ch 1:18, where Shelah is listed as the son of Arpachshad. However, the name Cainan appears in these genealogical lists in existing copies of the Greek *Septuagint*, such as the Codex Alexandrinus of the fifth century C.E. A large number of manuscripts of the Gospel of Luke support the inclusion of the expression “son of Cainan,” so it is retained in most Bible translations.

3:38

son of Adam: Luke traces Jesus’ genealogy back to Adam, the forefather of all mankind. This is in line with Luke’s intent to write good news for all people, addressing both Jews and non-Jews. Matthew, on the other hand, who seems to have written his Gospel especially for the Jews, traces Jesus’ genealogy back to Abraham. The universal appeal of Luke’s Gospel can also be seen in his recording that Christ’s message and works could bring good no matter what a person’s background—a Samaritan leper, a rich tax collector, and even a condemned thief dying on a stake.—Lu 17:11-19; 19:2-10; 23:39-43.

Adam, son of God: This reference goes back to the origin of mankind and agrees with the Genesis account that the first man was created by God and in God’s image. (Ge 1:26, 27; 2:7) This statement also sheds light on other inspired statements, such as Ro 5:12; 8:20, 21; and 1Co 15:22, 45.



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Caesar Augustus

Octavius was the first emperor of the Roman Empire. His full name was Gaius Julius Caesar Octavianus (Octavius or Octavian). He was the adoptive son of the Roman dictator Julius Caesar, who was murdered in 44 B.C.E. In September of 31 B.C.E., Octavius emerged as the undisputed ruler of the Roman Empire, and on January 16, 27 B.C.E., the Roman Senate gave him the title Augustus. In 2 B.C.E., Augustus issued a decree requiring all inhabitants of the empire to be registered, each one in “his own city.” (Lu 2:1-7) This decree resulted in Jesus’ being born in Bethlehem, in fulfillment of Bible prophecy. (Da 11:20; Mic 5:2) Augustus died on August 17, 14 C.E. (August 19, Julian calendar), in the month he had named after himself. The bronze sculpture shown here dates from 27 to 25 B.C.E. and is now kept in the British Museum.

Related Scripture(s) Lu 2:1



Winter in Bethlehem

Jesus could not have been born in December because the weather in Bethlehem is typically cold and rainy from November to March. In winter, snow may fall in this region. During this time of the year, shepherds would not be living out of doors, keeping watch over their flocks in the fields at night. ([Lu 2:8](#)) Bethlehem is located some 780 m (2,550 ft) above sea level in the Judean highlands.

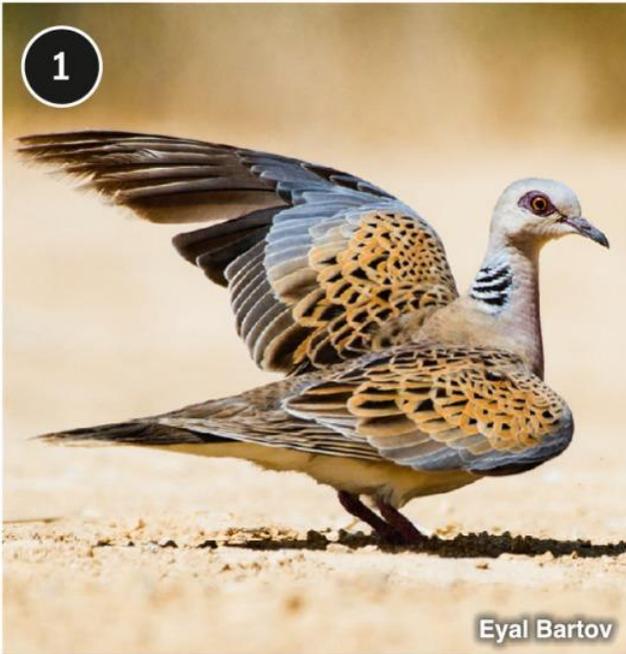
Related Scripture(s) Mt 2:1; Lu 2:4



Jesus in the Manger

The Greek word for “manger” used at [Lu 2:7](#) is *phat'ne*, meaning “feeding place.” In Palestine, archaeologists have found large troughs cut out of single pieces of limestone and measuring about 0.9 m (3 ft) in length, 0.5 m (1.5 ft) in width, and 0.6 m (2 ft) in depth. These are thought to have served as mangers. It may also be that as in more recent times, mangers were cut in the rock walls of caves that were used for sheltering animals.

Related Scripture(s) [Lu 2:7](#)



Turtledove and Pigeon

Under the Mosaic Law, a woman who had given birth was to offer a young ram as a burnt offering and a young pigeon or a turtledove as a sin offering. If the family could not afford a ram, as was evidently the case with Mary and Joseph, then two turtledoves or two young pigeons were acceptable. ([Le 12:6-8](#)) The turtledove (*Streptopelia turtur*) shown here (1) inhabits not only Israel but also Europe, North Africa, and western Asia. In October of each year, these birds migrate to warmer, southern countries, returning to Israel in the spring. The other bird shown here (2) is a rock pigeon (*Columba livia*). This species is found worldwide. They usually do not migrate.

Related Scripture(s) Lu 2:24



Roma, Museo della Civiltà Romana - Archivio Fotografico, Museo della Civiltà Romana; Todd Bolen/
BiblePlaces.com

Tiberius Caesar

Tiberius was born in 42 B.C.E. In 14 C.E., he became the second emperor of Rome. Tiberius lived until March 37 C.E. He was emperor throughout Jesus' ministry, so Tiberius was the ruling Caesar when Jesus said regarding the tax coin: "Pay back Caesar's things to Caesar."—Mr 12:14-17; Mt 22:17-21; Lu 20:22-25.

Related Scripture(s) Mt 22:21; Mr 12:17; Lu 3:1



Coin Made by Herod Antipas

These photos show both sides of a copper alloy coin that was minted about the time that Jesus was engaged in his ministry. The coin was commissioned by Herod Antipas, who was tetrarch, or district ruler, of Galilee and Perea. Jesus was likely passing through Herod's territory of Perea on his way to Jerusalem when the Pharisees told Jesus that Herod wanted to kill him. Jesus responded by calling Herod "that fox." (See study note on Lu 13:32.) Since most of Herod's subjects were Jewish, the coins he made depicted such emblems as a palm branch (1) and a wreath (2), images that would not offend the Jews.

Related Scripture(s) Mt 14:3; Mr 8:15; Lu 3:1; Lu 9:7; Lu 13:31, 32



The Wilderness

The original-language words rendered “wilderness” in the Bible (Hebrew, *midh-bar'* and Greek, *e're-mos*) generally refer to a sparsely settled, uncultivated land, often steppelands with brush and grass, even pastures. Those words may also apply to waterless regions that could be called true deserts. In the Gospels, the wilderness generally referred to is the wilderness of Judea. This wilderness is where John lived and preached and where Jesus was tempted by the Devil.—Mr 1:12.

Related Scripture(s) Mt 3:1; Mt 4:1; Mr 1:4; Lu 3:2; Lu 4:1



Sandals

In Bible times, sandals consisted of flat soles made of leather, wood, or other fibrous material strapped to the foot by leather laces. Sandals were used as symbols in some types of transactions and as a word picture. For example, a widow under the Law removed a sandal from the man who refused to perform brother-in-law marriage with her, and his name was reproachfully called “The house of the one who had his sandal removed.” (De 25:9, 10) The transfer of property or of right of repurchase was represented by a person’s handing his sandal to another. (Ru 4:7) To untie another’s sandal laces or to carry his sandals was considered a menial task often done by slaves. John the Baptist referred to this practice to denote his inferiority to the Christ.

Related Scripture(s) Mt 3:11; Mr 1:7; Lu 3:16



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Threshing Tools

Two of the replica threshing sledges (1) shown here are turned upside down, exposing the sharp stones that were embedded in the underside of the sledge. (Isa 41:15) As shown in the second photo (2), a farmer would spread sheaves of grain on a threshing floor, stand on the sledge, and have an animal, such as a bull, pull him across the grain. The hooves of the animal and the sharp stones on the underside of the sledge would cut and break down the grain stalks, releasing the grain. The farmer would then use a winnowing fork, or shovel (3), to throw the threshed grain into the air. The wind would carry off the chaff, leaving the heavier grain to fall to the ground. Threshing is used in the Bible as a fitting symbol of how Jehovah's enemies will be beaten and cut to pieces. (Jer 51:33; Mic 4:12, 13) John the Baptist used threshing to illustrate how the righteous would be separated from the wicked.

Related Scripture(s) Mt 3:12; Lu 3:17

- Song 133 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD

- **“Young Ones—Are You Growing Spiritually?”:** (10 min.)
 Lu 2:41, 42—Jesus attended the annual Passover festival with his parents (*nwtsty* study note on Lu 2:41)
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- **Digging for Spiritual Gems:** (8 min.)
 Lu 2:14—What is the meaning of this verse? (*nwtsty* study notes)

Lu 3:23—Who was Joseph’s father? (*wp16.3 9 ¶1-3*)

What has this week’s Bible reading taught you about Jehovah?

What other spiritual gems have you discovered in this week’s Bible reading?

- **Bible Reading:** (4 min. or less) Lu 2:1-20

APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

- **Initial Call:** (2 min. or less) Begin with the sample conversation. Then respond to an objection that is common in your territory.
- **Second Return Visit Video:** (5 min.) Play and discuss the video.
- **Talk:** (6 min. or less) *w14 2/15 26-27*—Theme: What Basis Did First-Century Jews Have for Being “in Expectation” of the Messiah?

LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

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- **“Parents, Give Your Children the Best Chance to Succeed”:** (15 min.) Discussion. Play the video *They Took Every Opportunity* (video category INTERVIEWS AND EXPERIENCES).
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LUKE 2-3 | Young Ones—Are You Growing Spiritually?

From childhood on, Jesus set a fine example in seeking spiritual interests and in showing respect to his parents.

 Young ones, how can you imitate Jesus in each of the following ways?



2:41, 42

Participating in spiritual activities:



2:46, 47

Growing in spiritual understanding:



2:51, 52

Respecting your parents:



Our Christian Life and Ministry

MEETING WORKBOOK

Sample Conversations

▲ Parents in South Africa studying with their children

●○○ INITIAL CALL

Question: How can we know what the future holds?

Scripture: Isa 46:10

Link: What Bible prophecies are we seeing fulfilled today?



●●○ FIRST RETURN VISIT

Question: What Bible prophecies are we seeing fulfilled today?

Scripture: Mt 24:6, 7, 14

Link: What will happen after “the end”?



○○● SECOND RETURN VISIT

Question: What will happen after “the end”?

Scripture: Re 21:4

Link: Where will this Bible prophecy be fulfilled?

Apply Yourself to the Field Ministry

Talk: (6 minutes or less) w14 2/15 26-27

What Basis Did First-Century Jews Have for Being “in Expectation” of the Messiah?

In the days of John the Baptizer, “the people were in expectation and all of them were reasoning in their hearts about John, ‘May he perhaps be the Christ?’” (Luke 3:15) Why might the Jews have expected the Messiah to appear at that time? There are a number of reasons.

After Jesus was born, Jehovah’s angel appeared to shepherds who were tending their flocks in the fields near Bethlehem. The angel proclaimed: “Today there was born to you in David’s city a savior, who is Christ the Lord.” (Luke 2:8-11) After that, the angel was joined by “a multitude of the heavenly army, praising God and saying: ‘Glory in the heights above to God, and on earth peace among men of goodwill.’”—Luke 2:13, 14.

That announcement certainly had a powerful effect on those humble shepherds. They immediately set out for Bethlehem, and when they found Joseph and Mary and the infant Jesus, “they made known the message that they had been told concerning this young child.” As a result, “*all who heard* were astonished at what the shepherds told them.” (Luke 2:17, 18) The expression “all who heard” implies that the shepherds spoke to others besides Joseph and Mary. Then, as the shepherds returned home, they kept “glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, just as it had been told to them.” (Luke 2:20) Those shepherds certainly were not keeping to themselves the good things they had heard about the Christ!

When Mary brought her firstborn son to Jerusalem in order to present him to Jehovah as the Mosaic Law required, the

prophetess Anna “began giving thanks to God and *speaking about the child to all who were waiting for Jerusalem’s deliverance.*” (Luke 2:36-38; Exodus 13:12) Thus, news of the Messiah’s appearance continued to spread.

Later, “astrologers from the East came to Jerusalem, saying: ‘Where is the one born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when we were in the East, and we have come to do obeisance to him.’” (Matthew 2:1, 2) Upon hearing this, “King Herod was agitated, *and all Jerusalem with him.* On gathering together *all the chief priests and scribes* of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born.” (Matthew 2:3, 4) So a great many people were being put on notice: The future Messiah had arrived!

Luke 3:15, quoted earlier, indicates that some Jews thought that John the Baptizer might be the Christ. However, John put that notion to rest with the words: “The one coming after me is stronger than I am, whose sandals I am not worthy to take off. That one will baptize you with holy spirit and with fire.” (Matthew 3:11) John’s modest comment would not fail to heighten Messianic expectations.

Could the first-century Jews have calculated the time of the Messiah’s arrival on the basis of the prophecy of the 70 weeks recorded at Daniel 9:24-27? While that possibility cannot be ruled out, it cannot be confirmed. The fact is that there were many conflicting interpretations of the 70 weeks in Jesus’ day, and none come close to our present understanding.

The Essenes, widely thought to have been a Jewish monastic sect, taught that two Messiahs would appear toward the end of 490 years, but we cannot be certain that the Essenes based their calculations on Daniel’s prophecy. Even if they had done so, it is hard to imagine how the Jews in general would have come to be influenced by the chronology of such a reclusive group.

In the second century C.E., certain Jews believed that the

70 weeks covered the period from the destruction of the first temple in 607 B.C.E. to the destruction of the second temple in 70 C.E., while others connected the fulfillment of the prophecy with the Maccabean period of the second century B.C.E. So there was no clear consensus as to how the 70 weeks should be counted.

If the timing of the 70 weeks had been correctly understood in the first century C.E., one would think that the apostles and other first-century Christians would have referred to it as proof that the promised Messiah had arrived right on time in the person of Jesus Christ. However, there is no evidence that the earliest Christians did so.

Another factor is worth noting. Gospel writers often pointed out that certain prophecies found in the Hebrew Scriptures were fulfilled in Jesus Christ. (Matthew 1:22, 23; 2:13-15; 4:13-16) Yet, not one of them connects Jesus' appearance on earth with the prophecy of the 70 weeks.

In summary: We cannot confirm that people in Jesus' day correctly understood the prophecy of the 70 weeks. However, the Gospels provide other sound reasons why the people would have been "in expectation" of the Messiah.

134 *Children Are a Trust From God*

(Psalm 127:3-5)

1. When a man becomes a father

And a woman has a child of her own,
They share a trust, they must remember,
That is not theirs, not theirs alone.
The gift they share is from Jehovah;
Of life and love he is the one true Source.
To parents he gives sure direction
That they may follow the wisest course.

(CHORUS)

*A sacred trust you have been given;
A precious life is in your hands.
You can bestow the greatest favor;
Instruct your child in God's commands.*

2. All the words God has commanded—

They must always prove to be on your heart.
These words you'll speak to sons and daughters;
This is your trust, this is your part.
To them you'll speak along your roadway,
When you rise up and when you are at rest.
In years to come, may they remember,
May they be faithful, may they be blessed.

(Chorus)

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- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

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2:41, 42

Participating in spiritual activities:



2:46, 47

Growing in spiritual understanding:



2:51, 52

Respecting your parents:

Jon and Sharon Schiller— They Took Every Opportunity

Let's turn our attention to the Schiller family.

Is it possible to balance raising a family with a busy spiritual routine?

And if circumstances allow, can parents reach out for spiritual goals—even full-time service?

Let's listen to their answers to those questions.

Sometimes people say: "Well, you know, what was your secret?

How did you raise six kids?"

We got married September 16, 1972.

Two things started coming quickly—spiritual privileges came along and the children came along—together.

I was made an elder shortly after the elder arrangement came into effect.

The kids were just part of all that, and you might think that sometimes they didn't know it.

We were doing substitute work with five children, and I don't think they even knew what we were doing.

In 1989, we were pioneering, and then we had the opportunity to help out at Bethel, maybe a week or two at a time.

About that time, Patterson was starting up.

And we kind of recognized that maybe we were getting too comfortable.

We went one time to Bethel and said: “Hey, if you need a doctor out at Patterson, why, we’d be available.

Or we could make ourselves available, maybe.”

And wouldn’t you know it, shortly after, we got a call, “How quickly could you sell your place and be up here?”

So we went to Bethel with six kids, sold our house at a loss so we could do that, and started a new life there.

So we learned pretty quickly: Don’t turn down any privileges —and especially not because we had kids.

When we went to Bethel, the oldest one was 17.

Having children kept my husband and me very humble because as soon as you thought you had something figured out, each child needed to be disciplined in a different way.

And as soon as you thought, ‘Boy, you know, I’ve got this figured out,’ you’re thrown a curve.

A challenge was to keep doing the basic things.

You’d come home tired. It would be so easy not to have the family study maybe one Monday.

It’s those basic, simple things that I think kept us on an even keel.

I often think of the illustration that Jesus gave at the end of the Sermon on the Mount, what he said about this foundation that was washed away.

And Jesus never blamed the storm; he blamed the foundation.

And so we recognize that any child anywhere—in fact, even adults—can get their faith tested.

So we tried to really make sure they had a good foundation that didn't get washed away.

Prepare them, let them learn how to deal with people while they're under your care, and get them ready for life.

We got to thinking, 'Other parents require their kids to go to college,' so we just required them to pioneer for a year.

Any kind of education—Any kind of secular education can teach you how to have a skill so that you have a job.

But the Bible teaches you how to live, and it teaches you principles that you can live your life by.

And all of them kept pioneering.

You know, they did various jobs to support themselves.

They cleaned; they worked at lumberyards; they worked on roofing.

And none of them have a complicated life that holds them down.

I wanted everlasting life for my children, and I knew I would have to give them back to Jehovah.

We have to realize we don't own our children—Jehovah does.

And we have to respect that.

We're not telling them what to do anymore.

We appreciate and we're very, very thankful when our children, as far away as they are and as busy as they are, take the time to communicate with us.

And I know you won't remember this, but I remember one time, before you fell asleep at night, I said, "With all that you have done for Jehovah, what would you like in return?"

Do you remember what you said?

You said three words, "All my children."

In Deuteronomy it says: "I have put life and death before you, . . . and you must choose."

So we can do what we can as parents—some things good, some things not so good.

In the end, each one had to make his or her own decision.

And that's why, again, it was not any secret we had.

We're so proud of what the kids decided and how they turned out because it was their decision.

I think that's the thing that we've learned: Don't turn down opportunities.

Isn't it wonderful to hear of ones like Brother and Sister Schiller who have offered their gifts to Jehovah?

Brother Schiller said that it was doing the basic things that kept his family focused spiritually.

So when opportunities came along, he was able to do more, which included pioneering, substitute circuit work, and using the medical training he had already acquired to volunteer at the Patterson Educational Center.

Proverbs 10:22 says: “It is the blessing of Jehovah that makes one rich, and He adds no hardship with it.”(Ftn.)

That certainly has proved true for Brother Schiller and his family.

COMPASSIONATELY CURING A LEPER

MATTHEW 8:1-4 MARK 1:40-45 LUKE 5:12-16

- JESUS HEALS A LEPER

As Jesus and his four disciples go preaching in the “synagogues throughout the whole of Galilee,” news about the wonderful things Jesus is doing spreads widely. (Mark 1:39) Word of his deeds reaches one city where there is a man sick with leprosy. The physician Luke describes him as being “full of leprosy.” (Luke 5:12) In its advanced stages, this dreadful disease slowly disfigures various parts of the body.

So this leper is in a grievous condition and is required to live away from others. Moreover, he is supposed to call out “Unclean, unclean!” when people are nearby and thus protect them from coming too close and risking infection. (Leviticus 13:45, 46) But what does this leper now do? He approaches Jesus and falls upon his face, begging: “Lord, if you



just want to, you can make me clean.”—Matthew 8:2.

What faith the man has in Jesus! And how pitiful his disease must make him appear! How will Jesus respond? What would you have done if you were there? Moved with compassion, Jesus stretches out his hand and actually touches the man. Jesus says to him: “I want to! Be made clean.” (Matthew 8:3) Hard as it might be for some to believe, the leprosy immediately vanishes from the sick man.

How would you like to have a king who is as compassionate and capable as Jesus? The way he treats this leper assures us that when Jesus is King over the whole earth, this Bible prophecy will be fulfilled: “He will have pity on the lowly and the poor, and the lives of the poor he will save.” (Psalm 72:13) Yes, Jesus will then fulfill his heart’s desire to help *all* afflicted ones.

Recall that even prior to the healing of this leper, Jesus’ ministry has been creating great excitement among the people. Now people will hear about this wonderful thing that he has done. Jesus, though, does not want people to put faith in him

merely on the basis of oral reports. He knows the prophecy that says he would “not make his voice heard in the street,” that is, in some sensational way. (Isaiah 42:1, 2) Accordingly, Jesus gives the healed leper the order: “See that you tell no one, but go, show yourself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses appointed.”—Matthew 8:4.

As you can imagine, however, the man is so happy over being healed that he cannot keep to himself what has just happened. He goes off and spreads the news everywhere. This rouses increased interest and curiosity among the people. It gets to the point that Jesus cannot openly go into a city, so for a while he stays in lonely places where nobody lives. Still, people from all over come to be taught by him and to be cured.

- ◇ What effect can leprosy have on a person, and what was a leper required to do?
- ◇ How does a leper appeal to Jesus, and what can we conclude from Jesus’ response?
- ◇ How does the healed man react to what Jesus did, and with what effect on others?

“I Want To”

(Luke 5:13)

1. Kind and patient, perfect in love,
Was Christ, who came down from above.
He took care of our needs
With words and by deeds;
He gave of his time and his love.
He would keep the lowly in mind
By healing the sick, deaf, and blind.
To his royal commission he proved true
And willingly said: “I want to.”

2. We now try to follow his way
In all of our dealings each day.
We are loving and kind
To all whom we find;
We help them to learn and obey.
We respond to friends when in need;
We love them in word and in deed.
So if widows and orphans should ask you,
Then readily say: “I want to.”

APRIL 2018

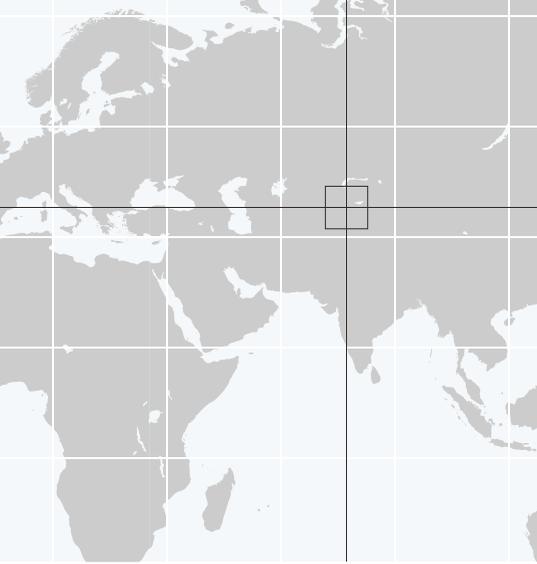
THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



STUDY ARTICLES FOR:
JUNE 4–JULY 8, 2018

LARGE
PRINT
EDITION



COVER IMAGE:

KYRGYZSTAN

A special pioneer couple preach in a remote area near the city of Balykchy

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7

Jehovah, Our Strength

(Isaiah 12:2)

1. Gracious Jehovah, our strength and our might,
You are our Savior, in you we delight.
We are your Witnesses bearing your news,
Whether men hear or they proudly refuse.

(CHORUS)

*Jehovah, our Rock, Our strength and our might,
Your name we make known Both day and night.
Glorious Jehovah, Almighty in pow'r,
You are our hiding place; You are our Tow'r.*

2. We who now serve you rejoice in your light;
Eyes that are opened now see truth and right.
Searching the Scriptures, we hear your command;
Making our choice, for your Kingdom we stand.

(Chorus)

3. Gladly, O God, we keep doing your will.
Though Satan mocks us, we're trusting you still.
Though he may slay us, oh, help us to be
Firm to the end for your grand Sov'reignty.

(Chorus)



SONGS:
7, 3

**HOW WOULD YOU
ANSWER?**

How has Jehovah proved to be a God who gives encouragement?

How did Jesus show himself to be encouraging?

How did the apostles encourage their brothers?

Imitating Jehovah A God Who Gives Encouragement

“Praised be the God . . . who encourages us in all our trials.”

—2 COR. 1:3, 4, ftn.

EVER since humankind fell into sin and imperfection, Jehovah has proved that he is a God who gives encouragement. Immediately after the rebellion in Eden, he gave Adam’s future descen-

1. What encouragement did Jehovah give at the time of the rebellion in Eden?

dants reason to take courage. All was not lost for the human family. Once understood, the prophetic promise written at Genesis 3:15 would give humankind hope that eventually “the original serpent,” Satan the Devil, and all his evil works would be destroyed.—Rev. 12:9; 1 John 3:8.

JEHOVAH ENCOURAGED HIS SERVANTS OF OLD

² Jehovah’s servant Noah lived in an ungodly world where the only people who worshipped Jehovah were members of his family. With violence and sexual perversion rampant all around him, Noah could have become discouraged. (Gen. 6:4, 5, 11; Jude 6) But Jehovah gave him information that infused him with the courage he needed to persevere in his efforts to ‘walk with God.’ (Gen. 6:9) Jehovah told Noah that He was going to put an end to that wicked world and instructed him about what he must do to ensure his family’s safety. (Gen. 6:13-18) Jehovah proved to be for Noah a God of encouragement.

³ Later, Joshua had the daunting task of settling God’s people in the Promised Land. This involved

-
2. How did Jehovah encourage Noah?
 3. What encouragement did Joshua receive? (See opening picture.)

conquering powerful armies of the nations that occupied the territory. Joshua had every reason to be apprehensive. Knowing this, Jehovah instructed Moses to reassure Joshua. God said: “Commission Joshua and encourage him and strengthen him, because he is the one who will cross over before this people and he is the one who will cause them to inherit the land that you will see.” (Deut. 3:28) Before Joshua went into action, Jehovah encouraged him, saying: “Have I not commanded you? Be courageous and strong. Do not be struck with terror or fear, for Jehovah your God is with you wherever you go.” (Josh. 1:1, 9) What reassuring encouragement!

⁴ Not only did Jehovah encourage individuals but he also gave words of encouragement to his people as a group. In prophetic terms that would prove to be of comfort to the Jews held captive in Babylon, Jehovah stated: “Do not be afraid, for I am with you. Do not be anxious, for I am your God. I will fortify you, yes, I will help you, I will really hold on to you with my right hand of righteousness.” (Isa. 41:10) The early Christians had the same assurance, and so do God’s people today.—**Read 2 Corinthians 1:3, 4.**

4, 5. (a) What encouragement did Jehovah give to his ancient people? (b) How did Jehovah encourage his Son?

⁵ Jesus himself received encouragement from his Father. At his baptism, Jesus heard a voice from heaven say: “This is my Son, the beloved, whom I have approved.” (Matt. 3:17) How those words must have strengthened Jesus throughout his earthly ministry!

JESUS GAVE ENCOURAGEMENT

⁶ Jesus imitated his Father’s example. The parable of the talents, given in Jesus’ prophecy about the conclusion of the system of things, encourages faithfulness. The master honored each of the faithful slaves with the words: “Well done, good and faithful slave! You were faithful over a few things. I will appoint you over many things. Enter into the joy of your master.” (Matt. 25:21, 23) What strong encouragement to continue serving Jehovah faithfully!

⁷ Jesus’ apostles often quarreled over who was the greatest among them, but Jesus patiently encouraged them to humble themselves and to become servants, not bosses. (Luke 22:24-26) Peter in particular disappointed Jesus several times. (Matt. 16:21-23; 26:31-35, 75) Rather than reject Peter,

6. How does the parable of the talents provide encouragement?

7. What encouragement did Jesus give to his apostles and to Peter in particular?

Jesus encouraged him and even commissioned him to strengthen his brothers.—John 21:16.

ENCOURAGEMENT GIVEN IN ANCIENT TIMES

⁸ Even before Jehovah’s Son came to earth and set a perfect example of how to impart encouragement, faithful servants of Jehovah were conscious of the need to be encouraging. When threatened by the Assyrians, Hezekiah assembled the military chiefs and the people of Judah to encourage them. “And the people were strengthened by [his] words.”—Read **2 Chronicles 32:6-8**.

⁹ Although in need of consolation himself, Job gave his three “troublesome comforters” a lesson in giving encouragement. He told them that if he had been in their place, he ‘would have strengthened them with the words of his mouth, and the consolation of his lips would have brought them relief.’ (Job 16:1-5) Finally, Job received encouragement from Elihu and from Jehovah himself.—Job 33:24, 25; 36:1, 11; 42:7, 10.

8. How did Hezekiah encourage the military chiefs and the people of Judah?

9. What does the book of Job teach us about giving encouragement?

¹⁰ Another example in ancient times of someone in need of encouragement is Jephthah's daughter. Before going out to combat the Ammonites, Judge Jephthah vowed that if Jehovah gave him the victory, the first person who would come out to meet him after the battle would be devoted to Jehovah's service at the sanctuary. It so happened that it was his daughter, his only child, who came out to celebrate his victory with him. Jephthah's heart was broken. But he kept his vow and sent his virgin daughter to Shiloh to serve at the tabernacle for the rest of her life.—Judg. 11:30-35.

¹¹ However hard this was on Jephthah, it may have been harder still on his daughter, who willingly complied with her father's decision. (Judg. 11:36, 37) She thus relinquished the right to marry, to have children, and to preserve the family name and inheritance. If anyone, then, needed comfort and encouragement, she did. The Bible account states: "It became a custom in Israel: From year to year, the young women of Israel would go to give commendation to the daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite four days in the year." (Judg. 11:39, 40) Do not unmarried Christians who use their singleness to

10, 11. (a) Why did Jephthah's daughter need to be encouraged?
(b) Who today deserve similar encouragement?

give greater attention to “the things of the Lord” also deserve commendation and encouragement? —1 Cor. 7:32-35.

THE APOSTLES ENCOURAGED THEIR BROTHERS

¹² On the night before his death, Jesus told the apostle Peter: “Simon, Simon, look! Satan has demanded to have all of you to sift you as wheat. But I have made supplication for you that your faith may not give out; and you, once you have returned, strengthen your brothers.”—Luke 22:31, 32.

¹³ Peter proved to be a pillar in the early Christian congregation. (Gal. 2:9) He encouraged his brothers by his courageous example at Pentecost and thereafter. Toward the end of his long ministry, he wrote to fellow Christians. Explaining why, he stated: “I have written you in few words in order to encourage you and to give an earnest witness that this is the true undeserved kindness of God. Stand firm in it.” (1 Pet. 5:12) Peter’s inspired letters have continued to be a source of encouragement to Christians throughout the ages and up to this day. How we need this encouragement as we await the fulfillment of Jehovah’s promises!—2 Pet. 3:13.

12, 13. How did Peter ‘strengthen his brothers’?

¹⁴ The apostle John was also a pillar in the early Christian congregation. His riveting Gospel account of Jesus' ministry has been a source of encouragement to Christians throughout the centuries—and still is. His Gospel alone preserves Jesus' statement that love is the identifying mark of his true disciples.—Read John 13:34, 35.

¹⁵ John's three letters contain further gems of truth. When we are weighed down with the burden of sin, are we not relieved to read that “the blood of Jesus . . . cleanses us from all sin”? (1 John 1:7) And if our heart continues to condemn us, do we not get a lump in our throat and tears of gratitude in our eyes when we read that “God is greater than our hearts”? (1 John 3:20) John alone wrote that “God is love.” (1 John 4:8, 16) His second and third letters commend Christians who continue “walking in the truth.”—2 John 4; 3 John 3, 4.

¹⁶ In the first century, perhaps the apostle who did the most to encourage his brothers was the apostle Paul. It appears that in the early days of Christianity, most of the apostles remained in

14, 15. How have the inspired writings of the apostle John been a source of encouragement for Christians throughout the centuries?
16, 17. What encouragement did the apostle Paul give the early Christians?



Jerusalem, which continued to be the location of the governing body. (Acts 8:14; 15:2) Christians in Judea preached Christ to people who because of the influence of Judaism believed in one God. On the other hand, the apostle Paul was sent by the holy spirit to preach to the people of the nations of the Greco-Roman world, who worshipped many gods. —Gal. 2:7-9; 1 Tim. 2:7.



The apostles' letters did much to encourage the congregations in the first century, and they build us up to this day
(See paragraphs 12-17)

¹⁷ Paul traveled far and wide in what is now Turkey, as well as in Greece and Italy, establishing Christian congregations among non-Jews. These newly converted Christians “suffered at the hands of [their] own countrymen” and needed

encouragement. (1 Thess. 2:14) About the year 50 C.E., Paul wrote to the young congregation in Thessalonica: “We always thank God when we mention all of you in our prayers, for we continually remember your faithful work, your loving labor, and your endurance.” (1 Thess. 1:2, 3) He also exhorted them to strengthen one another, saying: “Keep encouraging one another and building one another up.”—1 Thess. 5:11.

AN ENCOURAGING GOVERNING BODY

¹⁸ The first-century governing body proved to be a source of encouragement both to those taking the lead and to Christians in general. When Philip the evangelizer preached about Christ to the Samaritans, he received the full backing of those on the governing body. They sent two of their number, Peter and John, to pray for the new believers to receive holy spirit. (Acts 8:5, 14-17) How Philip himself as well as those he had converted must have been encouraged by this support from the governing body!

¹⁹ Later, the governing body was called upon to decide whether non-Jewish Christians should be re-

18. How did the first-century governing body encourage Philip?

19. What effect did the letter sent by the governing body have on the early Christian congregation?

quired to submit to circumcision, as had been required of Jews by the Law of Moses. (Acts 15:1, 2) Under the guidance of the holy spirit and after reasoning on the Scriptures, the responsible brothers decided that this was no longer necessary, and they wrote a letter to the congregations to that effect. Representatives of the governing body were sent out to the congregations to deliver the letter. The result? “After reading it, they rejoiced over the encouragement.”—Acts 15:27-32.

²⁰ Today, the Governing Body of Jehovah’s Witnesses gives encouragement to Bethel family members, to special full-time field workers, and indeed, to the entire international brotherhood of true Christians. And the result is the same as in the first century—rejoicing over the encouragement! In addition, in 2015 the Governing Body published the brochure *Return to Jehovah*, which has proved to be a rich source of encouragement to many throughout the world. But is it only those in authority who should imitate Jehovah in giving encouragement? The answer to that question will be found in the following article.

20. (a) What encouragement does the Governing Body today give to the international brotherhood? (b) What question will be answered in the following article?

3

Our Strength, Our Hope, Our Confidence

(Proverbs 14:26)

1. O Jehovah, you have given us
a hope that we hold dear.
It's a hope we find so thrilling
we want the world to hear.
But at times this life's anxieties
are the cause of fears within,
And the hope that burned so brightly
has suddenly grown dim.

(CHORUS)

*You're our strength, you're our hope,
you're our confidence.*

Whatever we lack, you supply.

*When we preach, when we teach,
we have confidence*

because it's on you we rely.

2. So Jehovah, please instill in us
a heart that won't forget,
For you've always been our comfort
when troubled times we've met.
And these thoughts that lift and strengthen us
can revive that dying flame,
For they fill our hearts with courage
to speak about your name.

(Chorus)

