

Luke 1:5-25

Introduction: Last time we looked at the trustworthiness of the book of Luke. Today we will look at the first detailed event in Luke's book for Theophilus. Compare Luke's book with the OT books concerning Samuel.

What is the background to this event?—1:5-10

- 1) When did these things happen? *in the days of Herod (the Great) the King of Judea, (37-4 BC)*
 - a) An Edomite, a descendent of Esau
- 2) The couple's HERITAGE—1:5
 - a) *Zachariah, of the (priestly) division of Abijah,*
 - i) The division of Abijah was 8th out of 24 divisions (1st Chronicles 24:10; 2nd Chronicles 8:14). There were approximately 750 men per division.
 - b) *and his wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth.*
 - i) Elizabeth was also the name of Aaron's wife (Exodus 6:23).
- 3) The couple's CHARACTER—1:6-7
 - a) Righteous acts—⁶ *Now there were both righteous in the sight of God,*
 - i) Not just an external righteousness in the eyes of people
 - b) Blameless behavior—*living in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blamelessly.*
 - c) Childless & hopeless—⁷ *Yet they had no child,* (but not as a result of their sin)
 - i) Barren—*because Elizabeth was barren,* (cf. Sarah; cf. Deuteronomy 7:14)
 - (1) Socially—This resulted in disgrace and insults from others (cf. 1:25)
 - (2) Economically—no one to support them in their advanced years
 - ii) Older—*and they both were advanced in their days.* (over 60?)
 - (1) Moses recorded the age of Levites to be 25-50 years old (Numbers 8:25)
- 4) Who is doing what at this time?—1:8-10 The setting for the announcement
 - a) Zachariah—*he was chosen by lot to enter the inner sanctuary of the Lord.*
 - i) *in the order of his division before God,*
 - (1) The priests were divided into 24 families/courses of service; these were on duty for a week at a time (Sabbath to Sabbath); thus, they served only twice per year and at some Feasts.
 - ii) ⁹ *according to the custom of the priesthood,*
 - (1) This privilege was a once in a lifetime experience. Many never got to have this privilege.
 - b) The worshipping crowd—¹⁰ *And the whole multitude of the people was praying outside at the hour of the incense offering* (probably @ 3:30 PM).

What did the angel Gabriel announce to Zachariah the priest?—1:11-20

- 1) A frightening appearance—1:11-12
 - a) ¹¹ *Now an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing on the right side of the altar of incense.* (cf. Psalm 141:2; Revelation 8:3-4)
 - i) Gabriel stands between the altar and the candlestick.
 - b) ¹² *And when Zachariah saw him, he was troubled, and fear seized him.*

- 2) The explanatory revelation—1:13-17 ¹³ *But the angel said to him,*
 - a) COMMAND OF REASSURANCE—1:13a *“Do not be afraid, Zachariah,*
 - b) PROMISE OF ENCOURAGEMENT—1:13b-14
 - i) *because ...*
 - (1) *your prayer has been heard;* (cf. Genesis 25:21)
 - (2) *and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son,*
 - (3) *and you will call his name John* (“Yahweh has given grace”).
 - ii) Two-fold response to the child—1:14
 - (1) Individually—¹⁴ *And you will have joy and gladness,*
 - (2) Shared—*and many will rejoice at his birth,*
 - c) PROPHECY OF EFFECTIVENESS—1:15-17 ¹⁵ *because ...*
 - i) Significant—*he will be great in the sight of the Lord,* (cf. John 7:28)
 - ii) Disciplined lifestyle—*and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink* (alcoholic beverages made from things other than grapes),
 - iii) Unique enablement—*and he will be filled* [πίμπλημι] *with the Holy Spirit while yet in his mother’s womb.* (cf. 1:41, 67 where both parents are filled)
 - iv) Encouraging repentance—¹⁶ *And he will turn many of the sons of Israel to the Lord their God.*
 - v) Boldness in encouraging reconciliation—¹⁷ *And he will go before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah,*
 - (1) *to turn ...*
 - (a) *the hearts of the father to the children,* (cf. Malachi 4:5-6):
 - (b) *and the disobedient in the attitude of the just,*
 - (2) *to make ready a people prepared* (outfitted, equipped) *for the Lord.”*
- 3) Zechariah’s response—1:18 ¹⁸ *And Zechariah said to the angel, “How (on what basis) will I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife is advanced in her days.”*
- 4) Gabriel’s explanation—1:19-20 ¹⁹ *And the angel responded and said to him,*
 - a) Delegation—*“I am Gabriel* (cf. Daniel 8:1, 15-16; 9:21-27), *who stands in the presence of God, and I have been sent* (by God)
 - i) *to speak to you,*
 - ii) *and to bring you this good news.*
 - b) Duration—²⁰ *And, behold, you will be mute and unable to speak until the days these things take place,*
 - i) *Why? because you did not trust my words, which will be fulfilled in their own time.”*

What happened immediately after the vision?—1:21-25

- 1) Suspense—1:21 ²¹ *And the people were waiting for Zachariah, and were wondering at his delay in the inner sanctuary.*
 - a) It normally didn’t take too long to sprinkle incense on the warm altar.
- 2) Limited understanding—1:22 ²² *But when he came out, he was unable to speak to them; and they perceived that he had seen a vision in the inner sanctuary, because he gesturing to them, and remained mute.*

- a) They concluded based on what they saw, but they were not completely accurate in their interpretation.
- 3) Zechariah returns to his home—1:23 ²³ *And it came to be, as soon as the days of his priestly service were ended, that he departed to his own house* (probably south of Jerusalem).
- 4) Elizabeth responds to God's working in her life—1:24-25
 - a) Promise initially fulfilled—²⁴ *Now after those days his wife Elizabeth became pregnant,*
 - b) Gratitude expressed—*and she kept herself in seclusion, saying, ²⁵ "This is the way the Lord has dealt with me in the days when He looked upon me, to take away my disgrace among people."*
 - i) Mary will be the first person to know of her pregnancy (cf. 1:36, 39-56)

Take-home truth: God's promises are trustworthy, no matter what our personal experience may tell us.