

Luke 1- Part 2

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Introduction:

1. In Part 1, we were introduced to Luke the writer and Theophilus, the man to whom Luke wrote.
2. The Parents of John the Baptist are introduced as godly people who loved the Lord. They were told they would have a baby son and to name him John.
3. Mary of Nazareth was introduced and given the option of having the Messiah of Israel. She accepted.

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MARY VISITS COUSIN ELIZABETH

(39.) A few days later Mary hurried to the hill country of Judea, to the town (40) where Zechariah lived. She entered the house and greeted Elizabeth.

- **Mary** did not discuss Gabriel's visit with Joseph. We can tell by this comment from Matthew:

Joseph, her fiancé, was a good man and did not want to disgrace her publicly, so he



decided to break the engagement quietly.

(Matthew 1:19)

- She **hurried** to Elizabeth to confirm the conversation and the promise made by Gabriel. **Mary** needed another woman to talk to.
- This involved a 4-5 day trip from Galilee to Judea. It was more than likely she joined a caravan going her way. Traveling alone would be unsafe. It was a common practice to pay a fee to the caravan leader for safe conduct to one's destination.
- **Paul Butler** writes: "The miracle of the conception was nothing compared to the identity of the Child to be conceived! He would be the Messiah, the Savior and the Son of David whom the Jewish people had longed for for centuries. Nearly every act of their religious and civil life was in anticipation of this Messiah. Great and famous women of the nation had lived and died hoping they would give birth to the Son of David. God chose a Galilean peasant girl, the fiancé of a lowly carpenter, to be that mother.



(41) At the sound of Mary's greeting, Elizabeth's child leaped within her, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. (42) Elizabeth gave a glad cry and exclaimed to Mary, "God has blessed you above all women, and your child is blessed. (43) Why am I so honored, that the mother of my Lord should visit me? (44) When I heard your greeting, the baby in my womb jumped for joy. (45) You are blessed because you believed that the Lord would do what He said."

- Further confirmations:
 - The baby **leaped** within Elizabeth (vs. 41) and also she was **filled with the Holy Spirit** (vs. 41) when **Mary** entered. Her words became those of **the Holy Spirit**.
 - Without asking, she knew that her youthful relative was to be the **mother of the Lord** (vs. 42). Such a consolation and affirmation for Mary!
 - Zacharias had written to his wife (he could not talk) that her baby was to introduce the **Lord**, so Elizabeth knew his coming was near. Now, here is his earthly mother walking in the door.
- While **Mary** was the mother of Jesus' earthly body, it cannot be that she was the mother of God (vs. 43). Jesus existed from all eternity whereas Mary was a finite creature with a definite date when she began to exist.
- **J. W. McGarvey** has it:

“What joy must have filled the hearts of these two women as they realized that one was to be the mother of the long-expected Messiah, and the other of his Elijah-like forerunner!”
- Elizabeth understood the **leap** of the baby within her as an expression of his **joy** (vs. 44).
- Mary's instant belief in Gabriel's promise was known to Elizabeth and commended (vs. 45). Undoubtedly she had known of her husband's contrasting moment of unbelief.

MARY WAS ESTATIC WITH THE LORD

(46) Mary responded, "Oh, how my soul praises the Lord. (47) How my spirit rejoices in God my Savior! (48) For He took notice of His lowly servant girl, and from now on all generations will call me blessed. (49) For the Mighty One is holy, and He has done great things for me. (50) He

shows mercy from generation to generation to all who fear Him.

- **Mary's** first words were praise for the **Lord** (vs. 46).
- Her second line (vs.47) tells of her feeling of **joy** in her relationship with **God her Savior**.
- Also in vs. 47 she speaks of **God my Savior**. She needed to be *saved* rather than being *sinless* as taught by the *Roman Catholic Church*.
- God has picked an insignificant virgin to honor with the blessing of being the mother of Israel's Messiah. What a wonderful treasure for all time! (vs. 48.)
- **James E. Smith** writes:

“Mary was deeply conscious that she was of a poor family, engaged to the village carpenter. She was not a likely candidate to be chosen as the object of God's special favor. People of future generations would regard Mary as blessed to be used of God to bring this child into the world. She does not mean that people through the centuries would regard her as an intermediary between man and Jesus, or that people would regard her as an object of veneration. She means that all generations would praise God because of the marvelous manner in which He honored this humble maiden.”
- The begetting of the babe was a demonstration of God's limitless power. He alone is **holy** (vs. 49).
- Mary knew this birth was not a one-**generation** event. It was for the God-fearing for all **generations**.

(51) His mighty arm has done tremendous things! He has scattered the proud and haughty ones. (52) He has brought down princes from their thrones and exalted the humble.

- The Messiah is not being born into the home of a highly placed descendant of David, for God in His Might has passed them by. He has chosen a **humble** virgin without social rank to carry the Messiah. Such exaltation!

(53) He has filled the hungry with good things and sent the rich away with empty hands. (54) He has helped His servant Israel and remembered to be merciful. (55) For He made this promise to our ancestors, to Abraham and his children forever."

- Mary, as well as Luke, is concerned about the tyranny of wealth. God favors the poor, the **hungry** and the down-trodden.
- God has helped Israel because of His mercy and kept His promises to **Abraham** (vss. 54-55).
- **Abraham's children** would one day be a greater number than just Israel. Men and women of faith around the world would become the seed of Abraham. "**And now that you belong to Christ, you are the true children of Abraham. You are his heirs, and God's promise to Abraham belongs to you.**"
(Galatians 3:29 NLT)

(56) Mary stayed with Elizabeth about three months and then went back to her own home.

- **Mary stayed with** Zacharias and Elizabeth, but returned **home** just prior to the birth of John. That would be a public event and she did not want to answer questions.
- **Mary** is at least three months pregnant as she returns to Nazareth and an unsuspecting family and Joseph.

THE BIRTH OF JOHN

(57) When it was time for Elizabeth's baby to be born, she gave birth to a son. (58) And when her neighbors

and relatives heard that the Lord had been very merciful to her, everyone rejoiced with her.

- Gabriel's word is being fulfilled. Here is the promised **son**.
- Word may not have gotten around in town before, but now the **relatives and neighbors** wanted to celebrate. They saw the child as an expression of the Lord's **mercy** (vs. 58).

THE NAMING OF JOHN

(59) When the baby was eight days old, they all came for the circumcision ceremony. They wanted to name him Zechariah, after his father. (60) But Elizabeth said, "No! His name is John!" (61) "What?" they exclaimed. "There is no one in all your family by that name."

- **Naming** was combined with the mandatory circumcision.
- The natural thing would have been to **name** him Junior.
- Elizabeth objected because his name has been divinely set and Zacharias has written this information to her. It was to be **John**.

But the angel said, "Don't be afraid, Zechariah! God has heard your prayer. Your wife, Elizabeth, will give you a son, and you are to name him John."

Luke 1:13 NLT

- The friends had their objection, too. **John** was not a family name in their line. Because of the vision he had received in the temple, **Zacharias** was now a celebrity. The friends assumed that the child would be named after his now famous father. However, the commands of God must take priority over the traditions of men.

- John remains a popular name still today. In English it's also *Jack, Sean, Shane*; in French it's *Jean*, in Spanish it's *Juan*, in Russian it's *Ivan*, in Estonian it's *Johannes*.

(62) So they used gestures to ask the baby's father what he wanted to name him. (63) He motioned for a writing tablet, and to everyone's surprise he wrote, "His name is John." (64) Instantly Zechariah could speak again, and he began praising God.

- Here (vs. 62) we learn that Zacharias could not hear either.
- However, his word was final on the matter. The child is already named **John** (vs. 63).
- This agreement on the **name John** between parents caused the friends and relatives **astonishment**.
- **Paul Butler** wisely observes: "Is God so rigid that when He tells a father and mother exactly what name to give their child, He expects implicit obedience? Indeed, He is! Man may not always understand God's explicit commands (and God probably does not want man to understand), but God expects man to trust Him enough to obey to the letter. Man certainly has enough recorded evidence that God's rigid commands are all for man's good. Of course, God has not told all parents what to name their children, but He has told all parents how to **rear** their children!"
- The *last words* from Zechariah's mouth had expressed doubt; the *first words* were those of **praise** (vs. 64). His words are recorded beginning in verse 69.
- Now we notice the reaction among the friends and neighbors when the mute priest began to praise God with words.

THE NEIGHBORS WERE AMAZED

(65) Awe fell upon the whole neighborhood, and the news of what had happened spread throughout the Judean hills. (66) Everyone who heard about it reflected on these events and asked, "What will this child turn out to be?" For the hand of the Lord was surely upon him in a special way.

- The remarkable events recorded in the preceding verses filled the minds of the people with the conviction that God was active in their midst and was carrying out his plan on earth. People tremble with excitement and awe when God is present and working in their midst.
- The story did not quickly die. As people met on the roads and talked from housetop to housetop, the events of this most unusual birth were retold repeatedly.
- This story has the ring of a personal investigation by Luke. His reporters could see God's special dealings with John.

ZACHARIAS' PROPHECY CONCERNING JOHN

(67) Then his father, Zechariah, was filled with the Holy Spirit and gave this prophecy: (68) "Praise the Lord, the God of Israel, because He has visited and redeemed His people. (69) He has sent us a mighty Savior from the royal line of His servant David,

- Luke records that **Zacharias** was speaking by inspiration of the **Holy Spirit** (vs. 67). Among the first uses of his rested tongue was a direct praise to God for bringing **redemption** (vs. 68). Though he could not yet see redemption, he had heard Gabriel's promise and was aware of Mary and the promise to her. To Zacharias, it was as good as done. His faith was now enriched in comparison with his first encounter with Gabriel.

- God had not been communicating to Israel, but now He has **visited** and brought the way for His people to be **redeemed** (vs.68).
- This power of salvation was coming through the line of **David**, Mary's ancestor. This is further evidence that she was from David's line.
- At this point, Luke begins quoting what Zacharias, in turn, is quoting from the ancient prophets in the Old Testament. Beyond a doubt, Zacharias is quoting from the Hebrew Scriptures, but Luke is writing in Greek to a Greek-speaking Roman governor. It is reasonable to think that Luke is writing down what is in the Greek Septuagint because that is the Bible that Theophilus uses. In the light of this, there will be slight variations when we read in our Hebrew Old Testament.

THE OLD PROPHETS HAVE SPOKEN

(70.) just as He promised through His holy prophets long ago. (71) Now we will be saved from our enemies and from all who hate us. (72) He has been merciful to our ancestors by remembering His sacred covenant-- (73) the covenant He swore with an oath to our ancestor Abraham. (74) We have been rescued from our enemies so we can serve God without fear, (75) in holiness and righteousness for as long as we live.

- Israel has long been oppressed by its enemies (vs. 71).
So He rescued them from their enemies and redeemed them from their foes.
Psalm 106:10 NLT
- The purpose of **rescue** is not to lower taxes or to extend the borders of Israel, but that God's people could live

without constant **fear** and serve God throughout the days of their lives (vs. 74,75).

SON JOHN WILL BE A PROPHET

(76.) "And you, my little son, will be called the prophet of the Most High, because you will prepare the way for the Lord. [Isaiah 40:3] (77) You will tell His people how to find salvation through forgiveness of their sins. (78) Because of God's tender mercy, the morning light from heaven is about to break upon us, (79) to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, [Isaiah 9:2] and to guide us to the path of peace."

- Directing his words to John (vs. 76) for the benefit of listeners, Zachariah described John's work as that of a **prophet** of God. He was to prepare the way for the **Lord**. He will not be a *priest* like his father, but a *prophet* who speaks to men on behalf of God. He would prepare the people for the very Lord himself.

Look! I am sending My messenger, and he will prepare the way before Me. Then the Lord you are seeking will suddenly come to His Temple. The messenger of the covenant, whom you look for so eagerly, is surely coming," says the LORD of Heaven's Armies. Malachi 3:1

- **McGarvey** states, "Israel had a false idea that the Messiah's salvation would be from political evil. John was needed to tell them that it was from sin that God proposed to Deliver them." (vs. 77).
- **Forgiveness of sin** was not a current idea (vs. 77), but had been prophesied in Jeremiah 31:34 NLT: **And they will not need to teach their neighbors, nor will they need to teach their relatives, saying, 'You should know the LORD.' For everyone, from**

the least to the greatest, will know Me already," says the LORD. "And I will forgive their wickedness, and I will never again remember their sins."

- The prophets loved to picture the Messiah's coming as a sunrise.

The people who walk in darkness will see a great light. For those who live in a land of deep darkness, a light will shine. Isaiah 9:2 NLT

There is a hint here of the salvation that will also include the Gentiles. Remember that Luke and Theophilus are both Gentiles. **Walking in darkness** describes non-Jewish people.

But for you who fear My name, the Sun of Righteousness will rise with healing in His wings. And you will go free, leaping with joy like calves let out to pasture. Malachi 4:2 NLT

- Christ's coming was the dawn of a new day for Israel and for mankind. This is how John the disciple of Jesus tells it:

The One who is the true light, who gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. John 1:9 NLT

It does not say that the true light is coming only to the people of Israel.

JOHN MATURED IN ISOLATION

(80.) John grew up and became strong in spirit. And he lived in the wilderness until he began his public ministry to Israel.

- John probably became an orphan early in life because of the advanced ages of his parents when he was born.
- The next 30 years of John's life are passed over in this single sentence. Physical and **spiritual** development are listed, but social development is not mentioned. John was apart from the social intrigues of his time.



Ponder how a person could survive on a terrain like this. Water? Food? Safe sleeping? Social life? Warmth? John the Baptist was a survivalist.

However John was not an *Essene*. Some have imagined that since he lived in the general vicinity of this isolated group that he was one of them. John preached the Kingdom of God while the Essenes practiced isolation from society. The Essenes abandoned society while John the Baptist preached to reform it. John had his own disciples and some of them later changed and followed Jesus.