

# (Through the Bible) Luke 1

by Chuck Smith

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*Chuck Smith's sermon on Luke 1 explores the significance of John the Baptist's birth and the fulfillment of God's promises through the lens of faith and prayer.*

**Duration:** 1:15:12

**Scripture:** Luke 1:52-56, Luke 1:68, Luke 1:70, Luke 1:78-79

**Topics:** "Luke"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the purpose of Jesus' coming, which is to seek and save the lost. The concept of redemption is highlighted, with the speaker noting that God has raised up the power of salvation through the house of David. The power of the gospel is emphasized as the means of salvation for those who believe. The speaker also references the prophecies concerning the Savior, which have been present since the beginning of humanity, particularly the promise to Abraham that through his seed, all nations would be blessed. The sermon concludes with a reminder of God's faithfulness to deliver his people and the need for humility and trust in his plans.

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## Transcript

Luke, the author of this third gospel, was called by Paul the Apostle, the beloved physician. There is some speculation that his patron was a man by the name of Theophilus. In those days, physicians were often slaves.

And there are some who theorize that Luke was Theophilus' personal physician and servant. Whether or not that be so is only a matter of speculation and thus worthless to delve into. Luke was a Greek and he is the only Gentile to have the privilege of placing Scripture in that holy canon of Scripture, which we recognize as inspired of God.

And there are two New Testament books that are ascribed to Luke. Of course, the Gospel according to Luke and then the Acts of the Apostles, which he begins, again addressing himself to Theophilus, saying, The former treatise have I made unto thee, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and to teach. There are some who say that the word Theophilus is not actually a person, or Theophilus is not actually a person at all, but just the word in Greek, Theophileo is lover of God.

And so that Luke is actually addressing his letter to the lovers of God. However, the people were usually named after hopes or aspirations or whatever of their parents. And there is no real reason to believe that

Theophilus was not an actual person.

In fact, being addressed as the most excellent Theophilus indicates that he was actually a ruler in the Roman Empire, as that is a title that is given to men who had a ruling position within the Roman Empire. Luke introduces the Gospel to Theophilus in the first four verses of chapter one. For as much as many have taken in hand to set forth in an orderly fashion, those things which are most assuredly believed among us, even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word, it seemed good to me also, having had a complete understanding of all of these things from the very first, to write unto thee an orderly progression, most excellent Theophilus, that you may know the certainty of those things wherein you have been instructed.

So Luke here declares that he has heard the message from those persons who were actually the eyewitnesses to these things. Now, Luke, no doubt, interviewed personally Mary in order that he might get a complete understanding concerning the circumstances that were surrounding the birth of Jesus. Luke, being a doctor, would be interested in various aspects that bordered on the medical profession.

And it is obvious that he received the information of chapters one and two directly from Mary. And so from his interview with Mary and his questioning of Mary, he got the information for chapters one and two. And the information in these two chapters is not found in detail like this in the other Gospels.

He had heard Peter and John and those who had been with Jesus, those who were eyewitnesses, he heard their stories as they told of their relationship with Jesus and of the work and the ministry that Jesus performed. And then he no doubt questioned them more thoroughly to get a more complete understanding. And having what he feels to be a complete understanding of the story, he then proceeds to write to this man Theophilus in order that he might realize the certainty of those things that he had heard.

Now, Luke begins then the actual story of the Gospel of Jesus by dealing with the birth, first of all, of John the Baptist, who was to be the forerunner of Jesus Christ. And so there was in the days of Herod, the king of Judea, a certain priest named Zacharias of the course of Abiah and his wife was of the daughters of Aaron and her name was Elizabeth. So immediately we're introduced to the persons that will be involved in the first part of his narrative here.

Zacharias of the tribe of Levi, making him then one of the priests. He was of the family of Abira or Abiram. His wife was also of the tribe of Levi.

She was a descendant from the family of Aaron. Now, at this particular time in Israel, there were around 20,000 descendants from Levi, male descendants involved in the priesthood. And in as much as it was, of course, impossible for all 20,000 to serve continually in the temple, each family had their turn to serve and they served twice during the year for one week periods.

And when it was the turn of your family to serve, they would cast lots to determine what particular aspect of the service you would be engaged in. And maybe once in a lifetime, the priest would have his lot to fall upon the offering of the incense before the altar of incense before the Lord. This was usually just a once in a lifetime, one day in your life, you get this glorious privilege of going in with the incense before the altar of incense to offer it before the Lord for the people.

And so this was surely a significant and a special day for Zacharias, who during the time that he was serving there, the lot fell on him for this particular task. Now we are told concerning Zacharias and

Elizabeth that they were both righteous before God. They walked in all of the commandments and the ordinances of the Lord blameless.

Two beautiful, righteous people who are quite insignificant as far as the world is concerned. People who love the Lord, people who walked with the Lord, people you would have never heard about unless they had been so involved in the story of Jesus Christ. The people because of their involvement, we are told of them.

Now we are also told that they had no child because Elizabeth was barren and they were both now well stricken in years. That is the years had taken their toll. They were bent over.

They had become feeble and the idea of well stricken in years is that of feebleness as the result of age. In that culture, it was considered a curse for a woman not to bear a child and it was legal grounds for divorce. Had Zacharias desired to put away Elizabeth because of her inability to bear children, no one would have questioned it.

It would have been accepted by everybody, but no doubt there was a tremendous love that they shared together and they shared this grief and this sorrow together that they were unable to have children. Now it came to pass that while he was fulfilling the priest's office before God in the order of his course, they had the priestly orders and this was one of the weeks that he had to come in for his particular duty of service. According as was the custom of the priest office, his lot fell that he might burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord.

And you can imagine the excitement of this old man, probably the only day in his life and he probably had given up by now ever having the opportunity of burning incense. And when the lots were drawn, his was that lot to burn the incense before the Lord that day. And the whole multitude of people were praying outside at the time of incense.

Now they would go in before the altar of incense and they would take this little golden bowl that had burning coals that had been taken from the altar where they had offered the sacrifice. The lamb was offered in the morning and in the evening. And they would take the coals from the altar and put it in this little golden bowl.

And then they would put the incense on top and they would go in swinging this little incense burner before the altar of incense and the smoke, the sweet smelling smoke would ascend up. And it was a beautiful symbolism of how God receives the prayers of his people. Our prayers that we offer to God arise before God as a sweet smelling odor, pleasant, beautiful.

In the book of Revelation chapter 5, when the lamb takes the scroll out of the right hand of him who was sitting upon the throne, John said, and the 24 elders came forth with their little golden bowls full of odors, which are the prayers of the saints. And they offered them before the throne of God. Now you remember that when God gave to Moses the instructions for building the tabernacle and all of these furnishings and the methods of worship were established, the Lord told Moses over and over, now be careful that you make it exactly according to plan.

And the reason why he was to make it exactly according to the plan that was given to him was because this whole thing was a model of what is in heaven. If you want to know what the heavenly scene, the throne of God and all looks like, you can study the tabernacle and it was a model of heavenly things. So as

the priest on earth would take these little golden bowls and fill them with incense and the incense would arise as the prayers, a sweet smelling savor before God.

So in heaven, chapter 5 of Revelation, we see it fulfilled in the heavenly scene as the 24 elders offer their little golden bowls full of odors, which are the prayers of the saints. And so a beautiful symbolism there. And so he's in offering the incense before the altar of incense, which was in the inner court of the temple in the holy place, not the holy of holies.

Only the high priest went in there once a year, but the holy place, which was just outside of the holy of holies. And while he was there, the multitude of people were waiting outside because it was then customary when he came out to place the blessing of God upon the people. It was a special occasion and the people would wait for the priest to come out and give them this blessing.

And there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense. And when Zacharias saw him, he was troubled and fear fell upon him. But the angel said unto him, fear not Zacharias, for thy prayer is heard.

What prayer? For years he had been praying, Lord, please give me a son. It really gives to us encouragement for persistence in prayer. He didn't give up even though he was now old, well stricken with years.

He was still praying, oh Lord, I'd love to have a son. Thy prayer is heard and thy wife Elizabeth shall bear thee a son and thou shalt call his name Johanan, which means the Lord is gracious. It is shortened to John, but the full name is actually Johanan.

And thou shalt have joy and gladness and many will rejoice at his birth. For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord and he shall drink neither wine nor strong drink and he shall be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb. And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord, their God.

And he shall go before him, that is the Messiah, in the spirit and in the power of Elijah to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord. Now, the last word of God to man prior to this was in Malachi, the fourth chapter. And the last word of God to man was in Malachi 4-5, behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and awesome day of the Lord.

And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse. That was the last word of God to man in the old covenant period prior to the angels meeting Zacharias there at the altar of the Lord. And it is interesting, though the Lord has been silent for 400 years, that very promise, which was the last promise of the Old Testament, is the first word of the Lord in the New Testament, which is the fulfillment of that prophecy, which is about to take place as this child that will be born will go forth in the spirit and in the power of Elijah.

Now there is a lot of confusion as regards to John the Baptist and the prophecy of the coming of Elijah. In John's gospel, we are told that as John was baptizing at the Jordan River, the Pharisees came out and they demanded of him his authority and who gave him the authority to do these things. They said, are you the Messiah? He said, no.

They said, are you Elijah? He said, no. Then who are you? He said, I'm just the voice of one crying in the wilderness, prepare you the way of the Lord, make straight his paths. And yet here the angel of the Lord

tells his father that he will be going forth in the spirit and in the power of Elijah.

Now the confusion exists in the fact that there were two comings of the Messiah. The first coming that we find recorded here in the gospel, the second coming for which we presently wait. And even as Elijah will appear before Jesus comes again.

So John the Baptist came in the spirit and in the power of Elijah. And if a person is able to accept it, he was the fulfillment of that promise of Elijah coming before the Lord to cause the hearts of the children to turn to their fathers and the fathers to the children. So the confusion lies in the fact that there are two comings of the Messiah, as well as the two comings of Elijah, both of them to prepare the people for the coming of the Lord.

He shall be great in the sight of the Lord. He was to be as a Nazarene, not drinking wine or strong drink, but filled with the Holy Spirit from his mother's womb. In a little bit, we will be studying where Mary, when she received word that she was to be the instrument through which the Messiah was to be born, went to this little village of Judah, the home of Elizabeth, who at that point was six months pregnant.

And when Mary walked in and greeted Elizabeth, Elizabeth felt the baby leap in her womb and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. So at that time, no doubt, John was also filled with the Holy Spirit, a prenatal experience, which is quite interesting indeed, even from his mother's womb. Now, though Zacharias had been praying that he might have a son, the prayers had not really been prayers of faith anymore, just of a hardly even a glimmering hope, because when this angel told him that he was to have a son, he didn't believe it.

And he challenged the angel. Zacharias said unto the angel, whereby shall I know this? For I am an old man and my wife is well stricken in years. And the angel answering said unto him, I am Gabriel that stand in the presence of God, and I've been sent to speak to thee and to show thee these glad tidings.

And behold, thou shalt be dumb and not able to speak until the day that these things shall be performed, because you did not believe my words, which shall be fulfilled in their season. It is interesting to me that we so often put such great emphasis upon our faith that God will do a certain thing, as though God is almost impotent apart from man's faith to operate or to work. But here with Zacharias, the angel said, all right, you want to sign? You're not going to be able to speak until the day the child is born because you didn't believe the things that God is going to perform.

Whether you believe it or not, God's going to do it. Your unbelief will not stop the work of God. It will not hinder the purposes of God.

And so many times they put heavy trips on us, you know, as though God's work is totally responsible upon my hanging in there and believing. And, and, you know, and I feel so guilty because maybe I failed God and, and, and thus, you know, people are lost or whatever because I failed God. No, God's purposes shall stand whether I believe it or not.

You see, your believing or not believing doesn't really hinder the work of God. He's going to do what he's going to do in spite of us. And that's sort of comforting because I'd hate to think that God's work depended on me and my faithfulness.

You remember when the children of Israel were threatened with extinction because of Haman's getting the king to sign the decree that all the Jews were to be put to death on a certain day. And Mordecai sent a

message to Esther that she should go in before the king and plead the cause of her people. And she responded, you know, you just don't do that.

That's not the protocol of the court. Even as his wife, I can't go in there anytime I want to see him. I can't go in there unless he calls me in.

And if anyone would dare to go in before the king not being called, you're putting your own life in jeopardy because if he doesn't raise the scepter, they'll put you to death immediately. And so Mordecai sent an answer back. Do you think that if this decree goes through that you're going to escape? How do you know, Esther, but what God didn't bring you to the kingdom for just this purpose? And then he said, if you altogether fail, then their deliverance will arise from another quarter.

God is going to deliver his people. His purposes are going to stand. God's going to deliver his people, but you will lose out completely.

Now God's work is going to be done. You may lose out on those rewards and blessings that you could have experienced had you been faithful, but your unfaithfulness is not going to stop that which God has purpose to do. And so here is Zacharias filled with unbelief.

How can I know this? I'm an old man. My wife's an old woman. What do you mean I'm going to have a son? You know, I am Gabriel.

The last appearance of Gabriel to our knowledge on the earth was about a little over 500 years prior to this particular event when Gabriel appeared to the prophet Daniel and gave to Daniel one of the clearest prophecies concerning the time of the coming of the Messiah. It was Gabriel who said unto Daniel that there are 77 determined upon the nation of Israel to finish the transgression, to make an end of iniquity, to bring in the everlasting righteousness, to anoint the most holy place, to complete the prophetic picture. And no one understand from the time the commandment goes forth to restore and rebuild Jerusalem to the coming of the Messiah.

The prince will be seven sevens and 62 sevens. The wall shall be built again in troublous times. And after the 69 sevens will the Messiah be cut off and receive nothing for himself and the people will be dispersed.

And so this amazing prediction of the time of the coming of the Messiah was given by none other than our friend Gabriel. Sort of a timeless fellow because now it's over 500 years later and he shows up on the scene again probably looking as young and fresh as ever. Announcing now to Zacharias that his wife Elizabeth was to bear the son which was to be the forerunner of the Messiah as he will go forth in the spirit and in the power of Elijah to fulfill the prophecy of sending the messenger before the face of the Lord.

It would appear that as God has set in order the things of the universe that he probably placed Gabriel as the overseer in charge of the details of getting his son into the world preparing the people on the earth preparing Mary and because it was Gabriel who appeared to Mary preparing here Zacharias. It would seem that he has a hard time keeping secrets. He appeared 500 years earlier and spilled the beans to Daniel at the time that the Messiah would be coming.

And so here he is again on the scene some 500 years later. It'll be interesting to meet Gabriel looking young and fresh as ever as he is one of those special angels that God has committed great responsibilities to and I for one am quite anxious to meet Gabriel. Now I don't expect him to sit on my bed and pet my dog and for you who have read that book you know what I'm talking about.

Now the people waited for Zacharias. They were waiting outside for that blessing from the priest and they marveled that he tarried so long in the temple and when he came out he could not speak unto them and so they perceived that he had seen a vision in the temple for he beckoned unto them and he remained speechless and it came to pass that as soon as the days of his ministration were accomplished he departed to his own house. So because they only served for a week at a time in just a few days he left their Jerusalem and went to Judah which is nearby Jerusalem actually.

And after those days his wife Elizabeth conceived and she hid herself for five months saying thus hath the Lord dealt with me in the days wherein he looked on me to take away my reproach from among men. Her inability to bear children caused her to be a reproach but the Lord she says has taken that away. And in the sixth month the same fellow Gabriel the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth to a virgin who was espoused to a man whose name was Joseph of the house of David and the virgin's name was Mary.

Three terms we need to deal with engaged espoused and married. A person could become engaged when they were two years old because for the most part marriage was by arrangement. So parents would get together they would be friends you'd have a pretty little girl your friends would have a nice little boy and we're friends with each other.

Why don't we have your son marry my daughter and we make the arrangements. And so here these little kids three or four years old walking around saying well we're engaged because the arrangements have been made by their parents that they would have each other as husband and wife. They felt that decisions as important as marriage should never be left to the capriciousness of youth.

They felt that young people didn't have enough wisdom to choose their mates. Now as they became older and usually they were married by the age of 15 or 16 years old and as they became older one year before they had the marriage ceremony they entered into a period known as espousal where they were as though they were married in that they were committed completely to each other but there was never a consummation of the marriage during this period of time. However once they entered into the period of the espousal they were considered married to the extent that if the fellow wanted to break it off he had to actually get a divorce even though the marriage at this point had never been consummated.

So Mary and Joseph were in this period of espousal where they were totally committed to each other and to the marriage of each other and yet the marriage was not to be consummated until the ceremony at a later time. And so to the virgin who was a spouse she was in this period of the one year before the actual consummation of the marriage to a man whose name was Joseph of the house of David and the virgin's name was Mary. And the angel Gabriel came in unto her and said, Hail thou art highly favored.

The Lord is with you. Blessed art thou among women. And when she saw him she was troubled at what he was saying and thought in her mind, what kind of a greeting is this? And the angel said unto her, Fear not Mary, for thou hast found favor with God.

And behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb and bring forth a son and shall call his name Jehoshua, which in Greek is Jesus, but in Hebrew Jehoshua, which means Jehovah is salvation. Now you remember in Matthew's gospel when Joseph found out that Mary was pregnant and he was really troubled by it because they were espoused, he thought he might just give her a bill of divorce but put her away privately because if he would expose her publicly, she'd be stoned to death. And the angel of the Lord came to Joseph at night and said, Fear not to take Mary as your wife for that holy thing, which is conceived in her

or that which is conceived in her as of the Holy Spirit.

And thou shalt call his name, she'll bear a son, thou shall call his name Jehoshua. So both Mary and Joseph were instructed by the angel of the Lord in the naming of Jesus. But when he told Joseph call his name Jehoshua, he said, For he shall save his people from their sins.

So the name is extremely significant because it expresses the mission of Jesus and that is bringing God's salvation to man. Jehoshua, the Lord has become our salvation. And then the angel Gabriel went on to say he shall be great and shall be called the son of the highest.

And the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David. And of course, throughout the Old Testament prophecies, there was that promise that the Messiah would sit upon the throne of David to order it and to establish it in righteousness and in judgment from henceforth, even forever. And he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever.

And of his kingdom, there shall be no end. In the book of Revelation, again, that glorious song that Handel has put to music, King of kings and Lord of lords forever and ever. Hallelujah.

Hallelujah. And so the angel is telling about the eternal reign of Jesus Christ. Then said Mary unto the angel, how shall this be seen? I know not a man.

Now there's a vast difference between the question of Zacharias and the question of Mary. Zacharias was questioning the word of the Lord. Mary was only asking information on the procedures.

How is this to be? Seeing I know not a man. Hers was not the question of doubt. Hers was only an inquiring question as to the manner by which it should be fulfilled.

She believed. And that is pointed out a little later as Elizabeth said, blessed art thou who has believed the word that the Lord spoke to thee. She believed the word that the Lord spoke to her.

However, she didn't know by what process it was to be fulfilled. And that really was her question. How is this going to be seeing? I am a virgin.

I know not a man. And the angel answered and said unto her, the Holy Spirit shall come upon thee and the power of the highest shall overshadow thee. Therefore, also that holy one which shall be born of thee shall be called the son of God.

And behold, thy cousin Elizabeth has also conceived a son in her old age. And this is the sixth month of her pregnancy who was called barren. For with God, nothing shall be impossible.

And Mary said, behold, the handmaid of the Lord, be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her. There is sometimes within the Protestant circles, perhaps a backlash to that position that the Catholics have sought to place Mary in as the intercessor.

And even some today, the co-redemptress. And there is that backlash among Protestants, oftentimes to sort of put Mary down. However, as the angel said unto her that she was highly favored, that the Lord was with her and she was blessed among women.

Surely, when God chose an instrument by which to send his son into the world, I am certain that he chose an instrument that he had thoroughly prepared. And I believe that Mary must have been one of the most

beautiful of character of any woman, woman who has ever lived. And I think that we can demonstrate this actually in the text that she was a extremely unique individual.

Now, remember, it is possible that at this point she was only about 16 years old and yet there is such a depth of character that is demonstrated in her. And it begins right here as when the angel tells her all of these remarkable, unusual things that are bound to create problems as they did with Joseph, her espoused husband. She said, behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it unto me according to thy word.

In other words, she submitted herself to the purpose of God. Here I am. Let the Lord do as he pleases in my life.

That kind of commitment. And I'm just intrigued. And Mary is another one that I want to meet.

What an unusual, remarkable person. Surely the most blessed of any woman who has ever lived. Now, culturally, it was the dream, the hope, the desire of every Jewish girl to be the instrument through which God would send the Messiah into the world.

And thus, many young Jewish girls, when they had a boy born to them, would call his name Joshua, hoping that maybe God would use that child to be the instrument of his salvation. And that was a reason, one of the reasons, why being barren was considered such a curse. You have no opportunity to be the mother of the Messiah if you are barren.

And that was the hope of every young Jewish girl to be the instrument that God would use. The dream, the hope. And with Elizabeth being barren, she had lost that hope.

And of course, everyone who was barren, they would lose the hope. Oh, I can't be the instrument. And that was a very disappointing thing to them, to feel I can't be the instrument that God uses to accomplish his purpose.

Oh, that we would be concerned about being the instrument through which God accomplishes his purposes. Today, the Druze, a very interesting people, they have an interesting religion that really they don't even know what it is. In the Druze religion, it's a break off from the Muslims, but only their priests know what they believe.

The people don't know what they believe. And the priest does the whole religious bit for them. They know they're Druze and they know that, you know, this is their religion and all, but only the priests know what it's all about and they know what they believe, but the people don't.

And many of the men, though, are priests. And as you go through the Druze villages today, you will see these men wearing these pants with these large pouches in the front. For one of the things that the Druze do believe is that when the Messiah comes, he will be born of a man.

And so going through their villages, and it's fascinating to go through the Druze villages and see these huge baggy pants in the front, these sacks that hang down in the front. And these men wear these in case they are the one that God chooses to send the Messiah through. In other words, they're the ones that will get pregnant with the Messiah.

And so they're prepared for it by wearing these pants with these large baggy things in the front. They're all set for their pregnancies. They've already got their maternity clothes.

But such was the hope of every young girl in Israel. And the fulfillment of that hope came to one, a young girl from Nazareth, a beautiful young girl of character and spirit named Mary. And Mary arose in those days and went into the hill country with haste to the city of Judah.

And she entered into the house of Zacharias, and she greeted Elizabeth. That word saluted is an old English word, and it actually means greeted. In the marriage ceremony, they used to say, you may now salute your bride.

But during World War II, too many of the guys were not really understanding the old English word salute. And so it is now, you know, something that you say, you may now kiss your bride. So she entered into the house of Zacharias and greeted Elizabeth.

And it came to pass that when Elizabeth heard the greeting, the salutations of Mary, that the baby leaped in her womb and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. And she spake out with a loud voice and said, Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. And whence is this to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For lo, as soon as I heard the voice of your greeting sounding in my ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy.

And blessed is she that believed, for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord. I suppose that this would be an appropriate place to talk about abortion. Here was John the Baptist six months along, and yet there was some kind of a recognition for when Mary spoke, he responded to it in the womb.

We are told that as the child is in the womb, that it begins to understand and to recognize voices, that you pregnant mothers should talk to your child. For if you are talking to them while you are still pregnant, they will be comforted by your voice after they are born because they've learned to recognize it. More and more we are discovering interesting facets of that fetal development.

And here at six months with John, there was that capacity to leap for joy in his mother's womb when he heard the voice of Mary. Now, remember, she is speaking by the Holy Spirit, and thus we have the word of the Holy Spirit that the child leaped for joy at the word of Mary. We talked a little bit this morning about what factors are considered in determining what is right and what is wrong in our present society.

And the effect that the philosophy has had upon our entire culture, the idea that the mores determine in a society what is accepted and unacceptable behavior, what is good, what is bad, what is right and what is wrong. And in this particular philosophical determination, if enough people within a society begin to practice a certain thing, it becomes then sociably acceptable, or it becomes good, or it becomes right, because that is determined by the mores of the society itself. Accepting that God does not exist because it has to come from a totally humanistic base.

God does not exist, and therefore there is no godly standard for right or wrong. And inasmuch as there is no godly standard for right or wrong, right or wrong now is determined strictly by the practices, the mores of a particular society. And the sociologists will show that there are societies where the father has nothing to do with the children, and so in that society is perfectly all right as the uncle takes the father role within the home.

There are societies where they have a plurality of wives or a plurality of husbands, and because it's the accepted practice of the society, no one thinks wrong of it or thinks it's bad or evil, and because the mores

determine what is right and what is wrong. So you get enough people doing something, and suddenly it becomes right. And so we get enough abortions killing millions of innocent babies, but it's all right because it's become a part of the mores.

No one's supposed to say anything against it. I have a hard time handling my emotions around a child. I become foolish.

I try to come down to their level a bit to communicate with them. I'm so fascinated with children. I love children so much.

I love little boys, and I love little girls, and to me there's nothing more enjoyable than communicating with children, seeing their responses. I love to study their faces. I love to study their habits.

I love to study just children. I can hold them and just look at them for hours on end, watching them, watching the changing expressions and all. I love to see them develop and grow.

That is why I have such tremendous difficulty with child abuse. Where an adult would deliberately abuse a little child, hurt it, damage it, beat it, destroy it, and unfortunately it is a rising, increasing problem in our society. In fact, in Los Angeles County this year, there have been more murders of infants than any time in the history of Los Angeles.

It's at record height. Babies that are beaten to death, or drowned, or suffocated, abused, it's reached record proportions this year. And I have such difficulty with this.

My body begins to recoil. I have to put it out of my mind because I just can't think about it too long. It just affects me too deeply.

But I wonder if much of this isn't attributed to the fact that we've begun to put a cheaper value on life by the legalizing of abortion. You see, it's all right, it's all right to abuse the child as long as it hasn't been born yet. But if it's all right to abuse that child because it really doesn't understand much, it hasn't been born yet, then I wonder if the next step is, well, it doesn't really understand too much of what's going on, so what difference does it make if you abuse the child because it doesn't really know or understand much yet.

Whether or not that has anything to do with it, all I know is that with the cheapening of the value of life, it seems to be following through all of the segment of our society. And I think that we have some extremely dangerous sociological implications that will arise from some of these humanistic, liberal, legislative decisions that are being made. And I only say that to warn you.

I don't think we're going to have to deal with it too long. I don't think God will allow things to go on much longer. I will be very shocked if he does.

All I can say, if I was the Lord, I would have closed it down a long time ago. Now, Elizabeth said unto her, blessed is she that believed. Mary believed, for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord.

And Mary said, and here we now get an insight into the beautiful depth of this young girl as she began to just worship the Lord. My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior, for he hath regarded the lowest state of his handmaiden. For behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed, for he that is mighty hath done to me great things, and holy is his name.

For his mercy is on them that fear him from generation to generation, for he hath showed strength with his arm. He hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. He hath put down the mighty from their seats and exalted them of low degree.

He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he hath sent empty away. He has helped his servant Israel in remembrance of his mercy. And as he spake to our fathers, to Abraham and to his seed forever, a reference to the promise of God to Abraham, that through thy seed all nations of the earth will be blessed.

And Mary stayed with her for about three months, probably until the time that John was born, and then she returned to her own house. Probably stayed to help Elizabeth during this period of her pregnancy. Now she speaks here, beginning with verse 51, of the revolution that God creates.

First of all, he has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. And so the first revolution is really an individual revolution of God, scattering the proud. The second, he put down the mighty from their thrones and exalted them of low degree.

And then thirdly, filled the hungry with good things and sent the rich away empty, an economic revolution. Now Elizabeth's full time came that she should be delivered, and she brought forth a son. And her neighbors and her cousins heard how the Lord had shown great mercy upon her, and they rejoiced with her.

And it came to pass that on the eighth day, when they came to circumcise the child, they called him Zacharias, after his father. But his mother answered and said, not so. He shall be called Johanan.

God is gracious. And they said unto her, there's none of your family that is called by that name. And they made signs to his father how he would have him to be named.

And he asked for a writing tablet, and he wrote saying, his name is John or Johanan. And all of them marveled. Now, when a woman was in labor, the neighbors would begin to gather.

They would bring their musical instruments, and they would bring food and all, and they'd prepare for a great party when the child was born. And when the child was born, and they would say, it's a boy, the musicians would start playing, they'd all dance, and they'd have a big party. If when the child was born, they said, it's a girl, they'd take their musical instruments, fold them up, and go home.

In those days, it was considered a great blessing to have a boy born in the home. But girls were sort of disregarded. It took really the teachings of Jesus Christ to elevate women to their proper level, placing upon them that glory and honor that they deserve.

You women should be extremely thankful for Jesus Christ. All you have to do is go into a culture where the gospel of Christ has not had a strong influence, and look at the role of the woman, and you will appreciate more and more what Jesus Christ has done for you. Look at the Bedouin society.

Look at the Indian culture. Look at the culture of those people in New Guinea. Read the book, Lords of the Earth.

It's a tremendous sociological insight into the culture of the New Guineans before the coming of Christianity. You'll really appreciate what Jesus Christ has done in his elevation of womanhood to its

beautiful, proper place. Now, as soon as he had written on the tablet, his name is John, his mouth was opened, and his tongue was loosed, and he spoke and praised God.

And fear came on all those that dwelt about them, and all of these sayings were noised abroad throughout all of the hill country of Judea. And all they that heard them laid them up in their hearts, saying, What kind of a kid is this going to be? For the hand of the Lord was with him, and his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Spirit. Now Mary, I mean, Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.

When Mary greeted her, now Zacharias is filled with the Holy Spirit. And he prophesied, saying, Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has visited and redeemed his people. Blessing God for, first of all, the fact that God has visited his people.

Jesus Christ is God, manifested in the flesh. And through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, as he is prophesying, the first declaration is that God, the Lord God of Israel, has visited his people. In the beginning was the Word, the Word was with God, the Word was God, the same was in the beginning with God, and the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.

He visited his people. But the purpose of his visit was redemption. He has visited and redeemed his people.

Jesus, in announcing his purpose, declared, for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost. Redemption, the purpose of the coming of Christ. The Lord has raised up a power of salvation.

The horn was always symbolic of power. And so he's raised up the power to salvation in the house of his servant David. Paul said, I'm not ashamed of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

It is the power of God unto salvation to those that believe. The preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness, but unto us who are saved thereby, it is the power of God. Oh, blessed be God.

He's visited his people. God has come to bring redemption, to give power for salvation through the house of David, through the house of his servant David. As he spoke by the mouth of the holy prophets, which have been since the world began, recognizing that the prophecies concerning the savior, concerning the Messiah have been in existence from the beginning of man's existence, from the beginning of the fall, actually, or from the time of the fall, when God said to the woman, cursed be the serpent, crawl upon the earth.

But then he said that the seed of the woman would bruise his head. That sin would be destroyed by the seed of the woman. Blessed be God.

He has brought now the power of salvation. He's redeemed through the seed of the woman, through the virgin born child. For God is performing the mercies that he's promised to our fathers.

And he's remembering his holy covenant, the oath, which he swore to our father, Abraham through thy seed, shall all the nations of the earth be blessed. That he would grant unto us that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear. Salvation is more than being saved from yes.

God has delivered us from the hand of our enemy, but he has saved us for the purpose that we might serve him without fear in holiness and in righteousness. Now, both holiness and righteousness have as their root idea that of being right. But holiness is a rightness of character, whereas righteousness is a

rightness in conduct.

But the one springs out of the other. Holiness is the root. Righteousness is the fruit that springs forth from the root.

The difficulty that so many people have today is their endeavor to be right without holiness. But ultimately, any endeavor to be right will break down for there is no motive strong enough to maintain righteousness other than holiness. You've got to be pure at the core.

You've got to have the holiness, the right attitude, if you are to have the right actions or activities. And so it is God's purpose, first of all, that we walk before him or serve him in holiness, that God does that work within our heart, changing our character, our life, in order that we might also serve him in righteousness. The Pharisees had a system of righteousness apart from holiness, and it was total failure.

Jesus remarked on the failure. He said, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and the Pharisees, you're not going to enter the kingdom of heaven to the disciples. That must have been one of the most shocking statements that Jesus has ever made, because who was more right? Who did the things more right than did the Pharisees? And yet, unless your righteousness exceeds those, you're not going to make it, Jesus said.

Why? Because theirs was a righteousness without holiness. It wasn't from the heart. Their attitudes were stinking, according to Jesus.

The outside, you're like a whited sepulcher, but inside, dead man's smelly bones. The outside of the platter is all clean, but the inside of the cup is filled with vermin. You may clean the outside, but the inside, you have a righteousness without holiness, totally unaccepted.

And unless your righteousness exceeds the scribes and the Pharisees, you're not going to make it into the kingdom of heaven, because you have to have a righteousness that springs from holiness, the holiness of character, and God's purpose that we serve him in holiness and in righteousness all the days of our life. And now addressing the child. This is a prophecy concerning the one that the child is to go before, but concerning the child himself, little John lying there, and thou child shall be called the prophet of the highest.

Jesus said of all of the prophets born of women, there hasn't been a greater one than arise than John. Thou shalt be called the prophet of the highest, for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways, to give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins through the tender mercy of our God, whereby the sun rising from on high hath visited us or the day spring or the sun rising or the rising of the sun to give light to those that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death to guide our feet in the way of peace. Again, referring to Christ.

God, by his tender mercy has sent the sunrise from on high to visit us, that he might give us light for those who are sitting in darkness and in the shadows that he might guide our feet in the way of peace, peace with God. And so the child grew and waxed strong in spirit and was in the desert until the day of his showing unto Israel.

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