

*Deeper Riches: Luke Bible Study*  
**Week 2 - Luke 1:5-80**

**Before You Begin...**

*Whether you have a lot of Bible knowledge, or whether this is your first Bible study ever, it will be helpful to set the stage for our study of Luke with a little background information. This will help you to make sense of the key figures you see in the very first chapter, including a newborn prophet, a speechless priest, and a puppet king...*

Luke's story begins in the land of Israel, in the holy city of Jerusalem. This is the land that God promised to Abraham's descendants, the people of Israel. They once possessed this land for themselves and had their own kings ruling over them, but when Luke's story begins, Israel has become a possession of the powerful Roman Empire, and is ruled over by Roman governors and Roman laws. The Jews are living in their promised land, but they do not possess it. Israel is ruled by Caesar, not by a King of the Jews.

God had promised to give David, the great king of Israel, a Son who would sit on his throne forever (**Psalm 132:12**). As the story begins, Luke tells us that "**Herod**" is "**king of Judea**," but Luke's readers would have known that Herod was not appointed by God; he was a puppet king for Rome. Herod was selfish, greedy, and violent, and was not even Jewish by blood. The people of Luke chapter 1 are eager for the promised descendant of David, who will deliver God's people from their oppressors, and rule the land in righteousness and peace (**Jeremiah 23:5-6**). They are longing for their promised **King**.

Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to the people of Israel through their prophets (**Hebrews 1:1**), but it has been 400 years since the people of Israel have heard from God (**Malachi 4:1-6**). Is God angry with them for some reason? The people are eager for a Word from God. They need a **Prophet** like Moses, who will speak the very words of God (**Deuteronomy 8:18**).

In the absence of a Word from God, the religious leaders (the Pharisees), have set up a legalistic version of Judaism that oppresses the people with the weight of rules and regulations added above and beyond the Law given to Moses. They preach an external obedience, but ignore the sin-sick condition of the heart (**Luke 11:39**). The people are in need of a **Priest** who can bring them real healing, give freedom and forgiveness to those taken captive by sin, and grant them access to God once and for all (**Isaiah 61:1-2**).

It is into this context of oppression and longing that Luke's story begins. The incense of a priest rises up to heaven carrying with it the prayers of this people for a Deliverer. Will God remember his promises to Israel? Will He hear their prayers? Is it finally time for the **Christ**, their longed for **Prophet, Priest, and King**, to come?

Take a moment to pray before we begin:

- Turn your face to God and invite Him to speak to you through His Holy Word. Acknowledge this glorious gift, that through the Scriptures we can actually know the God of the Universe.
- What else is on your heart? Do you have fears or expectations about Bible study? Burdens or distractions that you need to lay down? Things you want to ask God to do in you or for you as you study Luke? Take a moment to talk to God about these things.

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## Luke Study Guide: Week 2 - Luke 1:5-80

### Day 1 - Luke 1:5-25

We will begin our study of each individual passage by making some Observations. How much time this step takes is completely up to you. Here are some options:

**Option A:** If you are new to this or short on time, take 10 minutes to do Question #1 as written, making a few notes right here or in the margin of your copy of Luke. Then go on to Question #2.

**Option B (Deep Dive):** If you prefer to take some extra time to make more detailed observations and study the passage on your own, try using one of the **Observation Guides** at [DeeperRiches.com/Luke](http://DeeperRiches.com/Luke) or write out your observations and thoughts in a separate notebook.

1. **Read Luke 1:5-25.** Underline or mark some things that stand out to you. **Read it again** and notice things like:
  - **who** is in the passage
  - **what** is happening
  - **when** and **where**?
  - **repeated words** or ideas
2. What do you learn about Zechariah and Elizabeth as this story begins (**Luke 1:5-7**)?
3. What do you find significant about when and where the angel appears to Zechariah (**Luke 1:8-12**)?
4. Looking over **Luke 1:13-17**, list all the things about John that mark him as special, or out of the ordinary:
5. We know that John is not the Messiah (Luke 3:15-16), so why do you think God chose to make John so extraordinary, even down to having a miraculous birth?
6. Gabriel announced that this child would be the fulfillment of a 400 year old prophecy from the book of Malachi. Read **Malachi 4:5-6**. How does this prophecy relate to what is happening in Luke 1? Is there anything in this prophecy that you find surprising?
7. How will John prepare the people of Israel for what God is about to do? See **Luke 1:16-17, 1:76-77** and **3:3**. Based on John's task, what do you think it means to be "**a people prepared for the Lord?**"

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8. Read **Luke 1:18-23**. In the New Living Translation, Zechariah's response to this good news is translated, "**How can I be sure this will happen? I'm an old man now and my wife is well along in years.**" What do you think was displeasing to the angel about this response?

9. What was Elizabeth's standing among the people because of her barrenness (**1:7 and 1:24-25**)? How will the birth of John change that (**1:25**)?

Do you think her barrenness was a punishment from God, or something else? (Consider **Luke 1:5-6 and 1:36-37**.)

10. What has this passage shown you about God?

**Pray** a prayer of **praise** in response to what you have seen.

### Day 2 - Luke 1:26-38

1. **Read Luke 1:26-38**. Underline or mark some things that stand out to you. **Read it again** and notice things like:

- **who** is in the passage
- **what** is happening
- **when** and **where**?
- **repeated words** or ideas

2. How does the story of Gabriel's visit to Mary compare with Gabriel's visit to Zechariah (Luke 1:5-25)? What is similar and what is different?

3. What do you think it means that Mary found **favor** with God (**Luke 1:28, 1:30**)? It may help to look up the definition of "*favor*" in an online dictionary.

4. In verse **1:27 and 34**, Luke makes it clear that Mary was a virgin. The prophet Isaiah foresaw this event:

***"Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel, [which means, 'God with us']"*** (Isaiah 7:14, Matthew 1:23)

God could have sent His Son to earth in many different ways. Why do you think He chose to send His Son as a tiny unborn child, in the womb of a virgin girl?

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5. According to **Luke 1:31-35**, who is the father of Mary's baby? (Read carefully.)

How do you make sense of the fact that two different fathers are named for Jesus?

6. Read **Isaiah 9:6-7**. How does this prophecy point to Someone who will be both God and Man?

7. **Luke 1:38** records Mary's response to God's plan: "***I am the Lord's servant. May it be done to me according to your word.***" What might it have cost Mary to surrender to God's plan in this way? What made it worth the cost?

8. In what area of your life is it hardest to say to God, "I am your servant. Let it be to me according to your word?" Why? How does it encourage you to know that "nothing is impossible with God?"

**Pray** a prayer of **surrender** to the Lord now, **yielding** your anxieties and concerns to Him. Declare your **trust** in Him and **praise** Him for what you have seen in this passage.

### Day 3 - Luke 1:39-56

1. **Read Luke 1:39-56**. Underline or mark some things that stand out to you. **Read it again** and notice things like:

- **who** is in the passage
- **what** is happening
- **when** and **where**?
- **repeated words** or ideas

2. Why do you think Mary "hurried" to see Elizabeth? (**Luke 1:39**. See also **1:36**)

3. What kind of reception did Mary receive?

4. John's ministry will be to point people to the Messiah and prepare the way for Him. How does John (Elizabeth's baby) begin this ministry even from the womb? (**Luke 1:39-45**)

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5. In **Luke 1:42-45**, how does Elizabeth feel about being included in this great thing that God is doing? Is there any situation in your own life where you can relate to this?

6. How does Mary's poem reveal the upside down nature of the Kingdom of God? (**Luke 1:51-53**)

7. How is Mary, herself, an example of this upside-down Kingdom in action? (**Luke 1:46-49**)

8. In **Luke 1:54-55**, Mary sings of a promise given to Abraham. Read this promise in **Genesis 22:17-18**.

a. In your own words, what was the promise given to Abraham and his offspring (descendants)?

b. According to **Galatians 3:26-29**, who are the offspring of Abraham?

c. With that in mind, what is being revealed here about the nature of the Kingdom of God?

*\*Deep Dive:* How are the promises to Abraham in Genesis 22:17-18 fulfilled through Christ and His Church?\*

9. How would Mary's poem be an encouragement to Luke's readers, who were mostly Gentile (non-Jewish) Christians?

10. What about Mary's poem is most encouraging or convicting to you personally? Why?

Stop right now and talk to the Lord about these things.

### Day 4 - Luke 1:57-80

1. **Read Luke 1:57-80**. Underline or mark some things that stand out to you. **Read it again** and notice things like:

- **who** is in the passage
- **what** is happening
- **when** and **where**?
- **repeated words** or ideas

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2. How did Elizabeth's friends and family react to the news of the birth of her child (**1:57-58**)? How would this compare with the reaction Mary was likely to receive upon returning home from the hill country visibly pregnant, but not yet married?

3. What do you find remarkable about the events surrounding the naming of Elizabeth's child (**1:59-66**)?

4. News of the miraculous signs surrounding the birth of John spread throughout the region. All who heard it wondered, "**What then will this child become?**" (**1:66**). According to Zechariah's prophecy (**1:76-77**), what *would* John become?

5. What is the first thing Zechariah does when he regains his speech (**1:64**)? \_\_\_\_\_  
Carefully read Zechariah's prophecy in **Luke 1:67-79**. List everything Zechariah praises God for:

6. There are many things coming together here in Zechariah's prophecy, but one of the primary themes is **redemption**.

a. Circle all references to "**redemption**," "**salvation**," and "**rescue**" in **Luke 1:67-79**.

b. Use an online dictionary to define "**redemption**":

c. With this definition in mind, what does it mean that God "**has visited and redeemed his people**" (Luke 1:68)?

7. Twice in this prophecy, Zechariah mentions the "**enemies**" of God's people (**Luke 1:71** and **1:74**). Zechariah's listeners may have thought their "**enemies**" were the Romans who were occupying their land. How does the end of the prophecy (**Luke 1:77-79**) give us greater insight into which **enemies** God's people *really* need to be rescued from?

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8. Under the influence of the Holy Spirit, Zechariah makes a prophecy in **Luke 1:68-79** which contains references to dozens of prophecies and promises stretching across the entire history of the people of Israel. Zechariah quotes promises...

- from the very **first book of the Bible** (Genesis 22:16-18),
- to the time of the **great king David** (Psalm 107:10-15 and Psalm 132:17-18),
- the time of **the divided kingdom** (Isaiah 9:2-7),
- and **the exile from Judah** (Jeremiah 23:5-6),
- to **the final chapter of the final book of the Old Testament** (Malachi 4:2).

Imagine you were in the room hearing this prophecy. What would you make of all these promises from Israel's history coming together in one word from the Lord? What would you think was going on?

*\*Deep Dive: If you are curious, look up some of these cross references and match them to specific verses in Luke 1:68-79. Even more cross references can be found in a study Bible or at [biblegateway.org](http://biblegateway.org)\**

9. Look back over Zechariah's prophecy and your answers to question #5 and pray your own prayer of **praise** to God based on what you have seen in this passage.

### Day 5: Pulling it all together

1. What is one thing you think Luke really wants us to understand from these stories of angel visits and birth announcements? **If you have time, reread all of Luke 1 before answering.**

2. What was the ministry God gave to John the Baptist? Why do you think it was so important for the Messiah King of Israel to have a herald go before him to prepare the way of his coming?

3. What does Luke teach us about the role and work of the Holy Spirit in this chapter? Where was the Holy Spirit mentioned, and what was He doing?

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4. God is described five times in this chapter as showing “**mercy**.” Mercy is defined as, “**compassion or forgiveness shown toward someone whom it is within one's power to punish or harm**.” How does this definition of *mercy* help shape your view of God?

5. John was given the task to prepare Israel for the first coming of Christ (1:17 and 1:76), but the Bible tells us that Jesus “will appear a second time... to save those who are eagerly waiting for him” (**Hebrews 9:28**). Who do you think is supposed to prepare the world for Jesus’ second coming? What does it mean to be prepared for Christ’s return?

6. What is your most important personal take-away from this chapter? (For example, was there a **key verse**, a **special insight**, an **example** to follow, a new **way to pray**, something that **challenged** or **convicted** you, etc...)

In what area of your life does this seem to matter most, and how?

One of the best ways to **apply** the Word of God to your own life is to really **pray** about what you have seen in the passage. Try this acronym: **P.R.A.Y.** - **Praise, Repent, Ask, Yield**. Use the prompts below to guide your prayers.

**PRAISE.** Thank and Praise God for Who He is and what He has done. Be specific.

**REPENT.** Confess your sin to God and turn from it. Agree with God about the things that need to change. Be specific.

**ASK.** What will you ask God to do based on what He has shown you? Be specific.

**YIELD.** What will you surrender to God? How can you trust and obey Him in response to what He has shown you? Be specific.



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### Small Group Discussion Guide:

1. What is the ministry God gave to John the Baptist? Why do you think it was so important for the Messiah King of Israel to have a herald go before him to prepare the way of his coming?
2. What are the two different ways of responding to God's plan represented by Zechariah and Mary? Who do you more closely relate to?
3. What does Luke teach us about the role and work of the Holy Spirit in this chapter? Where was the Holy Spirit mentioned, and what was He doing?
4. In **Luke 1:42-45**, how does Elizabeth feel about being included in this great thing that God is doing? Is there any situation in your own life where you can relate to this?
5. What does Mary's poem reveal about the nature of the Kingdom of God? How did her poem encourage or convict you personally?
6. What did you make of Zechariah's prophecy? What do you think Luke wants us to understand from it? What are some questions you have about it?
7. John was given the task to prepare Israel for the first coming of Christ (1:17 and 1:76), but the Bible tells us that Jesus "will appear a second time... to save those who are eagerly waiting for him" (**Hebrews 9:28**). Who do you think is supposed to prepare the world for Jesus' second coming? What does it mean to be prepared for Christ's return?
8. What is your big take-away from this chapter of Luke?