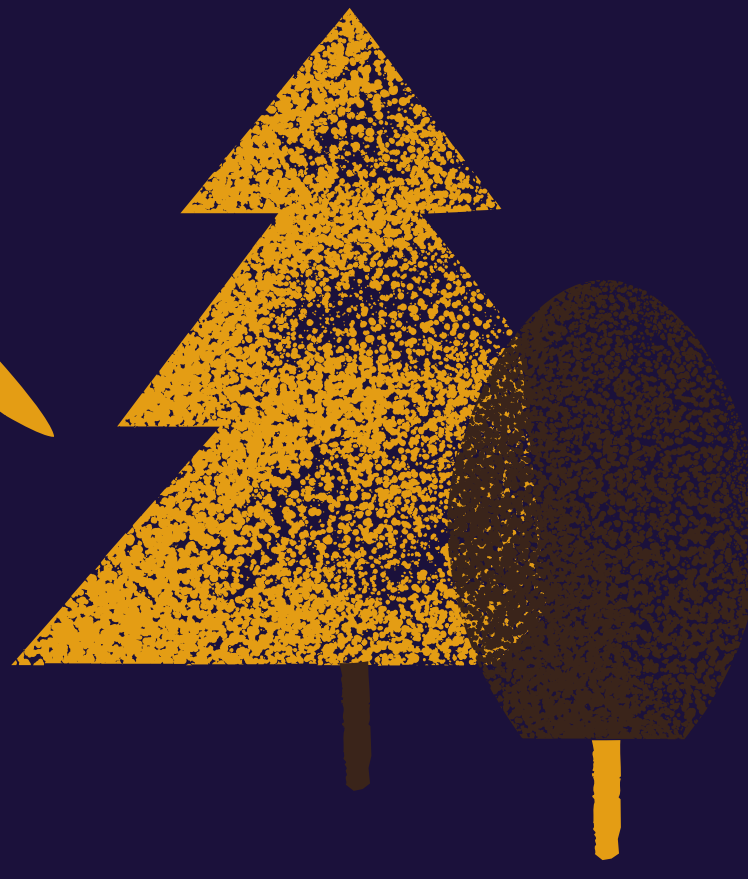
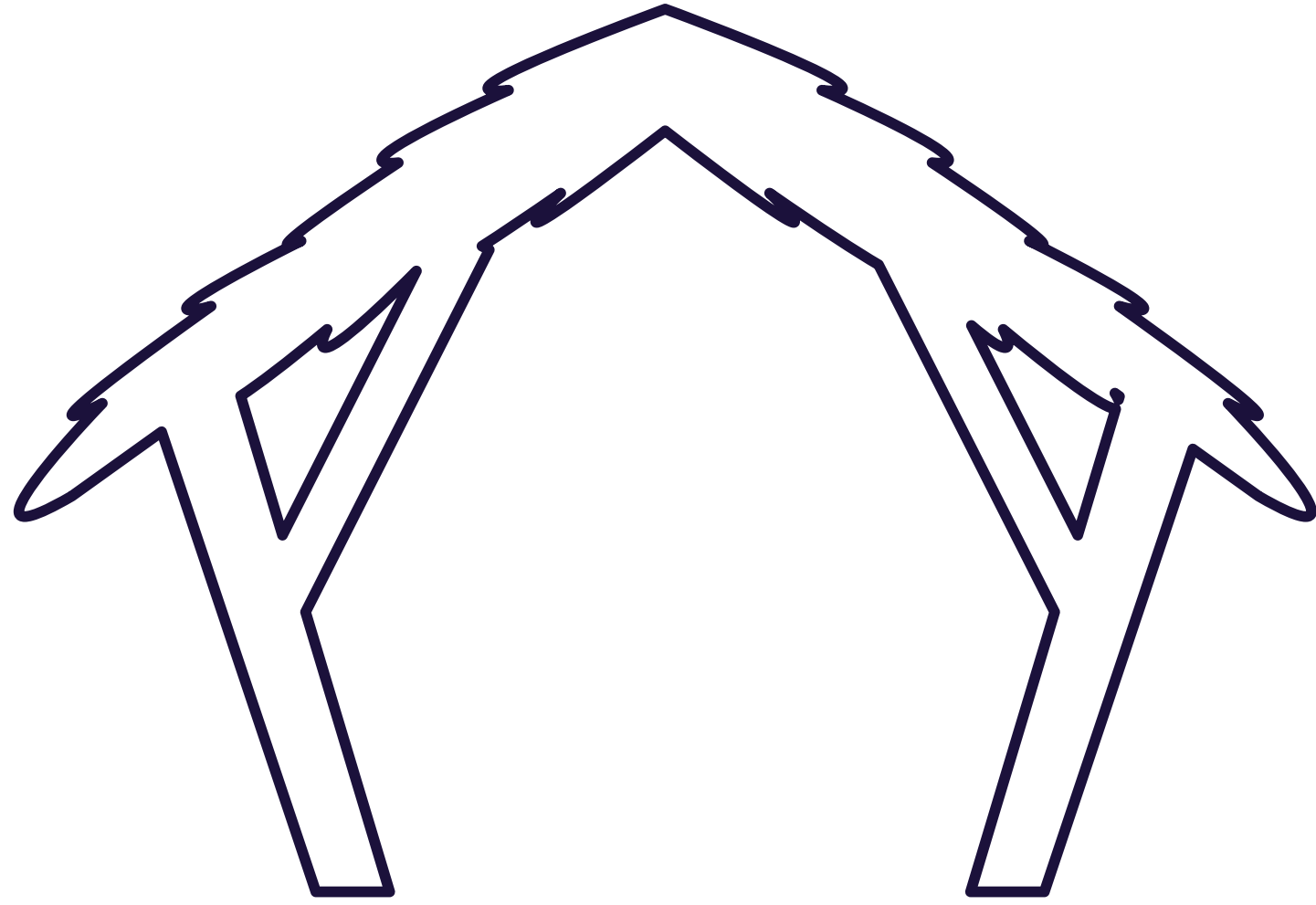




*Good News
of
Great Joy*



A Six-Part Study in Luke 1-2



Good News of Great Joy

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Good News of Great Joy

Produced by: Inter-City Baptist Church
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Printed in the United States of America

Table of Contents

Introduction	5
Part 1: Assurance	7
Part 2: Zechariah	11
Part 3: Mary	17
Part 4: Magnificat	23
Part 5: John	27
Part 6: Jesus	33
Conclusion	41

INTRODUCTION

Our society has faced significant challenges throughout the past several months. Sickness, isolation, financial pressure, unrest, division, damaged relationships, and other circumstances have made 2020 an extremely difficult year for most of us. During this year in particular, we have acutely sensed our need for hope, joy, certainty, and deliverance.

The time leading up to Christmas is traditionally called Advent season. Advent means "arrival" and refers to the first coming of Jesus Christ roughly 2,000 years ago. Each year this season produces expectation, wonder, and joy for millions across the world. In fact, these responses originate with the events of the first Christmas.

In his Gospel, Luke records the events surrounding the birth of Jesus. During Advent, God moved in human history to accomplish some of the world's most significant events. God gave the world the greatest gift he could possibly give on the first Christmas.

In Luke 1-2, nearly everyone who came into contact with God's activity responded with amazement and wonder. An old, barren couple felt joy and gladness when God promised them a son (1:13-14); a baby in the womb leaped for joy when encountering the Savior (1:44); and a young virgin named Mary rejoiced because of God's provision (1:47).

On the first Christmas, angels from heaven announced "good news of great joy that will be for all the people" (2:10). This is what the first Christmas promises you today. This Christmas we desperately need to recapture the meaning of the first Christmas. This year you can experience overflowing, permanent joy if you will hear and believe the good news about the first Christmas. That's what this six-part Bible study is about. Please come along for the journey and discover how you can share in the everlasting joy of Christmas.

Here are a few details to get you started. First, the Gospels in the Bible (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John) are the official biographies of Jesus. This booklet will focus on Luke because Luke records the most information concerning the birth of Jesus. Also, the term "gospel" simply means good news. It's a fitting title to describe the message about Jesus! Each part in this booklet begins with the section of verses that will be discussed, followed by notes that explain important details about the passage and questions that focus on the content of the passage. Please commit to studying the passage and getting your answers from the verses themselves. Other passages of the Bible are referenced throughout the study, and these passages appear at the end of each part. Finally, each part contains personal application questions. God wants to speak to you through his Word, the Bible; it is our earnest hope that you will hear him and respond. To that end, we hope you enjoy *Good News of Great Joy: A Six-Part Study in Luke 1-2*.

Soli Deo Gloria, Elliott Martin and Peter Cushman

Assurance

Part 1

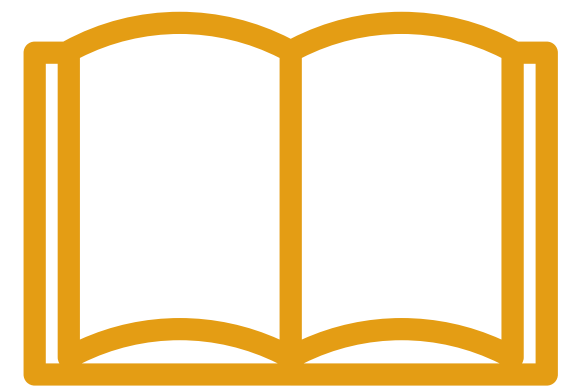
Luke 1:1-4

1 Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile a narrative of the things that have been accomplished among us, **2** just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word have delivered them to us,

3 it seemed good to me also, having followed all things closely for some time past, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, **4** that you may have certainty concerning the things you have been taught.

Luke
1:1-4

Assurance



INTRODUCTION

The introductory paragraph of Luke's Gospel reveals several significant facts about Luke as a person, the precedents on which he wrote his gospel, his writing process, and his purpose for writing. Before we study Luke's record of the first Christmas, we must first examine his reliability.

QUESTIONS

What makes a historical account reliable?

Luke lived during the first century and accompanied the apostle Paul on some of his missionary journeys (2 Timothy 4:11). The New Testament also tells us that Luke was a physician (Colossians 4:14). Luke himself was neither an apostle nor an eyewitness of the life and ministry of Jesus (Luke 1:2); however, he lived with contemporaries of Jesus, people who knew Jesus face-to-face.

How does this information add credibility to his written record?

QUESTIONS

Luke did not fabricate his story. He carefully, knowingly built upon precedents. What words and phrases in verses 1–2 indicate that sources concerning the life and ministry of Jesus predated Luke’s Gospel?

Not only did Luke use reliable sources concerning the life and ministry of Jesus, but also Luke notes “the things that have been accomplished among us” (1:1). He is likely referring to prophecies from Old Testament Scripture. Indeed, in his Gospel, Luke records the fulfillment of many of God’s promises given in the Old Testament.

Does this increase your confidence in Luke’s message? Why or why not?

Verse 3 describes Luke’s process for research and writing. List the words and phrases that characterize Luke’s process.

Luke wrote to a man named Theophilus. What was Luke’s purpose for writing (1:4)?

QUESTIONS

Luke wants you to believe his Gospel. He wants you to be assured of the truthfulness of the message of Christ and to believe it personally. Do you think you can trust Luke's message? Why or why not?

Colossians 4:14

Luke the beloved physician greets you, as does Demas.

2 Timothy 4:11

Luke alone is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is very useful to me for ministry.

Zechariah

Part 2

Luke 1:5-25

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 And they were both righteous before God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and statutes of the Lord. **7** But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and both were advanced in years.

8 Now while he was serving as priest before God when his division was on duty, **9** according to the custom of the priesthood, he was chosen by lot to enter the temple of the Lord and burn incense. **10** And the whole multitude of the people were praying outside at the hour of incense. **11** And there appeared to him an angel of the Lord standing on

the right side of the altar of incense. **12** And Zechariah was troubled when he saw him, and fear fell upon 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 call his name John. **14** And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth, **15** 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. **16** And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God, **17** 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."

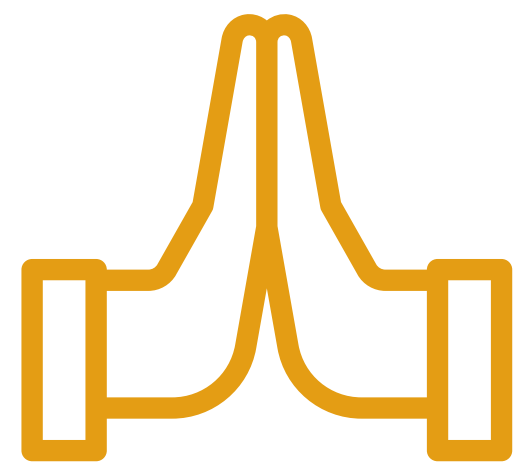
18 And Zechariah said to the angel, "How shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife is advanced in years." **19** And the angel answered him, "I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I was sent to speak to you and to bring you this good news. **20** And behold, you will be silent and 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." **21** And the people were waiting for Zechariah, and they were wondering at his

delay in the temple. **22** And 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 kept making signs to them and remained mute. **23** And when his time of service was ended, he went to his home. **24** After these days his wife Elizabeth conceived, and for five months she kept herself hidden, saying, **25** "Thus the Lord has done for me in the days when he looked on me, to take away my reproach among people."

Luke

1:5–25

Zechariah



INTRODUCTION

It had been over 400 years since anyone in Israel had received a new word from God. Imagine the shock when an angel appeared to Zechariah, an old priest, saying he would have a son who would prepare the people for the coming of the Lord! Not only was this good news for God's people, but it was also good news for a barren couple.

QUESTIONS

After Luke sets the events in their historical context by mentioning the rule of King Herod of Judea (37–4 B.C.), he introduces us to a genuinely devout Jewish couple. Their names are Zechariah and Elizabeth. What does verse 6 say about their character?

Despite their blameless character, this couple had a problem. What was it (1:7)? What does this problem tell us about the relationship between faithfulness and suffering?

QUESTIONS

Zechariah served as a priest of God's temple in Jerusalem. One day, he was randomly selected to perform the offering of incense, which symbolized the prayers of God's people ascending to God. As he entered the temple, what were the worshipers doing outside (1:10)?

While serving in the temple, he had an extraordinary experience. A messenger from God named Gabriel appeared to Zechariah in the temple with some incredible news. What did the angel promise Zechariah (1:13)?

This promise came in response to what activity on the part of Zechariah (1:13)?

It is no coincidence that God gave the promise of John's birth while the people were praying outside the temple. Throughout his Gospel, Luke notes several instances in which prayer precedes significant acts of God for his people. The promise came as an answer not only to the individual prayers of Zechariah and Elizabeth but also to the corporate prayers of God's people. God always answers prayer in the right way at the right time.

QUESTIONS

What would Zechariah, Elizabeth, and many others feel in response to this promise (1:14)?

Why would so many rejoice in the birth of this child? In other words, what would John accomplish in his ministry (1:16–17)?

Imagine if you turned to the Lord, the God of the Bible. What would that look like in your life?

Due to the couple's old age, Zechariah asked the angel for a sign to prove the trustworthiness of this promise. Ironically, Zechariah received a sign, but not the kind he wanted. What was his sign (1:20)?

How did the scene resolve in verse 24?

Mary

Luke 1:26–38

Part 3

26 In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named

Nazareth, 27 to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary. **28**

And he came to her and said, "Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!"

29 But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. **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 bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. **32**

He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, **33** and he

will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."

34 And Mary said to the angel, "How will this be, since I am a virgin?"

35 And the angel answered her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore, the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God. **36** And behold, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. **37** For nothing will be impossible with God."

38 And Mary said, "Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.

Mary



INTRODUCTION

In the last scene, God promised a miraculous child to a barren, elderly couple. By this promise, God provided a child for Zechariah and Elizabeth and a prophet for his people. In the next scene, God will promise a supernatural birth. God brought life from barrenness in Elizabeth's womb; however, God will create life from nothing in Mary's womb.

QUESTIONS

This passage emphasizes the chastity of Mary; verse 27 uses the term *virgin* twice. She was betrothed to a man named Joseph. According to Jewish customs, the betrothal stage preceded the actual marriage and formed a legal agreement between the man and woman, but the betrothed couple had not consummated their marriage yet. Therefore, Joseph would become Jesus's legal father (in the lineage of David). Did Jesus have a biological father?

This passage shows the fulfillment of two important Old Testament prophecies. God promised David that one of his descendants would rule over his people forever (2 Samuel 7:16), and the prophet Isaiah foretold that the Messiah would be born of a virgin (Isaiah 7:14). Does this strengthen your confidence in Luke's message?

QUESTIONS

Luke makes no formal citation, but Isaiah foretold that the Messiah would come from Galilee (Isaiah 9:1). Where was the angel Gabriel sent (1:26)?

The angel promised Mary something supernatural; she would conceive and give birth to a son. What was the name of the son (1:31)? What was special about him (1:32)?

List the ways in which Jesus is superior to John (1:27, 32-35).

JOHN	JESUS
born to a barren woman (1:7)	
prophet (1:15–17)	
would prepare the way for the Lord (1:17)	

Just like Zechariah, Mary followed up the birth announcement with a question; however, her question was significantly different from his. What distinguished Mary's question (1:18) from Zechariah's question (1:34)?

QUESTIONS

How did Mary conceive this child (1:34–35)?

What did the angel say about the nature of the child (1:35)?

Though Mary did not request a sign to assure her of this promise, the angel gave her one. What was this reassuring sign (1:36)?

Verse 37 contains a foundational truth that undergirds Luke's narrative and the entire Bible. What is it?

Mary's response to the angel was exemplary (1:38). Explain Mary's response and how it contrasts with Zechariah's response (1:20).

2 Samuel 7:16

And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever.

Isaiah 7:14

Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

Isaiah 9:1

But there will be no gloom for her who was in anguish. In the former time he brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time he has made glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations.

Magnificat

Part 4

Luke 1:39–56

39 In those days Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country, to a town in Judah, **40** and she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. **41** And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the baby leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit, **42** and she exclaimed with a loud cry, “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! **43** And why is this granted to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me? **44** For behold, when the sound of your greeting came to my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. **45** And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord.” **46** And Mary said, “My soul magnifies the Lord, **47** and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,

48 for he has looked on the humble estate of his servant. For behold, from now on all generations will call me blessed; **49** for he who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name. **50** And his mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. **51** He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts; **52** he has brought down the mighty from their thrones and exalted those of humble estate; **53** he has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent away empty. **54** He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, **55** as he spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his offspring forever.” **56** And Mary remained with her about three months and returned to her home.



INTRODUCTION

The angel informed Mary of Elizabeth's pregnancy as a sign that the promise of Mary's child would come true. After receiving this news, Mary rushed to visit Elizabeth. The reunion of these two cousins was the first scene in which John, the forerunner, and Jesus, the fulfillment, met.

QUESTIONS

What happened when Elizabeth first heard Mary's voice (1:41, 44)?

Do you remember what John would accomplish in his ministry (1:17)? How does that explain his movement in the womb (1:44)?

The blessing that Elizabeth pronounced upon Mary ("Blessed are you among women," 1:42) does not indicate that Mary was sinless. Mary had a sin nature along with the rest of mankind. Rather, verse 42 clearly indicates that Elizabeth blessed Mary on account of the child she would bear ("blessed is the fruit of your womb"). Mary herself recognized that she was undeserving of God's favor. How did Mary describe herself in verses 48 and 52?

QUESTIONS

Why did Elizabeth commend Mary (1:45)?

According to verses 50–53, what kinds of people does God oppose? To whom does God show mercy?

God's posture toward the proud versus God's posture toward the humble develops into a significant theme in the Gospel of Luke. God showed incredible mercy to Mary because she was humble, not because she was inherently deserving! In his lifetime, Jesus interacted with many self-righteous people who thought they deserved God's favor, and Jesus sternly rebuked them. Read Luke 18:9–14 (next page). Do you think God would hear you if you cried out for mercy and grace? Why or why not?

On the basis of his faithfulness to his promises (1:55), God showed mercy by sending Jesus (1:54). How can you know that God will show mercy to you?

Luke 18:9-14

He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and treated others with contempt: "Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed thus: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get.' But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, a sinner!' I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted."

John

Part 5

Luke 1:57-80

57 Now the time came for Elizabeth to give birth, and she bore a son. 58 And her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had shown great mercy to her, and they rejoiced with her. **59** And on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child. And they would have called him Zechariah after his father, **60** but his mother answered, "No, he shall be called John." **61** And they said to her, "None of your relatives is called by this name." **62** And they made signs to his father, inquiring what he wanted him to be called. **63** And he asked for a writing tablet and wrote, "His name is John." And they all wondered. **64** And immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue loosed, and he spoke, blessing God. **65** And fear came on all their neighbors. And all these things were

talked about through all the hill country of Judea, **66** 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.

67 And his father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied, saying, **68** "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has visited and redeemed his people **69** and has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David, **70** as he spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets from of old, **71** that we should be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us; **72** to show the mercy promised to our fathers and to remember his holy covenant, **73** the oath that he swore to our father Abraham, to grant us **74** that we, being

delivered from the hand of our enemies, might serve him without fear, **75** in holiness and righteousness before him all our days. **76** And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways, **77** to give knowledge of salvation to his people in the forgiveness of their sins, **78** because of the tender mercy of our God, whereby

the sunrise shall visit us from on high **79** to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace."

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

Luke

1:57–80

John



INTRODUCTION

In the previous scene, Mary praised God for showing her undeserved favor. Luke 18:14 says, “For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted.” Also, the forerunner, John, encountered the fulfillment, Jesus, for the first time. Now the storyline returns to Zechariah and God’s plan for John the Baptist.

QUESTIONS

In the first part of this scene, John received his name from his parents, Elizabeth and Zechariah. Reread 1:13–14. How did Elizabeth’s friends and relatives respond when the baby was born (1:58)?

Why did they respond this way (1:58)?

In their time, it was customary to name a son after the father or the grandfather. This custom is the reason those present at the circumcision and naming ceremony assumed that the boy would be called Zechariah. They responded with shock when Elizabeth told them his name would be John, and they looked to Zechariah for confirmation. What did Zechariah decide, and what was the result (1:63–64)?

QUESTIONS

Zechariah's response was decisive. Whereas Elizabeth announced, "He **shall be** called John" (1:60, future tense), Zechariah emphatically stated, "His name **is** John" (1:63). In Zechariah's mind, the boy born eight days prior had already received a name from God through the angelic messenger. By affirming the name John what did Zechariah demonstrate? Furthermore, why did Zechariah regain his speech?

How did those who heard of the events surrounding John's birth respond (1:63, 65-66)?

Ultimately, who performed these miraculous events (1:66)?

Zechariah used his restored speech to praise the Lord; he praised the Lord for "visiting and redeeming his people" (1:68). How would this be accomplished (1:69)?

The term *horn of salvation* (1:69) symbolizes strength and deliverance; the house of David indicates that the deliverer would be a descendant of King David from the Old Testament. As mentioned previously, God promised David that one of his descendants would rule over God's kingdom forever (2 Samuel 7:16). What did the coming of the Davidic Messiah fulfill (1:70)?

QUESTIONS

God sent the Messiah as the fulfillment of his promise to show mercy to the founding fathers of the Jewish people. Genesis 17:7–8 (next page) records God’s original promise to Abraham, which Zechariah described in verses 71–75. Compare those passages and summarize what God promised and what he will fulfill.

Zechariah summarized John’s role in verse 76.

What would John accomplish?

How would John accomplish his role [1:77]?

According to verse 78, what motivated God to provide this salvation?

The sunrise from on high in verse 78 refers to the Son of God coming to earth and taking on himself a human nature. When Christ came into this world, what did he bring (1:79)?

Do you sense your own need for God’s mercy and salvation?

Genesis 17:7-8

"And I will establish my covenant between me and you and your offspring after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you. And I will give to you and to your offspring after you the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession, and I will be their God."

Jesus

Part 6

Luke 2:1-21

1 In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. 2 This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. **3** And all went to be registered, each to his own town. **4** And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, **5** to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. **6** And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. **7** And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn. **8** And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field keeping watch over their flock by night. **9** And

an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear.

10 And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. **11** For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. **12** And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger." **13** And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying,

14 "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!"

15 When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go over to Bethlehem

and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us.” **16** And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. **17** And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. **18** And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them.

19 But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. **20** And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them. **21** And at the end of eight days, when he was circumcised, he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb.



INTRODUCTION

In the previous scene, God restored Zechariah's speech after Zechariah named his son John. Then Zechariah praised God for what he would do through John and Jesus. John would prepare the way for the Messiah; Jesus Himself was the way, the Savior that God sent from heaven to deliver mankind from sin and death. Jesus is the only one who can reconcile sinful men to God. In our final passage, Jesus arrives.

QUESTIONS

Read 1 Samuel 17:12, Micah 5:2 (page 41), and Luke 2:4. Where did the Bible predict the Messiah would be born? Why would he be born in this place?

Proverbs 21:1 says, "The king's heart is a stream of water in the hand of the LORD; he turns it wherever he will." The Roman emperor's registration (a census, likely for the purpose of taxation) required Joseph and Mary to travel to the town of Joseph's family lineage: Bethlehem. Based upon what this verse from Proverbs teaches, is it coincidence that Caesar Augustus issued this decree (2:1-3)? Explain your answer.

Describe the circumstances in which the Messiah was born (2:6-7).

The details regarding the birth of the Messiah are shockingly simple. Remember what Luke said about the Christ in 1:32-34: "He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High...and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever." Don't let the familiarity of the story numb the shock value; the Davidic Messiah entered the world in extremely meager conditions. This reinforces an important point in Luke and throughout the Bible: God lifts up the humble and brings down the proud.

QUESTIONS

To whom did God reveal the birth of the Messiah (2:8)?

When the glory of the Lord appeared to the shepherds, they were terrified. Why did the angel tell the shepherds not to fear (2:10)?

What is the content of this good news that causes great joy for all people (2:11)?

The angel called the Davidic Messiah a Savior (2:11). Reread Luke 1:77. What kind of salvation would the Christ provide?

QUESTIONS

The promise of a Savior was both for the benefit of the shepherds (“**unto you** is born this day” 2:11), who represented the humble and lowly, and for all people (2:10). This means that the Savior came into the world for you personally. Do you think this is good news? Does it fill you with great joy? Why or why not?

The angel described the Savior as Christ the Lord (2:11), indicating that Jesus is more than simply a man; he is also divine. If Jesus truly is God, what are the implications for your life?

Just as Zechariah and Mary received a sign from heaven regarding the promise they had been given, the shepherds also received a sign. What was this sign (2:12)?

Again, don't miss the shock value of the manger. You wouldn't look for Christ the Lord in a place for animals, lying in a feed trough.

Following the announcement of the sign, a host of angels appeared to the shepherds, proclaiming the result of the birth of the Messiah. What do they ascribe to God in heaven? What will the outcome be for men on earth (2:14)?

QUESTIONS

What response from the shepherds shows evidence of their faith (2:15–16)?

After finding the baby just as the angel promised, what did the shepherds do (2:17)?

How did people respond to the shepherd's news? How did Mary herself respond (2:18–19)?

After meeting Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, how did the shepherds respond (2:20)?

How do you think God wants you to respond to the birth of Jesus?



1 Samuel 17:12

Now David was the son of an Ephrathite of Bethlehem in Judah, named Jesse, who had eight sons. In the days of Saul the man was already old and advanced in years.

Micah 5:2

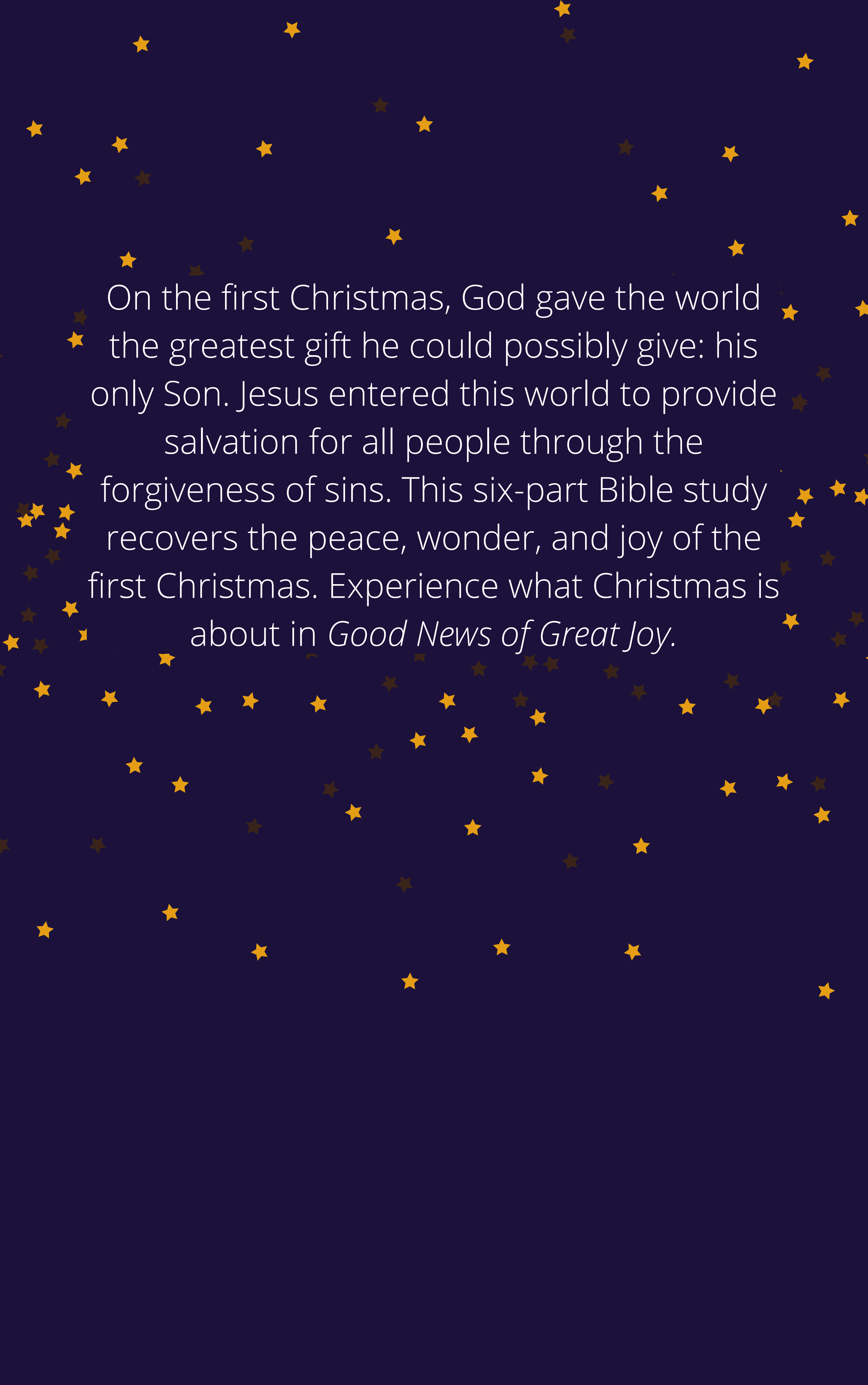
But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah,
who are too little to be among the clans of Judah,
from you shall come forth for me
one who is to be ruler in Israel,
whose coming forth is from of old,
from ancient days.

CONCLUSION

We hope and pray that the good news of the first Christmas transforms your life forever. On the first Christmas, God gave the world the greatest gift he could possibly give: his only Son. Jesus entered this world to provide salvation for all people through the forgiveness of sins. Please receive this free gift of God's grace and be reconciled to God.

If you would like to learn about the life of Jesus, we recommend reading through the rest of Luke or, even better, finding a Christian friend to read it with you. May God bless you with the peace and joy that come through his Son, Jesus.

"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!" Luke 2:14



On the first Christmas, God gave the world the greatest gift he could possibly give: his only Son. Jesus entered this world to provide salvation for all people through the forgiveness of sins. This six-part Bible study recovers the peace, wonder, and joy of the first Christmas. Experience what Christmas is about in *Good News of Great Joy*.