

The Gospel of Luke: Introduction and 1:1-80

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General Information:

1. The Four Gospel Accounts:

- a. **Matthew** and **John** were apostles.
- b. **Mark** worked closely with Peter.
- c. **Luke** worked closely with Paul.
(See PP for more info)

2. Examples of God's Grace in Luke:

- a. The parable of the prodigal son (15:11-32).
- b. The parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector (18:9-14).
- c. Jesus' statement: He "came to seek and to save what was lost" (19:10).
- d. Jesus' promise of paradise to the criminal on the cross (23:42-43).

3. Luke is the Writer (he also wrote Acts): *When comparing the total word count, Luke and Acts usually exceed the total word count of all 13 of Paul's letters.*

- a. **A Gentile** (most likely a Greek) by birth and probably born into a prosperous family.
- b. **He lived in Antioch**, which "rivaled Alexandria as the chief city of the Near East and was a cradle of Gentile Christianity."¹
- c. **A physician by profession:**
 - i. He did write with more detail than the other gospel writers *in connection with diseases and medical matters*.
 - ii. Between Luke and Acts, he used 750 words that are not found elsewhere in the Greek NT (Lenski, p. 19).
- d. **His conversion:** He was probably converted to Christianity with many

others, as noted in [Acts 11:19-21](#).

e. **A very close companion of Paul:**

"When Paul was again imprisoned in Rome... and expected to be condemned to death, we have the pathetic statement from his pen: 'Only Luke is with me'" (2 Tim. 4:11) (Lenski, 5).

f. **Mark and Luke were fellow workers with Paul: [Philemon 1:23-24](#)** "Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, greets you, as do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, [and] Luke, my fellow workers."

4. Paul's Three Missionary Journey's regarding Antioch:

- a. First – began and ended in Antioch.
- b. Second – began and ended in Antioch.
- c. Third – began in Antioch and ended in Jerusalem.

5. The "we passages" in the book of Acts:

- a. "They are sections written from a first-person perspective, in contrast to the rest of the book, which is written in the third person: Acts 16:10-17, Acts 20: 5-15, Acts 21:1-18, and Acts 27:1-28:16" (Google, AI).
- b. Since the first "we" passage appears in Acts 16, some believe that is when Luke joined Paul's missionary team.

6. More from Google AI:

- a. "Luke was a physician who traveled with Paul, Timothy, and Silas to Philippi, where he witnessed Paul and Silas's imprisonment. Luke remained with Paul throughout his third missionary journey, accompanying him to Jerusalem and

¹ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Antioch>

Rome. Luke was also with Paul during his imprisonment in Rome, when Paul wrote the letters of Colossians, Philemon, and 2 Timothy.”

- b. “Luke's writing often shows his familiarity with Paul, and Paul referred to Luke as his ‘dear friend’ and ‘doctor’ in his Letter to the Colossians.”
7. The Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles: Both were specifically written to Theophilus:
- a. “...when Luke wrote his Gospel to Theophilus [meaning, loved of God, Luke 1:3], this distinguished man was not yet a Christian but was greatly interested in things Christian; but [by the time] Luke sent the Acts to him [Acts 1:1], Theophilus had become a convert (Lenski, 11).”
 - b. “In the case of Luke’s writings, we may admit that Theophilus, prominent and wealthy as he was, was expected to publish them (Lenski, 13).” Therefore, both books were written to strengthen the faith of all believers and answer the attacks of unbelievers.
8. Key Dates (Lenski, 12-13):
- a. 43 – Paul came to Antioch and found Luke in the church.
 - b. 52 or 53 – Luke became one of Paul’s assistants.
 - c. 58 – Luke went with Paul to Jerusalem, remaining with him until they reached Rome in 60, the end of Paul’s first imprisonment in 62, and Paul’s death in 66.
 - d. “...Luke probably became acquainted with Theophilus... most likely during Luke’s last stay in Rome, and... Luke wrote his books to him shortly after that. ...[But] all Luke’s investigations about the eyewitnesses were made during the years prior to Paul’s death (16).”

9. The Four Gospels: “There is nothing to contradict the old tradition that the Gospels were written in the order in which we now have them in the NT (Lenski, 15).”
TLSB: Mt: 50; Ma: 50-60; Lu: 55-60; Jn: 90
10. The Gospel of Luke: It covers the account of Jesus, from John the Baptizer to Jesus’ ascension into heaven.
11. The Account of Jesus’ Birth:
- a. Matthew told from Joseph’s angle.
 - b. Luke told from Mary’s angle.
12. A Suggested Outline of Luke (NET Bible):
- a. Preface (1:1-4)
 - b. Beginnings: Infancy of John the Baptizer and Jesus through the temptation of Jesus (1:5-4:13)
 - c. Jesus’ ministry in Galilee (4:14-9:50)
 - d. Jesus’ journey from Galilee to Jerusalem (9:51-19:27)
 - e. Jesus’ last days in and around Jerusalem: Holy Week (His passion, death, resurrection) to the ascension (19:28-24:53)

Introduction (1:1-4):

1-4: 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 [Luke] 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.

13. “Many have undertaken...” How many? “...we have no means of knowing, but quite a number must be referred to. No trace is left of their writings... Luke is... not referring to the far later apocryphal Gospels, all of which are non-historical inventions (Lenski, 24-25).”

14. Where did the writers get their information?
- V. 2 _____
 - Who moved them to write?
2 Peter 1:21 “...no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.”
15. In general, Luke did nothing unusual – *by writing an account*, but the purpose of his writing was specific: *For the eternal benefit of Theophilus.*
16. Theophilus had probably heard from others and had been taught, but he was not yet certain. What is faith? (Hebrews 11:1) _____

The Birth of John the Baptist Foretold (1:5-25):

5-7: In the days of Herod [*the Great*], king of Judea [*who reigned from 37-4 B.C.*], there was a priest named Zacharias, of the division of Abijah [*one of 24 such divisions, which are named in 1 Chron. 24:7-18*]; and he had a wife from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth [*not only a descendant of a priest, but of the first high priest*].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 [*unable to conceive*], and they were both advanced in years.

17. Considering ➡ “the days of Herod, king of Judea,” who reigned from 37 to 4 B.C., ➡ the slaughter of the baby boys in Bethlehem (Matthew 2:16), and ➡ Herod dying in March—April of 4 B.C., what year was Jesus born? _____

(My opinion: John—March of 5 BC; Jesus—September of 5 BC)

18. What were Zacharias and Elizabeth in the sight of God? (6) _____
- How did that show in their lives?

 - “They were not sinless but were faithful and sincere in keeping God’s ordinances” (CSSB).

- How are we similar as NT Christians?
 - Sinners: **Eccl. 7:20** “Indeed, there is not a righteous man on earth who *continually* does good and who never sins.”
 - Saints: **Ephesians 1:1** “To the saints [*holy ones*] who are at Ephesus and who are faithful in Christ Jesus...”

19. Is God the One who permits women to become pregnant and bear children? Y N
- Genesis 29:31** “Now the LORD saw that Leah was unloved, and He opened her womb, but Rachel was barren.”
 - Genesis 30:22** “Then God remembered Rachel, and God gave heed to her and opened her womb.”

8-10: 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 [*by lot makes it God’s choice*].¹⁰ And the whole multitude of the people were in prayer outside at the hour of the incense offering.

20. How was Zacharias chosen to burn incense? (9) _____
- “Choosing in that way allowed God to control who did what” (FAQs, 231).
 - “Only once in a priest’s life could he be granted this high privilege. Zacharias was already aged, and not until this day had the lot for this task fallen to him” (Lenski, 42).
21. “Twice daily the incense was kindled: at dawn of day *before* the daily burnt offering and in the afternoon *after* the sacrifice” (Lenski, 42).

11-17: And an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing to the right of the altar of incense. ¹² Zacharias was troubled [*upset*] when he saw *the angel*, and fear gripped him. ¹³ But the angel said to him, [*see the video*] “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. ¹⁴ You will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth. ¹⁵ For he will be great in the sight of the Lord; and he will drink no wine or liquor, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit while yet in his mother’s womb. ¹⁶ And he will turn many of the sons of Israel back to the Lord their God. ¹⁷ It is he who will go *as a forerunner* before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, TO TURN THE HEARTS OF THE FATHERS BACK TO THE CHILDREN, and the disobedient to the attitude of the righteous, so as to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.”

22. Would you be “gripped with fear” if an angel appeared to you? Y N
23. What were Zacharias and Elizabeth lacking (7) and had obviously prayed for (13)?
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24. What great things did Gabriel say about the child to be born? (13-17) “...you will give him the name _____. ...he will be _____ in the sight of the Lord... [*Luke 7:28a*] he will be filled with the _____ while yet in his mother’s womb. And he will turn many of the sons of Israel _____ to the Lord their God [*Luke 3:1-18*]. ...he will go as a forerunner before Him in the spirit and power of _____ [*Matthew 11:14*], TO TURN... the disobedient to the attitude of the _____, so as to make ready a people _____ for the Lord [*through repentance; Isaiah 40:3-5*].”

18: Zacharias said to the angel, “How will I know this for certain? For I am an old man, and my wife is advanced in years.”

25. With **what** did Zacharias respond (20)?
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- a. Did he have good reasons for doing so? (18b) Y N
- b. Is *everything* possible with God? (Luke 1:37) Y N
- c. Name *an old man* and *a barren old woman* who had a child:
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- d. Did Zacharias almost certainly know that Bible account? Y N
- e. Does God want us to ✦ know His Word, ✦ believe it to be true, and ✦ allow it to highly influence our daily lives? Y N
- f. Let us proceed through life with confidence in the Holy Trinity to ✦ sustain us, ✦ guide us, and ✦ use us!

19-20: The angel answered and said to him, “I am Gabriel, **who stands in the presence of God**, and I have been sent to speak to you and to bring you this good news. ²⁰ And behold, you shall be silent and unable to speak until the day when these things take place, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their proper time.”

26. Try to picture the heavenly throne room: **Isaiah 6:1-4** “...I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, lofty and exalted, with the train of His robe filling the temple. ² Seraphim stood above Him, each having six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. ³ And one called out to another and said, ‘Holy, Holy, Holy, is the LORD of hosts, The whole earth is full of His glory.’ ⁴ And the foundations of the thresholds trembled at the voice of him who called out, while the temple was filling with smoke.” The word “angel” means _____ (Cat. question 99).
- a. Imagine God ✦ calling upon Gabriel, ✦ giving him the message, and ✦ sending him to Zacharias. The message from the angel was not his word; *it was* _____ *word!*

- b. The Bible is similar – it’s God’s very word to us via ♦the Holy Spirit, ♦the prophets, ♦Jesus, and ♦the apostles:
- i. **Hebrews 1:1-2** God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son...
 - ii. **1 Thess. 2:13** “For this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but for what it really is, **the word of God**, which also performs its work in you who believe.”

21-22: The people were waiting for Zacharias and were wondering at his delay in the temple. ²² But when he came out, he was unable to speak to them; and they realized that he had seen a vision in the temple; and he kept making signs to them and remained mute.

- 27.** “The service of sprinkling the frankincense on the golden altar took but a short time...” (Lenski, 57); therefore, it was natural to wonder about his delay in coming out.
- 28.** Once he came out, he should have spoken the benediction upon the people, *but he was not able to speak!* Based on his delay and inability to speak, the people understood that something extraordinary had happened.
- 29.** The signs he made could have been motioning the people to go home.

23-25: When the days of his priestly service ended, he went back home. ²⁴ After these days Elizabeth his wife became pregnant, and she kept herself in seclusion for five months, saying, ²⁵ “This is the way the Lord has dealt with me in the days when He looked with favor upon me, to take away my disgrace among men.”

- 30.** His time of service was one week; then he returned to Hebron where he lived (Lenski, p. 58).
- 31.** Why did Elizabeth remain in seclusion? Lenski called her time a “**customary retirement,**” apparently common when a woman became pregnant (58).
- 32.** Back then it was *very important to have children*; it “**was a sign of God’s displeasure and in that sense a reproach among men who would point to this couple as being for some reason punished by God (Lenski, 59).**” Therefore, *once Elizabeth became pregnant*, she could gladly speak of having ♦received God’s favor and ♦her disgrace taken away in the sight of her people – who saw her for so long without the blessing of a child.

The Birth of Jesus foretold (1:26-38):

26-28: Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city in Galilee called Nazareth, ²⁷ to a virgin [an unmarried young woman] engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the descendants of David; and the virgin’s name was Mary. ²⁸ And coming in, he said to her, “Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you.”

- 33.** “in the sixth month” is not a reference to *the sixth month of the year*, but to *the sixth month of _____*.
- 34.** The angel Gabriel appeared here to Mary and earlier to (1:19) _____.
- 35.** Galilee was a northern region of Israel; Judea – *the locations of Bethlehem and Jerusalem* – was a southern region; and the region of Samaria was in between.
- 36.** Notice that a form of the word “virgin” is used twice in verse 27 for emphasis.
- 37.** What did it mean *back then among the Jews* to be “pledged to be married”? “...**the Jewish betrothal was public and had vows that constituted virtual marriage and needed only that the bridegroom should come at the set time, take his bride, celebrate, and live with her**” (Lenski, 60).

38. “Mary was a descendant of David, as was Joseph (Matt. 1:16); so, Jesus could rightly be called a ‘son’ of David” (CSSB).

39. Gabriel said to Mary: “Greetings” [hail, hello] (28), which is the term “ave” in the Latin Bible (CSSB).

- a. What are the words of the “Ave Maria” (*they are in red; the underlined words below are in the Bible; “full of grace” – needs further study, see below*)? “Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee [Luke 1:28]; blessed art thou among women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb [Luke 1:42], Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.”
- b. Why don’t we use the “Ave Maria” at Bethlehem? (1 Tim. 2:5)

40. Gabriel referred to Mary as “favored one!” – κεχαριτωμένη (*perfect passive*) – literally, *the one having been favored*. In other words, the LORD showed favor **to Mary** by choosing her to be the mother of Jesus.

41. Here are two views on why Mary was referred to as “favored one!”:

- a. “The Immaculate Conception is, according to Roman Catholic Dogma, the conception of the Virgin Mary without any stain of original sin.... It is further said by Catholics that she lived a life completely free from sin.”² However, the Bible says otherwise: Ecclesiastes 7:20; Romans 3:10, 23; 1 John 1:8, 10. Only Adam and Eve (*for a short time; Genesis 1-3*) and Jesus (*for all time; Hebrews 4:15*) were without sin.
- b. “The special grace on account of which the angel greets Mary is **God’s selection of her to be the mother of his Son**.... Mary is a vessel to receive, not a fountain to dispense” (Lenski, 62).

42. “The Lord is with you.” Gabriel encouraged Mary with that blessed truth. Since she would soon be pregnant – *but not yet married, thus open to ridicule and even death* – she needed to know of God’s special help! In the liturgy (Lutheran Basics):

- a. I say to you: “The Lord is with you.” **Why is He with you?** To help you to hear, understand, and benefit from the prayers, readings, sermon, supper, and more!
- b. Then you say to me: “And with thy spirit.” / “And also with you.” **Why is He with me?** To enable me to pray, read, preach, distribute, and more to God’s glory and for your eternal benefit!

29-33: But she was very perplexed [*disturbed, confused*] at *this* statement, and kept pondering what kind of salutation this was.³⁰ The angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary; for you have found favor with God.³¹ And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus.³² He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David;³³ and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end.”

43. Mary “found favor with God.” “This divine grace is always found, never earned” (Lenski, 64). Some examples of people who found favor with God / the LORD?

- a. Noah (Gen. 6:8).
- b. Abraham (Gen. 18:3).
- c. Lot (Gen. 19:19).
- d. Moses (Exodus 33:12)

² http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Immaculate_conception

44. What great things did Gabriel say about Mary's child to be born (31-33)? "...you shall name Him _____.³² He will be _____ and will be called the Son of the _____; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father _____; ³³ and He will reign over the house of Jacob _____..."

45. John said this about Jesus: "He must increase, but I must decrease" (John 3:30). Mary could have said the same. Mary and John were both very important in *pointing people to Jesus, the Savior!*

34: Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?"

46. Zacharias responded to Gabriel with doubt and unbelief (18-20). How was Mary's response different (see 34, 45)?

35-37: The angel answered and said to her, "**The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you**; and for that reason the holy Child shall be called the Son of God. ³⁶ And behold, even your relative Elizabeth has also conceived a son in her old age; and she who was called barren is now in her sixth month. ³⁷ For nothing will be impossible with God."

47. We don't know the details of Mary's conception, other than the statement in verse 35. We confess in the Apostles' Creed: "**And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary...**" Lenski wrote: "**Farther than this the miracle could not be revealed, for the human mind could not follow farther**" (71).

48. How were *Elizabeth* and *Mary* related? "**It is not known whether [Elizabeth] was a cousin, aunt or other relation**" (CSSB).

49. Mary did believe the angel, but seeing Elizabeth pregnant (*since Elizabeth was old and had never had a child*) would certainly have increased Mary's confidence in Gabriel's message.

50. A good way to proceed in life:
F _____ R _____ O _____ G _____

51. Name some reasons why we should fully rely on God's Word? _____

38: And Mary said, "Behold, the bonds slave [*lit. female slave*] of the Lord; may it be done to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.

52. Mary wanted God's will to be done in her life; *let us have the same desire!*

53. Since God ✓ has saved us from eternal wrath (Eph. 2:1-9), ✓ has things planned for each of our lives (Eph. 2:10), and ✓ can accomplish anything through us (Eph. 3:20), how should we respond to His will for us?

- I am too busy!
- I have my own plans!
- Give me some time!
- Ask for further understanding!
- Know that God's will is best!
- Believe God can do anything!
- Gladly say, Yes," and follow His plan!

54. Apostles' Creed, Second Article, Luther's Explanation:

- This is what Jesus did: He "...redeemed me, a lost and condemned person, purchased and won me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil; not with gold or silver, but with His holy, precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death..."
- This is the proper response: "...that I may be His own and live under Him in His kingdom, and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness..."

Mary visits Elizabeth (1:39-45):

39-45: Now at this time Mary arose and went in a hurry to the hill country, to a city of Judah [a trip of about 90 miles], ⁴⁰ and entered the house of Zacharias and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹ When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. ⁴² And she cried out with a loud voice and said, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! ⁴³ And how has it happened to me, that the mother of my Lord would come to me? ⁴⁴ For behold, when the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby leaped in my womb for joy. ⁴⁵ And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what had been spoken to her by the Lord."

55. How long did Mary stay with Elizabeth?
(56) _____ months
56. Why was Mary blessed among women?
- Because she was conceived, was born, and lived without sin.
 - Because God chose her to bear His Son.
57. The baby leaped in her womb... Mary was chosen by God above all women; when the preborn John – *who was going to be the forerunner of Christ* – heard Mary's voice, he responded with joy. *God certainly used Elizabeth and Mary in extremely important ways to bring John and Jesus into the world!*
58. "Blessed are you among women..." Yes, *because you have been chosen to bear the Christ!*
59. "...blessed is the fruit of your womb..." Yes, *because He is the promised Savior!*

Mary's Song (1:46-56): The Magnificat: This canticle [Scriptural hymn text] is found in Luke 1:46-55. It is a hymn of praise by Mary, the mother of Jesus.

46-49: And Mary said [about God the Father]: "My soul exalts the Lord, ⁴⁷ And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior. ⁴⁸ For He has had regard for the humble state of His bondservant;

For behold, from this time on all generations will count me blessed. ⁴⁹ For the Mighty One has done great things for me; And holy is His name."

60. Mary's perspective:

- God is my Savior; therefore, I am a sinner in need of salvation – like everyone else.
- My position in life was lowly, but now – *as the mother of my Savior*, generations shall call me blessed.

61. Song: Mary, Did You Know? [Watch the video](#).

50-56: "AND HIS MERCY IS UPON GENERATION AFTER GENERATION TOWARD THOSE WHO FEAR HIM [Recalls covenants given to Abraham (Gn 12:1-3) and David. Thus, the climax of Mary's song emphasizes fulfillment (TLSB)]. ⁵¹ He has done mighty deeds with His arm; He has scattered those who were proud in the thoughts of their heart. ⁵² He has brought down rulers from their thrones [showing His almighty power] And has exalted those who were humble. ⁵³ HE HAS FILLED THE HUNGRY WITH GOOD THINGS [especially those hungry for God's righteousness]; And sent away the rich empty-handed [especially those who thought they were good enough on their own]. ⁵⁴ He has given help to Israel His servant [by bringing the promise of the Messiah to fulfillment], In remembrance of His mercy, ⁵⁵ As He spoke to our fathers, To Abraham and his descendants forever." ⁵⁶ And Mary stayed with [Elizabeth] about three months, and then returned to her home.

62. To whom does God's mercy extend? (50)
To "...those who revere God and live in harmony with his will" (CSSB).

The Birth of John the Baptist (1:57-66):

57-66: Now the time had come for Elizabeth to give birth, and she gave birth to a son. ⁵⁸ Her neighbors and her relatives heard that the Lord had displayed His great mercy toward her [by gifting her with a son, especially after being barren for so long]; and they were rejoicing with her.

⁵⁹ And it happened that on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child, and they were going to call him Zacharias, after his father.

⁶⁰ But his mother answered and said, “No indeed; but he shall be called John.” [Zacharias must have communicated to Elizabeth what Gabriel had said about calling him, John.] ⁶¹ And they said to her, “There is no one among your relatives who is called by that name.”

⁶² And they made signs to his father, as to what he wanted him called. ⁶³ And he asked for a tablet and wrote as follows, “His name is John.” And they were all astonished. ⁶⁴ And at once his mouth was opened and his tongue loosed, and he began to speak in praise of God. ⁶⁵ Fear came on all those living around them; and all these matters were being talked about in all the hill country of Judea. ⁶⁶ All who heard them kept them in mind, saying, “What then will this child turn out to be?” For the hand of the Lord was certainly with him.

63. How did the people react when Elizabeth and Zacharias agreed? (63) _____

64. Did the people recognize that the Lord had a special plan for John? Y N

Zacharias’s Song (1:67-80): The Benedictus

67-75: And his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Spirit [so he spoke by the HS], and prophesied, saying [about Jesus]:

⁶⁸ “Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, For He has visited us and accomplished redemption for His people [since we are all helpless to save ourselves or add to God’s work of saving us], ⁶⁹ And has raised up a horn of salvation [“a strong, firm, unwavering help” (Kretzmann)] for us In the house of David His servant-- ⁷⁰ As He spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from of old-- ⁷¹ Salvation FROM OUR ENEMIES, And FROM THE HAND OF ALL WHO HATE US; ⁷² To show mercy toward our fathers, And to remember His holy covenant,

⁷³ The oath which He swore to Abraham our father [“...in you all the families of the earth will be blessed” (Gen. 12:3)], ⁷⁴ To grant us that we, being rescued from the hand of our enemies, Might serve Him without fear, ⁷⁵ In holiness and righteousness before Him all our days.

Zacharias Prophesied about John:

76-80: And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; For you will go on BEFORE THE LORD TO PREPARE HIS WAYS [Isaiah 40:1-5]

[John is “the prophet of the Most High” leading the way for the Son of the Most High]; ⁷⁷ To give to His people the knowledge of salvation By the forgiveness of their sins [NOT what we do toward God, BUT what God gifts to us through Jesus],

⁷⁸ Because of the tender mercy of our God, With which the Sunrise from on high will visit us, ⁷⁹ TO SHINE UPON THOSE WHO SIT IN DARKNESS AND THE SHADOW OF DEATH [when the Holy Spirit shows us our **dark and helpless** state, then we are ready for God’s light of saving truth to shine upon us], To guide our feet into the way of peace [by grace through faith in Jesus].”

⁸⁰ And the child [John] continued to grow and to become strong in spirit, and he lived in the deserts until the day of his public appearance to Israel. // That is when John called everyone to repent! Jesus said: “...unless you repent, you will all likewise perish” (Luke 13:3). To repent is GOD’S WORK to *show us the utter darkness of our sin, *give us godly sorrow, and *give us the eternal benefits of Jesus’ finished work!

Concluding Statement of Good News:

Kretzmann: “Remission of sins has only one reason, namely, because God is merciful, and out of such mercy has sent and given us His Son that He might pay for us, and we should be saved through Him.

Therefore, it reads thus: Forgiveness of sins is not the result of our merit, nor of our good works, **but** of the sincere mercy of God, that He has loved us of His own free will.

We had with our sins earned the fire of hell, but God looked upon His boundless mercy. That is the reason why He sent His Son and for the sake of His Son forgives us our sins.”