

Luke 1: 1-13 (NASB)

Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile an account of the things accomplished among us, ² just as they were handed down to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word, ³ it seemed fitting for me as well, having investigated everything carefully from the beginning, to write *it* out for you in consecutive order, most excellent Theophilus; ⁴ so that you may know the exact truth about the things you have been taught. 5 In the days of Herod, king of Judea, there was a priest named Zacharias, of the division of Abijah; and he had a wife from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. 6 They were both righteous in the sight of God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and requirements of the Lord. 7 But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and they were both advanced in years. 8 Now it happened that while he was performing his priestly service before God in the appointed order of his division, 9 according to the custom of the priestly office, he was chosen by lot to enter the temple of the Lord and burn incense. 10 And the whole multitude of the people were in prayer outside at the hour of the incense offering. 11 And an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing to the right of the altar of incense. 12 Zacharias was troubled when he saw the angel, and fear gripped him. 13 But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your petition has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will give him the name John.

I. Prologue

II. Priest

III. Prayer

I. Prologue

1. Luke became a believer after the resurrection
 - a. He was a traveling companion of Paul
 - b. Paul tells us that Luke is a physician (Col 4:14)
 - c. He did careful research about the life of Jesus and documented the details
2. His key verse **19:10** "for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost"
3. In his opening, Luke uses a high level of refined, academic, classical style of Greek as he himself was Greek
4. The remainder of the book is in common Greek for the common man
5. His goal is that the reader would know the exact truth.
 - a. That everyone understands and believes in Jesus
6. He's also the author of Acts

- a. In this Gospel, he shows who Jesus is, what He did with and for people (believers and non-believers)
- b. In the book of Acts, he shows what Jesus does through believers
- c. Acts is an open ended book because we're still living those days out right now

7. Matthew wrote about Jesus the sovereign King to the Jews

8. Mark wrote about Jesus the suffering servant to the Romans

9. John wrote about Jesus the Son of God to all people

10. Luke wrote about Jesus the Son of Man to the Greeks

- a. Because the Greeks were fascinated with Aristotle's ideal republic and Plato's ideal man, Luke writes of Jesus as the Son of Man, the perfect Man (**Courson**)

- b. When Paul was arrested for 2 years on his 3 missionary journey, Luke was with him

- c. As Paul faced martyrdom, Luke was the only friend by his side (**Erdman**)

11. Luke was compelled to write a detailed account of the life of Jesus and redemption

- a. He went to the first hand sources to investigate and research the details of Jesus
- b. The eye witnesses described as servants of the Word (gospel)
- c. His goal is to persuade the reader to believe the gospel with the truth
- d. To believe the story of redemption
- e. Why is this important for us to understand?
- f. George Barna claims that 53 percent of those calling themselves “evangelical Christians” do not believe in absolute truth. And 43 percent agree [that], “It does not matter what religious faith you follow because all faiths teach similar lessons about life.” (Cited by Douglas Groothuis, “Telling the Truth Today,” Focal Point, Summer, 1995, p. 3.) **(Cole)**

12. Luke writes the truth in a logical persuasive manner detailing truth

13. **Biblical saving faith begins with understanding God's truth**

14. **The manner Luke uses is to reveal the humanity of Jesus**

- a. His courage
- b. His compassion

c. Constant fellowship with the Father

15. [Only in Luke will we find] the story of the priest Zacharias and his wife Elizabeth,

- a. the angel speaking to the virgin Mary
- b. the archangel speaking to the shepherds in the fields
- c. the twelve year old Jesus being lost in Jerusalem
- d. the conversion of Zacchaeus
- e. the salvation of the dying thief
- f. the walk on the road to Emmaus
- g. the story of the rich man and Lazarus
- h. the parable of the prodigal ... (**Thomas**)

16. He writes to Theophilus (**lover of God**) who may have been a friend or new believer in Jesus

17. [Some believe He's a high ranking] official who had trusted Christ and now needed to be established in the faith. (**Wiersbe**)

18. Others suggest Theophilus ... was merely an alias for someone who was being protected from possible persecution.

- a. Still others suggest that Theophilus was not an individual at all, but a code name for a group of people meeting in the name of Christ.

- b. Be Theophilus a real person, an alias for an individual, or a group of people, Luke's intent was to provide a carefully documented account (**Courson**)
- c. Theophilus may have been considering the following question
- d. "Is the Christian faith I believed in really the truth and the only truth? If it is true, why was Jesus rejected by His people and crucified? Why are Christians being persecuted? Why have most of the Jews rejected the message, while the Gentiles are receiving it?" (Adapted from Darrell Bock, Luke [Baker Exegetical Commentary], 1:65). (**Thomas**)

19. We may be asking questions today as well

- a. If I really believe the truth, then why...

20. Every heart longs to know the truth

21. Luke's purpose for writing is 4 fold (**Thomas**)

- a. It is full of **teaching** to tell Christians what they are to believe.
- b. It's full of **ethics** to tell Christians how they should live.
- c. It's full of **comfort** to tell Christians why they should rejoice...

- d. It's full of **prophecy** to tell Christians what they are to expect
(**Thomas**)

II. Priest

1. Vs. 5 tells us that about a priest named Zacharias living during a difficult time
 - a. There was a famine of the Word of God for 400 years
 - i. Malachi was the last O.T prophet to speak a Word from God
 - b. Herod was on the throne
 - i. A wicked ruler who killed his wives and own children
 1. It's safer to be Herod's pig than his son
 - c. Zechariah and Elizabeth could not have children
 - i. This is difficult in a society of blessings / cursings
2. Zacharias was a priest of the division of Abijah
 - a. King David divided priests into 24 teams
 - b. He was one out of 18,000 priests
 - c. Each priest served 1 week two times a year
 - d. Of the hundreds on duty, 1 was chosen by lot to burn incense

- e. They were not well known
- f. Nothing special about Zacharias and Elizabeth in human terms
- g. God has a way of calling the obscure, the unknown
 - i. All through scripture, God delights in the weak and unnoticed
 - 1. Joseph was 2nd to youngest
 - 2. Jacob was the youngest and weakest
 - 3. David was the youngest of his brothers
 - 4. God delights in the least likely to succeed

3. Meaning of their names

- a. Aaron (*Strong # 2*) - Light bringer
- b. Abijah (*Strong # 7*) - My Father is Jehovah
- c. Zechariah (*Strong # 2197*) - Remembered of Jehovah
- d. Elizabeth (*Strong # 1665*) - Oath of God
- e. John (*Strong # 2491*) - Jehovah is a gracious giver
 - i. Zechariah & Elizabeth belonged to the Light bringer

1. Jesus said: **I am the light of the world**
 - ii. Both can declare that Jehovah is their Father
 1. God is our Father
 - iii. **This is the initial truth and the door that we walk through**
 - iv. God remembers us, He has not forgotten
 - v. He's given us an Oath, many precious promises
 1. Taking hold of that Oath, God's kind of fruit will be produced in my life for His glory
 2. When remembered of Jehovah embraces the promises of God, sometimes, there may be a delay, but God's perfect timing will produce the beautiful result, Jehovah is a gracious giver
4. **1 Pet 2:9** But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

III. Prayer

1. Zacharias was chosen by lot to enter the holy place and offer incense
 - a. Offering the incense is representative of prayer
 - b. **Rev 8:3** And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne.

2. Zacharias is praying for his nation and the Messiah to arrive
 - a. This is a BIG deal
 - b. Gabriel who appeared to Daniel 500 years before is now speaking with Zechariah
 - c. Zacharias saw him and he was afraid
 - d. Don't be afraid Zacharias, for your prayer is heard...
 - e. What prayer?
 - f. How long has Zechariah prayed for a son?
 - g. How long do believers often wait for the promises of God?
 - vi. Some, years or decades

- h. They were without a child for years
 - i. Not having a child was looked upon as being cursed
 - j. Their neighbors and friends; "something is wrong"
 - k. This teaches us not to judge too quickly
 - l. The struggles people go through may not be a punishment
 - m. We don't know what God is doing in people's life
5. Do not be afraid, Zacharias, your prayer is heard
 6. As you pray and focus on others, your needs are often met
 - a. Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness...
 7. As a believer, you are also a priest (Remembered of Jehovah) and we're encouraged to pray for others & embrace the Oath (promises) of God for them
 8. This Passage teaches us not to focus on ourselves, but on others

9. **Rev. 1:6** and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father--to him be glory and power for ever and ever! Amen.

10. We serve God by serving His people

a. No greater way to serve them than by praying for them

11. As Joseph ministered to his 2 cellmates, God was aligning his destiny

a. God already knows what you need and want

b. Approach the Father of lights, He is your father

c. You are remembered by God

d. Embrace the oath of God not for yourself, but for others

e. Continue in prayer until you see results

f. God has an amazing way of meeting your needs