Lesson 1, Luke 1

**Luke 1**

1Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilledamong us, 2just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the word. 3With this in mind, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, I too decided to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, 4so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught.

5In the time of Herod king of Judea there was a priest named Zechariah, who belonged to the priestly division of Abijah; his wife Elizabeth was also a descendant of Aaron. 6Both of them were righteous in the sight of God, observing all the Lord’s commands and decrees blamelessly. 7But they were childless because Elizabeth was not able to conceive, and they were both very old.

8Once when Zechariah’s division was on duty and he was serving as priest before God, 9he was chosen by lot, according to the custom of the priesthood, to go into the temple of the Lord and burn incense. 10And when the time for the burning of incense came, all the assembled worshipers were praying outside.

11Then an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing at the right side of the altar of incense. 12When Zechariah saw him, he was startled and was gripped with fear. 13But the angel said to him: “Do not be afraid, Zechariah; your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you are to call him John. 14He will be a joy and delight to you, and many will rejoice because of his birth, 15for he will be great in the sight of the Lord. He is never to take wine or other fermented drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit even before he is born. 16He will bring back many of the people of Israel to the Lord their God. 17And he will go on before the Lord, in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the parents to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous—to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.”

18Zechariah asked the angel, “How can I be sure of this? I am an old man and my wife is well along in years.”

19The angel said to him, “I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to tell you this good news. 20And now you will be silent and not able to speak until the day this happens, because you did not believe my words, which will come true at their appointed time.”

21Meanwhile, the people were waiting for Zechariah and wondering why he stayed so long in the temple. 22When he came out, he could not speak to them. They realized he had seen a vision in the temple, for he kept making signs to them but remained unable to speak.

23When his time of service was completed, he returned home.24After this his wife Elizabeth became pregnant and for five months remained in seclusion. 25“The Lord has done this for me,” she said. “In these days he has shown his favor and taken away my disgrace among the people.”

26In the sixth month of Elizabeth’s pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, 27to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin’s name was Mary. 28The angel went to her and said, “Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you.”

29Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. 30But the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. 31You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus.32He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David,33and he will reign over Jacob’s descendants forever; his kingdom will never end.”

34“How will this be,” Mary asked the angel, “since I am a virgin?”

35The angel answered, “The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be calledthe Son of God. 36Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be unable to conceive is in her sixth month. 37For no word from God will ever fail.”

38“I am the Lord’s servant,” Mary answered. “May your word to me be fulfilled.” Then the angel left her.

39At that time Mary got ready and hurried to a town in the hill country of Judea, 40where she entered Zechariah’s home and greeted Elizabeth. 41When Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. 42In a loud voice she exclaimed: “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear! 43But why am I so favored, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?44As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. 45Blessed is she who has believed that the Lord would fulfill his promises to her!”

46And Mary said:

“My soul glorifies the Lord  
47    and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,  
48for he has been mindful  
    of the humble state of his servant.  
From now on all generations will call me blessed,  
49    for the Mighty One has done great things for me—  
    holy is his name.  
50His mercy extends to those who fear him,  
    from generation to generation.  
51He has performed mighty deeds with his arm;  
    he has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts.  
52He has brought down rulers from their thrones  
    but has lifted up the humble.  
53He has filled the hungry with good things  
    but has sent the rich away empty.  
54He has helped his servant Israel,  
    remembering to be merciful  
55to Abraham and his descendants forever,  
    just as he promised our ancestors.”

56Mary stayed with Elizabeth for about three months and then returned home.

The Birth of John the Baptist

57When it was time for Elizabeth to have her baby, she gave birth to a son. 58Her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had shown her great mercy, and they shared her joy.

59On the eighth day they came to circumcise the child, and they were going to name him after his father Zechariah, 60but his mother spoke up and said, “No! He is to be called John.”

61They said to her, “There is no one among your relatives who has that name.”

62Then they made signs to his father, to find out what he would like to name the child. 63He asked for a writing tablet, and to everyone’s astonishment he wrote, “His name is John.”64Immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue set free, and he began to speak, praising God. 65All the neighbors were filled with awe, and throughout the hill country of Judea people were talking about all these things. 66Everyone who heard this wondered about it, asking, “What then is this child going to be?” For the Lord’s hand was with him.

67His father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied:

68“Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel,  
    because he has come to his people and redeemed them.  
69He has raised up a hornof salvation for us  
    in the house of his servant David  
70(as he said through his holy prophets of long ago),  
71salvation from our enemies  
    and from the hand of all who hate us—  
72to show mercy to our ancestors  
    and to remember his holy covenant,  
73    the oath he swore to our father Abraham:  
74to rescue us from the hand of our enemies,  
    and to enable us to serve him without fear  
75    in holiness and righteousness before him all our days.

76And you, my child, will be called a prophet of the Most High;  
    for you will go on before the Lord to prepare the way for him,  
77to give his people the knowledge of salvation  
    through the forgiveness of their sins,  
78because of the tender mercy of our God,  
    by which the rising sun will come to us from heaven  
79to shine on those living in darkness  
    and in the shadow of death,  
to guide our feet into the path of peace.”

80And the child grew and became strong in spirit; and he lived in the wilderness until he appeared publicly to Israel.

**Colossians 4:14**: “Our dear friend Luke, the doctor, and Demas send greetings.”

**2 Timothy 4:11** “Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, because he is helpful to me in my ministry.”

**Philemon 1:23-24** Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, sends you greetings. And so do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas and Luke, my fellow workers.

**Ephesians 5:18** **“**Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit, ”

1. Read Luke 1:1-4, Colossians 4:14, 2 Timothy 4:11 and Philemon 1:24. What do you learn about Luke in these verses, and about his reason for writing this Gospel?

2. Read Luke 1:5-25, about Zechariah’s amazing experience while he was serving as priest, offering incense in the Holy of Holies. Try to put yourself in his sandals, and write in the first person, as if you were Zechariah, writing in a diary, about that experience. Include what you imagine he was thinking and feeling.

3. Read what Gabriel said about John in verses 14-17, and summarize what his ministry would be.

4. Read Luke 1:15 and also Ephesians 5:18. Why do you think John was never to drink wine or any fermented drink?

5. Read Luke 1:26-38, about Mary’s encounter with the same angel Gabriel. How did her asking “how” differ from Zechariah’s asking “how”?

6. Read verses 39-45. In your own words describe what happened to Elizabeth when she heard Mary’s greeting. What happened to baby John, who was still in her womb? Describe the significance of these words and events.

7. Mary’s song of praise, in verses 46-56 contains quotes and references to 18 Old Testament scripture verses. What does this tell you about Mary?

8. Jot down at least 3 characteristics of Mary, based on Luke 1, that make her a great role model for us.

9. When did Zechariah regain his ability to talk, and what happened to him after that?

10. Journal one of these verses SOAP-style.