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LUKE

JOURNEY WITH JESUS

EXPANDED OUTLINES AND COMMENTS BY
PAUL CHAPPELL

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First published in 2018 by Striving Together Publications, a ministry of Lancaster Baptist Church, Lancaster, CA 93535. Striving Together Publications is committed to providing tried, trusted, and proven books that will further equip local churches to carry out the Great Commission. Your comments and suggestions are valued.

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Striving Together Publications
4020 E. Lancaster Blvd.
Lancaster, CA 93535
800.201.7748

Cover design by Andrew Jones
Layout by Craig Parker
Edited by Johnny Albertini and Andrew Jones

The author and publication team have put forth every effort to give proper credit to quotes and thoughts that are not original with the author. It is not our intent to claim originality with any quote or thought that could not readily be tied to an original source.

ISBN 978-1-59894-359-7
Printed in the United States of America

DEDICATION

To the graduates of West Coast Baptist College
proclaiming the gospel of Christ to their generation

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS



I would like to thank Rick Houk and David Adams for their help in study. Thank you both for your thoroughness and faithfulness. Thank you also to Jerry Scheidbach and Tobi England for your help in reviewing these notes.

I also wish to thank Johnny Albertini and Andrew Jones for helping me prepare these notes for publication.

Especially, I wish to thank the Lancaster Baptist Church family for being a people who love God's Word and walk in its truths. It was a delight to prepare these messages for you.

INTRODUCTION



For over three decades as the pastor of Lancaster Baptist Church, I have had the joy of preaching verse by verse through books of the Bible. I thank God for a congregation of people who have evidenced a hunger for the preaching of the Word through the years.

In this study of Luke, I invite you to join me as we “Journey with Jesus.” Luke is the longest book in the New Testament with over one thousand verses, and it has been one of the greatest biblical journeys I have undertaken in preaching. There are ninety-two messages in this volume with outlined sermon notes and comments covering the entire book of Luke. This is not a full commentary, but expanded outlines with cross references, word studies, illustrations, and comments.

Throughout these pages, we’ll retrace the footsteps of our Lord from His birth to His resurrection. At the end of the study, I believe you’ll be challenged and encouraged in your walk with the Saviour.

I suggest that you use this volume either as a resource for your own sermon preparation or as a personal study guide for your devotional time. Read with an open Bible and an open heart. May God’s Spirit use His Word to deepen your walk with Him and lead you forward on your journey with Jesus.

Sincerely,

Pastor Paul Chappell
Lancaster, CA
April 2018

OUTLINE 1

OPENING OF THE BOOK OF LUKE

LUKE 1:1-4



“Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us, 2 Even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eyewitnesses, and ministers of the word; 3 It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus, 4 That thou mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed.” (Luke 1:1-4)

INTRODUCTION

The book of Luke was the first of two volumes written by the Gentile medical doctor, Luke. Both books he authored, Luke and Acts, were addressed to the same man—Theophilus. Luke traveled with Paul on many of his missionary journeys and stayed with the apostle during the last days of Paul’s ministry. Because of his profession as a physician, Luke’s writings are extremely detailed. He includes many events not found in any of the other Gospel accounts. All of these details used by Luke serve to show us with certainty that our faith is based on proven facts.

Throughout the book, Luke focuses on the humanity of the Lord Jesus Christ as the perfect human being in life and character. Christ is portrayed as the compassionate Son of man, who came to live among sinners, love them, help them, and die for them.

As we begin our study, let us discover the truths found in these first several verses of Luke’s Gospel.

1. THE DECLARATION OF CHRIST (vv. 1-2)

Luke begins by declaring the facts of the life and ministry of Jesus Christ. The Christian faith is not simply the ideas of men, but is based on historical facts. As Luke investigated and interviewed with eyewitnesses, the events of Christ’s life and ministry were declared by three sources:

A. Declared by First-Century Writers (vs. 1a)

Although Luke wrote this inspired text under the direction of the Holy Spirit, he consulted the written works of other men. Luke uses different literary terms in these first few verses to suggest that others had written historical narratives of the life of Christ.

Definition: *to set forth in order*—to put together in order, to arrange, to compose.

Definition: *declaration*—from the Greek word *diegesis* which suggests a narrative composed of notes that are compiled into a digest and then circulated.

B. Declared by First-Century Believers (vs. 1b)

Luke acknowledged the first century believers as another source for his material. During his interviews with the first century believers, he would have discovered that the early Christians believed surely the historical accuracy of the life and ministry of Jesus Christ. There were no questions or doubts about their faith—it was “on sure grounds.”

In this day, as in the first century, we need Christian men and women who will believe surely in the faith, and refuse to be dissuaded by scorners or skeptics.

“And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform.” (Romans 4:21)

“He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.” (John 3:18)

C. Declared by First-Century Ministers (vs. 2)

EYEWITNESSES

The eyewitnesses referenced in verse two are the apostles, Luke’s primary source for information about Christ’s life. These men had seen the resurrected Christ and been present for most of the Lord’s ministry.

MINISTERS OF THE WORD

The early Christians held the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ in high esteem, as a sacred trust. They counted the gospel as their most precious possession.

“Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God.” (1 Corinthians 4:1)

Quote: “The term ‘word’ here means the ‘gospel.’ Luke never uses it, as John does, to denote the second Person of the Trinity. These eye-witnesses and ministers refer, doubtless, to the seventy disciples, to the apostles, and perhaps to other preachers who had gone forth to proclaim the same things.”
—**Albert Barnes**, Barnes’ Notes Electronic Database.

2. THE DETERMINATION OF LUKE (vv. 3-4)

Luke was not content to merely learn about the Lord Jesus Christ and the gospel. After researching the life of Christ, he became determined to share the truth of the gospel with others. This determination to share what he had learned was accomplished in three ways:

A. By the Spirit

Luke did not write his Gospel account by his own power; he was prompted by the Holy Spirit. For this Gospel to be accurate, the Holy Spirit guided the writer to pen the correct words.

“For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.” (2 Peter 1:21)

“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:” (2 Timothy 3:16)

B. By Experience

As a result of his painstaking investigation, Luke wrote from a clear understanding of the events that transpired during Christ’s life. More than anyone else in the church, he had the abilities and opportunity to consult with eyewitnesses of Jesus’ ministry and consolidate their accounts.

For more than two years of Paul’s imprisonment in Caesarea, Luke had the chance to meet and interview many of the apostles and other eyewitnesses of Christ’s ministry. In 1 Corinthians, Paul details the many people who saw with their own eyes the resurrected Christ. Luke would have had the opportunity to meet many of these people.

“And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: 6 After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. 7 After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles. 8 And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time.” (1 Corinthians 15:5–8)

C. By Order of Events

Equipped with the Holy Spirit and the vast amount of information he had received through eyewitness accounts, Luke carried out his task of writing to produce an orderly narrative of the life of Christ. Verse three tells us that Luke wrote “in order,” meaning he intentionally recorded the events in chronological order, making his Gospel easy to follow.

“That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life;” (1 John 1:1)

3. THE DEVOTION OF THEOPHILUS (vv. 3b-4a)

The name *Theophilus* means “Lover of God.” Based on the meaning of Theophilus’ name, Luke’s Gospel was written to every person who loves God.

A. A New Believer

Theophilus was a new believer who had already received some instruction about the life of Christ. This new believer also exhibited a desire to keep growing as a Christian.

B. A Prominent Believer

Because Luke addresses this man as “most excellent Theophilus,” it is likely that Theophilus was a wealthy, educated man in the Roman government.

C. A Growing Believer

Theophilus was living in an era when people declared Caesar as lord. But after placing his faith in Christ, Theophilus was changing his allegiance. There was a chance he could lose his prominence because of his faith in Christ. Luke was essentially discipling Theophilus, writing to convince him of the certainty of the Christian faith.

The Christian faith is not built upon blind belief but upon specific facts that, when related to history, can be proven true.

“But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.” (John 20:31)

Quote: “There is, I imagine, no body of literature in the world that has been exposed to the stringent analytical study that the four Gospels have sustained for the past two hundred years. This is not something to be regretted: it is something to be accepted with satisfaction. Scholars today who treat the Gospels as credible historical documents do so in the full light of this analytical study, not by closing their minds to it.”—**F.F. Bruce**, *The Historical Reliability of the Gospels, Second Edition*.

D. A Generous Believer

It is very possible that Luke may have been paid by Theophilus to investigate and write this Gospel. In verse three, Luke was possibly acknowledging the man who had sponsored his research and made it possible to write the Gospel of Luke.

Isn’t it wonderful that the wealthy and the poor are able to give to the work of Jesus! The Philippians were able to contribute to Paul’s ministry.

“Now ye Philippians know also, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning

giving and receiving, but ye only. 16 For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity. 17 Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account.” (Philippians 4:15–17)

CONCLUSION

As we open the book of Luke, we are challenged with three questions from these first few verses:

The declaration of Christ—do you believe?

The Christian faith is based on historical facts. But these facts do not make a difference unless we believe them and trust in Jesus Christ to save us.

The determination of Luke —do you want others to know?

The entire reason that Luke wrote this Gospel was so that Theophilus could know the certainty of the Christian faith. Will we only grow in knowledge about Jesus Christ, or will we share that knowledge, the gospel, with others?

The devotion of Theophilus—will you help others to know?

Theophilus risked his prominent position to become a Christian. He gave financial support to Luke’s mission of gathering information and compiling the gospel. Every Christian can give to the Lord’s work and help to accomplish the ultimate goal of reaching every person with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

OUTLINE 2

THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

LUKE 1:5-25



“There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judaea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the course of Abia: and his wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elisabeth. 6 And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. 7 And they had no child, because that Elisabeth was barren, and they both were now well stricken in years. 8 And it came to pass, that while he executed the priest’s office before God in the order of his course, 9 According to the custom of the priest’s office, his lot was to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord. 10 And the whole multitude of the people were praying without at the time of incense. 11 And there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense. 12 And when Zacharias saw him, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him. 13 But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John. 14 And thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth. 15 For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother’s womb. 16 And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God. 17 And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord. 18 And Zacharias said unto the angel, Whereby shall I know this? for I am an old man, and my wife well stricken in years. 19 And the angel answering said unto him, I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God; and am sent to speak unto thee, and to shew thee these glad tidings. 20 And, behold, thou shalt be dumb, and not able to speak, until the day that these things shall be performed, because thou believest not my words, which shall be fulfilled in their season. 21 And the people waited for Zacharias, and marvelled that he tarried so long in the temple. 22 And when he came out, he could not speak unto them: and they perceived that he had seen a vision in the temple: for he beckoned unto them, and remained speechless. 23 And it came to pass, that, as soon as the days of his ministration were accomplished, he departed to his own house. 24 And after those days his wife Elisabeth conceived, and hid herself five months, saying, 25 Thus hath the Lord dealt with me in the days wherein he looked on me, to take away my reproach among men.” (Luke 1:5-25)

INTRODUCTION

The current text finds Israel in the midst of very dark days. The people had heard no prophetic word from God since the prophet Malachi had promised the coming of Elijah over four hundred years earlier (Malachi 4:5–6). The nation's spiritual leaders were shackled by tradition and, in some instances, outright corruption. The king, Herod the Great, was a tyrant and an extremely wicked man. He had nine wives, one of whom he had executed on a whim.

But no matter how spiritually dark the day might be, God always has a remnant of people who are devoted to Him. Zacharias and Elisabeth were a part of that remnant of believers. Regardless of the wickedness that may be exhibited in the lives of earthly rulers, God is still on His throne in Heaven, and He is still sovereign over the affairs of men. In the midst of these circumstances, God was still at work and sent a man to prepare the way for His Son. That man was John the Baptist.

John the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ, was prophesied to come by the prophet Malachi (Malachi 3:1). John was a type of Elijah at Christ's first advent (Luke 1:17). In addition to this, John the Baptist was the last prophet to announce the coming of Jesus Christ (Matthew 17:11–13). The prophet John was sent to prepare the people for the soon coming of Jesus.

Verse five tells us that all of this was taking place “in the days of Herod.” Herod was the provincial king of the Jews, appointed by the Roman Senate at the suggestion of Octavius and Mark Antony. As already mentioned, Herod was a very cruel man, exhibited when he ordered the slaughter of the firstborn sons. Many of the buildings he commissioned can still be seen in Jerusalem and Caesarea.

This passage takes us to the Jerusalem of the first century. This was the city God had appointed as the central place of Jewish worship. At the time of Christ, Jerusalem was a city of roughly 100,000 people. One of the most impressive structures in the city was the Jewish Temple, which had been destroyed in 598 B.C. but was later renovated during Herod's rule.

The Jewish people journeyed to the Temple to worship God at least three times each year—the Passover, Pentecost, and Feast of Tabernacles. The passage tells us that Zacharias was a priest and was therefore involved in the sacrifices at the Temple.

We will discover from this passage how God prepared John the Baptist as the forerunner of Jesus Christ.

1. THE PARENTS OF A PROPHET (vv. 5–7)

Zacharias and Elisabeth show us that despite the godlessness around us we can still live for God. They were faithful believers, serving the Lord. This godly couple was successful in standing for God, even in the spiritual darkness surrounding them.

“Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.” (Ephesians 6:13)

Quote: “Zacharias and Elisabeth represent the best of Old Testament piety and as the faithful remnant received the good news of the gospel (Luke 1:19). They are an indication that the good news Jesus brings does not conflict with the faith of Israel in the Old Testament.”—**New American Commentary**

Zacharias and Elisabeth were referred to as “just” or “holy.” This means that they had more than just an external conformity to the law. This was an honorable testimony of their “piety” toward God.

A. A Godly Father (v. 5a)

John would have received an excellent training in the home of Zacharias, who was a priest of the Levites. According to the historian Josephus, there were twenty thousand priests at that time. Because of so many priests, they were divided into twenty-four courses. (Zacharias was of the course of Abia.) Each course served two weeks out of the year, plus the special feast days.

Definition: *Zacharias*—the Lord remembers.

“And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.” (Luke 1:6)

B. A Devoted Mother (v. 5b)

Elisabeth was a daughter of Aaron, similar to what people today would call a “preacher’s kid.” She was a godly woman who served God her whole life.

Definition: *Elisabeth*—God’s oath.

Quote: “The mention of Zechariah and Elizabeth’s childlessness and their being past childbearing age points to the human impossibility of the events to come and heightens the miraculous character of God’s intervention in their son’s birth.”—**Robert H. Stein**, *The New American Commentary: Vol. 24*

In the Jewish culture, it was a reproach and a difficulty for a couple to be childless. It was the constant prayer of Zacharias and Elisabeth that God would bless them with children. Many modern Christians have an idol—the family. If their family is happy and healthy, they will serve God. However, Zacharias and Elisabeth chose to serve God even when He had denied them the privilege of rearing children.

2. THE PRAYERS OF THE PARENTS (vv. 8–17)

A. The Supplication of Zacharias (vv. 8–9)

Quote: “Poverty-stricken as the church is today in many things, she is most stricken here, in the place of prayer. We have many organizers, but few agonizers; many players and payers, few prayers; many singers, few clingers; lots of pastors, few wrestlers; many fears, few tears; much fashion, little

passion; many interferers, few intercessors; many writers, but few fighters. Failing here, we fail everywhere.”—**Leonard Ravenhill**

The Greek word for “temple” in verse 9 is *naos*, referring to the sanctuary or the Holy Place. The word for “temple” in Luke 2:27, 37, and 46 is *hieron*, referring to the entire temple complex.

As a priest, it was the privilege of Zacharias to offer prayers to God in the Temple. The privilege to offer incense was given to a priest only once in his lifetime. After the morning sacrifice was offered upon the altar, Zacharias would have entered the Holy Place alone, bearing the censer of fresh incense. To his left would be the glow of the golden candlestick. At his right was the table of shewbread. As he moved toward the altar of incense, he could see beyond to the veil that separated the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies: where the ark of the covenant and the mercy seat were. Zacharias would then place the fresh incense on the altar, waiting for it to catch fire and begin to smolder. He would worship the Lord and pray, then back out and return to the courtyard outside.

It is probable that Zacharias would have prayed for the deliverance of Israel, and perhaps that God would bless him with a son.

While it is amazing to think of the incredible privilege that Zacharias had to enter the Temple and pray, believers today can enter God’s presence anywhere, at any time. There is no priest or pastor between us and God. We have direct access through the blood of Jesus Christ. When we pray to God, it pleases Him.

“Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense; and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.” (Psalm 141:2)

B. The Surprise of Zacharias (v. 11)

THE APPEARANCE OF GABRIEL (v. 11)

Moments before, Zacharias had been praying to God and now finds himself standing face to face with the angel Gabriel. This is the first revelation or supernatural appearance from God in four hundred years to anyone in Israel.

THE ANSWER OF THE LORD (vv. 13–15)

Gabriel relayed God’s message to Zacharias that, in answer to his prayer, God would give him a son. The angel instructed Zacharias to name his son “John.”

Definition: *John*—Favored of Jehovah, the Lord hath given grace.

Zacharias learned from Gabriel that John would be great in God’s sight. The child would be filled with the Holy Spirit and would take the vow of a Nazarite, abstaining from wine or strong drink (Luke 7:33).

It is interesting to note that God often speaks to His people and calls them while they are busy living their daily lives. Both Moses and David were caring for sheep, Gideon was threshing wheat, and Peter was fishing when God

called them. It is difficult to steer a car when the engine is not running. When we are busy, God begins to direct us.

The Scripture here tells us that John would be filled with the Holy Ghost, “even from his mother’s womb.” Being “pro-life” is a biblical position, not a political position. Many people today want to defend abortion in the name of their personal rights. However, the Bible is very clear that the unborn child is just as much a person as a child after birth.

“Thus saith the LORD that made thee, and formed thee from the womb, which will help thee; Fear not, O Jacob, my servant; and thou, Jeshurun, whom I have chosen.” (Isaiah 44:2)

C. The Service of John the Baptist

TO TURN HEARTS TO THE LORD (v. 16)

The message he shared was for the people to repent and turn to Jesus.

“Let us search and try our ways, and turn again to the LORD.” (Lamentations 3:40)

TO MAKE READY A PEOPLE FOR THE LORD (v. 17)

John the Baptist was sent to prepare the hearts of the people for the coming of Jesus.

“And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.” (Malachi 4:6)

3. THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD (vv. 18–25)

Even though Elisabeth and Zacharias did not understand what was happening, God did. He is always in control of every situation, providing in ways we cannot see.

A. When We Doubt (v. 18)

THE DOUBT OF ZACHARIAS (v. 18)

Zacharias had waited his whole life for a son. He knew that God had miraculously intervened in the births of Isaac and Samuel so many years before. Zacharias was not an atheist; he believed in God.

Why do we so often doubt God? He has proven Himself so many times in the past.

“Ah Lord GOD! behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee:” (Jeremiah 32:17)

THE ASSURANCE OF GABRIEL (v. 19)

After seeing the doubt on Zacharias’ face, the angel revealed his name as Gabriel, and stated that he stands in the presence of God. This statement gives additional weight to the truth of the message Gabriel was delivering.

THE JUDGMENT OF GOD (v. 20)

Zacharias was punished with dumbness for his unbelief.

Quote: “Faith is blessed, but unbelief is judged; and Zacharias was struck dumb...until the Word was fulfilled.”—**Warren Wiersbe**, *The Wiersbe Bible Commentary*

Quote: “...Zacharias’ tongue which had uttered unbelief, was struck speechless...”—**R. Kent Hughes**, *Luke: That You May Know the Truth*

B. When We Wait (v. 23–25)

God is always working behind the scenes in our lives, even when we can’t see the work He is doing. Sometimes the waiting periods seem endless, but God has a plan, and He is in control.

Quote: “When we bless God for mercies, we usually prolong them. When we bless God for miseries, we usually end them. Praise is the honey of life which a devout heart extracts from every bloom of providence and grace.”
—**C.H. Spurgeon**

ELISABETH RECEIVED A SON (v. 24)

The Lord had miraculously provided a son to Elisabeth in her old age.

ELISABETH RECEIVED THE GRACE OF GOD (v. 25)

In the Jewish society, failure to bear children resulted in earthly disgrace. The reproach that Elisabeth had received from others had now been removed by God’s grace. Zacharias’ failure to believe God resulted in the inability to speak. But when they acknowledged and obeyed God, He swept away the disgrace, and they praised Him.

Illustration: The Apostle Paul wrote about the grace that God gives through trials of life...

“Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ’s sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.” (2 Corinthians 12:10)

CONCLUSION

Elisabeth rejoiced because her reproach had been taken away. God is able to take away any reproach that we may have. But there is one reproach that is shared by all men, and that is sin.

“But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.” (Galatians 3:22)

“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; 24 Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: 25 Whom God hath set forth to be

a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;” (Romans 3:23–25)

If you do not know Jesus as Saviour:

We have already seen that all of us share in a common reproach called sin. But this reproach, this sin, can be removed if we trust in Jesus Christ as Saviour.

If you are a parent:

Will you commit to stay faithful to God, to pray for your children as they are raised in a spiritually dark world? Zacharias and Elisabeth did, and God blessed them for it.

If you are struggling to trust God to provide:

Remember that God is always at work in our lives behind the scenes. He often calls us when we are busy with the normal events of life. He is faithful, and He will provide.

OUTLINE 3

THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF JESUS' BIRTH

LUKE 1:26-38



“And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, 27 To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin’s name was Mary. 28 And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women. 29 And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be. 30 And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God. 31 And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. 32 He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: 33 And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end. 34 Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? 35 And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God. 36 And, behold, thy cousin Elisabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age: and this is the sixth month with her, who was called barren. 37 For with God nothing shall be impossible. 38 And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her.” (Luke 1:26-38)

INTRODUCTION

In this lesson, we will begin to learn about the incarnation of Jesus Christ. The greatest news ever heard in Israel was presented to the most humble of her people—the people of Nazareth. But first, let us understand some of the background of the passage.

THE ANGEL GABRIEL

Verse 26 tells us that the angel Gabriel delivered the announcement to Mary concerning Jesus’ birth in the sixth month of Elisabeth’s pregnancy. He is a special angel who had appeared to Daniel in a vision nearly five hundred years earlier. As we saw in the previous lesson, he also prophesied the birth of John the Baptist. Gabriel came to Nazareth at the time appointed by God to declare the purpose of God.

“But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, 5 To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.” (Galatians 4:4-5)

THE TOWN OF NAZARETH

The events of this passage take place in Nazareth, an obscure town of about one hundred people in the Galilean region. This small town was roughly fourteen miles west of the southern tip of the Sea of Galilee. The members of this small community were simple people, working to make a living for their families. In contrast to the Nazareth of Jesus’ day, the modern city is home to roughly 200,000 people.

Quote: “A place...is not judged by its institutions or advantages, but by the righteous people within its borders.”—**Preacher’s Outline and Sermon Bible**

Quote: “Great works of God rarely start in big places. Rather, they start in small places—in some person with a big commitment.”—**Calvin Miller, *The Christ of Christmas***

THE TRUTH ABOUT MARY (vv. 27-28)

Mary is the most significant woman in history. She was specifically chosen by God to bring Jesus into the world.

1. Mary was a pure woman. (v. 27)

Definition: *virgin*, from Greek *parthenos*—meaning a maiden; by implication, an unmarried daughter—*virgin*.

2. Mary was a prepared woman.

“Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost.” (Matthew 1:18)

She was “espoused to a man.” The espousal period was after a couple was legally bound in a marriage contract, but the couple had not consummated the marriage physically. Sometimes this period would last as long as a year as the husband was preparing a home for his new bride.

“Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.” (Isaiah 7:14)

3. Mary was a preferred woman. (v. 28)

She was highly favored, and full of grace. Because God chose her to be the mother of Jesus, she was blessed among women.

THE FABLES ABOUT MARY

Illustration: One week a Sunday school teacher had just finished telling her class the Christmas story. After telling the story the teacher asked, “Who do you think the most important woman in the Bible is?” Of course, the teacher was expecting one of the kids to say, “Mary.” But instead, a little boy raised his hand and said, “Eve.” So the teacher asked him why he thought Eve was the most important woman in the

Bible. And the little boy replied, “Well, they named two days of the year after Eve. You know, Christmas Eve and New Year’s Eve.”

Although Mary’s testimony is truly remarkable as she was used by God in such a special way to bring our Saviour into the world, she was, like the rest of us, a sinner in need of a Saviour. Unfortunately, the Catholic church has elevated Mary above the teaching of Scripture.

Fable 1: Prayer to Mary

The Catholic church teaches its members to pray to Mary. The “Hail Mary” prayer first appeared in print in A.D. 1495 in an exposition by Italian friar Savonarola. Praying to Mary is not compatible with Bible doctrine, as Jesus instructed us to pray in His name, not in Mary’s name. Through Jesus, we have direct access to the Father.

“And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. 14 If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.” (John 14:13–14)

Fable 2: Perpetual virginity of Mary

Quote: “The virgin conceived and gave birth to a son, yet she remained a virgin forever.”—Catholic responsive liturgy for the feast of the Lord’s Presentation

“Is not this the carpenter’s son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas?” (Matthew 13:55)

Fable 3: That Mary is coredeemer

The Catholic church also teaches that Mary is necessary as an intercessor to obtain salvation. However, this heresy is blasphemous to the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus is the only way to Heaven.

Quote: “[Mary is called] the gate of heaven, because no one can enter that blessed kingdom without passing through her.”—**St. Bernard**

Quote: “The recourse we have to Mary in prayer follows upon the office she continuously fills by the side of the throne of God as Mediatrix of Divine grace; being by worthiness and by merit most acceptable to Him, and, therefore, surpassing in power all the angels and saints in Heaven.”—**Pope Leo XIII**

“Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.” (John 14:6)

1. THE MESSAGE TO MARY (vv. 30–33)

When Gabriel greeted Mary, she began to ponder why the angel had come. Gabriel told her to “Fear not” before he delivered his message to her.

Definition: *cast in her mind*—to bring together different reasons.

A. She Had Favor with God (v. 30)

Mary was a lady who was full of grace. In this day when men and women are often caustic and brash, graceful people stand out. Mary was also a humble lady and desired to live for God.

“But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.” (James 4:6)

B. She Would Have a Son Named Jesus (v. 31)

Definition: *Jesus*, Greek for the Hebrew name *Joshua*—Jehovah is salvation

The idea being communicated is that Jesus had come to deliver Israel. God sent Jesus as the Saviour.

“Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.” (Acts 4:12)

THE GREATNESS OF JESUS

He was the “Son of the Highest.”

Jesus was conceived of the Holy Ghost. He was not merely a man, but God incarnate in the form of man.

“And again, when he bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him. 7 And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire. 8 But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom.” (Hebrews 1:6–8)

He was of the tribe of Judah, and of the house of David.

“Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God, 2 (Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures,) 3 Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; 4 And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.” (Romans 1:1–4)

The Lord God will give Him the throne of David.

This passage is referencing the fact that Jesus will fulfill the promises made to David. This kingdom was not established at Christ’s first advent but will be established without end at His Second Coming.

“And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. 13 He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever.” (2 Samuel 7:12–13)

“For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. 7 Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with

justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.” (Isaiah 9:6–7)

2. THE MIRACLE OF THE CONCEPTION (vv. 34–37)

There is no doubt that one of the greatest miracles in the Scriptures is the divine conception of Jesus Christ in Mary by the Holy Spirit.

A. Because of Mary’s Purity (v. 34)

In humble sincerity, Mary asks the question, “How can this be?” because she was already betrothed to Joseph. Humanly, it does not make sense that a virgin could conceive and bear a child.

The Holy Ghost made it very clear in this passage that Mary was, in fact, a virgin.

B. Because of God’s Power (vv. 35–37)

This miracle was based on God’s power to produce a child without a human father.

Quote: “As Mary’s son, He would be human; as Son of the Highest (Luke 1:32), He would be the Son of God (Luke 1:35).”—**Warren W. Wiersbe**, *The Bible Exposition Commentary: New Testament*

Quote: “He who never began to be, but eternally existed, began to be what he eternally was not, and continued to be what he eternally was.”—**C.H. Spurgeon**

THE HOLY GHOST SHALL COME UPON THEE (v. 35)

Quote: “Gabriel was careful to point out that the Baby would be a ‘holy thing’ (v. 35b) and would not share the sinful human nature of man. Jesus knew no sin (2 Corinthians 5:21), He did no sin (1 Peter 2:22), and He had no sin (1 John 3:5). His body was prepared for Him by the Spirit of God (Hebrews 10:5) who ‘overshadowed’ Mary.”—**Warren Wiersbe**, *Be Compassionate*

THE POWER OF THE HIGHEST SHALL OVERSHADOW THEE (v. 35)

God Himself superintended the process. He “overshadowed” Mary, similar to the Shekinah glory that filled the Temple.

Verse 37 tells us that nothing is impossible with God. God is able to do anything. Why do we doubt Him so often? Situations that man would deem impossible are no problem for God.

3. THE MIND OF MARY (v. 38)

A. A Humble Spirit (v. 38)

Definition: *handmaid*, from the Greek *doule*—a female slave, bondmaid, the feminine gender of the word for bondservant.

Mary was presenting herself as a humble servant. She understood that she did not have much to offer the Lord, but she gave herself to Him anyway.

B. A Humble Consent (v. 38)

SHE CONSENTED TO HIS WILL (v. 38)

Even though Mary did not understand what was happening to her, or how it would work out, she surrendered her will to the Lord. When we face circumstances that seem impossible, we must remember to surrender our will to God's.

Illustration: There is a story of a man named Ivan who endured all the horrors of a Soviet prison camp. One day he was praying with his eyes closed when a fellow prisoner noticed him and said with ridicule, "Prayers won't help you get out of here any faster." Opening his eyes, Ivan answered, "I do not pray to get out of prison but to do the will of God."—**Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn**, *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*

Quote: "The world's most popular prayer is, 'Thy will be changed.' But the world's greatest prayer is, 'Thy will be done.'"—**William Barclay**

SHE CONSENTED TO HIS WORD (v. 38)

In this passage, Mary is perhaps the most extraordinary illustration recorded in the Bible of a life yielded to God. She laid her own will aside and trusted completely in God's perfect plan for her life. Whenever God speaks to us through His Word, we should humbly respond and yield to His Will.

Quote: "God is ready to assume full responsibility for the life wholly yielded to Him."—**Andrew Murray**

"For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end." (Jeremiah 29:11)

CONCLUSION

Even though God may ask us to do what seems impossible, we should have the faith to believe His Word and yield to His Will, knowing that God has a better plan than anything we could think of ourselves.

This faith begins with a relationship with Jesus Christ. It is important to remember that the Jesus whom Gabriel announced in this passage is the same Jesus who one day died on the cross of Calvary. The holy Son of God took upon Himself every sin that we have ever committed, and paid for them in full. If you do not know Jesus as Saviour today, you can call on Him to save you.

"For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." (2 Corinthians 5:21)

OUTLINE 4

WORRY OR WORSHIP

LUKE 1:39-56



“And Mary arose in those days, and went into the hill country with haste, into a city of Juda; 40 And entered into the house of Zacharias, and saluted Elisabeth. 41 And it came to pass, that, when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost: 42 And she spake out with a loud voice, and said, Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. 43 And whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? 44 For, lo, as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in mine ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy. 45 And blessed is she that believed: for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord. 46 And Mary said, My soul doth magnify the Lord, 47 And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour. 48 For he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden: for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. 49 For he that is mighty hath done to me great things; and holy is his name. 50 And his mercy is on them that fear him from generation to generation. 51 He hath shewed strength with his arm; he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. 52 He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree. 53 He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich he hath sent empty away. 54 He hath holpen his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy; 55 As he spake to our fathers, to Abraham, and to his seed for ever. 56 And Mary abode with her about three months, and returned to her own house.” (Luke 1:39–56)

INTRODUCTION

After hearing the wonderful news from Gabriel, Mary journeyed to Elisabeth, perhaps wanting to gain perspective by sharing the news with her older cousin. Mary walked roughly one hundred miles in scorching heat. Elisabeth was roughly six months pregnant when Mary came to meet her.

In verse 41, Scripture records that John leaped in Elisabeth’s womb when he sensed that Jesus was near. Both of these babies are recognized as human personalities before their birth, which confirms that the unborn are living, 100% human beings. John the Baptist, while still in his mother’s womb, was making his first prophecy concerning the Son of God.

“Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations.” (Jeremiah 1:5)

Elisabeth then took this opportunity to encourage young Mary in her faith. Mary's faith was strengthened by Elisabeth's words, a testament to the power of pure fellowship. God has given older men and women to the younger to encourage their faith. Teenagers must be intelligently challenged to develop their faith. Many churches today merely entertain the young people, forgetting that teenagers were greatly used of God throughout Scripture.

As these two new mothers are rejoicing in the goodness of God, Mary is confronted with a choice—to worry or worship. For many women, a pregnancy is enough cause for concern. Certainly, because of the unusual aspects of her pregnancy, Mary could have become very worried about her future. However, in the midst of incredible circumstances, Mary chose to worship God.

Worship can be defined simply as “magnifying the Lord.” Mary magnified the Lord through her song that we will study today.

1. MAGNIFY HIS SALVATION (vv. 46–48)

“And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; 19 Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; 20 Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;” (Ephesians 5:18–20)

A. She Magnified Jesus as Lord (v. 46)

Interestingly, with many Christian songs today, it is difficult to be sure who the musicians are singing about. Many songs do not mention Jesus at all. Men are made to worship—and they will worship either God or self. However, self-worship and idol worship are always vain.

The inspired song from Mary parallels Hannah's song in 1 Samuel chapter 2, reminding us that Mary was familiar with the Scriptures.

Exalting the Lord through worship with our entire spirit is His will and our purpose. Congregational worship allows us to honor the Lord with greater intensity.

“O GOD, my heart is fixed; I will sing and give praise, even with my glory.” (Psalm 108:1)

Quote: “The height of devotion is reached when reverence and contemplation produce passionate worship, which in turn breaks forth in thanksgiving and praise in word and song.”—**R. Kent Hughes**, *Disciplines of a Godly Man*

B. She Magnified Jesus as Saviour (vv. 47–48)

THE SAVIOUR CARES PERSONALLY (v. 47)

God saw her need and saved her. Mary recognized that Jesus had come to be her deliverer—her Saviour. Jesus cares for each individual personally.

“But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” (Romans 5:8)

THE SAVIOUR COMES COMPASSIONATELY (v. 48)

Knowing that she was a lowly sinner, Mary realized that God, through His great compassion, chose to send the Saviour anyway. In His omniscience, Jesus knew that we would fail Him many times, but He came compassionately to save us.

“Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began,” (2 Timothy 1:9)

THE SAVIOUR BLESSES GENERATIONALLY (v. 48b)

Because God chose Mary to bear the Messiah and she willingly submitted to Him, every generation since (including ours) has benefited. Jesus still saves men and women today.

“But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, 5 To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.” (Galatians 4:4–5)

2. MAGNIFY HIS CHARACTER (vv. 49–50)

A. She Magnified His Power (v. 49)

Mary had experienced this power firsthand in Luke 1:35, when Jesus was conceived by the Spirit. She was familiar with the awesome power of God, who is able to do that which seems impossible to men.

“And he said, The things which are impossible with men are possible with God.” (Luke 18:27)

B. She Magnified His Holiness (v. 49)

Quote: “We cannot grasp the true meaning of the divine holiness by thinking of someone or something very pure and then raising the concept to the highest degree we are capable of. God’s holiness is not simply the best we know infinitely bettered.”—**A.W. Tozer**, *The Knowledge of the Holy*

“Sing unto the LORD, O ye saints of his, and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness.” (Psalm 30:4)

C. She Magnified His Mercy (v. 50)

Even though God is holy, He had mercy on this world of sinful men, sending Christ to pay the penalty for our sin. Jesus lived a life that was in touch with the common man.

Illustration: In the mid-1990s, Sam Walton was named as one of the richest men in America. But one could never tell by seeing the way he lived. Walton drove a pickup truck and lived like a regular person. Once, when asked why he didn't drive a Rolls Royce, he responded, "Where would I put my dogs?" He was successful at least in part because he connected with the common man.

Mary named three specific groups to whom God had been merciful: 1) the helpless (Luke 1:51); 2) the humble (Luke 1:52); 3) and the hungry (Luke 1:53). Much of Christian ministry today is still focused on these three groups of people.

Quote: "God's mercy is so great that you may sooner drain the sea of its water, or deprive the sun of its light, or make space too narrow, than diminish the great mercy of God."—C.H. Spurgeon

3. MAGNIFY HIS WORKS (vv. 51-52)

In this part of her song, Mary included the great works that God had done.

A. His Works in History (v. 51)

Perhaps Mary recalled how God delivered Israel from Pharaoh, or how He removed Nebuchadnezzar from his throne. This reminds us that God is sovereign in the affairs of men. He is in control of history, from start to finish.

B. His Works in Prophecy (v. 52)

Mary noted Christ's power throughout history, but also for future generations.

PUT DOWN THE MIGHTY

God is able to bring the mighty low.

EXALT THE HUMBLE

"And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted." (Matthew 23:12)

"Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: 10 That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; 11 And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." (Philippians 2:9-11)

4. MAGNIFY HIS FAITHFULNESS (vv. 53-55)

Mary concludes her song by magnifying the faithfulness of God, seen in His provision for mankind.

A. His Temporal Provision (v. 53)

Those in physical and spiritual hunger usually have a greater appreciation for the filling that God gives. Are you hungry for the Lord? If you are already filled with the world, you cannot be hungry for the Lord.

“Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.” (Matthew 5:6)

B. His Eternal Provision (vv. 54–55)

Mary was thankful for the temporal provision of God, but she was more thankful for the eternal provision provided by her Son—Jesus Christ. Jesus came to bring eternal salvation for all who believe on Him.

HE WILL REMEMBER ISRAEL (vv. 54–55)

The promise that God made to Abraham will be fulfilled one day.

“Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father’s house, unto a land that I will shew thee: 2 And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: 3 And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.” (Genesis 12:1–3)

HE WILL REMEMBER US

He will remember the promise made to us, who have chosen to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation. Before salvation, we were separated from God.

“And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. 21 And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled 22 In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreproueable in his sight:” (Colossians 1:20–22)

CONCLUSION

Instead of focusing on the difficult circumstances around her, Mary chose to trust in the Lord and worship Him in spite of those circumstances. She magnified the Lord for who He is, for the great things He has done, and for the miraculous way He had provided a Saviour for the world. In many difficult situations or trials that we may find ourselves in, we are confronted with the choice to worry or to worship God. Mary chose to worship.

OUTLINE 5

THE BIRTH OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

LUKE 1:57-80



“Now Elisabeth’s full time came that she should be delivered; and she brought forth a son. 58 And her neighbours and her cousins heard how the Lord had shewed great mercy upon her; and they rejoiced with her. 59 And it came to pass, that on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child; and they called him Zacharias, after the name of his father. 60 And his mother answered and said, Not so; but he shall be called John. 61 And they said unto her, There is none of thy kindred that is called by this name. 62 And they made signs to his father, how he would have him called. 63 And he asked for a writing table, and wrote, saying, His name is John. And they marvelled all. 64 And his mouth was opened immediately, and his tongue loosed, and he spake, and praised God. 65 And fear came on all that dwelt round about them: and all these sayings were noised abroad throughout all the hill country of Judaea. 66 And all they that heard them laid them up in their hearts, saying, What manner of child shall this be! And the hand of the Lord was with him. 67 And his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Ghost, and prophesied, saying, 68 Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people, 69 And hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David; 70 As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began: 71 That we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us; 72 To perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant; 73 The oath which he sware to our father Abraham, 74 That he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear, 75 In holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life. 76 And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways; 77 To give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins, 78 Through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us, 79 To give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace. 80 And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his shewing unto Israel.” (Luke 1:57-80)

INTRODUCTION

In an earlier chapter, we learned how the angel Gabriel had prophesied to Zacharias that he and Elisabeth would have a son in their old age, and that they were to name

their son John. But long before Gabriel ever appeared to Zacharias, John's birth was prophesied in the Old Testament by the prophet Malachi.

When John was finally born, the neighbors of Zacharias and Elisabeth came to rejoice with them. It is likely that Mary was present for John's birth as well. Although Elisabeth was an older lady, God still allowed her the joy of delivering the child who would grow up to prepare the way for the Lord Jesus Christ.

As we learn about the events surrounding the birth of John the Baptist, the forerunner of Jesus Christ, let us discover several truths that we can apply to our own lives.

1. THE ARRIVAL OF JOHN THE BAPTIST (vv. 59–66)

A. Dedication of the Baby (vv. 59–63)

Circumcision was the mark of God's covenant with the people of Israel. This was performed in a ceremony by the child's father eight days after the child's birth.

“And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man child in your generations, he that is born in the house, or bought with money of any stranger, which is not of thy seed. 13 He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised: and my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. 14 And the uncircumcised man child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant.” (Genesis 17:12–14)

B. The Identity of the Baby (vv. 60–63)

In the Jewish culture, it would have been normal for the baby to be named after his father, Zacharias. But Elisabeth was clear that the boy's name would be “John.” John's ministry would be distinct from the ministry his father had as a priest. His authority would not come from his family line, but from God.

Definition: *John*—Favored of Jehovah, the Lord hath given grace.

C. Gratitude for the Baby (vv. 64–66)

FROM ZACHARIAS (v. 64)

Gabriel had pronounced that Zacharias would be unable to speak during the days of Elisabeth's pregnancy due to his lack of faith. Certainly, Zacharias was overjoyed at the birth of his son, and at the return of his voice.

FROM THE NEIGHBORS (vv. 65–66)

The people had fear when they heard Zacharias speak after so many months of silence.

Definition: *fear*, from the Greek *phobos*—alarm or fright.

Recognizing the miraculous hand of God in the events surrounding John's birth brought fear and a sense of awe to those who witnessed it.

2. THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF ZACHARIAS (vv. 69–80)

In his song of benediction, Zacharias praised God as he witnessed the fulfillment of prophecy in the birth of John the Baptist.

A. Praise for the Promise to David (vv. 67–69)

This is commonly called the Davidic Covenant, in which God promised to give to Israel a kingdom without end. The birth of John the Baptist was the first sign of this coming kingdom.

“And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. 13 He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever. 14 I will be his father, and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men.” (2 Samuel 7:12–14)

HE HAS VISITED HIS PEOPLE (v. 68)

This visitation was announced to Mary, and later to Joseph, by the angel Gabriel.

HE HAS REDEEMED HIS PEOPLE (v. 68)

This redemption was beginning to be accomplished with the birth of Jesus Christ.

In verse 69, the raising up of the Horn of salvation is most likely referencing Jesus Christ in His power and majesty. Even as an animal raises its horn to charge, Jesus was now coming to bring freedom to all men.

HE HAS DELIVERED ISRAEL FROM THEIR ENEMIES (vv. 70–71)

Throughout history, there have been many enemies that have tried to annihilate Israel from the earth. Among these are the Egyptians, the Canaanites, the Philistines, the Syrians, the Assyrians, the Babylonians, the Persians, the Greeks, the Romans, the Nazis in Germany, and many Muslim nations still in existence today.

Definition: *Enemies*, from the Greek word *echthros*—hostile, hating, and opposing another.

Behind every nation or movement that has opposed Israel has been their greatest enemy—Satan himself.

“And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, 8 And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. 9 And the great dragon was cast

out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.” (Revelation 12:7-9)

However, the deliverance that was promised to Israel through the seed of David was not just physical in nature. This was a promise to ultimately deliver Israel from sin. But this promise is not just for Israel; each individual can trust in Jesus Christ for spiritual deliverance.

“Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.” (Hebrews 7:25)

B. Praise for the Promise to Abraham (vv. 72-75)

The mercies of God were related to the covenants He made with Israel. After Abraham’s willingness to offer Isaac, God made an oath to Abraham. Zacharias praised God for the promises to Abraham and David: the promises that God would deliver Israel so that they could serve Him without fear and walk in holiness.

Quote: “The promise to David for a Messiah rested on the promise to Abraham.”

“And said, By myself have I sworn, saith the LORD, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: 17 That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; 18 And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice.” (Genesis 22:16-18)

C. Praise for John the Baptist (vv. 76-79)

After thanking God for the prophecies given to David and Abraham, Zacharias turned his attention to John the Baptist. John was the first prophet God sent to Israel in four hundred years. He was the forerunner of Jesus Christ, sent to prepare the way for the Lord. Zacharias praised the message that his son would proclaim: the message that Jesus Christ was coming to save the people from their sin.

Quote: “Depend on it, my hearer, you never will go to heaven unless you are prepared to worship Jesus Christ as God.”—**C.H. Spurgeon**

PRAISE FOR THE SALVATION OF JESUS (vv. 77-78)

Zacharias rejoiced for the salvation that Jesus would bring to all men.

“And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.” (Matthew 1:21)

Quote: “John was not the Saviour...His ministry was to introduce the Saviour who would provide redemption for God’s people.”—**J. Dwight Pentecost**

PRAISE FOR THE LIGHT OF JESUS (vv. 78–79)

In a day of great spiritual darkness, John the Baptist was sent to point others to the Light—the Lord Jesus Christ.

Quote: “The people [of Israel] were sitting in darkness and death, and distress gripped them when Jesus came; but He brought light, life, and peace. It was the dawn of a new day because of the tender mercies of God.”—**Warren Wiersbe** in *Be Compassionate: Let the World Know that Jesus Cares*

“The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up.” (Matthew 4:16)

“For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, 31 Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; 32 A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.” (Luke 2:30–32)

3. THE ADVANCEMENT OF JOHN THE BAPTIST (v. 80)

John spent his early years in the desert until around A.D. 27. His teen years were spent investing time and effort into his relationship with God, preparing to deliver the message that Jesus was coming. John became strong in the Holy Spirit, and his dedication to God is seen in the following three parts of his life:

A. His Identity (v. 80)

“And John was clothed with camel’s hair, and with a girdle of a skin about his loins; and he did eat locusts and wild honey;” (Mark 1:6)

John did not identify with the worldliness of the day, choosing instead to fashion his appearance after the Old Testament prophet Elijah. John identified as a man living for God.

Quote: “We are not to be isolated, but insulated, moving in the midst of evil but untouched by it.”—**Vance Havner**

B. His Courage (v. 80)

John was courageous in his preaching. He spoke courageously to the Pharisees and Sadducees (Matthew 3:7–8), as well as to the Roman soldiers (Luke 3:14).

His preaching strongly rebuked sin and stressed the need for repentance. America needs men today who will preach the Word of God with courage! Our country needs Christian men and women who will courageously speak what the Bible says, not with a mean or hateful spirit, but with a heart to see people come to Christ.

Quote: “Give me 100 men who hate nothing but sin and love God with all their hearts and I will shake the world for Christ!”—**John Wesley**

Quote: “It is the duty of the clergy to accommodate their discourses to the times, to preach against such sins as are most prevalent and to recommend such virtues as are most wanted.”—**John Adams**

C. His Humility (v. 80)

Some estimate that nearly 300,000 people may have been baptized during John’s ministry, yet he remained humble. When his followers began to leave to follow after Jesus, John remained humble, realizing that his entire purpose was to point others to Jesus.

“John answered and said, A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven. 28 Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him.” (John 3:27–28)

“He must increase, but I must decrease.” (John 3:30)

Quote: “The most critical need of the church at this moment is men, bold men, free men. The church must seek, in prayer and much humility, the coming again of men made of the stuff of which prophets and martyrs are made.”—**A.W. Tozer**

Quote: “The only hope of a decreasing self is an increasing Christ.”
—**F.B. Meyer**

CONCLUSION

John the Baptist was a man sent from God, a man who understood that his purpose was to point others to Jesus. He was not willing to be swayed by the culture of his day, but courageously lived a life pleasing to God. Even in the success that he enjoyed, he remained humble, choosing to live out the purpose that God had given to him.

The purpose of John the Baptist is the same purpose of the church in our modern day. We are called of God to be separate from the world, to courageously speak to others about our Saviour Jesus Christ, and to humbly point others to Him as the only One able to give salvation.