

The Ultimate Preview  
Luke 1:5-80

Intro: Please open your Bibles to Luke 1, pg. 855. Last week we covered 4 verses. This week, we're covering 76. Strap on your seatbelts. This should be fun!

I went to the movies about a month ago with the guys in my Community Group. . . . Batman- Dark Knight...  
Previews...

\*Just in case the movie was not any good, at least check at the previews, hopefully they will be good or at least good enough to make you think they are going to be good.

**The Point: Receive Jesus as the promised Messiah who will reign forever.**

We are going to see Jesus is the main character of this chapter...

**I. The Son of God is unique in how he came.**

That is to say, there is not another person in the history who arrived in the same way Jesus arrived. He is the unique, one-of-a-kind Son of God. Three realities grab us as we soak up this chapter. First...

***He fulfilled God's promises through the prophets.***

- Have you ever longed for something to the point where it changed your whole disposition? I mean, you just want something so bad, and you keep waiting and waiting and longing and hoping, aching for that one breakthrough that you just know is on the horizon.
- For many people in Israel, they continued to long for God's promises to be fulfilled. They set their hopes on his coming deliverance that would come through the promised Messiah.
- This was the case for many of the people we will see in Luke 1&2. Zechariah & Elizabeth, Mary & Joseph, Simeon & Anna.
- You see, God, from the very beginning of his covenant with Abraham in Genesis 12, on through the kings and the prophets, continually told Israel that they would experience his salvation through his chosen one.
- And Luke 1, in many, many ways is going to teach us that the words of Joshua 21:45: "Not one word of all the good promises that the Lord had made to the house of Israel had failed; all came to pass." (Joshua 21:45)
- And we will see over and over in this chapter where Mary and Zechariah say God has remembered his mercy (54, 72), that God keeps his covenant with Abraham (55, 73), that God does exactly what he said he would do when he spoke by the prophets of old (70). Undergirding the coming of Christ is the faithfulness of God to keep his covenant promises.
- And this could not be greater news than this for Israel. God even sent a special herald to announce the news whose name was John. God sent John as a forerunner to prepare the way for his Son.

***He had a forerunner to prepare his way.***

- We discover this in **Verses 5-25**.
- The pivotal verses here that teach us of John the Baptist's importance are 13-18.
- Zechariah and Elizabeth will have a son who there will be great rejoicing over his birth and who will be great before the Lord. Why was he so great? The reason for his greatness is found in his "character and mission." (Bock, 84). Remember, it says he will be great "before the Lord." John was great because he had a great assignment from God and served God with all of his heart.
  - App: Here's a practical encouragement: I know there are many ways the world defines greatness. Attention, accolades, success... But it would be wise for us to let God to set our definition of greatness. True greatness comes from God and how we live our lives before him.
- It says in v. 15 that he will be filled with the Holy spirit (no wine). The restriction on wine is not a condemnation of all wine, but tells us that John, much like the priests of the OT who would refrain from any drink while on their duty, had a special assignment from God. Rather than being filled with wine, John would be full of the Holy Spirit. God's presence and favor would rest on him and empower him for the task ahead.. and what was that task?

- **Verses 16 & 17.** Turn many to the Lord their God. Zechariah. Here's what your son's job description will be: Prepare people for Christ.
- This is the first announcement of the "Gospel." In verse 19, we see the Greek word *euangelion* appear for the first time. It is translated "good news" or "gospel" in the NT.
- We see here in this passage that the coming of John brought great joy to the people because it signified that God's salvation was near. If this was the response to his birth, what would be the [response] to an even greater birth? We're about to find out... **Verses 26-38.**

### ***He was born of a virgin.***

- How would this happen? Miraculous Conception. This baby would be born to a virgin.
- Mary was not that old, but old enough to understand how babies are conceived, and she says to the angel in **Verse 34.**
- A number of years ago Larry King was asked who he would most like to have interviewed across history. One of those he named was Jesus Christ. When questioned as to what he would have asked Him, King said, "I would like to ask Him if He was indeed virgin born, because the answer to that question would define history"
- The Apostles' Creed: "I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth. And in Jesus Christ, his only son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary..."
- The virgin birth is so important because it explains how Jesus could have been born with a human nature not tainted with original sin. It also paves the way for our understanding of the unique nature of Jesus as the God-Man, fully human & fully divine.
- Consider the importance of the virgin birth as stated by theologian Donald Macleod: "**The virgin birth is posted on guard at the door of the mystery of Christmas; and none of us must think of hurrying past it. It stands on the threshold of the New Testament, blatantly supernatural, defying our rationalism, informing us that all that follows belongs to the same order as itself and that if we find it offensive there is no point in proceeding further.**"
- In other words, here's a little heads up. If the virgin birth is beyond the realm of possibility for you, then just know that the sinless life of Jesus, the substitutionary sacrifice of Jesus, the resurrection of Jesus, the ascension of Jesus, and the current reign of Jesus over all things will also be pretty difficult to embrace.
- How do you defend the virgin birth? Pretty simply. Verse 37. "For nothing is impossible with God." If you are a theist, or even open to the idea of God, is this a big leap? There is a God who created the world and rules the world he made. If he created all of this, is there anything he could not do?"
- But beyond all of the questions and doubts of the skeptical and perhaps of our own minds, we must remember that the virgin birth tells us that Jesus, the Son of God, is a miraculous gift to humanity, and this gift is to be received by all. But why would anyone want to receive this gift? That brings us to point #2.

Trans: The Son of God is unique in how he came. He is also...

## **II. The Son of God is unique in his person and work.**

- The claims of Chapter one are quite staggering. I'm asking God to give us fresh eyes to see the gigantic implications of the claims contained here.
- Verses 32-33 provide some of the most potent Christology in the NT. These two verses are our medimemo this week. Last week we threw a 10 mph slow pitch softball last week (Luke 19:10). This week, 97mph heat, on the corners. Check them out. **Verses 32-33.**
- Speaking of these verses, Michael Wilcock says: "**The stupendous claims which the angel makes for this unborn baby would have staggered Jewish readers of the Gospel. . . . For the Son of Mary is a colossal figure. He will be the greatest ruler that not only Israel (1:32-33a), but the world (1:33b), has ever seen.**"
- Let's dissect these verses that display the person and work of Christ.

### ***His Person***

#### **Great.**

- Whereas John the Baptist was "great *before the Lord*," Jesus possesses unqualified greatness! Greatness is simply part of who he is. It is intrinsic to his nature. He is great, Son of the Most High, and will . . .

#### **Reign forever on the Throne of David**

- The background is 2 Samuel 7 where God promises that one of his descendents would sit on his throne forever. The prophets anticipated his coming as well. Isaiah 9:6-7 says: "**For to us a child is born, to us a**

**son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this. (Isaiah 9:6-7)**

- It's election year... President Obama is running for a second term. His leadership will extend a maximum of eight years. That's all our leader can give us, eight years. What about Louis the 14<sup>th</sup>? He reigned in France for 72 years and 110 days from 1643 to 1715. What about Jesus? Forever.
- His kingdom is often paradoxical. Some have referred to it as the "upside kingdom."
- Mary's song speaks of one of these in her song: the humble are exalted, and the proud are brought low (48-53).
- So Luke, before he even recounts his birth, tells us that he is the Son of God (32, 35); the Davidic Messiah (32-33), a King who will reign forever (33), and "the Holy One" (35).
- And let's not miss what Elizabeth calls the unborn Christ when Mary visited her. **v. 43**, her "Lord." He is God. That's who he is; what about what he brings?

#### *His Work*

- We have already seen that he will reign forever. He is ushering in a kingdom that is both already inaugurated but not yet totally fulfilled. All of his work amount to focus of Luke's gospel: the salvation Jesus came to bring. Luke 1 sets the table in so many ways for the remainder of the gospel, and we learn several key truths about salvation.
- Salvation belongs to God. It is his work. "God my Savior" (47) "God has visited, redeemed, raised up a horn of salvation" (68)
- Salvation includes forgiveness through mercy (76-78a)
  - There concept of salvation needed to be corrected. Most Jews were anticipating God's deliverer Messiah to be one that would bring national peace, defeat the enemies of Israel on every side...
  - But God had an even greater plan. While not brushing aside the need for physical deliverance and rest, he went further to meet bring spiritual deliverance and rest...
  - He does this by extending forgiveness through his great and unspeakable mercy.
  - App: Do you find it difficult to forgive? Of course we do... oftentimes when the offense is so small...
- Salvation includes guidance to the place of peace... (v. 78b-79)
  - We need guidance.. (how many of you need guidance, discernment, direction...)?
  - God provides guidance through lighting our path...
  - This light takes us to the place of peace.
  - Someone just asked for prayer for peace, freedom from anxiety (& God is all about that, you know what I'm saying – Phil 4:6, Do not be anxious about anything, but .... And the PEACE OF GOD...)
  - It is great that God can break through our stress and provide this type of peace, but often we reduce the peace of God to the absence of inner turmoil and strife.
  - Jewish concept of Peace, *shalom*, is so much more robust and nuanced than this... Human Flourishing...
  - Total renewal...Redemption, Resurrection, Renewal and Total Restoration.
- Jesus is unique in how he came. He is unique in his person and his work. And finally...

### **III. The Son of God is unique in the response he deserves.**

#### ***Salvation produces praise. (Magnificat & Zechariah's prophesy)***

- I cannot think of another place in the NT where you have two hymns of this nature stacked back to back.
- We have already looked at much of the content concerning the kingdom that Christ has initiated in our midst, but let's not miss the general tone of Mary & Zechariah's response to God. First, let's look at Mary's song of praise, but before we do, I want to highlight her godly response to the plan of God...
- **Verse 38:** "Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word." Beautiful example. . .
- We should esteem the work of God in Mary's life. We should emulate her response, but let me be clear: we should never venerate Mary. In more simply terms, we should never worship her, we are never told to pray to her or pray through her as if she was our intercessor. We pray to God in Jesus name, and Jesus and the Holy Spirit intercede for us.

- I'm not here to hate this morning. I'm here to teach and be faithful to this Word. There is never an indication that any other person besides Jesus is without sin or was conceived without sin.
- I love my Catholic friends. My favorite football team is the Notre Dame Fighting Irish. (Big Win over Michigan St. last night, thank you very much). I'm pretty sure Touchdown Jesus was inspired by the Holy Spirit (that was a joke...) but we would have a number of theological differences with them beyond their view of Mary as worthy of praise, being prayed to, and holding that she was free from original sin and lived a sinless life. We also have major differences on 1) The Mass, 2) The priesthood, 3) The pope, 4) The sacraments, 5) Grace, and 6) Purgatory,
- All that said, in response to Catholicism, sometimes Protestants can swing the pendulum too far in the other direction and basically ignore Mary.
- Let's not be guilty of worshipping her, nor ignoring her. Let's thank God for her and emulate her godliness, and that godliness is seen in her hymn known as the Magnificat that we see in **verses 46-55**.

#### Mary's *Magnificat*:

- She begins her song with the beautiful words: "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior."
- Here is a great pattern for a praise-filled life. Magnification and Rejoicing.
- In magnifying the Lord we are saying, "He is great. He is worthy of our praise." And this praise comes from deep within her. It is intensely personal. *My soul* magnifies the Lord."
- The same is true when she says "my spirit rejoices." Soul and spirit are parallel terms. This rejoicing and delight over the work of God is intensely personal, coming from within. When you see God at work, do you rejoice? Does it make you glad? Does it lift you up from within, producing excitement and delight. God's work is intrinsically designed to produce joy in his people. And notice it is rejoicing "in God my Savior."
- When we see God doing a great work in the life of a friend, we should rejoice and magnify the Lord.
- When we see God doing a great work in the life of our church (and he is, just look around), we should praise God and rejoice in him because this is his and the glory belongs to him.
- It is great when God is working in our individual lives and in our church, but the thrust of this passage is how God has worked decisively to bring about our salvation in the person and work of his Son, Jesus Christ.
- That is what Mary is responding to, and the same is true for Zechariah:

#### Zechariah's *Benedictus*

- Benedictus is the first word that we see in v. 68, "Blessed," translated from Latin.
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- The reality of the Spirit screams that God is active, that God is moving in power to accomplish his will in the world.
  - John the Baptist will be filled with the Holy Spirit (15)
  - Jesus will be conceived by the power of the Spirit (35)
  - Elizabeth greeted Mary being inspired by the Spirit (41ff)
  - Zechariah celebrates the birth of John the Baptist with a prophecy in the Spirit (67)
  - The Spirit is central in Luke, Central in Acts, and should be central in our lives...
    - Expound...
- Trans: Salvation produces praise, and ...

#### **Salvation leads to action:**

- **Verse 74-75.** "that we, ... might serve him without fear, in holiness, and righteousness before him all our days."
- Simply put, Christianity will flip your life upside down.

#### How will respond to this Preview?

- Here's the deal with every preview: They are created to elicit a positive response. What is that response? I want to see more!
- Some of you are saying, "I want to see more." Some of you are saying, "I've seen enough. I'm in." But here's the best response: "I've seen enough. I'm in, but I've gotta see more!"
- He is the reigning king on a forever throne. Does he reign in you?
- He is the Son of the Most High God, sent to save us out of all of our sin and brokenness. Has he saved you?
- Repent. Believe. Follow.