

Bible Stories for Adults

God Promises John to Zechariah

Luke 1:1-25

Opening

Gathering: What are you doing this advent season to prepare yourself to celebrate Jesus' coming?

Today's Focus: God prepared the world to receive and recognize His Savior by sending John the Baptist, filled with the Holy Spirit, to prepare the way.

Key Verses: *I myself have carefully examined everything from the beginning ... so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught.* Luke 1:3-4

He will be filled with the Holy Spirit even from birth. Many of the people of Israel will he bring back to the Lord their God. Luke 1:15-16

Opening Prayer

Lesson

Luke - The Historical Gospel (*Luke 1:1-4*)

Who was Luke?

Colossians 4:14

How qualified was Luke to write the gospel (*good news*) of Jesus?

Acts 16:8-10

What was the scope of his gospel?

Acts 1:1-2

Did Luke write his gospel because no one else had tried to record what had happened?

Luke 1:1-2

Why did Luke go to this trouble if others had already done so?

Luke 1:3-4

How carefully had Luke investigated everything and made his facts certain?

Luke 3:1-2

Did Luke have any help getting his facts straight?

2 Peter 1:20-21

Why is it so important to God that the Bible is fully accurate and without errors?

2 Timothy 3:16-17

Zechariah and Elizabeth (*Luke 1:5-7*)

With what story and details does Luke begin his book?

Luke 1:5

What does it mean that Zechariah *belonged to the priestly division of Abijah*?

1 Chronicles 24:1, 3, 10, 19

Priests could only marry Jewish women, especially honorable to marry a desc of Aaron

Was this marriage a coincidence or were these devout Jews trying to please God?

Luke 1:6

Did God shower them with earthly blessings in response to their faithfulness?

Luke 1:7

Childlessness was blamed on the woman, legal grounds for divorce

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Zechariah Is Specially Selected (*Luke 1:8-10*)

What special honor did Zechariah receive once when he went on duty?

Luke 1:8-10

About 20,000 priests divided into 24 divisions, each on duty at the temple two weeks per year

All priests on duty at the temple for Passover, Pentecost and Feast of the Tabernacles

Special duties (50 per day) assigned to priests by throwing lots

Most special duty was to offer the incense in the Holy Place before the Holy of Holies

Could only do once in a lifetime, many priests never had the opportunity

Incense offered in morning and evening with sacrifice

Rising sweet smoke symbolized prayers going to heaven

Worshippers prayed until the priest came back out and gave the benediction

Zechariah Gets a Special Surprise (*Luke 1:11-13*)

Did things go smoothly for Zechariah during his special service?

Luke 1:11

Jewish tradition reserved the right side of the altar for God and the left for angel Gabriel

How did Zechariah feel about what he saw?

Luke 1:12

Besides being surprised, why would Zechariah be so scared?

Exodus 33:20

What comforting message was Zechariah given?

Luke 1:13

Don't be afraid - also used by angels and Jesus in Luke 1:30; 2:10; 5:10; 8:50; 12:7, 32

You Can't Steer a Parked Car (*Colossians 3:23-24*)

Does God come to His people in His house like His angel came to Zechariah in the temple?

Exodus 33:9

Do we need to go to God's house for Him to speak to us?

Exodus 3:1-2

Judges 6:11

1 Samuel 16:11 (Psalm 78:70)

1 Kings 19:19

Matthew 9:9

Mark 1:16-20

Does this mean we should not sit back quietly and wait for the Lord to come to us?

2 Thessalonians 3:6, 11-13 (6-15)

But don't we need to quietly meditate to hear God talk to us?

Matthew 13:11, 14-16

So does God want us to put ourselves fully into our work?

Colossians 3:23-24

Does this mean that being a workaholic is in line with God's desire for our lives?

Luke 10:41-42

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This Special Son (*Luke 1:14-17*)

How would John be different than other kids?

Luke 1:14-15

How would Zechariah understand that John should never drink alcohol?

Numbers 6:1-3 (1-21)

What examples of Nazirites do we have in the Old Testament?

Judges 13:3-5

1 Samuel 1:20, 27-28

How do we first see that John was truly filled with the Holy Spirit from birth as the angel said?

Luke 1:41-44

Prepare Ye the Way of the Lord (*Luke 1:16*)

What work would the Spirit accomplish through the life of this Nazirite?

Luke 1:16

Why was this important to God's plan?

Mark 1:1-3

How effective would John be in his ministry?

Mark 1:4-5

The Spirit and Power of Elijah (*Luke 1:17*)

What other special thing did the angel foretell about John?

Luke 1:17

What was the last prophesy God had given the Jews 400 years earlier?

Malachi 4:5-6

Did the people recognize John to be the promised return of Elijah?

Matthew 17:10-13

Were the people told that Elijah had returned?

Matthew 11:7, 10, 14 (7-15)

Doubting Zechariah (*Luke 1:18*)

After hearing the message from the angel what story would Zechariah have remembered?

Genesis 18:1, 10-11

How easily did faithful Abraham and Sarah believe God's promise?

Genesis 17:17; 18:12-14

Did Zechariah show any stronger faith when given a similar message?

Luke 1:18

How did the angel remind Zechariah who the promise was from?

Luke 1:19

Would this angel's name mean anything to Zechariah?

Daniel 8:15-16 (9:21-22)

What other job does Gabriel get to do?

Luke 1:26-28

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Greek Word Meanings:

Angelia (ahn-ge-LEE-a)
Angel
Evangel
Gospel
Evangelist

You Asked For A Sign, You've Got It (Luke 1:20)

What sign would Zechariah be given because of his weak faith?
Luke 1:20

Was there any other part of the sign?
Luke 1:62

Did the worshippers outside realize what had happened?
Luke 1:21-22

Why had the worshippers waited so long for Zechariah?
Numbers 6:22-26

What other sign was Zechariah given that the promise would happen?
Luke 1:23-25

Closing Prayer

Response - Consider and meditate on one each day this week

1. When have I carefully investigated everything so that I might understand and know the certainty of something in God's Word?
(*Luke 1:1-4; John 5:36-40; 20:30-31; Acts 17:11-12*)
2. What special honors have I been given to serve God in special ways?
(*Luke 1:8-9; 14:7-14; 1 Samuel 2:8, 30; Psalm 84:11; Proverbs 15:33; John 12:26; 1 Cor. 10:31*)
3. How do I approach the work that I do – as a service to God or as a drudgery?
(*Colossians 3:23-24; Proverbs 10:4-5; Ecclesiastes 5:18-20; Ephesians 4:16, 28; 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12; 2 Thessalonians 3:6-15*)
4. In what ways have I dedicated my life to God?
(*Numbers 6:1-21; Judges 13:3-5; 1 Samuel 1:20-28; Mark 8:34-38; Luke 1:14-17; Ephesians 4:1; 1 Timothy 4:13-16; 1 Peter 3:1-2*)
5. When has a lack of faith led me to question a direction God has shown me for my life?
(*Luke 1:18-20; Isaiah 7:9b; Matthew 14:25-33; Mark 6:5-6; Hebrews 11; James 2:14-26*)