

Devotionals Nov 8 – Dec 7, 2021: The Gospel of Luke (1): The Promise of a Savior Fulfilled

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Although it is likely early in November when you are reading this, signs that Christmas is on its way are already all around you. Retail stores that you enter are probably decked out in Christmas decor and holiday sale signs. Advertisements everywhere encourage you to hurry up and start your Christmas shopping before it is too late. Some radio stations have even already started playing Christmas music! Most people look forward to the arrival of the holiday season. Children hear the story of Santa Claus and eagerly await his supposed arrival on Christmas Eve to bring them gifts, while their parents anticipate time off from work to relax and get together with family and friends.

Jewish children in the Old Testament also heard stories about the arrival of a very special visitor. For thousands of years, God's people had been passing on stories from generation to generation about the promised Messiah who would come to deliver them. They were anticipating a Savior who would be the fulfillment of all God's promises. There had been many signs that pointed to this Savior and prophets who foretold what his coming would be like. But they still did not know exactly when or how he would come. At times they were given deliverance from their enemies by military leaders such as the judges, but it was only temporary. There were a few godly kings who pictured the King who was coming, but each of their reigns eventually came to an end. None of these men were the true Messiah, the One who could provide lasting deliverance and salvation to his people and whose kingdom would have no end.

The people of Israel had waited through many difficult seasons of captivity, foreign rule, and persecution. Generations of saints had come and gone without ever seeing the fulfillment of God's promises. Prior to the beginning of Luke's gospel account, there had been four hundred years of silence without any direct revelation from God. Perhaps many Jews were beginning to doubt whether the Messiah would ever actually come. Maybe they were wondering if God had forgotten about them. But even when he was silent, God was not sitting idle. He was carefully orchestrating the events of the world to bring about his perfect plan for the salvation of his people. Our heavenly Father never forgets his promises, but he fulfills them according to his own timeline and in his own way. And usually, it is not at the time or in the way that we would prefer! Are you in a season where you are waiting on God for something? If you are tempted to be impatient or anxious, remember to pray for patience to trust in his perfect plan just as the faithful saints of old, such as Simeon and Anna, did.

Then finally, after all those years of silence, an angel appears—first to Zacharias, and then to Mary. Mary, as a direct descendant of David, undoubtedly heard the stories about the promised Messiah from childhood. Now the angel Gabriel appears to tell her that *she* would be the one to bear him into this world. Mary's believing response to hearing that her Savior was finally coming was to praise and worship the Lord. Rather than exalt herself as the one who had been chosen to be the mother of the Son of God, she magnified the Lord and humbly expressed awe and gratitude for his goodness and mercy to his people in her beautiful song of faith. Do you also magnify God, not just at Christmas or on Sundays, but every day of the year? Or do you minimize him in your daily life to make room for other things? Daily Bible study and prayer will keep God's goodness and mercy in the front of your mind so that you are better able to magnify him in all that you do.

Following the birth of his own son, Zacharias' first words after being able to speak again were also a song of praise. Being filled with the Holy Spirit, he gave a beautiful prophecy that testifies of God's faithfulness, both to him and to the entire nation of Israel. He was eager to tell everyone about the salvation and deliverance that Jesus would bring, as well as how his son John would prepare the way for Jesus to begin his ministry. The shepherds who visited Jesus were also eager to tell everyone about what

they had seen and heard. We read in Luke 2:17 that they “made known abroad” what they had learned about this special child. After seeing baby Jesus at the temple, we read that Anna the prophetess “spoke of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem” (Luke 2:38). Are you eager to tell everyone around you about your Savior? Do you testify with your words and actions about God and what he has done for you? As you read this month through the history of Jesus’ early life and his preparation for ministry, think of ways that you can tell others about the “good tidings of great joy” (Luke 2:10) that you are reading in the gospel according to Luke.

Reading Plan

Date	Read	Study Question	Sing/Pray
Nov 8	Luke 1:1–4	What was Luke’s purpose for writing this gospel account? How does this affect the way that you read it?	Psalter #28
Nov 9	Luke 1:5–12	Do you think that some of God’s people thought he had forgotten about them during the four hundred years of silence leading up to Gabriel’s appearance to Zacharias? Have you ever felt this way?	Psalter #22
Nov 10	Luke 1:13–17; Malachi 4:5–6	What would be so special about the child that Zacharias and Elisabeth would have? How would he fulfill the prophecy that Malachi spoke four hundred years earlier?	Psalter #7
Nov 11	Luke 1:18–25	Why was Zacharias unable to speak after his response to the angel Gabriel’s appearance? Have you ever struggled to believe one of God’s promises to you?	Psalter #6
Nov 12	Luke 1:26–33	What does Gabriel tell Mary about the son that she will have? Why was it so important for him to be the Son of God?	Psalter #242
Nov 13	Luke 1:34–38	How does Mary’s response to Gabriel’s message show her faith and trust in God? Do you truly believe the words of verse 37?	Psalter #243
Nov 14	2 Samuel 7:12–29	What is the significance of the fact that Jesus is not only the Son of God, but the Son of David?	Psalter #241
Nov 15	Luke 1:39–45	We see evidence here of the Holy Spirit working in Elisabeth and even John while he was still in her womb. What does this teach us about the salvation of unborn children?	Psalter #85
Nov 16	Luke 1:46–56	Mary’s song of praise is often called “the Magnificat” because of how her words magnify the greatness of the Lord. What wonderful characteristics of God does she emphasize?	The Song of Mary
Nov 17	1 Samuel 2:1–10	What similarities do you see between Hannah’s prayer of thanksgiving and the song of Mary? What does this tell you?	Psalter #283
Nov 18	Luke 1:57–66	Why was Zacharias able to speak again? How was this action evidence of his renewed faith?	Psalter #277
Nov 19	Luke 1:67–75	In verse 69 Zacharias says that Jesus will be a “horn of salvation.” What does this tell us about what the coming Messiah will do for his people?	The Song of Zacharias

Nov 20	Luke 1:76–77; Isaiah 40:3–8	How would John the Baptist prepare the people for the coming of Jesus? How are pastors today called to prepare for Jesus' second coming?	Psalter #261
Nov 21	Luke 1:78–80	What does the imagery in these verses reveal about the Savior who was coming? How does this give you hope as a believer today?	Psalter #264
Nov 22	Luke 2:1–5; Micah 5:1–3	Here we see God using a wicked government leader to fulfill a promise that he had made to his people. What comfort does this give to you as a child of God?	Psalter #30
Nov 23	Luke 2:6–7; Isaiah 53:1–3	How were the humble circumstances of Jesus' birth symbolic of what his earthly ministry would be like?	Psalter #46
Nov 24	Luke 2:8–12	Joy is a common theme that we will see in the gospel of Luke. Do you have great joy when you hear the good news of the gospel? Why or why not?	Psalter #406
Nov 25	Luke 2:13–14	The Roman Empire was experiencing a time of great peace and prosperity that is known as the <i>Pax Romana</i> . How is the peace that the angels speak of here different from earthly peace?	Psalter #407
Nov 26	Luke 2:15–20	Notice the differences between the shepherds' response to Jesus' birth and Mary's response. What can you learn from both responses?	Psalter #141
Nov 27	Luke 2:21–24	Research the meaning of the name "Jesus." What does our Savior's earthly name reveal to us about him?	Psalter #77
Nov 28	Luke 2:25–32	What truths about salvation do we learn from Simeon's words in verses 31 & 32?	The Song of Simeon
Nov 29	Luke 2:33–35	What does Simeon prophesy about both Jesus and Mary in these verses? How is this fulfilled later in Jesus' life?	Psalter #164
Nov 30	Luke 2:36–38	How does Anna's life exemplify what it means to be a "living sacrifice" (see Rom. 12:1)? What can you learn from her?	Psalter #163
Dec 1	Luke 2:39–40	Compare this passage to Judges 13:24, 1 Samuel 2:26, Luke 1:80. What does this teach us about Jesus' childhood?	Psalter #259
Dec 2	Luke 2:41–52	Here we see Jesus submitting to his earthly parents even though they did not fully understand him and his work. What can you learn from this?	Psalter #255
Dec 3	Luke 3:1–9	John prepared the way for Jesus by preaching that the people had to repent. Why is being reminded of our sin good news for God's people?	Psalter #141
Dec 4	Luke 3:10–20	Following their repentance and baptism, John gives the people specific ways that they must change their life. What do all his examples have in common? What does this teach you?	Psalter #268
Dec 5	Luke 3:21–22	How do you see all three persons of the Trinity present in the baptism of Jesus? Why did this event mark the beginning of Jesus' earthly ministry?	Psalter #3
Dec 6	Luke 3:23–38	Who are some of the notable figures in Jesus' ancestry? What does reading the genealogy of Jesus Christ teach us about him?	Psalter #408

Dec 7	Luke 4:1–13	Notice how Christ used the word of God to ward off the attacks of Satan. What Scriptures can you use to fight against your own personal temptations?	Psalter #162
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