

# Day 137, Luke 1

by David Servant

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*David Servant explores the birth of John the Baptist and the significance of God's promises through the Gospel of Luke.*

**Scripture:** Proverbs 21:13, Luke 1:6-53

**Topics:** "Divine Sovereignty", "Virgin Birth"

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## Description

David Servant delves into the events surrounding the birth of John the Baptist as detailed by Luke in his Gospel. Luke, writing to Theophilus, possibly addresses all who truly love God. He meticulously investigated Christ's life over three decades, providing unique insights into John's godly parentage and Zacharias' encounter with the angel Gabriel. The prophecy of Jesus' eternal reign brings certainty in an uncertain world, emphasizing the security of His everlasting kingdom. The miraculous virgin birth of Jesus highlights God's power and sovereignty, challenging skeptics to consider the countless miracles in every birth.

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## Transcript

We now turn the clock back about 68 years on our chronological journey through the New Testament, to the events surrounding the birth of John the Baptist. Interestingly, however, we're not changing authors, as we've been reading Luke's other book for the past 21 days, the book of Acts.

Luke was writing to someone named Theophilus (1:3), whose name is derived from the words Theo, meaning "God," and philo, meaning "love." So Theophilus means "lover of God," which leads us to wonder if Luke was actually addressing his Gospel to everyone who truly loves God. Luke was not one of the twelve original apostles and probably was not born again until after Christ's resurrection. So he did not write from first-hand knowledge about Christ's life, but from his careful investigation (1:3) over three or more decades.

Luke is the only Gospel-writer who gives us details about the birth of John the Baptist. We learn that John was born of godly parents. Luke writes that they were "righteous," but their righteousness was much more than just a legal stamp of forgiveness that had nothing to do with how they lived. According to Luke, they were "walking blamelessly in all the commandments and requirements of the Lord" (1:6).

By Jesus' day, there were thousands of descendants of Aaron, and they took turns fulfilling the priestly duties in the temple. The occasion of Zacharias' going into the holy place to burn incense was a

once-in-a-lifetime event. I suspect that he was nervous, but imagine how he felt when he met an angel whom no one had seen since Daniel's time, about 600 years earlier! Gabriel informed Zacharias that the Elijah promised by Malachi 400 years before (Mal. 4:5) was about to arrive on the scene, and he would be Zacharias' son! Of course, John the Baptist was not Elijah reincarnated, but he came in Elijah's spirit and power (1:17).

Zacharias' discipline was clearly the result of his unbelief. We should learn from his error. It's better to say nothing at all than to speak words of doubt!

I always get a zing in my heart when I read Gabriel's words to Mary regarding Jesus: "He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end" (1:33). In a world of growing uncertainty, there is something we know about the future that is certain. Jesus will one day be ruling the earth, and from then on through eternity, everything will be secure. No reason to worry then! Therefore, there's no reason to worry now!

Scoffers will also scoff at the idea of a virgin birth, saying such a thing is impossible. I wonder how they explain even a normal conception and birth. There must be at least 10,000 miracles associated with the conception and development of every baby, so how difficult was it for God to add one more miracle to have a baby conceived without the aid of an earthly father? The most amazing thing in all of this was not that the virgin Mary had a baby in her womb, but that the baby in her womb was God.

There are so many wonderful phrases contained within Mary's prophecy, commonly referred to as the "Magnificat," but I want to highlight just one phrase that the Holy Spirit spoke through Mary about the works of God: "He has filled the hungry with good things; and sent away the rich empty-handed" (1:53). If God "sent away the rich empty-handed," that means the rich came to Him at a time of great need, when their riches were gone, and when they found themselves lacking food. But because when they were rich they ignored the plight of the hungry, God then ignored their plight. They reaped what they had sown, just as God promised in Proverbs 21:13: "He who shuts his ear to the cry of the poor will also cry himself and not be answered." Oh if people believed that God is just and that He will indeed repay every person according to his deeds! They would repent! Rich people (like all of us) who repent start caring for the poor and feeding the hungry.

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