



A Course
In
LUKE, STUDIES IN

PART ONE

Prepared by the
Committee on Religious Education
of the
American Bible College

Pineland, Florida 33945

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PREFACE

This book, the longest of the Gospels, was written principally for the Greeks. Its emphasis is upon the perfect humanity of Christ, whom it presents as the Son of man, the human-divine Person, and whose genealogy it traces to Adam. Luke's narrative of the birth and infancy of the Lord is from the point of view of the virgin mother. He alone tells of Christ's boyhood and reveals more of His prayer life than the other Synoptics. The parables found in this Gospel show Christ's concern for lost humanity. In the accounts of certain miracles the trained observation of a physician is evident.

Luke is in many ways the Gospel of compassion, stressing, as it does, the Lord's sympathy for the brokenhearted, the sick, the mistreated, and the bereaved. It also shows the ministry of women to Christ. Along with its presentation of the Son of man, the book emphasizes the world-wide scope of salvation. Luke alone records the parables of the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the lost son (15:3-32) and the mission of the Seventy (10:1-24).¹

Although the American Bible College believes the King James Version is the preserved Word of God, this method of study allows the writer to occasionally condense a passage in his own paraphrase. This should not be construed to imply that A. B. C. is correcting God's Word.

During this course the student is required to read through the entire Book of Luke ten times.

¹ THE NEW SCOFIELD REFERENCE BIBLE, NEW TESTAMENT, (NEW YORK – OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS, 1967), p. 1075.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The American Bible College wishes to thank Dr. David H. Sorenson for his permission to use his material, taken from his 2nd edition commentary, *UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE*, VOL. 42, THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO SAINT LUKE (published by Northstar Ministries, 1820 W. Morgan St., Duluth, MN. He is an outstanding independent Baptist pastor and a prolific writer holding to fundamental Bible doctrine. We whole-heartedly recommend this commentary set to our readers. Also, we wish to thank the other commentators for the use of their quotes.

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(This outline style is adapted from Dr. A. C. Gaebelein's outline.)¹

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¹ Arno Clement Gaebelein, THE ANNOTATED BIBLE, *THE BOOK LUKE*, (In the Public Domain), Hereafter referred to as [GAEBELEIN].

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INTRODUCTION

THE BOOK OF

LUKE

AUTHOR: I. Author — Genuineness. — The universal tradition of Christendom, reaching up at least to the latter part of the 2nd century, has assigned the third member of our Gospel collection to Luke, Paul's trusted companion and fellow-laborer, who alone continued in attendance on his beloved master in his last imprisonment (Colossians 4:14; Philemon 1:24; 2 Timothy 4:11). Its authorship has never been questioned until comparatively recent times, until the unsparing criticism of Germany Rationalism (liberalism or modernism).¹

DATE: It is certain that the Gospel was written before the Acts of the Apostles (Acts 1:1). This letter could not have been composed before A.D. 58, when the writer leaves Paul "in his own hired house" at Rome; nor probably long after, since otherwise the issue of the apostle's imprisonment and appeal to Caesar must naturally have been recorded by him. How long the composition of the Gospel preceded that of the Acts it is impossible to determine, but we may remark that the different tradition followed in the reports of the ascension in the two books renders it probable that the interval was not very small, or, at any rate, that the two were not contemporaneous. If we follow the old tradition given above, we may find reason for supposing that the interval between Luke's being left at Philippi (Acts 16:12; 17:1) and his joining the apostle there again (20:5) was employed in writing and publishing his gospel. [MCCLINTOCK, p. 206]

RECIPIENTS: For whom written. — On this point we have certain evidence. Luke himself tells us that the object he had in view in compiling his gospel was that a certain Theophilus (meaning "loved of God") "might know the certainty of those things wherein he had been (orally) instructed." Nothing more is known of this Theophilus, and it is idle to repeat the vague conjectures in which critics have indulged, some even denying his personal existence altogether, and arguing,

¹ John McClintock and James Strong, CYCLOPEDIA OF BIBLICAL, THEOLOGICAL, AND ECCLESIASTICAL LITERATURE, Vol. 5, (AGES SOFTWARE, Rio, WI., 2000), pp. 186, 187. hereafter referred to as [MCCLINTOCK].

from the meaning of the name, that it stands merely as the representative of a class. ... One or two inferences may, however, be made with tolerable certainty from Luke's words. He was doubtless a Christian, and, from his name and the character of the Gospel, a Gentile convert; while the epithet ἐξοχώτατος ("most excellent"), generally employed as 'a title of honor' (Acts 23:26; 24:3; 26:25), indicates that he was a person of official dignity. He was not an inhabitant of Palestine, for the evangelist minutely describes the position of places which to such a one would be well known. It is so with Capernaum (4:31), Nazareth (1:26), Arimathlea (23:51), the country of the Gadarenes (8:26), the distance of Mount Olivet and Emmaus from Jerusalem (Acts 1:12; Luke 24:13). By the same test he probably was not a Macedonian (Acts 16:12), nor an Athenian (Acts 17:21), nor a Cretan (Acts 27:8, 12). But that he was a native of Italy, and perhaps an inhabitant of Rome, is probable from similar data. [MCCLINTOCK, p. 204]

THEME: The Gospel of Luke is the third of the so-called Synoptics. The word synoptic means "seeing the whole together or at a glance." Matthew, Mark, and Luke are called the synoptic Gospels, because they present a common narrative, relate the same incidents of our Lord, with much the same words, though characteristic differences, omissions, and additions are equally apparent. ...

The well-known scholar, Dr. Schaff, made the statement, "The essential identity, of the Christ of the Synoptics is now universally conceded." This is true. But the differences, the divergences in numerous things of the story the Synoptic Gospels reveal, how are they to be explained? There can be but one answer. The three persons who have written were chosen by the Spirit of God to write the narrative in exactly the way in which they did. The characteristic differences of their work is not man-made, but God-breathed. They wrote independently of each other. They did not try to improve upon a record already in existence. The Holy Spirit guided the pen of each, so that we possess in these three Gospels the testimony of the Holy Spirit concerning the Lord Jesus in a threefold aspect. The proof of this will soon be found in the careful and prayerful study of the Gospels. The truth is not discovered by learning and research in linguistic or historical lines, but by earnest searching in the Word itself. The three Gospels make the humanity of the Lord Jesus prominent, but not to the exclusion of His Deity. The full revelation of His Deity is given in the fourth Gospel, the Gospel of John, but not excluding His true humanity. The Transfiguration is given by each of the Synoptics, but it is not found in the fourth

□◆✠ ℳ 𐤀𐤏𐤍𐤏 𐤏𐤕𐤏𐤕𐤏𐤕𐤏𐤕 𐤏𐤕𐤏𐤕𐤏𐤕 𐤏𐤕𐤏𐤕𐤏𐤕 𐤏𐤕𐤏𐤕𐤏𐤕
 & 𐤏𐤕 [for that is delivered unto me"], 50:
 (Luke 4:6); 𐤏𐤕𐤏𐤕𐤏𐤕 & 𐤏𐤕𐤏𐤕𐤏𐤕 [“for a
 season”(Luke 4:13); 𐤏𐤕𐤏𐤕𐤏𐤕
 𐤏𐤕𐤏𐤕𐤏𐤕 [“power of the
 Lord”] & 𐤏𐤕 50: (Luke 5:17);
 & 𐤏𐤕𐤏𐤕𐤏𐤕𐤏𐤕𐤏𐤕 𐤏𐤕𐤏𐤕𐤏𐤕𐤏𐤕 [“having left
 all”] and 𐤏𐤕𐤏𐤕𐤏𐤕𐤏𐤕 𐤏𐤕𐤏𐤕 [“a great feast”]. [“ (vs
 28, 29); the comparison of old and new wine (Luke
 5:39); ℳ 𐤀𐤏𐤍𐤏𐤕𐤏𐤕𐤏𐤕 𐤏𐤕𐤏𐤕𐤏𐤕𐤏𐤕𐤏𐤕
 [“were filled with madness”] (Luke 6:11);
 𐤏𐤕𐤏𐤕𐤏𐤕𐤏𐤕𐤏𐤕𐤏𐤕 𐤏𐤕𐤏𐤕𐤏𐤕𐤏𐤕𐤏𐤕
 𐤏𐤕𐤏𐤕𐤏𐤕 [“went virtue out of him”] (Luke
 6:19); the cures in the presence of John's disciples
 (Luke 7:21), and the incidental remarks (ver. 29, 30);
 many additional touches in the narratives of the
 Gadarene demoniac (Luke 8:26-39), and the
 transfiguration, especially the fact of his "praying"
 (Luke records at least six instances of our Lord having
 prayed omitted by the other evangelists), and the
 subject of the conversation with Moses and Elijah
 (Luke 9:28-36); notices supplied (Luke 20:19; 21:37,
 38), all tending to convince us that we are in the
 presence not of a mere copyist, but of a trustworthy and
 independent witness. Luke's account of the passion and
 resurrection is to a great extent his own, adding much
 of the deepest significance to the synoptical narrative,
 particularly the warning to Simon in the name of the
 twelve (Luke 22:31, 32); the bloody sweat (verse 44);
 the sending to Herod (Luke 23:7-12); the words to the
 women (verse 27-31); the prayer for forgiveness (ver.
 34); the penitent thief (verse 39-43); the walk to
 Emmaus (Luke 24:13-35); and the ascension (verse 50-
 53).

It has been remarked that there is nothing in which
 Luke is more characteristically distinguished from both
 the evangelists than in his selection of our Lord's
 parables. There are no less than eleven quite peculiar to
 him: (1.) The two debtors; (2.) Good Samaritan; (3.)
 Friend at midnight; (4.) Rich fool; (5.) Barren fig tree;
 (6.) Lost silver; (7.) Prodigal son; (8.) Unjust steward;
 (9.) Rich man and Lazarus; (10.) Unjust judge; (11.)
 Pharisee and publican; and two others, the Great
 Supper, and the Pounds, which, with many points of
 similarity, differ considerably from those found in
 Matthew.

Of our Lord's miracles, six omitted by Matthew and
 Mark are recorded by Luke: (1.) Miraculous draught;
 (2.) The son of the widow of Nain; (3.) The woman
 with a spirit of infirmity; (4.) The man with a dropsy;
 (5.) The ten lepers; (6.) The healing of Malchus's ear.

Of the seven not related by him, the most remarkable
 omission is that of the Syrophenician woman, for
 which à priori reasoning would have claimed a special
 place in the so-called Gospel of the Gentiles. We miss

also the walking on the sea, the feeding of the four
 thousand, the cure of the blind men, and of the deaf and
 dumb, the stater [gold coin] in the fish's mouth, and the
 cursing of the fig-tree.

The chief omissions in narrative are the whole
 section, Matthew 14-16:12; Mark 6:45-8:26; Matthew
 19:2-12; 20:1-16, 20-28; comp. Mark 10:35-45; the
 anointing, Matthew 26:6-13; Mark 14:3-9.

With regard to coincidence of language, a most
 important remark was long since made by bishop
 Marsh (Michaelis, 5:317), that when Matthew and
 Luke agree verbally in the common synoptical
 sections, Mark always agrees with them also; and that
 there is not a single instance in these sections of verbal
 agreement between Matthew and Luke alone. A close
 scrutiny will discover that the verbal agreement
 between Luke and Mark is greater than that between
 Luke and Matthew, while the mutual dependence of the
 second and third evangelists on the same source is
 rendered still more probable by the observation of
 Reuss, that they agree both in excess and defect when
 compared with Matthew: that when Mark has elements
 wanting in Matthew, Luke usually has them also;
 while, when Matthew supplies more than Mark, Luke
 follows the latter; and that where Mark fails altogether,
 Luke's narrative often represents a different
 □𐤕𐤏𐤕𐤏𐤕𐤏𐤕𐤏𐤕, from that of Matthew.
 [MCCLINTOCK, pp. 191-194]

QUOTATIONS FROM THE OLD

TESTAMENT: Quotations from the O.T. — It is a
 striking confirmation of the view propounded above of
 the character of Luke's Gospel, and the object of its
 composition, that the references to the O.T., the
 authority of which with any except the Jews would be
 but small, are so few — only twenty-four in the one
 against sixty-five in the other — when compared with
 their abundance in Matthew. Only eight out of the
 whole number are peculiar to our evangelist (marked
 with an asterisk in the annexed list), which occur in the
 portions where he appears to have followed more or
 less completely a □𐤕𐤏𐤕𐤏𐤕𐤏𐤕𐤏𐤕 of his own;
 the history of the birth and childhood of our Lord, the
 visit to Nazareth (chapter 4), and that of the passion.
 The rest are found in the common synoptical sections.
 We may also remark that, with the most trifling
 exceptions, Luke never quotes the O.T. himself, nor
 speaks on his own authority of events occurring in
 fulfillment of prophecy, and that his citations are only
 found in the sayings of our Lord and others.
 [MCCLINTOCK, p. 202]

COMMENTARY

I. THE BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD.

Chapter 1-2:52.

CHAPTER 1

(1)True, (2)False. (A. p.41)Matthew's entire account is written from the viewpoint of Joseph, and for Jews. His genealogy is the genealogy of Joseph according to the legal Jewish method. Gabriel's appearance to Joseph is to explain Mary's condition. Indeed, all the four supernatural directions for the family movements come in dreams to Joseph. Every incident and every Old Testament quotation conspire to prove that Jesus of Nazareth is the foretold and long-expected King of the Jews. ...

Luke's entire account is written from Mary's viewpoint and to show our Lord's broader relations to humanity. His genealogy is real, not legal. It is Mary's genealogy, not Joseph's, our Lord's relations to Joseph being only a Jewish, legal supposition. While indeed it shows that Mary was a Jewess, really descended from David and Abraham, yet her genealogy extends back to Adam, in order to prove that her Son was the second Adam, and literally fulfilled the first gospel promise, "The seed of the woman [not of the man] shall bruise the serpent's head."...

It is to Mary, Gabriel announces her conception of a Son, by the Holy Spirit, who because thus sired shall be holy, the Son of God. ...

It is to Mary the angel announces the condition of Elisabeth, and thus prepares the way for Mary's visit to Elisabeth. All of Luke's other incidents are those which Mary "kept in her heart." The conjecture that Luke's genealogy is also traced through Joseph is puerile in itself, utterly gratuitous, and at war with Luke's whole plan. It is to invent a difficulty and then invite the harmonists of the two genealogies to settle it. Why should they be harmonized? They have different starting points (a legal son, a real son) and different objectives (Abraham – Adam); they are not even parallel lines, since they meet and part. ...

We here confront what Paul calls "the great mystery of Godliness" – the incarnation of our Lord. Isaiah,

who had already foretold his virgin birth, in a clear prophecy concerning him, says, "For unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6). Quoting Isaiah, and because the virgin mother is with child by the Holy Ghost, Matthew says, "His name shall be called Immanuel (God with us)." In explanation of the way a virgin can become a mother, Luke's angel says to Mary, "The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee: wherefore also the Holy One who is begotten of thee shall be called the Son of God."...

Mark says, "Jesus Christ, the Son of God." John says, "The Logos which was God, was manifested and became flesh." Paul says, "He who was the effulgence of God's glory and the very image of his substance," (Hebrews 1:3) "who existed in the form of God ... was made in the likeness of man (Philippians 2:6-8) was born of a woman" (Galatians 4:4). Not otherwise could he escape the hereditary taint of Adam's sin (Genesis 5:3); not otherwise could he fulfil the protevangel, "the seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head" (Genesis 3:15); not otherwise could he be the Second Adam, the second head of the race (Romans 5:12-21; 1 Corinthians 15:45-49).¹

Vss. 1-4. The prologue to Luke's Gospel (1:1-4) constitutes one of the most remarkable literary and theological sentences in literature (all four verses are only one sentence in Greek). Written in the finest literary *koine* [or koine] (the common Greek of the market-place), the prologue has affinities with the preambles of the historians Herodotus, Polybius, and Thucydides, and incorporates much of the language of the physicians Galen and Hippocrates. Theologically, the affirmations of Luke provide a profound discourse supporting the accuracy of other N.T. authors and of his own writing as well. In v. 1, Luke notes the efforts of others. Whether Matthew and/or Mark are here intended, or whether Luke refers to other sources, cannot be known for sure. Obviously others preceded him in the task of producing a "narrative" (ἱστορίαν ἡμῶν ἡμεῖς ἠκούσαμεν) of the things believed in the early Christian community. These authors are more precisely identified in v. 2. Luke speaks of them as eyewitnesses (*iautopta*, Gk., "to see for oneself") and ministers of the Word. In this identification, Luke expresses his perfect confidence in the veracity of their

¹ B. H. Carroll, AN INTERPRETATION OF THE ENGLISH BIBLE, Vol. 10, THE FOUR GOSPELS, Part I, (MALLOY, INC., ANN ARBOR, MI. 1976), pp. 47-48. Hereafter referred to as [CARROLL].

labor. Apparently Luke felt himself led of God's Spirit to add new information "to set in order" the story of Jesus. This confidence grew out of thorough investigation. Luke describes his endeavor in v. 3 with the word *parakoloutheos*, (Gk.), translated "having had perfect understanding." Literally the term means "to follow along beside" or "to trace carefully." Galen, the famous physician, used the word for describing symptoms in a patient. Luke further qualifies this research with the strong Greek word, *akribos* "accurately," which is translated as "perfect" in v. 3. Luke contemplates the anticipated result of his project for Theophilus. Theophilus will "know" (*epignos*, Gk., "to know fully") the certainty of those things in which he has been instructed. Luke desires full knowledge of Christian truths and events. The word "certainty" (v. 4) is derived from the Greek *sphallog*, meaning "to totter" or "to fall." In this verse the verb has the prefix *a* which negates the action of the word. The full knowledge contained in Luke's account will prevent Theophilus from tottering in comprehension of the truth. Herein is an affirmation of the accuracy and authority of the Gospel of Luke. A comparison of the Lucan prologue with Acts 1:1-4 reveals that Luke intended his Gospel and the Book of Acts to be considered a two-volume work.²

Vss. 5-7. Zacharias was not, as some have imagined, High-Priest. ...Zacharias was chosen by lot to burn incense: the high-priest did it by "the right of succession", and burned it in the Holy of holies, into which Zacharias entered not. ... Zacharias was priest of the course of Abia; whereas the high-priest was of no course at all. These several courses began on the sabbath-day, and continued to serve till the next sabbath.' *Whitby. (Notes, 2 Kings 11:5-9. 1 Chr. 23:2-6. 24:10. Ezra 2:36-39.)*—St. Luke begins his history with the parentage and birth of John. His father Zacharias was a priest of the order of Abia, or Abijah; and his wife Elizabeth also was descended from Aaron. They were exemplary persons, being "righteous before God," and not merely in the sight of men; being accepted as true believers, and approving themselves to him by a conscientious conduct in his sight: so that they habitually walked in an upright and regular course of obedience to all the moral commandments of the law, and in an attendance on all the ordinances of his instituted worship; and thus acted in a most blameless and irreproachable manner, as to the general tenor of their conduct. ... They had no children: and as

² W.A. Criswell, *Believer's study Bible [computer file], electronic ed., Logos Library System*, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson) 1997, c1991 by the Criswell Center for Biblical Studies. Hereafter referred to as [CRISWELL].

Elizabeth had been barren in her younger years, it was not to be expected that she should bear children in her old age. This was thought a very heavy affliction by the Jews: yet Zacharias gave no countenance to the practice of polygamy or divorce, by taking another wife. The latter of these, especially, was common at that time.³

Vss. 8-10. Luke recorded that **Zechariah's** [Temple duty] **division was on duty**. This division was one of 24 groups of priests, drawn up in David's time (1 Chron. 24:7-18). The priests in each division were on duty twice a year for a week at a time.

Zechariah was **chosen by lot** (*elache*) to be the **priest** who offered the **incense**. Because of the large number of priests this would be the only time in Zechariah's life when he was allowed to perform this task. As elsewhere in Scripture, the sovereignty of God is stressed even in matters which seem like chance, as in the casting of a lot. ...

While Zechariah was inside at the altar of incense, a crowd gathered to pray. The incense for which Zechariah was responsible symbolized the prayers of the entire nation. At that particular moment Zechariah was thus the focal point of the entire Jewish nation.⁴

Vss. 11-17. While performing his duties pertaining to the burning of incense, "there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense." (This precise and specific information of Luke denotes a source who was an eyewitness. He evidently gleaned these details from one who had witnessed it.) Zacharias was startled and understandably frightened. ...

As so often is the case in the appearance of an angel, two things are evident. (1) There was fear in being confronted by an absolutely holy messenger of God. (2) The angel in appearing to a godly individual immediately urged him to "fear not." Clear evidence that God hears and answers prayer is established. "Thy prayer is heard." They evidently had prayed for children for years. God in His providential plan had withheld answering until the fulness of time had come. Now their prayer would be answered in a miraculous way. They would have a son and his name would be called John. ...

The angel proceeded to describe the blessedness of their coming son. Not only would they rejoice along with many others, but he would be "great in the sight

³ Thomas Scott, *Scott's Commentary on the New Testament*, Luke, (J. B. Lippincott & Co., Philadelphia, 1872), p. 183. Hereafter referred to as [SCOTT].

⁴ John A. Martin, *THE BIBLE KNOWLEDGE COMMENTARY, NEW TESTAMENT, LUKE*, (Chariot Victor Pub., Colorado Springs, CO., 1985), p. 2.3. Hereafter referred to as [MARTIN].

of the Lord.” It is one thing to be great in the eyes of man, but how much more excellent to be great in the sight of the Lord? Though not specifically noted as a Nazrite, he, like them, was not to drink “wine nor strong drink.” His purity of life was parallel to how he would uniquely “be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother’s womb.” ...

Several comments might be made. (1) Those who would be great in the sight of the Lord will never ingest alcoholic beverages. (2) Purity of life is a prerequisite to the fulness of the Holy Spirit. (3) John the Baptist is the only one recorded in Scripture specifically noted as being filled with the Holy Ghost [proper name for God’s Spirit] from his mother’s womb. It may be presumed Jesus was, though it is not specifically noted. His ministry would in part be turning many in Israel “to the Lord their God.” (Implied is that many in Israel then, as now, needed to turn to their God.) ...

Perhaps most significantly, John the Baptist would “go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.” Even at this early juncture, a clear correlation between John the Baptist being the fulfillment of the Elijah as the prophesied forerunner of Christ is established. There is a clear allusion to Malachi 3:1 and 4:5-6 as well as Isaiah 40:1-3. John the Baptist’s primary ministry would be to prepare the way for Jesus Christ, soon to follow him.⁵

Vss. 18-22. *A faithless priest.* You would think that the presence of an angel and the announcement of God’s Word would encourage Zacharias’ faith, but they did not. Instead of looking to God by faith, the priest looked at himself and his wife and decided that the birth of a son was impossible. He wanted some assurance beyond the plain word of Gabriel, God’s messenger, perhaps a sign from God. ...

This, of course, was unbelief, and unbelief is something God does not accept. Zacharias was really questioning God’s ability to fulfill His own Word! Had he forgotten what God did for Abraham and Sarah? (Gen. 18:9-15; Rom. 4:18-25) Did he think that his physical limitations would hinder Almighty God? But before we criticize Zacharias too much, we should examine ourselves and see how strong our own faith is. ...

Faith is blessed, but unbelief is judged; and Zacharias was struck dumb (and possibly deaf, v. 62) until the Word was fulfilled. “I belie(1)True, (2)False. (A. p.13)ved, and therefore have I spoken” (2 Cor. 4:13). Zacharias did not believe; therefore he could not

speak. When he left the holy place, he was unable to give the priestly benediction to the people (Num. 6:22-27) or even tell them what he had seen. Indeed, God had given him a very personal “sign” that he would have to live with for the next nine months.⁶

Vss. 26-38. *Gabriel’s announcement to Mary.*

Vs. 26. **And in the sixth month** refers to the sixth month of Elisabeth’s pregnancy. Once again, Gabriel was sent to announce a special birth, this time to Mary in Nazareth.

Vs. 27. To a virgin. There is no doubt according to Scripture that Christ’s birth was a virgin birth, totally without parallel either before or since. This is required for several reasons: (1) to fulfill Old Testament prophecy (Gen 3:15; Isa 7:14; Jer 31:22); (2) to avoid the Old Testament curse on the seed of Jeconiah (Jer 22:24–30), yet still be able to claim the Throne of David in the kingly line; (3) to be in accord with the theological implications of the inspiration of the Scriptures and Christ’s sinless humanity. Through the miraculous virgin conception, Christ avoided receiving a sinful nature; (4) to avoid receiving a human father. Christ already had a Father, and it would be unsuitable to have a second one; (5) to avoid creating a new person, as is done in all normal conceptions. Mary’s conception of Christ was to be the incarnation of an already existing person.

Vs. 28. Blessed art thou among women. Mary was perhaps the best female descendant of David suitable for this matchless ministry of rearing the very Son of God. We must be careful not to downgrade Mary, nor to exalt her too highly.

Vss. 29–33. Mary was naturally perplexed by all this, though she accepted it. Gabriel went on to explain that the Messiah Himself was to be born to her. The importance of verses 2:32–33 is that of the fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant of II Samuel 7:13–16, and of the messianic reign described in Isaiah 9:6–7.

Vs. 34. How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? This was a legitimate question, given Mary’s present marital status. Unlike Zechariah’s question in verse 18, Mary expresses no doubt, but rather a humble submission to the will of God. Note verse 38 in this regard also.

Vs. 35. The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee. These words express the completely miraculous nature of Mary’s conception. It was accomplished by God alone in a unique, never-to-be-repeated way. But one asks, could not Mary transmit her sinful nature to the one conceived in her womb? Ordinarily this would be

⁵ David H. Sorenson, UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE, Vol. 8, (Northstar Ministries, Duluth, MN.), pp. 548-549. Hereafter referred to as [SORENSEN].

⁶ Warren W. Wiersbe, BE COMPASSIONATE, (Victor Books, Wheaton, IL., 1988), p. 12. Hereafter referred to as [WIERSBE].

the case, but the phrase **that holy thing which shall be born of thee** declares that God supernaturally prevented this from occurring.

Vss. 36–38. Gabriel’s announcement to Mary concluded with the statement that Mary’s elderly cousin Elisabeth had also conceived, and was in her sixth month of pregnancy. The words, **For with God nothing shall be impossible**, are applicable to what God was doing with both Mary and Elisabeth.⁷

Vss. 39-45. Mary Visits Elizabeth.

Vs. 39. The $\square\square\mathcal{M}\text{H}\blacksquare$ is the “hill country” of Judea over against the plain and level land, especially that on the coast [“The hill country of Judah... beginning considerably below Hebron, it stretches northward to Jerusalem, eastward to the Dead Sea slopes, and westward to the Shefelah — McClintock, Vol. 4, p, 346]; it is not the *Oreine*, one of the ten toparchies of Pliny’s time, about the boundaries of which we know nothing. But what is meant by $\mathcal{M}\text{H}^{\prime\prime}$ $\square\square\bullet\text{H}\blacksquare$ $\text{H}\square\blacklozenge\text{H}\text{O}$? Many say “into a city of Judea,” but when Luke refers to the province he writes $\text{H}\square\blacklozenge\text{H}\text{O}$ (10 times in the Gospel, 12 times in the Acts). Moreover, the hill country takes in less territory than Judea (1:65) and includes fewer cities than the entire province. The most likely sense is “into a city (named) Juda.” Luke has a number of instances in which he thus combines “city” with the name of the city (2:4; Acts 11:5; 16:14; 27:8). The trouble is that we know of no city by this name; many are willing to accept the traveler Reland’s conjecture that Juttah is meant (Josh. 15:55; 21:16) which was about 8 miles south of Hebron. $\text{H}\bullet\text{H}\text{O}\text{H}\square\text{O}$ -aspazomai [“saluted”] is any form of greeting or farewell which began with loving embrace and ended with words. In this instance the salutation must have been fervent.⁸

Soon after this vision, Mary being in haste to communicate with Elizabeth, took a long journey from Nazareth to the hill-country of Judea, perhaps to Hebron, for that purpose. Being arrived she saluted Elizabeth, and probably congratulated her on the unexpected favour conferred on her: but no sooner did Elizabeth hear her voice, than she felt the infant leap in her womb in a very extraordinary manner; even as if he had been conscious of the presence of the mother of the great Redeemer, whom he was appointed to precede.

⁷ Jerry Falwell, executive editor; Edward E. Hinson and Michael Kroll Woodrow, general editors, *KJV Bible commentary [computer file], electronic ed., Logos Library System*, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson) 1997, c1994. Hereafter referred to as [FALWELL].

⁸ R. C. H. Lenski, *THE INTERPRETATION OF LUKE’S GOSPEL*, (Augsburg Pub., Minneapolis, MN., 1964), p. 77. Hereafter referred to as [LENSKI].

At the same time, “Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost,” and under his prophetic influence, she pronounced Mary and “the Fruit of her womb,” to be most blessed, as peculiarly honoured by the most high God. Though Elizabeth was superior in age, in station, and in reputation, yet she considered Mary as so distinguished a person, by being chosen to be the mother of the Messiah, that she was filled with admiration, at being favoured with a visit from her, in addition to all her other mercies. She acknowledged the child which was to be born of her, to be “her Lord” and the Lord of all: and she declared that the infant in her womb, exulted for joy under the impulse of the Holy Ghost, and as a kind of homage to his Lord. Indeed Mary was peculiarly happy, in that she had so readily and implicitly believed the divine message; by which means she had honoured God, and had received her mercies unmingled with rebukes; for the promise would surely and exactly be accomplished.—There was in this a reference to Zacharias’ unbelief, and the painful rebuke under which he lay; but the subject was touched very gently, as it was proper from the mouth of Elizabeth. It is remarkable that Mary, though young and inexperienced, so readily believed a far more difficult promise, than that about which Zacharias, an aged priest and an experienced believer, had hesitated. It does not appear that Elisabeth knew the circumstances of Mary’s vision, or her faith in the divine message, except by the Spirit of prophecy; for it may be concluded from the narrative, that she thus addressed Mary, before she had time to inform her of these matters. The words of Elizabeth, and all the circumstances of her interview with Mary, must have had a powerful effect in establishing the faith, and enlarging the expectations of the latter: and the favour and testimony of persons, so highly respected as Zacharias and Elizabeth, would powerfully operate to prevent any injurious reflections on her character.⁹

Vs. 41. Prior to the Day of Pentecost, Old Testament believers were only temporarily filled with the Holy Ghost for specific tasks, because Christ had not been sacrificed for the sins of mankind — [MARTIN, p. 206].

The fact that the fetus, John the Baptist, “leaped in” Elizabeth’s womb at the news of Mary’s conception of the Messiah, is proof that unborn children are alive and that abortion is murder.

Vss. 46-56. The Virgin Mary’s Hymn of Praise.

Vs. 46. Said ($\mathcal{M}\text{H}\square\mathcal{M}\blacksquare$). Simply compare ver. 42. “Elizabeth’s salutation was full of excitement, but

⁹ Thomas Scott, *SCOTT’S COMMENTARY ON THE NEW TESTAMENT, LUKE*, (J. B. Lippincott & Co., Philadelphia, 1872), p. 185. Hereafter referred to as [SCOTT].

Mary's hymn breathes a sentiment of deep inward repose" (Godet). Compare the song of Hannah (1 Sam. ii.). Hannah's song differs from Mary's in its sense of indignation and personal triumph compared with Mary's humility and calmness.

My soul—spirit (☐◆❖♫☞☞—☐vℳ◆○a). See on Mark xii. 30. The *soul* is the principle of individuality, the seat of personal impressions, having a side in contact with the material element of humanity, as well as with the spiritual element. It is thus the mediating organ between the spirit and the body, receiving impressions from without and from within, and transmitting them by word or sign. *Spirit* is the highest, deepest, noblest part of our humanity, the point of contact between God and man. ...

Vs. 47. God my Saviour (◆◆☐ℳ◆◆◆◆◆◆☐☐☐). Note the two articles. "The God who is *the* or *my* Saviour." The title Saviour is often applied to God in the Old Testament. See Septuagint, Deut. 32:15; Ps. 24:5; 15:5; 45:1. ...

Vs. 48. Regarded (ℳ☐ℳ☐☐☐☐☐☐). See on Jas. 2:3. Compare 1 Sam. 1:11; Ps. 31:7; 119:132, Sept. ...

Vs. 50. Mercy (ℳ●ℳ☐s). The word emphasizes the *misery* with which *grace* (see on ver. 30) deals; hence, peculiarly the sense of human wretchedness coupled with the impulse to relieve it, which issues in gracious ministry. Bengel remarks, "Grace takes away the *fault*, mercy the *misery*."...

Fear (☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐). The word is used in both a good and a bad sense in the New Testament. For the latter, see Matt. 21:46; Mark 6:20; 11:32; Luke 12:4. For the former, as here, in the sense of *godly reverence*, Acts 10:2, 22, 35; Col. 3:22; Apoc. 14:7; 15:4. ...

Vs. 51. Shewed strength (ℳ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐). Lit., *made strength*. So Wyc., *made might*. A Hebrew form of expression. Compare Ps. 118:15, Sept.: "The right hand of the Lord doeth valiantly". ...

In the imagination (☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐). The faculty of thought, understanding, especially *moral* understanding. Wyc. refers the word here to God: *with mind of his heart*. ...

Vs. 54. Hath holpen (☐◆◆ℳ●☐☐☐☐). The verb means to *lay hold on*: thence to *grasp helpfully* or *to help*. To lay hold in the sense of *partaking* (1 Tim. 6:2), carries us back to the primitive meaning of the word according to its composition: to receive *instead of*, or *in return* (☐◆◆☐☐), and suggests the old phrase *to take up for, espouse the cause of*. ...

Servant (☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐). Often *child*, son or daughter, but here *servant*, in allusion to Isa. 41:8.¹⁰

Vss. 57-66. The Birth of John the Baptist.

Vss. 57-59a. Eight days after the birth of Elisabeth's baby boy, he was to be circumcised in accord with the elements enumerated in God's covenant with Abraham in Genesis 17:10-14, and made part of the Law in Leviticus 12. The idea of circumcision seems to include three truths: (1) purification of the flesh; (2) separation unto God; and (3) identification as God's very own.

Vss. 59b-63. And they called him Zechariah, after the name of his father. And his mother answered and said, Not so; but he shall be called John. Zechariah, in his speechless condition had at least made known to Elisabeth the full content of the angel Gabriel's message in which the new son was to be named John. The friends and relatives were not aware of this fact; they wanted to name him after his father. They were greatly surprised to see the boy called **John**, which means in Hebrew, "Jehovah is gracious," or "Jehovah's gift." Certainly both were true regarding this gracious gift to Zechariah and Elisabeth. When the relatives questioned this new name, Zechariah confirmed the naming by writing "John" on a small wooden or wax tablet.

Vss. 64-66. Immediately God miraculously ended Zechariah's long involuntary period of silence and he began praising God. These actions attracted great awe and amazement in that entire region. People began to take note of young John, and of the fact that **the hand of the Lord was with him** (cf. I Sam 2:21, 26). [FALWELL]

Vss. 67-80. The prophetic song of Zacharius.

THE BENEDICTUS from the first word, "blessed." This is the second Christian hymn. It is divided into two distinct parts:

First, the ascription of praise to God for his continued mercy to his covenant people, Israel, according to promise and prophecy from Abraham's day (Luke 1:68-75).

This promise was messianic – "to raise up a horn of salvation in the house of David," "horn" meaning a king or kingdom of power, as in Daniel's apocalypses, and in Revelation. Daniel 8:3, the ram with two horns of unequal length, represented Persia united with Media. Daniel 8:5-9, the one "notable horn" of the he-goat was Alexander the Great, and the "four horns" his four successors. The "little horn" rising later was Antiochus Epiphanes. Daniel 7:7-8, the "ten horns" of

¹⁰ Marvin R. Vincent, WORD STUDIES IN THE NEW TESTAMENT, (Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., Grand Rapids, MI., 1965), pp. 262, 263. Hereafter referred to as [VINCENT].

this fourth beast were the ten kingdoms into which the fallen Roman empire was divided, and the “little horn” was the papacy.

So when Zacharias says, “Thou hast raised up a horn of salvation in the house of David,” it means the Messiah, David’s greater Son. One of the prophecies to which Zecharias refers is 2 Samuel 7:12-13, with which compare Isaiah 11. It is evident, therefore, that Zacharias speaks his benediction on God because of spiritual messianic mercies.

The second part of the benediction (Luke 1:76-79) is spoken to his son, John, because of his relation to the Messiah of the first part. John was to be (1) the prophet of the Most High. (2) He was to go before the coming Messiah and prepare the way for him. (3) His ministry was to give the people “The *knowledge* of salvation *in the remission of their sins*.” We shall have much use later for this last item, when we devote a special chapter to John the Baptist, defining his place in the Christian system.

For the present we note that a true disciple of John was saved. He had “*knowledge*” of his salvation. This knowledge is *experimental* since it came through the remission of sins. We are not surprised, therefore, that his candidates for baptism “confessed their sins,” nor that his baptism was “of repentance unto remission of sins,” as Peter preached at Pentecost (Acts 2:38) and was in harmony with our Lord’s great commission given in his gospel: “Repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name unto all nations beginning at Jerusalem” (Luke 24:47).

[“Remission”, Gr. *Aphesis*, was a Greek judicial term meaning “case dismissed.” When a judge saw that there was no grounds for conviction, he dismissed the case before him. When one repents of his sins, God dismisses the sentence of eternal death due to Christ’s sacrifice.]

“The Dayspring from on High” (Luke 1:78) is our Lord himself, the Sun of righteousness, in the dawn of his rising.[CARROLL, Vol., pp. 71-72].

END OF SAMPLE