

Luke 1

Since many have undertaken to compile an account of the things accomplished among us, ² just as they were handed down to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word, ³ it seemed fitting to me as well, having investigated everything carefully from the beginning, to write *it out* for you in an orderly sequence, most excellent Theophilus; ⁴ so that you may know the exact truth about the things you have been taught.

John the Baptist's Birth Foretold

⁵ In the days of Herod, king of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah, of the division of Abijah; and he had a wife from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. ⁶ They were both righteous in the sight of God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and requirements of the Lord. ⁷ And yet they had no child, because Elizabeth was infertile, and they were both advanced in years.

⁸ Now it happened *that* while he was performing his priestly service before God in the appointed order of his division, ⁹ according to the custom of the priestly office, he was chosen by lot to enter the temple of the Lord and burn incense. ¹⁰ And the whole multitude of the people were in prayer outside at the hour of the incense offering. ¹¹ Now an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing to the right of the altar of incense. ¹² Zechariah was troubled when he saw *the angel*, and fear gripped him.

¹³ But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall name him John. ¹⁴ You will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice over his birth. ¹⁵ For he will be great in the sight of the Lord; and he will drink no wine or liquor, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit while still in his mother's womb. ¹⁶ And he will turn many of the sons of Israel back to the Lord their God. ¹⁷ And *it is he who will go as a forerunner* before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of fathers back to *their* children, and the disobedient to the attitude of the righteous, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."

¹⁸ Zechariah said to the angel, “How will I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife is advanced in her years.” ¹⁹ The angel answered and said to him, “I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God, and I was sent to speak to you and to bring you this good news. ²⁰ And behold, you will be silent and unable to speak until the day when these things take place, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled at their proper time.”

²¹ And *meanwhile* the people were waiting for Zechariah, and were wondering at his delay in the temple.

²² But when he came out, he was unable to speak to them; and they realized that he had seen a vision in the temple, and he *repeatedly* made signs to them, and remained speechless. ²³ When the days of his priestly service were concluded, he went back home.

²⁴ Now after these days his wife Elizabeth became pregnant, and she kept herself in seclusion for five months, saying, ²⁵ “This is the way the Lord has dealt with me in the days when He looked *with favor* upon *me*, to take away my disgrace among people.”

Jesus’ Birth Foretold

²⁶ Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city in Galilee named Nazareth, ²⁷ to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the descendants of David; and the virgin’s name was Mary. ²⁸ And coming in, he said to her, “Greetings, favored one! The Lord *is* with you.” ²⁹ But she was very perplexed at *this* statement, and was pondering what kind of greeting this was. ³⁰ And the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God.

³¹ And behold, you will conceive in your womb and give birth to a son, and you shall name Him Jesus. ³² He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David; ³³ and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end.” ³⁴ But Mary said to the angel, “How will this be, since I am a virgin?”

³⁵ The angel answered and said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; for that reason also the holy Child will be called the Son of God. ³⁶ And behold, even your relative Elizabeth herself has conceived a son in her

old age, and she who was called infertile is now in her sixth month. ³⁷ For nothing will be impossible with God.” ³⁸ And Mary said, “Behold, the Lord’s bond-servant; may it be done to me according to your word.” And the angel departed from her.

Mary Visits Elizabeth

³⁹ Now at this time Mary set out and went in a hurry to the hill country, to a city of Judah, ⁴⁰ and she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹ When Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. ⁴² And she cried out with a loud voice and said, “Blessed *are* you among women, and blessed *is* the fruit of your womb! ⁴³ And how has it happened to me that the mother of my Lord would come to me? ⁴⁴ For behold, when the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby leaped in my womb for joy. ⁴⁵ And blessed *is* she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what had been spoken to her by the Lord.”

Mary’s Song: The Magnificat

⁴⁶ And Mary said: “My soul exalts the Lord, ⁴⁷ And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior. ⁴⁸ For He has had regard for the humble state of His bond-servant; For behold, from now *on* all generations will call me blessed. ⁴⁹ For the Mighty One has done great things for me; And holy is His name. ⁵⁰ And His mercy is to generation after generation Toward those who fear Him. ⁵¹ He has done mighty deeds with His arm; He has scattered *those who were* proud in the thoughts of their hearts. ⁵² He has brought down rulers from *their* thrones, And has exalted those who were humble. ⁵³ He has filled the hungry with good things, And sent the rich away empty-handed. ⁵⁴ He has given help to His servant Israel, In remembrance of His mercy, ⁵⁵ Just as He spoke to our fathers, To Abraham and his descendants forever.” ⁵⁶ Mary stayed with her about three months, and *then* returned to her home.

1. Verse 4 - So that you may know the exact truth we need faith in the exact truth to grow as Christians
2. Those who saw and heard are the best witnesses.
3. Luke sees the importance of absolute truth.

4. Theophilus is the governor Luke is writing to - little did he know how important his account came to be.
5. Luke's focus on Zechariah is important because it connects the prophetic promise to that which is present.
6. Elizabeth is also from the priestly line.
7. Both had lived before God as righteous people, which means that they had kept the law.
8. Elizabeth had the misfortune of being barren, the couple were both old, so no natural chance of conception – right? No wrong.
9. In the fulfilling of his duties Zechariah receives a visitation from Gabriel, who brings a message of the promise of a child.
10. Zechariah was gripped by fear. How do you think that you would have responded if you had had an angel turn up to see you?
11. Gabriel does not want Zechariah to be afraid and reveals the good news to their prayers. Elizabeth will bear a son, his name shall be called John, he will be specially set apart for the Lord.
12. The Holy Spirit will live in him while he is in the womb.
13. I have prayed for all of our children to be filled with the Holy Spirit in the womb.
14. His calling is to bring many back to God, as a prophet preparing the way for the Lord.
15. Zechariah's response to the angel, 'how may I know for certain'? To know without doubt.
16. Zechariah's focus was on the obstacles in front of him, not on the word God gave through Gabriel.
17. Gabriel was no ordinary angel but one who stands in the presence of God.
18. Zechariah's unbelief created a problem for him, Gabriel says he will not speak.
19. The people outside in the temple are rather concerned for Zechariah.
20. How did Elizabeth respond when Zechariah told her at home about the promise? Do you think they had an early night?
21. Why does Elizabeth isolate herself?
22. Gabriel is sent by God to bring a message to Mary, a young virgin girl, engaged to Joseph.
23. Engagement was pre-marriage which had conditions.

24. Do you think Mary knew God was with her as Gabriel had said?
25. Joseph is of the line of King David.
26. Mary wonders what is going on inside of her! She is perplexed by being favoured, confused – she knows how babies come.
27. The Holy Spirit will make all this happen - you will bear a son, you will name him Jesus meaning saviour, son of the most high.
28. God will give him David's throne to reign on and His kingdom will have no end.
29. Mary's question to Gabriel 'how can this be?' Although it is the same as Zechariah, it is without doubt.
30. It is the Holy Spirit that will overshadow Mary and bring this blessing upon her, a miracle conception, the Son of God!
31. Gabriel brings reassurance to Mary by declaring Elizabeth, who was barren has conceived in the normal way.
32. Mary declares she is God's bond-slave, meaning life slave.
33. Her declaration 'may it be done to me according to your word' is the foundation of her faith.
34. Off she set to see Elizabeth for confirmation of her own encounter.
35. Arriving at Elizabeth's the baby inside her womb leaps for joy, full of the Holy Spirit.
36. Elizabeth filled with the Holy Spirit brings a prophetic declaration blessing.
37. The joy of her own baby and deliverance from her disgrace brings her into a song of exultation.
38. Overflowing with appreciation of all that God does, acknowledgement of all that He is and alignment to all of His plans and His ways, an insight into the revelation of the Father who keeps His promises to His children from generation to generation.
39. After three months Mary goes home, what will await Mary when she arrives pregnant?