

**Bible Believer's Fellowship**  
**Bible Study**  
*The Book Of Luke*

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**Introduction**

Bible Believer's Fellowship is a local group of Bible believing Christians, thus the name. We believe the King James Bible, otherwise known as the Authorized Version, contains the infallible word of God and needs no correction. We carry ourselves like the Bereans did in Acts 17:11, for we receive the Word of God with all readiness of mind and check the Scriptures daily to see if those things being taught are so. It is with this mind set that we study Scripture. By doing so, we "shew ourselves approved unto God" being "workmen that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." 2 Tim 2:15

This study will be covering the book of Luke. After that, we will study the book of Acts. Following this plan will allow us to go from the time just before the birth of Jesus, to his death, burial, resurrection and ascension into heaven, and the establishment of the Christian church. As we study, we shall find that the best commentary on the Bible is the Bible itself! There will be times when we shall look at some other extra-biblical references to help in establishing the history of events in particular.

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**Luke 1:1 – 4 Luke's Introduction to the Book of Luke**

<sup>1</sup> Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us,

<sup>2</sup> Even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eyewitnesses, and ministers of the word;

<sup>3</sup> It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus,

<sup>4</sup> That thou mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed.

This section only covers four verses, but establishes several points. First, there was a large push to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Second, Luke was involved with this furthering of the Gospel and was a teacher/elder to Theophilus. One other reason we are going to look at Luke and Acts as a group is because the opening of both books establish Luke as the author to the enlightenment of Theophilus. Fortunately, it turns out to be an enlightenment to us, also!

These four verses point out that the Gospel is being preached to many, and it is important for us to start out with an understanding of what the Gospel entails. We will start this with a look at 1 Corinthians 15:1 – 4, after all, the Bible is it's best commentary!

<sup>1</sup> Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand;

<sup>2</sup> By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.

<sup>3</sup> For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures;

<sup>4</sup> And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:

This is the Gospel of Jesus Christ put so succinctly. There is no confusion from it. Here Paul says, "I declare unto you the gospel." Paul preached the Gospel, we, who are saved, have received the Gospel, and we also stand in the Gospel. Paul says it is by believing the Gospel, and not believing in vain, that we are saved. The Gospel that we believe says that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures.

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As you can see, we are saved by believing the Gospel. There is nothing else involved on our part, only that we believe that Jesus died on the Cross according to scripture, was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to scripture! We are not saved by any other means. Paul was so adamant about this that he said the following in Galatians 1:6 – 9,

<sup>6</sup> I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel:

<sup>7</sup> Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ.

<sup>8</sup> But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.

<sup>9</sup> As we said before, so say I now again, If any *man* preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.

There is only one Gospel by which we can be saved, and that is the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Jesus himself states the following in John 14:6,

<sup>6</sup> Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

Having established there is only one Gospel and that is the Gospel of Jesus Christ, let us verify we can only be saved through believing on Jesus.

It is common for us as men and women to want to be able to earn our way. Most of us do not want handouts and wish to pay our own way. We feel we should do our part in life's challenges. This is admirable, because according to the Word of God, we are not to be lazy or busybodies. However, when we come to the subject of our salvation, it is impossible for us to earn it. There are not enough works we can do to earn salvation. God, knowing this, presented salvation as a gift. Salvation is given to us as a free gift and the only thing we have to do is believe on Jesus' death, burial and resurrection. But, as the Bereans did, let us search scripture and not just take anyone's word for it.

There are many ways to show salvation is not earned, but one of the best is contained in Paul's letter to the church at Ephesus. Let's read Ephesians 2:4 – 10,

<sup>4</sup> But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us,

<sup>5</sup> Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)

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<sup>6</sup> And hath raised *us* up together, and made *us* sit together in heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus:

<sup>7</sup> That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in *his* kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.

<sup>8</sup> For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God:

<sup>9</sup> Not of works, lest any man should boast.

<sup>10</sup> For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

As we read we see in verses 5 and 8 that we are saved by grace. It is God's grace that saves us. As we see in verse 8 we are not saved of ourselves, i.e. we are not saved because of anything we have done. Verse 8 tells us our salvation is the gift of God. Verse 9 nails it by saying "Not of works, lest any man should boast." Would we be able to save ourselves, we would brag about it and we wouldn't be in Christ at that point. Pride is the very thing that caused Lucifer to be ejected out of heaven. So we are not saved by works but by the grace of God that we receive through faith. But, we still have a desire in us to do good works. And it is true we have this desire in us after we are saved. We have to go with what God considers good works. Good works from God's perspective are those works done by us for someone else's benefit and not our own. We are to be servants, not those being served. This we see in verse 10. We were created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God had before ordained that we should walk in them. We are in Christ Jesus once we are saved.

This is not the only portion of scripture that talks directly about salvation being given to us and that we have not earned it. I like that God calls it a gift. How many of us would make the recipient of a birthday present or gift at Christmas earn it before we gave it to them? No, we give gifts out of love for that person, whether they really deserve it or not!

Titus 3 starts off by describing our nature before we were saved. Then in verses 5 – 8 it says the following,

<sup>5</sup> Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;

<sup>6</sup> Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour;

<sup>7</sup> That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

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Once again, we see that we are saved by grace. It is because of God's mercy that we are saved and not by any "works of righteousness" which we have done.

When we believe on Jesus' death, burial and resurrection we are saved. It is a merciful and gracious God that gives us a way out of the payment for our sins that we deserve to receive. If it were not for the fact that God loved us first, we would be destined to an eternity in hell. It is only because of God's love for us that He gave His only begotten Son, Jesus, to pay the price of sin for us. Thankfully, we now have a means to make it to heaven, and it's all because of Jesus!

As Luke wrote to Theophilus in verse 4 of our study this evening, we went over this that you may know with certainty that salvation is through Jesus Christ alone as we have been instructed.

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**Luke 1:5 – 25      God Begins To Usher In A New Dispensation**

<sup>5</sup> There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judaea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the course of Abia: and his wife *was* of the daughters of Aaron, and her name *was* Elisabeth.

<sup>6</sup> And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.

<sup>7</sup> And they had no child, because that Elisabeth was barren, and they both were *now* well stricken in years.

<sup>8</sup> And it came to pass, that while he executed the priest's office before God in the order of his course,

<sup>9</sup> According to the custom of the priest's office, his lot was to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord.

<sup>10</sup> And the whole multitude of the people were praying without at the time of incense.

<sup>11</sup> And there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense.

<sup>12</sup> And when Zacharias saw *him*, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him.

<sup>13</sup> But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John.

<sup>14</sup> And thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth.

<sup>15</sup> For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb.

<sup>16</sup> And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God.

<sup>17</sup> And he shall 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.

<sup>18</sup> And Zacharias said unto the angel, Whereby shall I know this? for I am an old man, and my wife well stricken in years.

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<sup>19</sup> And the angel answering said unto him, I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God; and am sent to speak unto thee, and to shew thee these glad tidings.

<sup>20</sup> And, behold, thou shalt be dumb, and not able to speak, until the day that these things shall be performed, because thou believest not my words, which shall be fulfilled in their season.

<sup>21</sup> And the people waited for Zacharias, and marvelled that he tarried so long in the temple.

<sup>22</sup> And when he came out, he could not speak unto them: and they perceived that he had seen a vision in the temple: for he beckoned unto them, and remained speechless.

<sup>23</sup> And it came to pass, that, as soon as the days of his ministration were accomplished, he departed to his own house.

<sup>24</sup> And after those days his wife Elisabeth conceived, and hid herself five months, saying,

<sup>25</sup> Thus hath the Lord dealt with me in the days wherein he looked on *me*, to take away my reproach among men.

**An Introduction to Zacharias and Elisabeth**

Luke begins his history of events at an interesting place as we shall see. It has been 400 years of silence from God up to the time we are now reading about. Our story begins with a description of Zacharias and Elisabeth, the father and mother of John. The name Zacharias means “God remembers” and Elisabeth means “his oath.” After four centuries of silence from God, I’m sure the nation of Israel was wondering when they were going to hear from God again. It had been four hundred years since God had spoken through his prophets. It’s interesting that John’s parents names meant what they did. Together they say, God remembers his oath. What oath is being talked about here? In 1 Chronicles 17:10 – 14 we read the following,

<sup>10</sup> And since the time that I commanded judges *to be* over my people Israel. Moreover I will subdue all thine enemies. Furthermore I tell thee that the LORD will build thee an house.

<sup>11</sup> And it shall come to pass, when thy days be expired that thou must go *to be* with thy fathers, that I will raise up thy seed after thee, which shall be of thy sons; and I will establish his kingdom.

<sup>12</sup> He shall build me an house, and I will stablish his throne for ever.

<sup>13</sup> I will be his father, and he shall be my son: and I will not take my mercy away from him, as I took *it* from *him* that was before thee:



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<sup>14</sup> But I will settle him in mine house and in my kingdom for ever: and his throne shall be established for evermore.

This is the covenant that God established with David, promising the Messiah would come from the line of David and that he would establish the Messiah's kingdom and throne forever. God said that he would be the Messiah's father and the Messiah would be his son. This is the covenant, or oath, that God will remember. Zacharias and Elisabeth would have a son who would announce the coming Messiah, the son of God. Psalm 89:34 – 37 says the following,

<sup>34</sup> My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips.

<sup>35</sup> Once have I sworn by my holiness that I will not lie unto David.

<sup>36</sup> His seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before me.

<sup>37</sup> It shall be established for ever as the moon, and *as* a faithful witness in heaven. Selah.

In this Psalm we hear a recanting of the promise made to David by God. God says he will keep his promise to David because he has sworn to it by his own holiness. This is the oath God has remembered.

Zacharias is said to be of the course of Abia. 1 Chronicles 24:10, 19 establish the order of priests had originally been established by David,

<sup>10</sup> The seventh to Hakkoz, the eighth to Abijah,

<sup>19</sup> These *were* the orderings of them in their service to come into the house of the LORD, according to their manner, under Aaron their father, as the LORD God of Israel had commanded him.

2 Chronicles 8:14 also shows us David established courses for the priests,

<sup>14</sup> And he appointed, according to the order of David his father, the courses of the priests to their service, and the Levites to their charges, to praise and minister before the priests, as the duty of every day required: the porters also by their courses at every gate: for so had David the man of God commanded.

Zacharias served only two Sabbath days and was only able to enter the Holy Place on one of those days. One day a year, one priest was permitted to enter the Holy Place. It was no coincidence that Zacharias was that priest in this case.

Scripture in our study tells us that Zacharias and Elisabeth, who was of the line of Aaron, were "both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. We see they were called righteous by God. Were they perfect without sin? No, but

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they offered sacrifices for any sins they committed as required by God. This is why God's word here says they walked in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. This introduction of Zacharias and Elisabeth finishes with the statement that Elisabeth was barren and they were both "well stricken in age." From a human standpoint it certainly did not appear they would have any children. But, with God, all things are possible.

**Zacharias Has A Visitation**

Luke, after introducing Zacharias and Elisabeth, continues with his narrative. It is written that while Zacharias was performing his priestly duties, burning incense as he entered into the temple of the Lord. It describes the whole multitude of people praying outside the temple as Zacharias entered. As this is happening, a fantastic thing is about to happen!

Remember, it has been 400 years since the nation of Israel has heard from the Lord. For 400 years there has been no prophecy, no signs from God, no wonders, no miracles, God has been silent towards the nation of Israel for 400 years. For 400 years the priests had been maintaining their duties. I wonder if this had just become a ritualistic exercise. For many of the priests and for many of those with positions of importance, it had become ritualistic. It had become a means to become powerful in their own rights, outside of what God had commanded. As we have seen though, Zacharias and Elisabeth did not fit this role. The 400 years of silence is about to end; there is about to be a monumental change!

Verse 11 brings in the beginnings of a new dispensation in God's economy of time.

<sup>11</sup> And there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense.

As has been stated, 400 years have passed and Zacharias has an angel of the Lord appear to him! It is definitely understandable that Zacharias had the reaction he did as described in verse 12,

<sup>12</sup> And when Zacharias saw *him*, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him.

If you ever have the chance to study the appearance of angels in the Bible, you will find this is the usual reaction. This is the reaction from the sighting of an angel and they are sent by God. No man has ever seen God, but the angels have. Can you imagine what a person's reaction would be if they ever saw God? Moses had seen the glory of God and his face radiated so much he had to cover his head. The Hebrews saw the effects of the glory of God coming from Mount Sinai and were so afraid they sent Moses to hear God speak and then have Moses come back to speak to them. It's scary to realize there are people so wilfully ignorant of God out there that they believe if there is a judgment, they'll have a few things to tell God! Those folks are in for a very real surprise!

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But here, the angel is sent to bring good news to Zacharias and Elisabeth. The angel lets Zacharias now the prayers of he and his wife have been heard concerning a child.

Verses 13 – 17 give us the account of the angels testimony to Zacharias,

<sup>13</sup> But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John.

<sup>14</sup> And thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth.

<sup>15</sup> For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb.

<sup>16</sup> And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God.

<sup>17</sup> And he shall 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.

The angel sent to bring news that Zacharias and Elisabeth's prayers have been answered begins by comforting Zacharias. As was previously noted, the fact that no one had heard from God for 400 years alone would be reason to be in fear, but as we also stated, the presence of an angel caused fear to come over others before. This angel assures Zacharias that his prayer has been heard and that his wife Elisabeth would bear him a son. Now remember they are as Scripture says "well stricken in years." They were old! Zacharias also finds out what the boy's name would be. God was naming the child for Zacharias and Elisabeth. Keep this in mind because it comes into play later in our study. The angel goes on to describe not only the son they would have, but the effects of the birth of John. As we go through this description, remember God is the one who gave the angel the words to speak. This is God describing the baby to Zacharias. The following is an itemized list of this description:

1. John shall be great in the sight of the Lord.
2. He shall not drink wine or strong drink.
3. He shall be filled with the Holy Ghost even while in his mother's womb.
4. He shall turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God.
5. He shall go in the spirit and power of Elias.
6. He shall turn the hearts of the fathers to the children.
7. He shall turn the hearts of the disobedient to the wisdom of the just.
8. He shall make ready a people prepared for the Lord.

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**Zacharias' Response And It's Effects**

Here we have Luke recording the response of Zacharias to the angel's words of joy. Once again, I have to reiterate the fact it's been 400 years since the people had heard from God. So, how does one respond to this once in a several lifetimes event? Dare I say, our response may not have been much different than Zacharias' response. Zacharias, as we have already seen, responded first with a troubled heart and fear. This response, I am certain, would be the same for myself. After being comforted by the angel, and the angel's words concerning the birth of his and Elisabeth's son, Zacharias responds in a way any one of us would considering where Zacharias was in his life at the time. Zacharias and Elisabeth, it is recorded, were both well stricken in age. So, it is of no wonder, that Zacharias responds as he does here in verse 18,

<sup>18</sup> And Zacharias said unto the angel, Whereby shall I know this? for I am an old man, and my wife well stricken in years.

This is not the first time someone spoke words like this when told by God of a child being born to them even at an old age. But the response from God is a different. Let's take a look for a moment at Genesis 17:17,

<sup>17</sup> Then Abraham fell upon his face, and laughed, and said in his heart, Shall *a child* be born unto him that is an hundred years old? and shall Sarah, that is ninety years old, bear?

This son that was to be born to Abraham and Sarah was Isaac, with whom God was going to establish his everlasting covenant with and with Isaac's seed thereafter. God's response here was a bit different with Abraham than with Zachariah. Zachariah had Scripture to go to while Abraham did not. The nation of Israel was to start with Abraham. Prior to Abraham, the whole world was a gentile one. God's covenant with his chosen people began with Abraham and Sarah.

Instead of being joyful and accepting what the angel said, Zacharias was asking for a sign. Now for a Jew to require a sign concerning a statement of action from God was not in itself bad, however as we said before, this was not a new thing from God. A sign was given to Zacharias, though as we shall see in what we read next, but it caused Zacharias some convenience for the next nine months.

Luke 1:19 – 20 records the following response from the angel,

<sup>19</sup> And the angel answering said unto him, I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God; and am sent to speak unto thee, and to shew thee these glad tidings.

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<sup>20</sup> And, behold, thou shalt be dumb, and not able to speak, until the day that these things shall be performed, because thou believest not my words, which shall be fulfilled in their season.

Here we find out who the angel is that was speaking to Zacharias. He was the angel Gabriel, and it is said here that Gabriel stands in the presence of God.

Now this is not the first time we read of Gabriel appearing unto a man. Gabriel had appeared to Daniel on two occasions as recorded in Daniel 8:16, and Daniel 9:21. Daniel's response was what Gabriel was expecting from Zachariah, namely one of taking what was said as the Word of the Lord. Now some commentators have said that Zachariah's punishment was not as harsh as it could have been because Zachariah was asking for a sign as confirmation of what was said and not necessarily because of unbelief. We should never try to change what Scripture says! It is clear from verse 20 that Zachariah's punishment was from unbelief. Gabriel clearly states it is "because thou believest not my words." Because Zacharias did not believe the words Gabriel spoke, which came from God (Gabriel was the messenger), Zacharias was not able to speak until the words that God had given to Gabriel to speak were fulfilled.

This is an interesting punishment Zacharias was dealt. Why was he made not able to speak for this period of roughly nine months? A look at this is worthwhile because it is something that happened as the result of someone's actions.

Words are powerful things. With God, they are especially powerful. A study of the phrase, "by the word" in the Bible reveals some amazing truths. We read in Hebrews 11:3,

<sup>3</sup> Through faith we understand that ***the worlds were framed by the word of God***, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.

Ephesians 5:25 – 27 says,

<sup>25</sup> Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;

<sup>26</sup> That he might ***sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word***,

<sup>27</sup> That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.

1 Peter 1:23 has this to say,

<sup>23</sup> Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, ***by the word of God***, which liveth and abideth for ever.

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One final example in Hebrews 1:3 has this,

<sup>3</sup> Who being the brightness of *his* glory, and the express image of his person, and ***upholding all things by the word of his power***, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;

This is not an all inclusive list, but we can see the word of God is powerful.

Our own words are powerful. They are not powerful in the sense of what the “name and claim it” group would like to believe. We are not able to command God to do things by what we say, or manipulate God into doing our bidding by what we say. The things we say do have power in our lives and the lives of others though. Our words can elicit a whole host of emotions in particular. Scripture points this idea out, also. Consider the effects of the exchange between Isaac and Esau in Genesis 27:32 – 34,

<sup>32</sup> And Isaac his father said unto him, Who *art* thou? And he said, I *am* thy son, thy firstborn Esau.

<sup>33</sup> And Isaac trembled very exceedingly, and said, Who? where *is* he that hath taken venison, and brought *it* me, and I have eaten of all before thou camest, and have blessed him? yea, *and* he shall be blessed.

<sup>34</sup> And when Esau heard the words of his father, he cried with a great and exceeding bitter cry, and said unto his father, Bless me, *even* me also, O my father.

Here we see the effects on both Isaac and Esau by words that were spoken. They were not meant to have these effects by the person doing the speaking, but the effects are recorded here nonetheless. Isaac trembled very exceedingly and Esau cried with a great and exceeding bitter cry. Both of these responses can be traced back to what Jacob did at the statements of his mother, Rebekah.

Judges 9:30 records this effect of spoken words,

<sup>30</sup> And when Zebul the ruler of the city heard the words of Gaal the son of Ebed, his anger was kindled.

Here spoken words from one person, Gaal, caused the anger of another person, Zebul, to become very heated.

Proverbs 15:30 says this,

<sup>30</sup> The light of the eyes rejoiceth the heart: *and* a good report maketh the bones fat.

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As we see by the examples provided, words are powerful. Our words can help others, exhort, encourage, reprove, and rebuke others. Our words should be carefully chosen and spoken. In many places in Proverbs, the Lord reminds us that those who speak hastily are likened to fools. Proverbs 15:1 – 2 says this,

<sup>1</sup> A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger.

<sup>2</sup> The tongue of the wise useth knowledge aright: but the mouth of fools poureth out foolishness.

There are many other places, and especially in Proverbs, that shows the effects of our speech.

Finally, we should be careful about what we say. Jesus tells us in Matthew 12:36 – 37 how important our words are that we speak.

<sup>36</sup> But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.

<sup>37</sup> For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.

We will give account of every idle word we speak in the day of judgment. Our words will either justify us, or condemn us.

Zacharias was held accountable for the words he spoke right after speaking them! The result of the words he spoke caused him to be made dumb from the moment after saying what he did to Gabriel until a time after the birth of his son, John.

### **What God Speaks Will Come To Pass**

We finish up here our portion of the study concerning God's issuing in of a new dispensation with the birth of John the Baptist. This portion of our study looks at the verses remaining in this section of Luke chapter 1, namely verses 21 – 25. Luke 1:21 – 22 are given here,

<sup>21</sup> And the people waited for Zacharias, and marvelled that he tarried so long in the temple.

<sup>22</sup> And when he came out, he could not speak unto them: and they perceived that he had seen a vision in the temple: for he beckoned unto them, and remained speechless.

Zacharias has just had the experience of his long life. His encounter with the angel, Gabriel, has left him dumbfounded: literally dumbfounded in the strictest sense. We shall see, once again, that Zacharias will remain in this state until after the birth of his soon to be conceived son, John.

The people of Israel waited for Zacharias to come out of the temple after performing his assigned duties of lighting the incense in the temple. Scripture here shows that the people marveled that

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he was taking so long in the temple. The people of Israel had a long history of being impatient, but this time no idolatrous activity took place.

What is very noteworthy here, however, is what happened when Zacharias came out of the temple. Actually it would be more accurate to say what did not happen when he came out of the temple. According to the rules of the priests, when Zacharias came out of the temple, he was required to speak the Aaronic blessing over the people. This is found in Numbers 6:22 – 27, with the blessing specifically in verses 24 – 26,

<sup>22</sup> And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

<sup>23</sup> Speak unto Aaron and unto his sons, saying, On this wise ye shall bless the children of Israel, saying unto them,

<sup>24</sup> The LORD bless thee, and keep thee:

<sup>25</sup> The LORD make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee:

<sup>26</sup> The LORD lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.

<sup>27</sup> And they shall put my name upon the children of Israel; and I will bless them.

Verses 24 – 26, were the words of blessing the priest was to pronounce over the people of Israel upon exiting the temple. Zacharias was not able to speak this blessing however. What makes this even more interesting is how this section of Scripture in Numbers comes directly after the description of what a Nazarite was and what he was to do when his time of sanctification had been completed. John, who was to be born to Zacharias and Elisabeth was to be a Nazarite! What a mess Zacharias has got himself into by speaking what he did to Gabriel.

Remember now again, it has been 400 years since God has spoken to the people of Israel. Now He sends his angel, Gabriel, to the people of Israel after 400 years of silence and the one Gabriel is sent to doubts the words that God gave to Gabriel to speak. So now, after 400 years of silence from God, Zacharias is going to be silent for roughly nine months!

Now Zacharias, upon coming out of the temple, is only able to beckon to the people. Normally when someone beckons to someone else they are trying to get their attention to tell them something. Zacharias beckons but is unable to speak. It is too bad he could not speak, because the people of Israel, who had been waiting on him to exit the temple, perceived he had seen a vision. Zacharias saw more than a vision; he saw a very real angel. But he was unable to communicate this to the people.

This whole ordeal must have turned into a frustrating experience for Zacharias. Here he was, a priest of God in the temple doing the job he was commanded to do. Gabriel appears to him after



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no one in all of Israel had heard from God for 400 years. Zacharias' response is one of unbelief! Now as a direct result of his actions, he is cursed to roughly nine months without being able to speak. But, he is supposed to go out and pronounce the blessing of God on the people of Israel and they were waiting for him to do so! Not only could he not pronounce God's blessing on the people, he was not able to let them know he had just heard from God through the angel of Gabriel. He was unable to let the people know, "People of Israel, after 400 years of silence from Jehovah, I have heard from Him!" No, he was only able to beckon and suffer frustration and even embarrassment.

Luke 1:23 tells us then that after he had completed his ministration, he departed to his own house. After all Zacharias had put himself through, he did finish the rest of the days of his ministration. In this respect, Zacharias still acted in a way that allowed us to read from God's Word that he was found righteous in the eyes of God. He was faithful to complete his priestly duties in spite of the condition he had put himself in.

Our story continues in these last two verses of our current section of study in Luke 1:24 – 25,

<sup>24</sup> And after those days his wife Elisabeth conceived, and hid herself five months, saying,

<sup>25</sup> Thus hath the Lord dealt with me in the days wherein he looked on *me*, to take away my reproach among men.

Here we see that what Gabriel spoke came to pass after he spoke it. The prophecy was true. What God says will come to pass in spite of what we think or say. Zacharias paid for his words of doubt, but it had not impact on God's plan.

In those days especially and even in these days somewhat, women want children and men wish to marry women who are able to bear children. It is in our nature to reproduce and while there are a few who do not fall into this group, the largest majority of people on this earth are in this group. Just an FYI here, Paul commends those who are able to remain single and commit themselves to the Lord completely, so there is no sin in being this way.

Elisabeth and Zacharias, however, wanted children. They lived in a time where a woman was looked down on if she was childless. It is no doubt that Elisabeth felt this, as did other woman during her time and before. We remember the story of Rachel, the daughter of Laban, whose sister, Leah, was able to bear children, but she was not. Genesis 30:22 – 23 records what happened to Rachel and her response.

<sup>22</sup> And God remembered Rachel, and God hearkened to her, and opened her womb.

<sup>23</sup> And she conceived, and bare a son; and said, God hath taken away my reproach:

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She is the one who bore Jacob's son, Joseph. Joseph's story is a picture of Jesus. Many of the events in his life, foreshadowed much of what would happen to Jesus. But, Rachel in this verse talks about how God has taken away her reproach. Her reproach being she was barren. Hannah is an example of the reproach suffered by those who were barren. Her story of reproach is contained in 1 Samuel 1. She ended up giving birth to Samuel, however, so God had taken away her reproach, also.

In this section we should also notice something else. While Zacharias spoke with doubt concerning this news of joy from Gabriel, Elisabeth had a very different response. Now, God said both Zacharias and Elisabeth were righteous, but there appears to be a different level of righteousness. We've seen how Zacharias responded, but Elisabeth responded in a way that we should all respond when faced with answered prayers to God. Elisabeth responded in a way that showed she praised God for what had happened. She was happy to have this reproach on her by the people of Israel taken away by causing her to become pregnant with John. Interestingly, she hid herself away for five months. I believe had she gone out and proclaimed she had conceived and was now pregnant, the people of Israel may not have believed her and may have written her off as an old woman that had finally gone off the deep end because she had been childless all her life. But, to wait five months and then show herself, there would be no question that she had indeed conceived. The proof would be there. So her time of waiting accomplished two things. She praised God for what he had done and she waited until there was no doubt that she was pregnant.

This is a wonderful section of Scripture and I would encourage an even more in depth study of it. Take this section of Scripture, study it, and see what it has to say to you. Meditate on God's Word daily and you will be surprised at what things are birthed in you! Just remember to be thankful for what God reveals to you and praise him for His manifold wisdom.

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**Luke 1:26 – 38    The Proclamation Of The Birth Of The Savior Of The World**

<sup>26</sup> And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth,

<sup>27</sup> To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name *was* Mary.

<sup>28</sup> And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, *thou that art* highly favoured, the Lord *is* with thee: blessed *art* thou among women.

<sup>29</sup> And when she saw *him*, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be.

<sup>30</sup> And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God.

<sup>31</sup> And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS.

<sup>32</sup> He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David:

<sup>33</sup> And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

<sup>34</sup> Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?

<sup>35</sup> And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.

<sup>36</sup> And, behold, thy cousin Elisabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age: and this is the sixth month with her, who was called barren.

<sup>37</sup> For with God nothing shall be impossible.

<sup>38</sup> And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her.

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**Gabriel Is Sent To Nazareth By God**

<sup>26</sup> And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth,

<sup>27</sup> To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name *was* Mary.

We pick up our story with Gabriel being sent to Nazareth by God. There is quite a bit going on in these two verses, so we will step through it a little bit at a time.

The first thing we notice is the mention of a time period, namely the sixth month. Now some may take this to mean the sixth month of the Jewish calendar. If this was the case, it would be the month of Elul. But, as we shall see from this passage of Scripture, God tells us exactly what is meant by the sixth month. We remember being told Elisabeth hid herself for five months after conceiving John. Our story continues now, so it is just as likely this sixth month is the month after Elisabeth stopped hiding herself. This is actually confirmed in verse 36 in Luke 1. Here Gabriel tells Mary that her cousin, Elisabeth, is in her sixth month of pregnancy. So, even at this point, John, who is still in the womb, is being a kind of herald about the coming Messiah!

Now we come to the mention of a place. Actually a place within a place. We see Gabriel has been sent to a city of Galilee named Nazareth. This is one of those times where a bit of a word study can come in handy. We are going to look at the meaning of Galilee and Nazareth. We will take these definitions and consider it along with what we are told in verse 27. With these thoughts in mind, we will then take a look back at a prophecy of Isaiah and see how this lines up even in this manner.

The word Galilee means “circle” or “region” in Hebrew. Now, the word Nazareth means “branch” in Hebrew. So when we see the city of Nazareth of Galilee, we can read it as a branch of a circle or region. Nazareth is certainly of the region of Galilee being a city within Galilee. We can look at it as a branch out of a circle. Verse 27 tells us the words of Gabriel are being told to a virgin named Mary who is espoused to Joseph, of the house of David. Let's take a look at Isaiah's prophecy in Isaiah 11:1,

<sup>1</sup> And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots:

Jesse is the father of David, the very David from whose house Joseph is from. This prophecy speaks of the importance of David. He is the rod that comes forth out of the stem of Jesse. This is prophetic language of the lineage of David. The line leading up to Jesse had been decimated by the Babylonians, so it is fitting that Scripture speaks of a stem here. The important thing to

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see here, however, is the Branch that shall grow out of the rod out of the stem of Jesse. This is a prophecy concerning the coming Messiah. This Messiah is Jesus.

Verse 27 also gives us the name of the woman to whom Gabriel was speaking. Her name is Mary. We will see that Mary is indeed a special woman, but this verse speaks of her as a virgin, as being espoused to Joseph. Espoused is what we would call engaged. Mary was promised in marriage to Joseph. According to Jewish tradition, when a marriage was arranged between a man and a woman, the two would not marry right away, but would wait for a year before consummating the marriage. In this way, the groom could be certain that the child she would bare was his. This is important to keep in mind because of what we will read shortly.

It is certain Mary was a virgin. Interestingly enough, if you study the prophecies concerning the birth of the Messiah, you will find some key points. The first prophecy concerning the birth of the Messiah comes from Genesis 3:15,

<sup>15</sup> And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

While this does not directly speak of a virgin, it does speak of the seed of the woman having enmity, or hatred or hostility, with the seed of the serpent. Let's take a look at Isaiah 7:14,

<sup>14</sup> Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

Now we can determine that God spoke the prophecy in Genesis 3:15 some five thousand years before the birth of Christ. We can also determine that the prophecy given to Isaiah was some five to seven hundred years before the birth of Christ. The point is both of these prophecies and all the other prophecies in the Bible were given well before they happened and then they did happen! The prophecies that were meant to happen already have happened with a one hundred percent accuracy!

Notice Isaiah speaks here that a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. While some so called scholars would like to have people believe that the word for virgin here is merely speaking of a maiden, there are many occurrences of the Hebrew word for virgin where virgin is the only translation that makes sense. The Hebrew word for virgin is *almah*.

### **Gabriel Greets Mary**

We now look at verses 28 through 38 where Gabriel brings God's message to Mary. A message the world has waited on for over five thousand years! Gabriel begins his message by greeting Mary in verse 28,

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<sup>28</sup> And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, *thou that art* highly favoured, the Lord *is* with thee: blessed *art* thou among women.

What woman would not want to hear those words? What person would not want to hear they are highly favored and that they are blessed among any others? But this is how Gabriel addresses Mary. These are the words of God to Mary as delivered by Gabriel.

It should be noted in both the cases of Zacharias and Mary, the angel, Gabriel, came to them to bring good news. Gabriel is God's messenger and he goes to those who are to receive the good news. This same thing should be done by those who are born again Christians. We are God's messenger and have been commanded to go and tell the whole world the good news. The good news that God has provided the way for us to receive salvation from our sins by believing on the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus. By believing that Jesus is the only way to the Father in heaven and that we must go through Him. So, do as Gabriel did. Go and proclaim the message given to you by God to those who are to receive it! Just as Gabriel stated that he stands in the presence of God, we, too, will one day stand in the presence of God, but only if we have believed on the atonement for sin that Jesus provided!

So, we have here, Gabriel coming to Mary with great news! Gabriel tells Mary that she is blessed among women because she is highly favored and that the Lord is with her. Mary's reaction follows in verse 29,

<sup>29</sup> And when she saw *him*, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be.

It cannot be understated the significance of these visits by Gabriel. As we have emphasized before, it has been 400 years since mankind has heard from God. Mary would not have known yet that her cousin, Elisabeth's husband, had also been visited by Gabriel. Now Mary is being visited and she does wonder what manner of salutation this should be.

This kind of greeting from Gabriel is not limited to Mary, however. As we read in Daniel 9:21 – 23, we see this same type of greeting to Daniel.

<sup>21</sup> Yea, whiles I *was* speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening oblation.

<sup>22</sup> And he informed *me*, and talked with me, and said, O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding.

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<sup>23</sup> At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth, and I am come to shew *thee*; for thou *art* greatly beloved: therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision.

While what we read here shows that the greeting we see to Mary was not limited to just Mary, we also see the type of person this kind of greeting comes to. We know from reading Daniel, that he was a man who was wholly devoted to God's work. There was no room for compromise with Daniel and his love and desire for the LORD. We have this same type of character in Mary. In this exchange with Daniel, we see Gabriel giving Daniel a message concerning the future of Israel. We see Gabriel giving Mary a message concerning the future of Israel, also. There are many similarities between these two sections of Scripture and the only difference really is that in one Gabriel is speaking to a man of God and the second Gabriel is speaking to a woman of God. Both are highly favored, however. Let there be no difference in this respect that God will use whomever He pleases to accomplish that which He sets forth. I think one other thing we can take from this comparison is both were devoted to prayer, or communication with God on His terms.

Gabriel then reassures Mary that all is well in verse 30,

<sup>30</sup> And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God.

Once again, Gabriel must reassure the person he is visiting. He always tells them, "Fear not." It is clear that those who stand in the presence of God are seen in a way different from anyone else. Read back to Moses' countenance when he was in the presence of God on Mount Sinai. Here, too, Mary is told again that she has found favor with God. We understand from Scripture, the only way to find favor with God is by having faith in Him. Hebrews 11:6 tells us this,

<sup>6</sup> But without faith *it is* impossible to please *him*: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and *that* he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

If you want to please God, or to find favor with God, you must begin by having faith in Him and seek after Him. By having faith in God and diligently seeking him, He will reward you. Participating in these Bible studies, studying on your own, and joining up with a Bible believing fellowship are all ways of diligently seeking Him and showing your faith in God. Our faith in God only comes by the hearing of His word. We are told this in Romans 10:17,

<sup>17</sup> So then faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

### **Gabriel Gives Mary A Message From God**

After Gabriel gives his salutation to Mary, he speaks the following message from God to Mary,

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<sup>31</sup> And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS.

<sup>32</sup> He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David:

<sup>33</sup> And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

I understand that some things are open to debate, but for myself, this has to be the greatest message ever given by God to any human being. Everything from man's fall in the Garden up to this point has pointed towards this statement. The only thing greater is the fulfillment of this statement. Jesus' statement He made while on the Cross, is for me, the greatest statement ever made by a man. The statement I am speaking of is when Jesus said, "It is finished."

There are quite a few statements here and a listing of these statements are in order. Some are specific to Mary and some specific to Jesus. These ones specific to Jesus not only say what He is going to do, but reiterate previous prophecy's provided hundreds of years before.

1. Thou shalt conceive in thy womb.
2. Thou shalt bring forth a son.
3. Thou shalt call his name Jesus.
4. He shall be great.
5. He shall be called the Son of the Highest.
6. The Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David.
7. He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever.
8. Of his kingdom there shall be no end.

The first three speak of things specifically to Mary, while the last five speak of things specific to Jesus.

These first three things to Mary were a surprise to her indeed. We see this from her statement to Gabriel in verse 34,

<sup>34</sup> Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?

Now at first, it may appear Mary is reacting the same way Zacharias did when Gabriel told him about the son he was going to have. A closer look shows this is not the case, however. Zacharias, as we were told, spoke in unbelief. We are not told this concerning Mary's statement, however. The question Mary is asking is not because of unbelief, but an understanding of the Law and God's Word. She wasn't claiming this couldn't happen because of some physical



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reason that made it seem impossible, but she was claiming that what she was being told would violate God's Law. Mary was totally committed to God and her future husband, the man who she would know, Joseph; she was not a harlot. So, while Zacharias was speaking from unbelief based on his old age and Elisabeth being barren, Mary was speaking from a respect of God's Word.

One of the powerful things about the Word of God and the prophecies given by God is they are specific and are always fulfilled. Gabriel relates to Mary that she is not only going to conceive, but will have a son. Gabriel didn't say Mary would have a child, or that Mary would probably have a son, but told her she would have a son. This takes me back to the words spoken by God to the serpent in the Garden after the Fall. We find this in Genesis 3:15,

<sup>15</sup> And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

Notice here God is speaking of the seed of the woman. God refers to that seed in the masculine sense, "...and thou shalt bruise his heel." Now if you read the Bible from the Latin Vulgate, you won't find this to be true. It will bring about a misunderstanding of God's Word. You see, this translation used by the Catholic church says the following,

15 I will put enmities between thee and the woman, and thy seed and her seed: she shall crush thy head, and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel.

It refers to the woman as the cause of action! So apparently according to this translation, either Eve was going to crush the head of the serpent, which did not happen, or Mary would crush the head of the serpent, which did not happen either. At no place in God's Word, does it ever refer to Eve or Mary as the one who would kill Satan or destroy his power. That is the job of the Messiah and the Messiah is a man named Jesus. Be careful about the translation of the Bible you read! If you stick with the King James Bible, you will not go wrong.

The Messiah would have to be a man, because it was a man who would rule as King over a kingdom. All prophecies speak of the Messiah as being a man. This had to be true because it was a man that caused the Fall. When Adam ate of the fruit from the Tree he was commanded not to eat from, he was being disobedient and therefore sinned. It would take another man to come and pay the price of that sin, and Jesus is that man.

Gabriel gave instruction to Mary as to the name of her son, also. Mary was told the name of her son would be Jesus. This is the name we know our Lord by. The name Jesus is a Greek transliteration of the name Yeshua, or Joshua. Interestingly enough, Joshua in the Hebrew means, "Jehovah is salvation."

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Names given in the Old Testament are descriptive of the person who has the name. When a person was named, they were not just named from a book of common names, but by direction from God.

These statements from Gabriel to Mary all confirm what was spoken in Isaiah 7:14,

<sup>14</sup> Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

Matthew 1:23 uses the name Emmanuel in the description of what we are looking at here in Luke. It helps shed some light on the situation, also, because it shows how Joseph was to deal with the situation of his espoused wife being pregnant. Matthew 1:18 – 23 follows,

<sup>18</sup> Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost.

<sup>19</sup> Then Joseph her husband, being a just *man*, and not willing to make her a publick example, was minded to put her away privily.

<sup>20</sup> But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.

<sup>21</sup> And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.

<sup>22</sup> Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying,

<sup>23</sup> Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.

So, we see here, Joseph having the same concerns that Mary had. The angel of the Lord appeared to him though and let him know there was no need to privately put away Mary for she was pregnant because of the Holy Ghost. The prophecy given here is Isaiah 7:14. It even goes on to give us the meaning of the name Emmanuel. Emmanuel means “God with us.” The angel gave Joseph the same instruction, though, as far as the name of the child Mary was carrying. Verse 21 shows us the angel told Joseph the son would be named JESUS. Once again, the meaning of the name is given, “he shall save his people from their sins.” So we have in a sense two names given, Emmanuel and Jesus. Together they mean, “God with us and our salvation.” It is not necessarily two separate names, but does show the dual nature Jesus would have. That nature being 100% God and 100% man. Yes, God is with us and this man shall be our salvation.

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This has been a talk about the three things concerning Mary in Gabriel's message. There are 5 things spoken of about the son Mary would have. We listed them earlier, but again they are:

1. He shall be great.
2. He shall be called the Son of the Highest.
3. The Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David.
4. He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever.
5. Of his kingdom there shall be no end.

These are speaking of things that shall be. We will spend some time now on these and will touch on them again as we continue our study through Luke. Five things are spoken of about the one who would be named Jesus, the only begotten Son of God. We will look at them now individually.

**He Shall Be Great**

Something we need to remember in this part of our study. The words Gabriel is speaking are not his own, but those given him to speak by God the Father. Here we have the message being given, he will be great. These words were spoken prophetically. We can examine this though with the knowledge provided by the history of Jesus as provided by the Bible.

We have the man named Jesus here described as great. This is not speaking of Jesus as God. Jesus as God humbled himself and became as man, to know trials, tribulation and temptation. The greatness spoken here of Jesus is more than the greatness spoken of John the Baptist by Gabriel in Luke 1:15. John himself recognized this and said in John 3:30 – 31,

<sup>30</sup> He must increase, but I *must* decrease.

<sup>31</sup> He that cometh from above is above all: he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth: he that cometh from heaven is above all.

John knew his place and knew that the greatness of Jesus was greater than his own greatness.

Hebrews 2:16 – 18 sheds light on Jesus coming as a man to pay for the sins of men,

<sup>16</sup> For verily he took not on *him the nature of* angels; but he took on *him* the seed of Abraham.

<sup>17</sup> Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto *his* brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things *pertaining* to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.

<sup>18</sup> For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.

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Jesus came, not as a heavenly being, but as an earthly man. Verse 17 here says he did this so that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. It was only Jesus who was able to accomplish this. Verse 18 says he suffered being tempted, that is he allowed himself to be tempted, so that he could succor, or comfort, those that are tempted. Jesus had to come as a man to do this. Jesus was one hundred percent man.

But why would he need to become like man and suffer in order to fulfill what we are studying here, namely that part of Gabriel's message that he would be great? It is this way because it is all part of the plan of salvation. Mark 10:45 says,

<sup>45</sup> For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

There will come a time when Jesus will be King and all will serve Him, but at this point there was the sin issue to deal with. Remember, man is not able to make full atonement for his sin, so Jesus had to do this for us. That is why Jesus came to minister and to give his life as a ransom for many. We even see this powerfully prophesied in Isaiah 52:13 – 53:12. It starts off with what will happen and then explains how he will get there.

<sup>13</sup> Behold, my servant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high.

<sup>14</sup> As many were astonished at thee; his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men:

<sup>15</sup> So shall he sprinkle many nations; the kings shall shut their mouths at him: for *that* which had not been told them shall they see; and *that* which they had not heard shall they consider.

<sup>1</sup> Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?

<sup>2</sup> For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, *there is* no beauty that we should desire him.

<sup>3</sup> He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were *our* faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

<sup>4</sup> Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

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<sup>5</sup> But he *was* wounded for our transgressions, *he was* bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace *was* upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

<sup>6</sup> All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

<sup>7</sup> He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.

<sup>8</sup> He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken.

<sup>9</sup> And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither *was any* deceit in his mouth.

<sup>10</sup> Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put *him* to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see *his* seed, he shall prolong *his* days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.

<sup>11</sup> He shall see of the travail of his soul, *and* shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.

<sup>12</sup> Therefore will I divide him *a portion* with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

This is a passage of Scripture that is important to read and read over again. It speaks of what the Messiah, the suffering Messiah, would have to go through to pay for our sin. Jesus is that Messiah and he suffered all this so that we would not be held accountable for the punishment of our sin. He has given us the way out of the punishment of our sin the law requires. Because of this, as we read in verse 12, he is given a portion with the great. He shall be made King of kings and Lord of lords. We see here it pleased the LORD to do these things. It pleased the LORD because by Messiah's actions the world would now be able to reconcile themselves again with the LORD. By believing on Messiah, the world shall be saved. By not believing, the world is putting itself into the hands of the law which pronounces them guilty and eternal damnation is the punishment. Jesus is great with the LORD because Jesus accomplished what he was sent to do. Jesus is great with us as Christians because he has paid the cost, the punishment, for our sin. Jesus is great with the world because he has made possible what was impossible before, the way of reconciliation back with the LORD.

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**He shall be called the Son of the Highest**

The LORD God is the highest. Contained in the very first book of the Bible, in the very first chapter of the Bible, in the very first sentence in the Bible and in the very first statement of the Bible are the words, "In the beginning God..." God is the highest. Before there was anything else, God was. God is now. God will always be. God is the highest. The only begotten son of God is Jesus. Jesus is THE son of God. He is the Son of the highest. While there are references to angels being called, the sons of God, there is only one begotten Son of God, and He is Jesus. He is Jesus the Messiah, the Christ, the Anointed one. Jesus is the only begotten Son of God because he alone was born of a virgin woman on this earth, and her name is Mary. The same Mary we are reading about in our study here in Luke. We know that because Jesus is born of a woman, that he is a man. Jesus has gained legal entry into this world by being born of a woman. There is no other legal entry into this world outside of being born of a woman. Jesus is indeed, one hundred percent man. We also find, however, that Jesus is one hundred percent God. Let us look at John 1:1, 14,

<sup>1</sup> In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

<sup>14</sup> And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

Jesus is the Word. Jesus is the only begotten of the Father. This says the Word, that same Word that was with God in the beginning and is God, was made flesh and dwelt among us. Jesus, who is one hundred percent God, humbled himself to become as man, made in the flesh, to dwell among us. In our previous section we found that it pleased the LORD to cause this to suffering of Messiah to happen. John 3:16 says,

<sup>16</sup> For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

We read in two separate instances of a voice from heaven speaking about Jesus as the Son of God. Once at the baptism of Jesus and again at the mount of transfiguration. The baptism account is found in Matthew 3:16 – 17,

<sup>16</sup> And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him:

<sup>17</sup> And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

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The account at the mount of transfiguration is found in Matthew 17:1 – 5,

<sup>1</sup> And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart,

<sup>2</sup> And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light.

<sup>3</sup> And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him.

<sup>4</sup> Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias.

<sup>5</sup> While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.

There is no question that Jesus is the Son of God. There is no question salvation only comes from believing on the Son of God. Salvation comes from no other source and this includes any man, woman, child, pope, priest, guru, self sacrifice, church, baptism, good works, living a good life, or any of the other ways people will try to believe they will make it to heaven and not burn for all of eternity in hell. The Bible is clear, Jesus is the only begotten Son of God and by believing on Him, you will have salvation.

**The Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David**

We come now to the third promise given in verse 32 here. While the promises given by Gabriel so far have been fulfilled, we are waiting on this promise to be fulfilled. In order to believe this promise, we must believe that Jesus was resurrected after dying on the Cross. Otherwise, how could this promise be fulfilled by someone who is still deceased?

Jesus' resurrection was spoken of in the Old Testament and he was seen by many people after his death. Psalm 16:10 prophesies,

<sup>10</sup> For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.

Interestingly, our bodies do not begin to decompose until after 3 days. It is reported that Jesus rose from the dead on the third day. This would fulfill what was written here in Psalm 16:10, that God would not suffer His Holy One to see corruption.

We read in Matthew 28:1 – 10 the following account of the Resurrection,

<sup>1</sup> In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first *day* of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre.

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<sup>2</sup> And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it.

<sup>3</sup> His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow:

<sup>4</sup> And for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead *men*.

<sup>5</sup> And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified.

<sup>6</sup> He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay.

<sup>7</sup> And go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and, behold, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him: lo, I have told you.

<sup>8</sup> And they departed quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy; and did run to bring his disciples word.

<sup>9</sup> And as they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail. And they came and held him by the feet, and worshipped him.

<sup>10</sup> Then said Jesus unto them, Be not afraid: go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me.

The same angel, Gabriel, brought word to those at the tomb that Jesus had risen from the dead. I believe this to be Gabriel for several reasons. One, as Gabriel has had to do in his previous encounters, the first thing he says is, Fear not. Secondly, he says in verse 7, lo, I have told you. This sounds rather reminiscent of his words to Zacharias when chastening him about his unbelief. This section is here though to show Jesus had indeed risen from the grave.

The promise Gabriel makes here in Luke 1:32 that he would be given the throne of his father David, is a reiteration of the promise made by God in 2 Samuel 7:12 – 16, known as the Davidic Covenant,

<sup>12</sup> And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom.

<sup>13</sup> He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever.

<sup>14</sup> I will be his father, and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men:



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<sup>15</sup> But my mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took *it* from Saul, whom I put away before thee.

<sup>16</sup> And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever.

Gabriel is reiterating this covenant to establish that Jesus is the fulfillment of that seed that has come through David. There will not be another who can come and claim that he is the seed of David whose kingdom and throne would be established forever.

One of the proofs that Jesus is that fulfillment of the seed and therefore Messiah, comes from history and the events of 70 AD. In 70 AD, Titus, the Roman general came down from the north and destroyed the city of Jerusalem. With that destruction came the destruction of the Hall of Records in Jerusalem. It was by the genealogical records stored in this Hall of Records that a Jew could prove his family lineage. Jesus could do this, as he was born before 70 AD. He could prove that he descended from the line of King David. In 70 AD all these records were destroyed, so it is now impossible for anyone to prove their Jewish lineage back to David.