

A CERTAIN FAITH



Bible Studies on the Gospel of Luke

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Introduction

Luke's gospel is the longest of the four gospel accounts of Jesus' life and ministry. It is the only gospel with a sequel, the book of Acts of the Apostles. In the book of Acts Luke writes, "In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach until he has taken up into heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen." (Acts 1:1-2). This first volume that we are about to launch, into has been described as "the climactic work in the history of salvation through the life, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ"¹.

This gospel was written to strengthen and confirm the faith of early Christians. It has recently been said that we live in a "post truth" culture where objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal beliefs. The gospel of Luke is a gospel for our time because it resists this "post truth" culture to help us take our stand and give us a certain faith.

¹ NIV 2011 Study Bible

Study 1: An Orderly Account

Luke 1:1-4

Getting Started

1. Describe a rumour or a legend that surrounds a famous person?
Why do you think the rumour or legend persists?

Investigate Luke 1:1-4

2. What do we learn about Luke from the following verses?

Colossians 4:12-15

2 Timothy 4:9-11

Philemon 23-24

3. How does Luke describe the account in v. 1? How might that influence our reading of Luke's account? (ref. Luke 24:44-48)

4. Where is Luke's information coming from? (v. 2)

5. What sort of account does Luke want to write? (v. 3)

6. What is Luke's aim in writing this account? (v. 4)

Thinking it through

7. How certain can we be about Jesus? Why?

8. What sort of confidence can we have in Luke's account?

9. What sort of circumstances cause you to doubt Jesus? How can we deal with those doubts?

Prayer Points

Study 2: Getting Ready

Luke 1:5-25

Getting Started

1. Think of an important event that you were unprepared for. What would you have done differently to be prepared?

Investigate Luke 1:5-25

2. List the historical details mentioned in v. 5 that indicate Luke has “carefully investigated everything”?

3. What is this promised child’s mission and how will he achieve it? (vv. 11-17)

4. What led Zechariah to doubt the angel’s promise? (v. 18)

5. How is Elizabeth’s response to these event different from that of her husband’s response? (vv. 23-25)

Thinking it through

6. Which Old Testament events or people remind you of John and Elizabeth's circumstances described in v. 7? (ref. Genesis 17:15-20 and Judges 13:2-24)

7. Why should Zechariah have known better than to doubt the promise made by the angel Gabriel?

8. Read the final verses in the Old Testament in Malachi 4:1-6. How does this help our understanding of Jesus from this Luke 1:5-25?

9. Why are our present circumstances so influential in shaping our faith in God?

10. How does this passage give us confidence in God's faithfulness to his promises?

Prayer Points

Study 3: The Promise Fulfilled

Luke 1:26-38

Getting Started

1. What factors help us to trust or distrust the promises of others?

Investigate Luke 1:26-38

2. What details do we learn about Gabriel's visitation in vv .26-27?

3. Read the following Old Testament passages and find their fulfillment in this passage from Luke's gospel.

2 Samuel 7:8-16

Isaiah 7:13-17

4. How does Mary's response differ from Zechariah's response?

5. How does verse 37 explain the significance of these events?

6. Why are the details in verse 35 important?

7. Given Mary's circumstances, what makes her response in verse 38 so remarkable?

Thinking it through

8. What promises of God do we need to trust as followers of Jesus Christ?

9. How might we demonstrate that trust in God's promises?

10. Mary had a unique part to play in God's plans to establish the Kingdom of God. What part are you required to play in the establishment of God's Kingdom?

Prayer Points

Study 4: A Cause To Celebrate

Luke 1:39-56

Getting Started

1. What do we celebrate as individuals and as a nation? Why are they worth celebrating?

Investigate Luke 1:39-56

2. What is the significance of Elizabeth's baby leaping in her womb?

3. What is the evidence that Elizabeth is "filled with the Holy Spirit"? (v. 42-43)

4. How does Elizabeth identify the baby that Mary carries? (v. 43)

5. Why is Mary regarded as being blessed? (v. 45)

6. How does Mary describe God and why does she bring glory to God? (vv. 46-49)

7. In the second part of Mary's song, what do verses 50-55 tell us about how God treats people?

Thinking it through

8. How do you think Jesus' ministry will fulfil the description of God in verses 50-55?

9. How does Mary's song challenge the things that we celebrate and give thanks to God for?

10. What sort of warnings does Mary's song hold for the life of faith? Why would they be dangerous?

Prayer Points

Study 5: Looking Towards Salvation

Luke 1:57-80

Getting Started

1. What moments of rescue have captured the imagination of our world? Why do they capture our imagination?

Investigate Luke 1:57-80

2. How is the birth of Elizabeth's son understood by her neighbours and relatives?

3. How is Zechariah and Elizabeth's naming of their son a demonstration of their faith in God? (v. 59-63, see also Luke 1:13)

4. After Zechariah is able to speak again, who are his first words about? (v. 67-68)

5. List the different ways salvation is described in Zechariah's song?

6. What is the role of John according to Zechariah? (vv. 76-77)

7. In the following verses, how will this salvation impact us?

vv. 74-75

vv. 78-79

Thinking it through

8. What does Zechariah's song tell us about Zechariah's priorities? How might these priorities shape our life choices?

9. Verse 74 speaks about a freedom to serve without fear in holiness and righteousness. How might this work out in our life now?

10. From verse 78-79 how does Jesus shine light on our darkness and guide our feet on the path of peace?

Prayer Points

Study 6: A Humble Start

Luke 2:1-21

Getting Started

1. What were the big world news events at the time of your birth?
Whose world did your birth change?

Investigate Luke 2:1-21

2. How does Luke anchor the birth of Jesus in history? (vv. 1-4)
3. Why is the town of Bethlehem important? (v. 4, see also Micah 5:2)
4. How would you describe the conditions surrounding the birth of Mary's son? How do they measure up against the prophecy in 2 Samuel 7:1-17?
5. What does the angel say about Jesus? (vv. 9-11)

6. How do the angels, shepherds and Mary respond to this event? (vv. 15-20)

Angels:

Shepherds:

Mary:

Thinking it through

7. What sort of condition is the royal house of David in at this time? How does this compare with the prophecy in Luke 1:32-33 and 1:68-71?

8. Why do you think shepherds rather than those in power hear the good news first?

9. From the world's perspective, how does Jesus' power and glory compare to that of Caesar Augustus?

10. How does Philippians 2:5-11 help our understanding of Jesus' birth? How does the account of Jesus' birth shape our approach to life as followers of Jesus?

Prayer Points

Study 7: My Father's House

Luke 2:22-51

Getting Started

1. What sort of factors do you think contribute to a child's success or failure in our world?

Investigate Luke 2:22-51

2. Why is Jesus taken to the temple? (vv. 22-24)

3. What does the sacrifice described in verse 24 tell us about Jesus' family? (see Lev. 12:6-8)

4. What do we learn about Simeon in verses 25-27?

5. What does Simeon see in Jesus and what has it got to do with us Gentiles? (vv. 29-32)

6. What note of caution does Simeon give to Mary in verses 34-35?

7. Why does the prophet Anna give thanks to God? (v. 38)

8. Why do Jesus' parent travel to Jerusalem? (vv. 41-42)

9. What do we learn about Jesus in this incident at the temple?
(vv. 46-49)

10. How does Luke summarise Jesus' childhood? (vv. 51-52)

Thinking it through

11. How might Simeon and Anna's response to Jesus be a challenge for us?

12. How might the response to Jesus of those in the temple courts shape our response to Jesus?

13. What factors cause us to keep silent about Jesus, or ignore what he has to teach? What can change this?

Prayer Points

Study 8: Prepare The Way

Luke 3:1-19

Getting Started

1. What tactics are used in the media today to persuade people change their views regarding politics or purchases? Why do they work?

Investigate Luke 3:1-19

2. How does Luke anchor the ministry of John the Baptist in history? (vv. 1-2)

3. How is John the Baptist's preaching summarised in verse 3? How might this shape our understanding of the prophecy in Isaiah 40:1-5?

4. Why is John the Baptist critical of those who came to him for baptism? (vv. 7-9)

5. What common factors for the fruit of repentance are described in verses 11-14?

6. What does John the Baptist tell us about Jesus in verses 16-17?

7. Why is John the Baptist locked up in prison? (v. 19)

Thinking it through

8. How might John the Baptist describe the “fruit of repentance” for those in your stage of life?

9. What makes John’s message an uncomfortable one for people then and now?

10. What place does the message of judgement have in our evangelistic efforts today? Why?

11. How might we help one another to take John’s teaching regarding Jesus, more seriously?

Prayer Points

Study 9: Who do you think Jesus is?

Luke 3:20-4:13

Getting Started

1. What do you know about your genealogy? Who do you think you are?

Investigate Luke 3:20-4:13

2. What two events accompany Jesus baptism in verses 21-22?

3. How is Jesus related to Joseph in the genealogy? (vv. 23-37)

4. Look up the following verse to find out what they say about some of the individuals identified in Jesus genealogy.

Name	Passage	Information
Joseph	Mat 1:18-25	
Zerubbabel	Hag 1:13-14	
David	1 Sam 17:34-37	
Boaz	Ruth 4:10-17	
Abraham	Gen 15:2-6	

Name	Passage	Information
Terah	Josh 24:2	
Noah	Gen 6:9-10	
Lamech	Gen 4:23-24	
Seth	Gen 4:25-26	
Adam	Gen 3:17	

5. What three ways does the devil tempt Jesus? (vv. 3, 6, 9)

1.

2.

3.

6. How does Jesus resist the devil's temptation? (vv. 4, 8, 11)

Thinking it through

7. Why do you think Jesus was baptised? (see also Mat 3:13-15, Acts 10:36-38)

8. What does the genealogy tell us about Jesus' relationship with humanity?

10. Who is the source of temptation? What is the goal of temptation?
(James 1:13-15)

11. How should we handle temptation? (Luke 11:4, 1 Cor 10:12-13, Heb 4:15-16)

Prayer Points

Study 10: The Year Of The Lord's Favour

Luke 4:14-30

Getting Started

1. What factors make a person popular in our culture today?

Investigate Luke 4:14-30

2. How is the power of the Spirit evidenced in Jesus ministry?
(vv. 14-15)

3. Who, according to the quote from Isaiah, will benefit from the Messiah's mission? (vv. 18-19)

4. What important claim does Jesus make in verse 21?

5. How do the locals at Nazareth respond to Jesus? (v. 22) What do you think they mean?

6. How does Jesus interpret the response of the Nazareth locals in v. 23?

7. Given that Sidon (v. 26) and Syria (v. 27) are not part of Israel, why do you think Jesus' words enraged the locals in Nazareth? (vv. 24-27)

Thinking it through

8. The people of Nazareth thought Jesus was obligated to them because he was one of them. How does Jesus' quote in verses 18-19 from Isaiah 61 challenge the attitude of the people of Nazareth?

9. How are we tempted to think that God is obligated towards us?

10. How might Jesus' teaching polarise people today?

11. What does Jesus' example mean for those who would be his disciples?

Prayer Points