

John's Birth

We begin with Luke's introduction, including who he's writing to and for what purpose. We know Luke as Paul's traveling companion and physician (Colossians 4:14; 2 Timothy 4:11; Philemon 24; "we" passages throughout Acts). Luke aimed to bolster Theophilus' belief in what he heard. It would be wise for us to do the same.

The first chapter is the longest one. Due to its length, I've decided to look at the first two chapters as one narrative and focus on John's birth, followed by Jesus' birth. We'll study Luke 1:1-25; 57-80. I hope to "talk this through" in a way that will hopefully encourage us to put ourselves with these men and women from time past. We want to appreciate what they experienced and who they came to know: Jesus, the Son of Man.

The Goal (1-4)

- Support Theophilus' belief.
- Luke acted as a responsible disciple. He was not an eyewitness, but he took into account what had already been taught/delivered and compiled from eyewitnesses, the life of Christ.

The Dynamic Duo (5-7)

- Herod. Driven by lust. Killed his own family (wife, her mother, and children). Strong. Intelligent. Great builder. Died in 4 B.C. Hard to live under such rulers. He's also mentioned in Matthew 2. He ordered the death of male babies 2 years and younger in Bethlehem.
- Priestly families (Levi).
- Blameless. This is what we strive for in marriage.
- Barren woman. We've seen this before. God tends to help barren women who put their faith in Him.
- Older people. We've seen this before. Abraham and Sarah, anyone?

Zechariah's Visit (8-25)

- Rare occasion to burn incense. This may only occur once in a priest's lifetime.
- Gabriel - mentioned in Luke 1 and Daniel 8-9.
- Answer to their prayers. There's hope for them! Prayers were offered every evening on behalf of Israel. Perhaps God is answering two kinds of prayers: finally giving them a child they weren't expecting anymore and the child playing a supportive role to the Savior for Israel.
- John will be the fulfillment of Elijah's return (Malachi 4:5-6). He was not literally Elijah, but he would work in the same environment and be the same character. Funny because Elijah also wore a leather belt and garments of hair.
- Perhaps referencing the Nazarite vow (Numbers 6)? Though he is not told to cut his hair. The point is - his focus will be one dedicated to their service to God.
- His mission will also unite families (unity - fathers to children), and the wise will help the disobedient.
- Zechariah and Elizabeth would probably never see their sons work, but that didn't change the blessing of God's promise. Not all blessings are realized in our lifetime but through our children. Zechariah goes back home (perhaps Hebron), and they wait for the Lord.

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- You can imagine the time of John's birth brought the community together.
- Circumcision on the 8th day according to Law (Genesis 17:9-14).
- The people assumed he'd take his father's name, but this lovely couple obeyed Gabriel's instruction.
- Redemption is the theme of Zechariah's praise. He seems to have in mind a physical victory, but as we'll see going forward, it will be salvation through the cross of Christ.
- John would be the prophet of God and offer knowledge of salvation. This is the tender mercy of God, through John, centered on Jesus. Jesus is like a light that gives hope to a new day. Yes, the 400 years of silence have come to an end. Israel's hope is beginning to be realized.

Takeaway?

Challenge to give thanks to God in the moment (and remember once the newness wears off).
Wait on God during the years of silence - even if they are never realized in our lifetime.