

The Gospel of Luke

Lesson 03

In the previous lesson, we investigated Luke's account of the birth of Jesus. Luke writes that the angel Gabriel is sent by God to a virgin named Mary, who lives in the town of Nazareth in Galilee. Gabriel tells Mary that she is highly favored by God, for the Lord her God is with her. It is not that Mary herself has produced this grace and goodwill, but rather that she is the recipient of God's grace.

Mary is told that she is to have a son through the miraculous working of the Holy Spirit, for the power of the Most High will overshadow her. Gabriel prophesizes that this child to be born to Mary

Will be great.

Will be called the Son of the Most High.

Will be given the throne of his father David.

Will reign over the house of Jacob forever and that

His kingdom will never end.

Mary is to give him the name Jesus because He will save His people from their sins, as we saw from Matthew 1:21. Told that her elderly relative Elizabeth is expecting a child, Mary goes to visit her. Upon Mary's arrival, the baby in Elizabeth's womb leaps for joy, and Elizabeth, filled with the Holy Spirit, loudly proclaims, "Blessed are you among women and blessed is the child you will bear." Brimming over with joy, Elizabeth further exclaims that all are blessed who believe that the Lord will accomplish all that He has said to them.

Then it is Mary's turn to burst forth in praise, exclaiming that her soul glorifies the Lord and her spirit rejoices in God her Savior. She continues to extol the virtues of God, noting His regard for her humble estate, His mercy to her and all who honor Him, His mighty deeds on behalf her people. She concludes her song of praise by proclaiming that God's faithfulness and mercy to Abraham and his descendants would continue forward forever with the birth of her son, who would be the Savior of all God's people.

In this part of his gospel, Luke also records the birth of John the Baptist and Zechariah's song of praise extolling the virtues of God and his prophecy about his son John. Called a prophet of the Most High, John will go before the Lord to prepare the way for Him and to declare to His people the promise of salvation through the forgiveness of their sins.

As you begin this lesson on the birth of Jesus, will you take a moment to ponder who God is and what He has done? Then ask Him to help you study His Word and to grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus, also called "Immanuel," which means "God with us."

The Birth of Jesus

1. Read Matthew 1:18-25.
 - A. Who is Joseph? From the narrative, describe his character and importance to Mary and Jesus.

B. By what two names will the child born to Mary be known? What do these names mean?

2. Read Micah 5:2 and Luke 2:1-7 and review Luke 1:26-33.

A. How is God's sovereignty revealed in these passages? What is the importance of Bethlehem to Joseph? To God?

B. From these passages, contrast the majesty of God with the humility of God.

C. Skeptics and unbelievers have long contested the virgin birth of Jesus. Consider your own experience and the following passages: Isaiah 1:18, 7:14, 9:6-7, 53:1-6, 55:8-9; John 1:29; 2 Corinthians 5:21; and Revelation 1:17-18. What, if anything, has convinced you that Jesus was born of the virgin Mary? Why does the virgin birth of Jesus matter?

3. Read Luke 2:8-20 and 2 Corinthians 1:26-31.

A. Thought to be unscrupulous and untrustworthy, shepherds were the lowest class, whose testimony was of little value. What is significant about their involvement in God's plan of redemption?

B. What "good news" does the angel bring? What signs does God provide the shepherds to confirm this "good news"?

C. How do the shepherds respond to these signs? Where do they go? What do they do? How do others react to their testimony? How does Mary respond to the shepherds' report?

4. Read Leviticus 12:3, 6-8 and Luke 2:21-40.

A. How do Mary and Joseph comply with Jewish law? How are we made aware of their humble estate?

B. Who are Simeon and Anna? What did they prophesy?

C. From verse 40, what does Luke reveal about the childhood of Jesus?

