

Nathan Wicker / General

Birth of Revival

› Luke Chapter 1

History of Luke

- Physician, educated
- Travelled with the Apostle Paul
- Interviewed many eyewitnesses to Jesus' Earthly ministry to write his account of the Gospel
- Wrote the Books of Luke and Acts - written to a man named Theophilus

Theophilus = *lover of God*

we could say that Luke wrote this to us as “lovers of God,” but the reality is that there most likely was a rich man named Theophilus who was paying Luke to do the research and document the history of God’s work.

How important is it to fund the gospel message! We are blessed 2000 years later because a man stewarded his funds to further the gospel message. That's a beefy return on investment!

- Luke is 24 chapters long, and these first 4 verses are the only one written in “scholarly writing.” The rest of the letter is written for the common man.

1. RECOGNIZE YOUR ROOTS

Luke 1:5–7 ESV

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. And they were both righteous before God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and statutes of the Lord. But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and both were advanced in years.

ZECHARIAH

Zechariah = *Jehovah is renowned or remembered*

Division of Abijah = this was the eighth priestly division according to the arrangement put in place by King David in [1 Chronicles 24:1-10](#).

This is important to understand the timing of the events. However, Luke being very detailed in other areas does not account for us the timing of these events. We know based on [Luke 1:9-10](#) that he was chosen to burn the incense and that the people were praying outside the temple at the **hour of incense**. Additional information points to the fact that the entire priesthood (all 24 divisions) would be serving during the major feasts.

ELIZABETH

Elizabeth = *God her oath*

Daughters of Aaron - this signifies that both Zechariah and Elizabeth were from priestly order and heritage

RIGHTEOUS BEFORE GOD

Both were accounted **righteous before God, walking blamelessly in all commandments and statutes**

We need to be blameless and consecrated before the Lord. This will prepare the way for the King!

2. PICKED TO PREPARE

Luke 1:8–11 ESV

Now while he was serving as priest before God when his division was on duty, according to the custom of the priesthood, he was chosen by lot to enter the temple of the Lord and burn incense. And the whole multitude of the people were praying outside at the hour of incense. And there appeared to him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense.

TEMPLE HISTORY

Pictures of Herod's Temple

Herod's Temple was much larger in comparison to Solomon's temple. The size of this temple really puts into perspective why the people would've had a hard time believe Jesus would tear down the temple and rebuild it in three days.

The duty assigned to Zechariah to burn incense was really a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for a priest in those days.

It is believed that the priesthood had grown to over 20,000! To be given the opportunity to burn incense for the nation in your lifetime was a great honor.

THE LOST TESTIMONY

The interesting info about this time was that in the temple there is the Holy of Holies. Only one priest can go in there once a year.

The duty that Zechariah was performing was not in the Holy of Holies, but in the Holy Place (just outside the Holy of Holies)

The Holy of Holies is where the Ark of the Testimony (Covenant) was located – *only thing is*, the ark had been missing for centuries!

The last place we see the Ark's location recorded is in [2 Chronicles 35:1-6](#) & [2 Kings 23:21-23](#), when Josiah ordered it to be brought to the temple. World History tells us that Nebuchadnezzar raided Jerusalem and the temple. He returned almost 10 year later and took whatever was left and burned it. We don't know if the Ark was destroyed, hidden, captured. There are claims that Jewish Priests know where it is today and when they build the third temple (which they have plans and materials for already), they will reveal the location of the Ark and retrieve it.

I believe this fact of the Ark being M.I.A. brings even greater significance to the fact that when Jesus paid the ultimate sacrifice on the cross, taking the weight and punishment of our sin, the veil separating the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies is ripped in half from top to bottom!

The Lord became accessible to all – not just one person, once a year.

PRAYER FOR THE NATION

As Zechariah goes into this moment, he is interceding on behalf of the nation.

What is he praying? (we don't know, but can probably guess a few things)

- for the promised messiah to come
- to be released from foreign oppression
- needs of the nation
- **probably not**, his personal needs

And yet, God answers a personal prayer that he probably stopped praying a long time ago.

3. A HOLY VISITATION

And there appeared to him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense. And Zechariah was troubled when he saw him, and fear fell upon him. 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 call his name John. And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth, for he will be great before the Lord. And he must not drink wine or strong drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother’s womb. And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God, and he will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready for the Lord a people prepared.”

Zechariah is troubled - *meaning that he was agitated or stirred up*

Knowing that he was the only one in that room and the reverence that was required for such a moment, it would be startling to open your eyes (finishing your prayer) and there's something else in the room with you.

Fear falls on Zechariah - he goes from startled to afraid at the sight of this angel

JOHN'S PROPHECY - [LUKE 1:13-15](#)

- his name, **John** = *meaning, Yahweh has shown favor*
- **joy, gladness, rejoicing** at John's birth - this isn't going to be a small and quiet affair
- he will be **great before the Lord**
- abstain from **wine or strong drink** - the nazarite vow
- filled with the **Holy Spirit** even from the womb!

JOHN'S CALLING - [LUKE 1:16-17](#)

- turn many back to God
- he will operate with the spirit of Elijah (greatest prophet of Israel)
- turn hearts of father's to children - reclaiming the fatherless generation (no more orphans)
- disobedient will be turned to wisdom and justice
- **make ready for the Lord a people prepared!**

John is a blessing to both the current generation and the coming generation!

Luke 1:18 ESV

And Zechariah said to the angel, “How shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife is advanced in years.”

HOW CAN THIS BE?

I think that Zechariah heard this word spoken over **his son** and thinks, *how can I steward this?*

First-Time Parent - Merinda and I still ask each other, who said we could do this? It is a large undertaking to parent a child because there is no foreseeable end in sight when it comes to parenting. **And children change!** Parenting an infant, is different than a toddler, is different than a pre-schooler, is different than a teenager, is different than a young adult, etc.

*The Lord knows that **you** cannot accomplish His word on your own power, plans, abilities. That's where He is simply looking for our obedience! Just say, Yes Lord!*

WE LACK KNOWING

Know - **ginōskō**, *ghin-oce'-ko*; allow, be aware (of), feel, (have) know (-ledge), perceive, be resolved, can speak, be sure, understand.

- › Can you relate to Zechariah?

So many times when the Lord is calling me into the unknown, I feel at least one if not multiple of these.

WHERE DID THE MESSAGE ORIGINATE?

Luke 1:19 ESV

And the angel answered him, “I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I was sent to speak to you and to bring you this good news.

Gabriel

- Messenger and Waring angel known from the book of Daniel
- He stands in the presence of God

In [Revelation 8:2](#) we see that there are 7 angels standing before God

- Gabriel means *champion of God*

Luke 1:20 ESV

And behold, you will be silent and unable to speak until the day that these things take place, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their time.”

Silent - inability to speak; to be at peace

EZEKIEL CROSS-REFERENCE

Ezekiel 3:26–27 ESV

And I will make your tongue cling to the roof of your mouth, so that you shall be mute and unable to reprove them, for they are a rebellious house. But when I speak with you, I will open your mouth, and you shall say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord God.’ He who will hear, let him hear; and he who will refuse to hear, let him refuse, for they are a rebellious house.

He who will hear, let him hear

He who will refuse, let him refuse

4. THE WORD FULFILLED

- Elizabeth conceives and remains hidden for the first five months
- The baby is filled with the Holy Spirit while still in the womb
- Elizabeth gives birth (it's one thing to be pregnant, it's another thing to birth something) to a son
- They name him, John
- Zechariah's voice is returned at the appointed time

THE OPEN MOUTH AT THE APPOINTED TIME

Luke 1:64–66 ESV

And immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue loosed, and he spoke, blessing God. And fear came on all their neighbors. And all these things were

talked about through all the hill country of Judea, and all who heard them laid them up in their hearts, saying, “What then will this child be?” For the hand of the Lord was with him.

Zechariah is filled with the Holy Spirit and begins to prophesy!!

He prophesies over his child! (How important is it that we prophesy **life** over this next generation)

Stop complaining and speaking death over the generation before or after you. You want to see change, begin to speak to God's plan for them!

Luke 1:76–79 ESV

And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways, to give knowledge of salvation to his people in the forgiveness of their sins, because of the tender mercy of our God, whereby the sunrise shall visit us from on high to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.”

THE OUTCOME

Luke 1:80 ESV

And the child grew and became strong in spirit, and he was in the wilderness until the day of his public appearance to Israel.

John became the fulfilled prophecy with the obedience of his parents.

Remember the prophecy was as much a blessing for the parents as it was John. It required the stewardship of both to see the Word fulfilled!