

Introduction - The Gospel to the Ends of the Earth

Lesson #1

Luke 1:1-25

The Holy Spirit has uniquely inspired four men to write four Gospels, each one bearing His authority. Each of these four inspired writers emphasizes our Lord and His ministry differently to best share the Gospel with his audience. Therefore, each Gospel is important to our understanding of who Jesus is.

Matthew wrote to Jewish Christians emphasizing Jesus' identity as the promised Messiah.

Mark wrote to Gentile Christians and in his short, fast paced Gospel, emphasized that Jesus as the promised Messiah and Servant of the Lord had to suffer and die to pay the penalty for sin.

John wrote to Christians and those still searching; his emphasis was to show that through Jesus, the divine Son of God, eternal life is available to all who believe in Him.

Luke, the only Gentile writer, wrote to Christians everywhere revealing Jesus as Savior of the world.

In the Word will begin our study of the New Testament in the Gospel written by Luke in which he presents the proof that Jesus is God's Savior who came to fulfill the promise made to Abraham *"so that the world may know the one true God."*

Luke's Introduction

Throughout this two-volume work of Luke-Acts, the author does not identify himself by name but reveals his identity through his writing. As you journey through Luke-Acts, look for clues to his identity as Luke, companion of the apostle Paul.

1. What information is given about Luke in the following letters of Paul?
 - Colossians 4:14
 - Philemon verse 24
 - 2 Timothy 4:11
2. Is Luke's Gospel, which means "Good News," the first written account of Jesus' life and ministry? (Luke 1:1)

3. Was Luke an eyewitness to Jesus' life and ministry? (Luke 1:2)

4. Using Luke 1:3 & 4:
 - To whom does Luke address his writing?

 - Why does he say he is writing this Gospel?

 - How does Luke say he got his information?

 - How does he describe his Gospel?

 - From your answers above, what impression do you get about the author, Luke?

John the Baptist - 1:5-25

Background - 1:5-7

5. Luke chose to begin his Gospel with the announcement of the birth of John the Baptist. Who does Luke say was king of Judea at this time? (Luke 1:5)

6. He opens by introducing a couple named Zechariah & Elizabeth. Using Luke 1:5-7:
 - From whom were Zechariah and Elizabeth descended?

 - What was Zechariah's occupation?

- How does Luke describe their characters?
 - What does Luke say about their ages?
 - What problem does Luke point out?
7. The details Luke chose to focus on would have brought to his reader's mind a common Old Testament theme. What other couples would immediately be thought of?
- Genesis 11:29 & 30
 - Genesis 29:30 & 31
 - 1 Samuel 1:1-17
8. What do you think Luke was telling his readers by drawing attention to this situation?

The Announcement – 1:8-24

9. According to 1 Chronicles 24:6-19:
- How many divisions were in the priesthood?
 - Zechariah was in the family of Abijah, so what number was his division?
10. What duties, first carried out by Aaron, were the divisions to perform? (Exodus 30:7, 8)

Note: The main ingredient of the incense was frankincense.
For more details and further study see Exodus 30:34-38.

11. When it came time for Zechariah's division to serve before the Lord, how was he chosen for the privilege of entering the temple? (Luke 1:8, 9)

12. The proper time finally arrived and while Zechariah was in the temple what were the rest of the assembled people doing? (Luke 1:10)
13. What occurred while Zechariah was offering the incense? (Luke 1:11)
14. Using Luke 1:12 explain in your own words what happened next.
15. The angel (Gabriel) tried to comfort Zechariah with word of encouragement. What did he say in each of the following verses?
 - 1:13
 - 1:14
 - 1:15
 - 1:16
 - 1:17
16. Wow, that is quite a list God gave regarding this yet unborn child! Zechariah must have been overwhelmed. What does he say in response to Gabriel's gracious words? (Luke 1:18)
17. This did not set well with Gabriel, whose name means "mighty man of God." He informed Zechariah that he, Gabriel, who stands in the very presence of God, had been sent to him to bring good news. From verse 20:
 - Why was Gabriel so angry with Zechariah?
 - What did Gabriel say would be the consequence of Zechariah's behavior?

18. Meanwhile, since this was taking quite awhile, what was going on outside the temple? (Luke 1:21)

19. What happened when Zechariah finally came out of the temple? (Luke 1:22)

20. *"When his time of service was completed, he returned home. After this his wife Elizabeth became pregnant and for five months remained in seclusion"* (Luke 1:23, 24). Why do you think she "remained in seclusion?"

21. What does Luke say were Elizabeth's thoughts about being pregnant at her age? (Luke 1:25)