

April 7, 2024
Two Men Who Knew Their Callings
The Jesus We Need to Know Series

Text: Selected Verses from Luke 1-4

Introduction: Today we begin what looks to be possibly a ten-week study from the gospel of Luke.

- Luke is the longest of the gospel accounts of Jesus' life. We believe it was written by a physician friend of Paul's, who was compelled after much research to write about the life of Christ.
- It is considered a synoptic gospel, which is just a term used by theologians as they have studied Matthew, Mark, and Luke side by side and have noted their many similarities and differences.
- Some scholars believe Mark was penned first and then was used as an outline of sorts by Matthew and Luke, but I am not convinced of that. Matthew was a disciple and eyewitness of the Lord and His work. Many believe John Mark obtained much of his information from his time spent with Peter. Luke wrote of what he had learned from *eyewitnesses and ministers of the word*. (Luke 1:2)
- The gospel of John was written much later and is notably different from the first three records – it tells of Jesus ministry throughout Judea, rather than Galilee, and doesn't include any of Jesus' teachings we call parables.

If your Bible reading includes our Quiet Time passages, you will be following right along with my sermon topics.

Read **Luke 1:1-4**.

Author ~ Luke.

A redeemed Gentile physician who would write not only this gospel, but also Acts, the history of the early church. Although he never identifies himself by name, internal evidence points clearly to him and the earliest church fathers attributed authorship to him.

Recipient ~ Most excellent Theophilus.

Both Luke and Acts were addressed to this person; some

think he may have been a Roman dignitary.

Purpose ~ To set in order a narrative of the eyewitness testimonies concerning Jesus, to validate the teachings of the church.

Two Men Who Knew Their Callings

I. What Their Parents Knew.

A. Zacharias and Elizabeth. **Luke 1:13-17**

Gabriel revealed to Zacharias that despite their long-time barrenness, they would have a son and would name him, John.

- He will be *great in the sight of the Lord*.
- He will not consume alcoholic beverages.
- He will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even *before* birth.

He leapt in his mother's womb at the presence of expectant Mary.

- His ministry will be instrumental in turning the Jews to God.
- He will prepare the hearts of the people for the Messiah's coming.

After John's birth and the loosing of Zacharias' tongue, we learn a little more: **Luke 1:76-78a**

- He would be the *prophet of the Highest*.
- He would proclaim to the people their need to confess and forsake sin and find salvation from God.

B. Joseph and Mary. **Luke 1:28-33**

Gabriel told Mary that by God's favor and blessing she would bear a Son and would name Him, Jesus.

- He will be great.
- He will be called the Son of the Highest.
- He will reign on the throne of David.
- The kingdom He will establish will be eternal.

Joseph was given similar information in a dream. (Matthew 1:20-21) with the reassurance that Mary had not been unfaithful to him.

After His birth at His dedication, Simeon proclaimed Jesus as God's salvation to both the Gentiles and the Jews. A prophetess, Anna, also gave a similar message.

Both boys grew to adulthood, with little said about the growing-up years. Read **Luke 1:80** (John) and **Luke 2:40** (Jesus).

Both became *strong in spirit*.

John was raised in the desert/wilderness; Jesus in Nazareth. Jesus was filled with wisdom and the grace of God was upon Him.

After Jesus' temple time in Jerusalem, Luke writes (**2:52**).

II. What Their Early Ministries Proved.

A. John, the Son of Zacharias and Elizabeth.

1. His ministry began at God's command.

Luke 3:1-2

All four gospels identify John as *the voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the LORD; make His paths straight*.

2. His ministry called people to repentance from sin that was confirmed with water baptism. **Luke 3:3**

He was not reserved in his preaching; he did not hold back any punches. (Luke 3:7-14) A forsaking of sinful practices had to follow the repentance of sin.

3. He would solely point people to God's promised Messiah. **Luke 3:15-18**

B. Jesus, the Son of Joseph and Mary.

Jesus entered His Father's ministry by submitting to John's baptism. Unnecessary, to say the least, for a man who had never veered from perfect obedience to His Father.

- In it, Jesus identified with mankind's sure need for cleansing.
- His baptism gave opportunity for His identity to be confirmed, as His Father proclaimed, *You are my beloved Son; in You I am well pleased* and as the Holy Spirit descended on Him from on high.

1. His calling was revealed by His temptation in the wilderness. (Luke 4:1-13)

- Jesus was human and suffered from hunger pangs.
- Jesus knew He was destined to reign over all, but His time was not yet.
- Jesus knew He was the Son of God; it was fact, and He had no need to prove it by testing the Father.

2. He was the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies. **Luke 4:16-21**

The people knew that Isaiah (61:1-2) was referring to the Messiah with these words.

This claim of Jesus didn't win Him any favor in His hometown; in fact, the people wanted to throw Him off a cliff, but even that is somewhat of a prophetic fulfillment. **Luke 2:34-35**

So What? God's plan was set in motion.

The promises made to Zacharias & Elizabeth and Joseph & Mary proved to be true.

Both John and Jesus would do the Father's will for them.

1. John's Message ~ Get right with God!

We can do that considering what Jesus ultimately did for us.

He lived that perfect, sinless life so He could be the Perfect Lamb for sacrifice. His shed blood pays the price for the sins of all repentant sinners.

Admit your need, believe Jesus is God's Son, confess and forsake your sin, and receive God's gift of eternal life.

2. Jesus' Message ~ Let Me be your Savior!

He came to bring good news to the poor, to heal the hurting, to give freedom to those who are slaves to sin. He can give understanding to the ignorant and a hand up to those who have lost all hope. Each of us must seek Him.

Questions to Ponder Through the Week
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1. If you haven't already, use a study Bible or the internet and officially introduce yourself to the gospel of Luke. You might consider watching The Gospel of Luke Summary from the Bible Project ~ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XIb_dCIxZr0. This would be Part One of a two-part video. Did you learn anything new in your study?

2. What do we learn about John the Baptist in Luke 1:13-17, 76-78a? What would you say his mission or focus would be in his ministry? Luke 1:80 tells us John grew up in the deserts ~ do you think Zacharias and Elizabeth left their city in Judah (v. 39) or is there another possible explanation?

3. Read Luke 2:25-38. What do we know about Simeon and Anna? What testimony did each of them give to those in the temple? What did Simeon mean when he spoke to Mary in verses 34-35?

4. In Luke 3:1-18 John had become a man and was preaching and baptizing at the river. How were people responding to his message? How would you describe his preaching style? Would John the Baptist be popular today? Is his message still pertinent today?

5. Consider the visit Jesus made to the synagogue in Nazareth. How was it different than the time He spent in the temple in Jerusalem as a twelve-year-old boy (Luke 2:41-50)? Is it always difficult for a servant of God to minister in his hometown? Explain your thinking? Does this mean that pastors should usually look beyond where they were raised?

Sermon Topic for April 14:

Jesus & His Men ~ Their Calling & Commission Luke 4-6
Jesus called twelve men to work closely with Him for three years. They are listed in Luke 6:13-16. Do some personal investigation this week concerning Jesus' disciples – who were they, what were their occupations, why would Jesus choose each one of them?