

Wheelersburg Baptist Church 12/8/91 PM
Luke 1:5-80 "Getting Ready for the Baby"

Intro: (of message) It's an exciting time in a home that's expecting a baby! And there's lots to do. Get the nursery ready. Purchase the announcements.

Q: What did God do to prepare the world for the arrival of His Son?
A: Luke tells us in Luke 1:5-80. We'll see tonight.

This morning we began a 3 week series "Whatever Happened to the Christ of Christmas?" Our text is Luke 1-2.

Goal of our Study in Luke 1-2:

I want you to know right up front what Luke is going to do for us. Luke wants to show us something. Luke is going to help us to get to know the Christ of Christmas in such a way that we'll gladly place our complete confidence and trust in Him.

Illust:

Present Series: "Whatever Happened to the Christ of Christmas?" Luke 1-2

December 8 (AM) "Is Christmas More Than a Sentimental Story?" 1:1-4

December 8 (PM) "Getting Ready for the Baby" Luke 1:5-80

December 15 "The Humble Birth of the Sovereign King" 2:1-7

December 22 "The Correct Response to the Christ of Christmas" 2:15-20

Review: This morning Luke gave us. . .

- I. The Investigation (1-2)
 - A. Involved Human Resources
 - B. Involved Divine Inspiration
- II. The Instruction (3)
 - A. It is Thorough.
 - B. It is Accurate.
 - C. It is Orderly.
- III. The Intention (4)

Q: What did God do to prepare the world for the arrival of His Son?
A: Luke tells us in Luke 1:5-80.

Proposition: Tonight let's notice 4 things God did to prepare the world for the arrival of His Son, as recorded by Luke in Luke 1:5-80.

- I. God sent an angel to Zacharias (5-25).
- II. God sent an angel to Mary (26-38).
- III. God sent two pronouncements (39-79).
 - A. Through Elizabeth (39-45)
 - B. Through Zechariah (67-80)
- IV. God sent John the Baptist (80).

Look at v 5. It is packed with significance.

V 5 "There was in the days of Herod. . ."

V 5 tells us 2 important things about the background of our Lord's entrance into the world.

1. The Political Climate--"in the days of Herod"

Herod was a crook, a tyrant, a scoundrel. He had 9 wives, one of whom he had executed for no apparent reason. The days of Herod were dark, sinister days.

Herod was an Idumean. Genesis 27:41 says, "And Essau hated Jacob." We need not say more. Herod was an Idumean. He did not belong to Jacob. He belonged to Essau. Yet he ruled over Judea and the sons of Jacob. He was king.

His title was conferred upon him by the Roman senate, through the influence of Antonius and Octavius. He was a puppet of Rome. His authority was delegated. He was a self-seeking despot that cooperated with Rome and whoever else he could to promote his own cause. So the Jews hated him. He had erected vast, gorgeous temples in the land for the worship of idols.

2. The Religious Climate--"a certain priest. . ."

It was a dark day for the nation of Israel. She had not heard a prophetic word since the days of Malachi, 400 years earlier. The 400 silent years.

Judaism had turned into an oppressive devotion to tradition. The religious elite burdened the common people with extreme demands.

In the midst of this political and religious climate, God prepared the world for the arrival of His anointed Son.

I. God sent an angel to Zacharias (5-25).

Herod, 16 years earlier, authorized the refurbishment of the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem. The project would take more than 50 years to complete. Jewish life revolved around the religious system in the temple. This was certainly the case for one Jew named Zacharias (5).

Q: Who was Zacharias?

His name means "Yahweh has remembered." His wife Elizabeth's name meant "God is my oath." They were both from Aaron's line (5). They were a righteous couple (6). And they were a childless couple (7).

Zech was a priest (5). Look at vv 8-9 to see him performing his priestly duty.

There were 24 groups of priests divided by families (I Chron 23-24). Each of these 24 divisions served in the Temple for one week, twice a year, as well as at the major festivals. V 9 says spec that the lot fell for Zach to "burn incense." That is key. A priest could offer incense at the daily sacrifice only once in his life, since there were so many priests. This was the biggest moment in Zach's career as a priest.

But that day took on an even greater significance when Zach received a visitor.

He was in the Holy Place. The people were praying outside (10). Then. . .

V 11 "And there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord. . ."

Luke mentions angels 23 times in his gospel. Rev 5:11 indicates that there are more angels than can be numbered. Only 2 are named in the Bible. Michael (Jd 9). And this angel. What was his name? See v 19--Gabriel.

What did Zach think when he saw the angel next to the altar?
V 12--He was petrified! He feared for his life.

But the angel had an announcement for Zach. What?
Vv 13-17 "Fear not. . ."

Key Questions:

Q: What was Zach to name the child? V 13 John

Q: What was significant about John? His name means "the grace of God"

Key: Gabriel quoted the closing words of the OT in v 17 (Mal 4:6).

This would be no ordinary child! This man would be the One sent from God to break 400 years of prophetic silence! But he was more than a prophet. He was the fulfillment of the prophets. The OT prophets said that the Messiah would come SOME day. John was sent to announce, "The time is NOW!"

Purpose: V 17 "to make ready a people prepared for the Lord"

Q: How did Zach respond to the angel? V 18 Doubt/Unbelief

Q: How did the angel respond to Zach's unbelief? Vv 19-20

"I stand in the presence of God"

"thou shalt be dumb because thou believest not"

By the time Zach returned to the Temple court, the people new something unusual had transpired. Zach had been gone too long. And his tongue was frozen (22). In fact, he would not speak for the next 9 months.

Illust:

Tran: That's the first incident Luke records that God did to prepare the world for His Son. God sent an angel to Zach. Notice the second. . .

II. God sent an angel to Mary (26-38).

Note: The first incident Luke records occurred in Jerusalem. Six months later the same angel appeared, this time to a young woman. Where?

Vv 26-27 "To a virgin. . ."

What's significant about Nazareth? Nazareth was a hotbed of corruption. The town, located 70 miles NE of Jerusalem, was located on a highway between Tyre and Sidon and Jerusalem. Along that highway passed Roman soldiers, Greek merchants, and pagan travelers. Nathaniel said of Nazareth, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?"

No one in their wildest dreams anticipated that an angel would bring the greatest news of all ages to obscure Nazareth!

You remember this part of the story. Gabriel announced that Mary found favor with God, and that she would conceive a special child.

--His name would be "Jesus" (31) = Joshua

--He would be great, in fact, the Son of the Highest (32)
--He would be the King of Kings, forever (32-33)

How did Mary respond in v 34? "How?"

Discuss: What's the difference between the way Mary and Zach responded to the angel? Mary didn't question WHAT would happen, as Zach did. Her question was HOW. She had good reason to wonder. Why?

V 34 "How can this be since I know not a man?"

Mary was betrothed to Joseph. Engaged acc to Jewish terms. She was a young Jewish girl, probably in her teens. Her question is simple, "How could a virgin give birth to a child?"

Gabriel announced that it would be a miracle. See v 35

"overshadow" = envelop in darkness

Illust: Cloud that "covered" the tabernacle when it was filled by the glory of God (Ex 40:35)

Listen. Every child conceived and brought into this world is tainted by sin, original sin. Parents transmit the deadly disease of sin to their offspring. Every son of Adam is totally depraved.

But not Jesus. How do we know? Listen to the angel. . .

V 35 "that HOLY thing. . . the Son of God."

The angel's message to Mary was clear. The child she would carry would be the God-man. 100% man, and 100% God.

Why was that essential?

Luke's purpose: Lk 19:10 "to seek and save the lost."

Illust:

Q: How did Mary respond? V 38 ". . . acc to thy word."

Tran: Let's notice the 3rd thing God did to prepare the world for His Son.

III. God sent two pronouncements (39-79).

Luke was a Gentile. His gospel has a Greek flavor to it. The Greeks were fond of beautiful poetry and art. Luke records for us marvelous poetic speeches in Luke 1, not found in Matt, Mk, or John.

These speeches were not of human origin however. Notice what Luke says first of Elizabeth, then of Zacharias.

V 41 "And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit"

V 67 "And Zach was filled with the Holy Spirit"

And both times God used their voices to reveal truth He wanted the world to know. First. . .

A. Through Elizabeth (39-45)

Key: Nowhere in Scripture is Mary called "the Mother of God."
If you'll listen carefully you'll see that Elizabeth's wording is precise.

Vv 42-45 "And she spoke out with a loud voice"
V 43 "the mother of my Lord"

Note: Mary responded with a poetic song in vv 46-56. It's commonly known as "The Magnificat" because the Latin version of v 46 begins with the word "magnificat." Mary's desire was to magnify the Lord!

Problem: When it comes to Mary, people tend to go to one of 2 extremes. They either magnify her so much that Jesus takes second place, or they ignore her and fail to give her the esteem she deserves.

Mary was a great woman of God. Think of the price she paid for the honor of carrying the Christ-child. Public disgrace. No wonder she left for the hill country (39) and stayed with Elizabeth for 3 months (56).

Next event--vv 57-66

1. John born (57)
2. Zach speaks (64)
3. The people marvel (65-66)

Tran: Then God sent a second pronouncement. . .

B. Through Zechariah (67-80)

Vv 67ff "Blessed be God. . ."

Key: What would John do?

V 76 "go before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways"

Tran: You can just feel the anticipation building as we come to the end of Luke 1. The stage is set. God is preparing the world for the arrival of His Son. He sent the angel to Zach, to Mary. Then He sent divine proclamations through Eliz and Zach. There's one more thing we need to know before the Christ-child comes.

IV. God sent John the Baptist (80).

V 80 "And the child grew. . . till the day of his showing to Israel"

Conclusion:

Gal 4:4 "But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law. . ." Why?

Gal 4:5 "to redeem them that were under the law"

God took great care to prepare the world for the arrival of His Son.

Q: What about your heart this evening? Do you welcome the Christ-child as the Savior and Lord of your life?

Illust: