

## The Discipler's Commentary

Answer Outline for the Discipler

Luke 2

2:1-20 – The account of Jesus' birth in Bethlehem and the witness of the shepherds

Joseph and Mary lived in Nazareth, a small town in Galilee, aka the land of the Gentiles

- *Whenever locations are mentioned, such as towns or the region of Galilee, a map is useful for students to gain perspective. Maps are often found in the back of some study Bibles.*
- *It also may be helpful to have the disciple look up Old Testament references that prophecy events surrounding Jesus' birth. Specifically, have the student look up Isaiah 9:1 and Micah 5:2. Seeing OT prophecies fulfilled is an important way to build faith.*

Bethlehem is called the "City of David" because that was where David was from

- *David, son of Jesse, a "Bethlehemite," is found in 1 Samuel 16.*
- *Help the disciple see the "big picture" of God's plan that Jesus had to be born in Bethlehem.*

Verse 5 states that Mary was "engaged" to Joseph and was with child

- *It would be important here to differentiate between being "engaged" in modern-day America and being engaged in Jewish culture. In Jewish culture, engagement was a legal contract between families.*
- *Have the disciple attempt to describe how Mary, being unmarried but "with child," would have been looked up by her relatives, her family, her friends and her community.*

The shepherds were watching sheep being raised for the purpose of sacrifice at the temple

- *It would be helpful here to include the information that the sheep were probably grazing under the shadow of Herod's residence, and that they were being raised specifically for sacrifice. Help the disciple see the relationship between these sheep and the "lamb of God," Jesus.*
- *Depending on the disciple's knowledge of the OT, some review may need to be made of the "Passover" lamb sacrifice in Exodus 12, and how Jesus fulfilled that role.*

Though Gabriel announced that "the Child" was the Son of God, the angels call Him the Messiah (Christ)

- *Messiah means "Anointed One." For scriptural references on this, see Ps. 2:2, Dan. 9:25, and John 1:41. King David was a "type" of Messiah. A Jewish tradition had been built up over the centuries that a Messiah would come to deliver Israel from all their enemies.*

2:21-38 – The account of Jesus' presentation at the Temple and the blessing by Simeon

Jesus was circumcised on the "eighth day" and presented with an offering because He was first born

- *This ceremony was instituted in the Mosaic law; the firstborn was always presented as an offering to God (Ex. 13:2; Lev. 27:26).*
- *Discuss with the disciple the significance that Joseph and Mary had to offer "turtledoves." Tie this fact into the events surrounding Jesus' birth in a stable.*

A man named Simeon, who is not a priest, is described as "righteous and devout"

- *Have the disciple attempt to describe what it would mean to be "righteous and devout" today. Make sure that the disciple does not limit his or her description to things one does or doesn't do (works), but to focus on the importance of relationships and the role of love in the disciple's life.*

Simeon received a promise from the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he saw the Messiah

- *Make sure the disciple understands that this was a unique promise given at a unique time, and therefore, not applicable to everyone. What is applicable is that God fulfills His universal promises to all believers, such as the promise of eternal life.*

Simeon's blessing upon the Child includes the prophetic words that He would be "a light to the Gentiles"

- *This will be an important concept to understand as the disciple begins learning about the gospel being received among the Gentiles in the Book of Acts, and the apostle Paul's role in that mission.*

Simeon also prophesies that Mary, the mother of Jesus, will suffer great personal pain

- *There are a multitude of lessons that can be gleaned from this passage. The most important one, perhaps, is that with the good news of Jesus Christ, there comes sacrifice and suffering. Sacrifice and suffering are a NORMAL part of the disciple's life. Refer to Rom. 8:17 and 2 Tim. 3:12.*

Anna is a widow who devoted her life serving in the temple with "fastings and prayers"

- *Have the disciple describe what was special about Anna. Speculate as to why Luke included her in his gospel.*

2:39-52 – The account of Jesus' trip with His family to Jerusalem and His teaching in the temple

Every year, Jesus' parents traveled to Jerusalem for the Feast of Passover

- *Provide the information that Jewish men were required to make a pilgrimage to the temple in Jerusalem three times a year: at Passover (Feast of Unleavened Bread), Pentecost (Harvest; Feast of Weeks), and Feast of Booths (Feast of Ingathering). This is found in Exodus 23:15-17.*

Jesus was teaching Jewish scholars in the temple when He was 12, one year *before* being an accountable adult

- *At 13, Jewish boys go through a ritual called "bar mitzvah," which means "son of commandment." (Young girls go through "bat mitzvah" at age 12.) This means they became accountable as adults under the law of Moses.*

Jesus' parents are unable to locate Jesus in the caravan, but find Him teaching in the temple after three days

- *Help the disciple see the significance of the "three days," and how that ties into the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ.*

Joseph and Mary did not understand what Jesus meant when He said He had to be in His Father's house

- *Raise this question for the disciple to ponder: how can we today be in our Father's house? Many will think of being in church. But the answer is much more profound. We are in our Father's house when we pray.*

At this time, Jesus did not have complete understanding of God's will because He was "increasing in wisdom"

- *Ask the disciple how he or she intends to "increase in wisdom" over the rest of their lifetime. Does this mean increasing in knowledge, or in the wisdom of the world? Have the disciple read 1 Corinthians 2:6-16 and Colossians 1:9.*
- *Finally, ask the disciple how God is speaking to him or her personally through this chapter.*