

Bible Stories for Adults

Mary & Elizabeth / John is Born

Luke 1:39-80

Opening

Gathering: How does it feel when your heart leaps for joy being in the presence of someone for whom you care?

Today's Focus: Mary and Zechariah both praised God for the great things that He did through them.

Key Verses: *Blessed is she who has believed that what the Lord has said to her will be accomplished!*
Luke 1:45

Everyone who heard this wondered about it, asking, "What then is this child going to be?"
Luke 1:66

Opening Prayer

Lesson

Review of Two Weeks Ago (*Luke 1:1-25*)

How did the historian Luke transition from the Old Testament into his story of Jesus?
Luke 1:5, 8, 11, 13

Why would God send an angel just to tell an elderly couple they would have a child?
Luke 1:16-17

How did the angel reply when Zechariah couldn't believe what he was seeing and hearing?
Luke 1:19-20

Review of Last Week (*Luke 1:26-38*)

What was the next job for this arch-angel Gabriel?
Luke 1:26-27, 30-31

Was Mary told anything about who this child really was?
Luke 1:32-33

Did Mary ask for proof or help believing this amazing announcement as Zechariah had?
Luke 1:34

How would Mary become pregnant even though it would be months before Joseph took her in?
Luke 1:35

Although she didn't ask for it, what proof did Gabriel give Mary for this impossible birth?
Luke 1:36-37

How faithfully did Mary accept this promise?
Luke 1:38

A Small Select Sorority (*Luke 1:39-40*)

With whom could Mary share this great news who wouldn't call her crazy?
Luke 1:39-40

Town assumed to be Hebron, a Levite town in the Judean hill country (Joshua 21:10-11)
Hebron - Promise to Isaac, circumcision instituted, Abraham's first land, David crowned,
Abraham/Sarah/Isaac/Rebekah/Jacob/Leah buried there

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The Spirit's Greeting (Luke 1:41-45)

- How was the promise to Mary confirmed by Elizabeth even before they saw each other?
Luke 1:41
- How is it revealed that Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and not just happy to see her relative?
Luke 1:42-43
- What did Elizabeth say to explain how she knew Mary would be the mother of the Messiah?
Luke 1:44
- How could a baby leaping in a womb be taken as a sign from God?
Luke 1:15
- Did Elizabeth praise Mary for being so holy that she would bear God's Son?
Luke 1:45

Magnificat anima mea Dominum (Luke 1:46-55)

- How did Mary respond to Elizabeth's strange greeting?
Luke 1:46-47
Hebrew poetry often used *synonymous parallelism* (second line reiterates the first)
- What great things did Mary praise God for that He had done for her?
Luke 1:48-49
- Was Mary boasting of herself when she said *all generations will call me blessed*?
1 Corinthians 1:26-31
- What great things did Mary praise God for that He has done for us?
Luke 1:50-53
- What is an example of how God has extended His mercy to generations of those who fear Him?
Nehemiah 9:30-31
- How has God *scattered those who are proud and brought down rulers from their thrones*?
Matthew 23:2, 5-7, 11-12 (Romans 9:30-10:4)
- How do we see *He has filled the hungry with good things but has sent the rich away empty*?
Mark 10:21-23, 26-27
- How does Jesus later explain these contrasts of humility and self-righteousness?
Matthew 5:6 (3-12)
(See also Proverbs 3:34; Isaiah 2:11-12, 17; Ezekiel 21:26; Luke 14:7-14; 1 Peter 5:5-6)
- What great things did Mary praise God for that He has done for Israel?
Luke 1:54-55
- Why is it important to us that God has remembered to be merciful to His chosen people Israel?
Deuteronomy 7:7-9

Mary Surprises Joseph (Luke 1:56)

- How long did Mary stay with Elizabeth?
Luke 1:56
- What surprised Joseph when he welcomed his betrothed Mary back to Nazareth?
Matthew 1:18-19
- How did God protect the legal legitimacy of His only Son?
Matthew 1:20, 24-25

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John Is Born and Named (*Luke 1:57-66*)

What happened soon after Mary returned to Nazareth?

Luke 1:57-58

When a birth was near, friends and local musicians would gather by the house

When a boy was born, the musicians started playing and everyone celebrated

If it was a girl, the musicians would leave quietly - Romans might throw the girl away

Double celebration at this birth - Barren Elizabeth was blessed with a son

What would happen to a Jewish boy eight days after his birth?

Genesis 17:12

Names were descriptive, parent's names were often given

Neighbors and relatives would often help name a child:

Ruth 4:16-17

What name did Elizabeth's neighbors and friends naturally want to give this child?

Luke 1:59-61

How were the neighbors able to get Zechariah's decision since he couldn't speak or hear?

Luke 1:62-63

Writing tablet - Hollowed out wooden board filled with wax, inscribe into the wax

What happened after Zechariah had officially given his son the unprecedented name John?

Luke 1:64

How did the neighbors respond to Zechariah's sudden ability to speak?

Luke 1:65

How did others respond when they heard what had happened?

Luke 1:66

Benedictus dominus deus Israel (Luke 1:67-79)

Besides the ability to speak, how else was Zechariah blessed after John was named?

Luke 1:67

Did Zechariah praise God for sending him this special son despite his old age?

Luke 1:68

Why did Zechariah praise God for coming? Didn't they believe He was always there?

Luke 7:16-17

If the people recognized Jesus as God come down, why did they kill Him?

Luke 19:41, 44

Did Jesus' followers understand that He came to redeem (pay the price) for Israel?

Luke 24:20-21

What did Zechariah say that told those around that He was speaking of the Messiah?

Luke 1:69

What did Jews think of when prophets spoke about a horn?

Daniel 7:8, 24

How would the people understand Zechariah's reference to a horn in David's house?

Psalms 132:17

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Benedictus (Luke 1:67-79)

How does Zechariah make sure that those listening recognized what he was saying?

Luke 1:70

What was God doing for His people by sending this Messiah?

Luke 1:71-73

Why was God doing this?

Luke 1:74-75

How well did Zechariah understand his son's role in God's plan?

Luke 1:76-77

What prophesy did Zechariah understand that his son John would fulfill?

Isaiah 40:3-5

Why had Zechariah sung about the Messiah when thanking God for sending John?

Malachi 3:1

Was Zechariah praising God for sending John or the *sun of righteousness* promised in Malachi 4:2?

Luke 1:78-79

How would this rising sun shine on those living in darkness?

Isaiah 60:1-3

Training for Messiah's Messenger (*Luke 1:80*)

How was John raised in preparation for his ministry?

Luke 1:80

Closing Prayer

Response - Consider and meditate on one each day this week

1. What friends or relatives do I have to whom I can confide?
(*Luke 1:39-40; Exodus 18; 1 Samuel 20; Job 2:11-13; Proverbs 3:26; 18:24; 20:19; 2 Corinthians 7:3-4; James 5:13-16; 1 Peter 5:7*)
2. What friends or relatives would come to me when they need someone to confide in?
(*1 Samuel 19:1-7; Psalm 25:14; Proverbs 11:13; 1 Timothy 5:1-2*)
3. Do I react with pride or humility when God does great things for or through me?
(*Luke 1:48-49; 14:7-14; Matthew 23; 1 Corinthians 1:26-31; James 4:10; 1 Peter 5:5-6*)
4. When and how has God shown His mercy to me?
(*Luke 1:50, 72, 78; Psalm 103:8-10; Romans 5:6-8; 1 Timothy 1:15-16; Titus 3:3-7; 1 Peter 1:3-5*)
5. When have I shown God's mercy to others?
(*Matthew 18:21-35; Luke 6:27-36; James 2:12-13; Jude 22-23*)