

Luke Chapter 1 Continued

Luke 1:21 "And the people waited for Zachariah, and marveled that he tarried so long in the temple."

In the last lesson, we saw Zachariah going into the temple to burn incense. He saw the angel Gabriel and was told he would have a son in his old age. Because of his unbelief he was struck dumb, unable to speak. When someone tarried this long ordinarily it meant he had displeased God and been killed. The people were beginning to be concerned for Zachariah's life.

“Tarried so long in the temple”: Zachariah was only supposed to offer incense, then come out to pronounce the familiar blessing of (Numbers 6:23-27), on the people who were waiting in the temple court. The conversation with the angel would have taken additional time.

Luke 1:22 "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."

When the people saw him (Zachariah), they knew immediately that something unusual had happened in the temple. They assumed that he had seen a vision because he could not talk.

Luke 1:23 "And it came to pass, that, as soon as the days of his ministration were accomplished, he departed to his own house."

We see here, that he went ahead and finished his allotted time of work in the temple (a week), before he went home. Each priest had a certain amount of time he attended work in the temple and then someone else took over. This was the case with Zachariah.

Luke 1:24 "And after those days his wife Elisabeth conceived, and hid herself five months, saying,"

“Hid herself”: Probably an act of devotion out of deep gratitude to the Lord.

Elisabeth immediately knew that this child was a gift from God. She felt now her friends would not think God had cursed her because she had no children. She knew they too, would realize this was a gift from God because of her great age.

Luke 1:25 "Thus hath the Lord dealt with me in the days wherein he looked on [me], to take away my reproach among men."

“My reproach”: Childlessness carried a reproach in a culture where blessings were tied to birthrights and family line. Barrenness could occasionally be a sign of divine disfavor (Lev. 20:21-22), but it was not always so (Gen. 30:23; 1 Sam. 1:5-10). Still, it carried a social stigma that could be humiliating.

Luke 1:26 "And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth,"

“Sixth month”: I.e., Elizabeth’s sixth month of pregnancy.

We see again here, God the Father sending Gabriel to Galilee with a message. The little town he went to was Nazareth. "Nazareth" means branch. What an interesting place for this to happen in that Jesus is the Branch.

Luke 1:27 "To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name [was] Mary."

“A virgin”: The importance of the virgin birth cannot be overstated. A right view of the incarnation hinges on the truth that Jesus was virgin-born. Both Luke and Matthew expressly state that Mary was a virgin when Jesus was conceived.

The Holy Spirit wrought the conception through supernatural means. The nature of Christ’s conception testifies of both His deity and His sinlessness.

This "espoused" was much more binding than an engagement today. The deal had already been made by the fathers of the bride and groom. The actual marriage would take place after the groom had built the bride a home.

This explanation meant that she was a "virgin" and that she had never slept with Joseph and could not possibly be expecting his child. Mary was a cousin of Elisabeth and was from a very godly family herself. Joseph was a descendent of King David. The world would suppose Jesus to be Joseph's son so it would be of extreme importance for him to be descended from David.

Luke 1:28 "And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, [thou that art] highly favored, the Lord [is] with thee: blessed [art] thou among women."

“Highly favored”: Literally “full of grace”, a term used of all believers (in Eph. 1:6), where it is translated “bestowed.” This portrays Mary as a recipient, not a dispenser, of divine grace.

Gabriel is bringing news to Mary that God sees how she lives and He is about to bless her above all the women of her day.

Luke 1:29 "And when she saw [him], she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be."

Mary felt uneasy because of the presence of Gabriel. She was not sure what he was saying. This "cast in her mind" just means she was questioning in her mind what he meant. She was surprised at his greeting to her. She did not think of herself as being highly favored.

Luke 1:30 "And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favor with God."

“Fear not”: The same thing Gabriel had said to Zachariah (verse 13).

Here again, we see Gabriel telling Mary not to fear. She is pleasing unto God.

Luke 1:31 "And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS."

The name "JESUS" is powerful. The name means Savior, The Salvation of Jehovah. At the name of Jesus every knee shall bow.

Philippians 2:10 "That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of [things] in heaven, and [things] in earth, and [things] under the earth;"

In this name is salvation. This would certainly be startling news to Mary who had never been with a man. Not only is she told she will have a child, but that He will be a son as well.

Luke 1:32 "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:"

“He shall be great”: This same promise was made of John the Baptist. However, the subsequent title is what set Jesus apart.

Notice here that "Son" is capitalized showing that this is God's Son.

1 Kings 2:45 "And king Solomon [shall be] blessed, and the throne of David shall be established before the LORD for ever."

“The Son of the Highest” (verse 76), where John the Baptist is called “the prophet of the Most High.” The Greek term Luke uses for “Most High” is the one employed in the LXX to translate the Hebrew “The Most High God.”

Since a son bears his father’s qualities, calling a person someone else’s “son” was a way of signifying equality. Here the angel was telling Mary that her Son would be equal to the Most High God.

“His father David”: Jesus was David’s physical descendant through Mary’s line. David’s “throne” was emblematic of the messianic kingdom (2 Sam. 7:13-16; Psalm 89:26-29).

God had promised some of David's descendants would be on the throne forever. We see here David's throne is Jesus' throne.

Luke 1:33 "And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end."

“Over the house of Jacob for ever”: This emphasizes both the Jewish character of the millennial kingdom and the eternal permanence of Christ’s rule over all.

We would have understood this better if it had said Israel instead of "Jacob". Jesus reigns over physical Israel (the Jewish nation), and spiritual Israel (the believers in Christ). Jesus' reign is forever.

Luke 1:34 "Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?"

"I know not a man": Mary understood that the angel was speaking of an immediate conception, and she and Joseph were still in the midst of the long betrothal, or engagement period before the actual marriage and consummation. Her question was borne out of wonder, not doubt, not disbelief, so the angel did not rebuke her as he had Zachariah (verse 20).

Mary was thinking of the physical and not the spiritual. She knows that she has not been with a man and knows she is not expecting a baby by a man.

Luke 1:35 "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."

The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee": This was a creative act of the Holy Spirit, not the sort of divine-human cohabitation, sometimes seen in pagan mythology.

God is to be the Father of Jesus. Mary is the mother and God is the Father. Mary furnishes the body and God provides the Spirit.

"Highest" here means the eternal Father. Mary is expecting the Christ Child. Jesus Christ is the Eternal Word. The Word takes on the form of flesh and dwells among us.

John 1:14 "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth."

Luke 1:36 "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."

"Thy cousin Elisabeth": It seems most reasonable to regard the genealogy of (3:23-38), as Mary's. This would make her a direct descendant of David. Yet, Elizabeth was a descendant of Aaron. Therefore, Mary must have been related to Elizabeth through her mother, who would have been of Aaronic descent. Thus, Mary was a descendant of David through her father.

Luke 1:37 "For with God nothing shall be impossible."

This is telling Mary that all things are possible with God. Nothing is impossible to Him. Elisabeth is expecting John and Mary is expecting Jesus. These two will play a great role in Christianity. John is the voice proclaiming the coming of Jesus Christ. His ministry will fade away as Jesus' ministry broadens.

Luke 1:38 "And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her."

“Be it unto me according to thy word”: Mary was in an extremely embarrassing and difficult position. Betrothed to Joseph, she faced the stigma of an unwed motherhood. Joseph would obviously have known that the child was not his.

She knew she would be accused of adultery, an offense punishable by stoning (Deut. 22:13-21; John 8:3-5). Yet she willingly and graciously submitted to the will of God.

We see here, Mary totally submitted to God. She calls herself "handmaid of the Lord". Because she is totally His servant. His will is her desire.

Luke 1:39-40 "And Mary arose in those days, and went into the hill country with haste, into a city of Judah;" "And entered into the house of Zachariah, and saluted Elisabeth."

Here we see Mary, the cousin of Elisabeth going to share the news of expecting the Christ child. Mary knows Elisabeth believes in God and will believe that Mary is pregnant by the Holy Spirit. She also wants to hear about the miracle of Elisabeth's pregnancy.

Luke 1:41 "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:"

“Filled with the Holy Ghost”: I.e., controlled by the Holy Spirit, who undoubtedly guided Elisabeth’s remarkable expression of praise.

This is the Spirit of the Holy Ghost that came upon Elisabeth the minute Mary greeted her. The gift of prophecy came upon her and she began to prophesy of the coming events. Her first statement was a message from God to Mary approving of the birth of the Christ child which is to be soon.

Luke 1:42 "And she spake out with a loud voice, and said, Blessed [art] thou among women, and blessed [is] the fruit of thy womb."

Many times, a message of prophecy comes in a very loud voice from an ordinarily quiet person. Elisabeth in prophecy recognizes the blessedness of the Christ child which Mary is carrying in her womb.

Luke 1:43 "And whence [is] this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?"

“The mother of my Lord”: This expression is not in praise of Mary, but in praise of the Child whom she bore. It was a profound expression of Elisabeth’s confidence that Mary’s Child would be the long-hoped-for Messiah, the one whom even David called “Lord” (20:44).

Elizabeth's grasp of the situation was extraordinary, considering the aura of mystery that overshadowed all these events (2:19). She greeted Mary not with skepticism but with joy. She understood the response of the child in her own womb.

And she seemed to comprehend the immense importance of the Child whom Mary was carrying. All of this must be attributed to the illuminating work of the Spirit (verse 41).

Here we see in prophecy, Elisabeth recognizes Jesus as her Lord even before His birth.

Luke 1:44 "For, lo, as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in mine ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy."

"The babe leaped in my womb for joy": The infant, like his mother, was Spirit-filled (verses 15, 41). His response, like that of Elizabeth, was supernaturally prompted by the Spirit of God.

We see here that even before his birth, John the Baptist recognized Jesus.

Luke 1:45 "And blessed [is] she that believed: for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord."

This is the end of Elisabeth's prophecy. She is proclaiming how wonderful it is that Mary believed.

From verse 46 through 55 is a hymn of praise by Mary. This is a beautiful statement of the low estate of Mary and the high estate of God. This is an unselfish prayer of praise.

Verses 46-55: Mary's Magnificat (the first word in the Latin translation); is filled with Old Testament allusions and quotations. It reveals that Mary's heart and mind were saturated with the Word of God. It contains repeated echoes of Hannah's prayers, e.g., (1 Sam 1:11; 2:1-10).

These verses also contain numerous allusions to the law, the psalms and the prophets. The entire passage is a point-by-point reciting of the covenant promises of God.

Luke 1:46 "And Mary said, My soul doth magnify the Lord,"

Here we see Mary glorifying the Son of God who is her Savior, as well as ours. Even though she is His earthly mother, He is her Savior.

Luke 1:47 "And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior."

"My Savior": Mary referred to God as "Savior," indicating both that she recognized her own need of a Savior, and that she knew the true God as her Savior. Nothing here or anywhere else in Scripture indicates Mary thought of herself as "immaculate" (free from the taint of original sin).

Quite the opposite is true; she employed language typical of someone whose only hope for salvation is divine grace. Nothing in this passage lends support to the notion that Mary herself ought to be an object of adoration.

Luke 1:48 "For he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden: for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed."

“Low estate”: The quality of Mary that shines most clearly through this passage is a deep sense of humility.

Mary can hardly believe that a young girl of so little worldly importance can be blessed of God so much that she will be remembered for generations to come. Here again, she calls herself God's servant ("handmaid").

Luke 1:49-50 "For he that is mighty hath done to me great things; and holy [is] his name." "And his mercy [is] on them that fear him from generation to generation."

She jumps here from the blessings He has showered on her to the mercy He will show all them who fear Him. His power (might), is mentioned, then His holiness, and then His mercy. We see too, that all of these are never ending.

Luke 1:51 "He hath shewed strength with his arm; he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts."

We see here, the mighty arm of God in His Son Jesus Christ. Jesus is an extension of the Father. Jesus, in many instances, is spoken of as the Right Hand of God. This is a kind of prophecy of Mary here, speaking of what Jesus will do.

Luke 1:52-53 "He hath put down the mighty from [their] seats, and exalted them of low degree." "He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich he hath sent empty away."

This is very similar to the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus comes to help those who cannot help themselves. He would say He came for the ones who needed a physician. Those who trust in uncertain riches of this world will be turned away by Jesus. The key word is trust.

Luke 1:54-55 "He hath holpen his servant Israel, in remembrance of [his] mercy;" "As he spake to our fathers, to Abraham, and to his seed for ever."

Now we must look and see who Abraham's seed of promise are.

Galatians 3:29 "And if ye [be] Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."

You see, Jesus Christ is the help of physical Israel and spiritual Israel (the believers in Christ). The believers are Abraham's seed.

Luke 1:56 "And Mary abode with her about three months, and returned to her own house."

“About three months”: Mary arrived in the sixth month of Elizabeth’s pregnancy (verse 26), so she evidently stayed until John the Baptist was born.

“Her own house”: At this point Mary was still betrothed to Joseph, not yet living in his house (Matt. 1:24).

We see here, that Mary and Elisabeth had a lot in common. Both were to have miracle births. Both were expecting promised sons. The difference was Elisabeth's baby had an earthly father and Mary's baby had a heavenly Father.

Luke Chapter 1 Continued Questions

1. Why did the people marvel that Zachariah was in the temple so long?
2. Why did the people think Zachariah had seen a vision?
3. When did he go home?
4. Who was Zachariah' wife?
5. How long did she hide herself?
6. What had God done for her?
7. Why would the people think this was a gift from God to her?
8. What angel was sent to Mary?
9. Where was she at the time?
10. Who was she espoused to?
11. Whose house was he of?
12. What does "espoused" mean?
13. What one word lets you know Mary lived right?
14. What does "Nazareth" mean here?
15. What relation was Mary to Elisabeth?

16. What did the angel first say to Mary?
17. What does "cast in her mind" Mean?
18. What was her Son to be named?
19. What does His name mean?
20. In Philippians 2:10, what do we find out about Jesus?
21. In verse 32, what shall Jesus be called?
22. What house shall Jesus reign over forever?
23. Explain who these people are.
24. Why did Mary ask Gabriel how all this could be?
25. Who shall come upon Mary to cause her to conceive the Son of God?
26. What does Mary furnish in this union?
27. What is Jesus called in John 1:14?
28. How far along was Elisabeth when Mary became with child?
29. What does Mary call herself showing she is God's servant?
30. Where would Mary find Elisabeth?
31. When Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, what happened to her baby in her womb?
32. What happened to Elisabeth?
33. What gift of the Spirit did Elisabeth receive?
34. Who did Elisabeth call Mary?
35. Who did she call Mary's baby?
36. What are verses 46 thorough 55?
37. Mary's soul magnifies whom?
38. What does Mary call Jesus?

39. What is hard for Mary to believe?
40. What three things are glorified by Mary of God in verses 49 and 50?
41. The mighty arm of God is _____.
42. Who does He help?
43. Who are Abraham's seed?
44. How long did Mary stay with Elisabeth?