

## Lesson 124

# Angelic Announcements

God delivers the message of the coming Messiah through his angel Gabriel.

# Overview

## Lesson Focus

God sent the angel Gabriel to deliver the message to Zechariah that he and his wife, Elizabeth, would have a son named John who would prepare the hearts of the people for the promised Messiah. Then God sent Gabriel to tell Mary that she would miraculously conceive a son who would be called Jesus. Jesus was the Messiah for whom John would be preparing the people.

## Key Passages

Isaiah 7:14, 9:6; Malachi 3:1; Luke 1:5–7, 1:11–15, 1:26–31

## Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Describe how Zechariah received the message of the birth of his son.
- Identify the prophecy that was fulfilled in Mary.

## Memory Verse

Isaiah 7:14 Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

## Prepare to Share

### Scriptural Background

Prepare to teach by preparing your heart. Read the key passages for this lesson along with this background.

The people of Israel knew of the promised Messiah, and some were waiting for this one who would redeem Israel (Isaiah 53:4–6, 61:1–3). A faithful remnant of the Jewish people waited for “Elijah,” the prophet who would turn the hearts of the fathers to the children and the hearts of the children to their fathers (Malachi 4:5–6) and who would prepare the way for the Lord whom they had waited for (Malachi 3:1).

Zechariah and his wife, Elizabeth, had never been able to have children (Luke 1:5–7). But that was soon to change in a most amazing way. God sent the angel Gabriel to Zechariah while he was ministering in the temple. He said Zechariah and his wife would soon have a son, whom they were to name John. John would be great in the sight of the Lord, and many would rejoice at his birth (Luke 1:13–15). As God’s messenger, the angel testified that John would come in the power and spirit of Elijah. He would fulfill the prophecy of Malachi 4:5–6. He would make ready for the Lord a people prepared (Luke 1:17). This son, John

the Baptist, was not the Christ but came to give witness to the Christ (John 1:20) and to make straight the way of the Lord (John 1:23; Isaiah 40:3).

In another more spectacular announcement, God sent Gabriel to the city of Nazareth, to a young woman, a virgin, who was betrothed to be married to Joseph. The angel assured her not to be afraid, for she had found favor with God. She would conceive a child, the Son of the Most High (Luke 1:32), who would be called Jesus, for he would save his people from their sins (Matthew 1:21). What a mystery! Mary was not yet married to Joseph and had never known a man physically (Luke 1:34). But Mary would conceive in a miraculous way by the power of the Holy Spirit. And thus the prophecy of Isaiah—that a virgin would conceive a son and name him Immanuel, which means God with us—was fulfilled (Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:23).

The angel Gabriel also told Mary that her son would reign over a kingdom that would never end and over the house of Jacob forever (Luke 1:32–33). Again, we see in Jesus Christ the fulfillment of a promise made long ago through God's prophet Nathan to King David that a house and kingdom would be established through his descendant forever (2 Samuel 7:16).

These very important announcements were sent through a supernatural messenger by the will of God to announce the forerunner of the Messiah and the Messiah himself. Angels are unique creations of God, spiritual beings, who do the will of God. In the accounts mentioned above, Gabriel came to herald God's news that the Messiah was coming—very soon.

## Historical/Apologetics Background

Scripture teaches that there is a spiritual realm with both good and evil beings (1 Peter 3:22; Ephesians 6:12) but does not give us much detail about spiritual beings and their activities. However, we do know that these beings do God's will (Psalm 103:20–21), praise him (Isaiah 6:3), worship him (Hebrews 1:6), minister to God's people (Hebrews 1:14), and serve God in many other ways. The Bible describes various angelic beings, including seraphim (Isaiah 6:2), cherubim (Genesis 3:24), an archangel (Jude 1:9), and angels (Revelation 5:11).

The Bible also tells us there are angels who are enemies of God, usually referred to as demons. It is commonly accepted that these demons were once angels created by God and were led by Lucifer, who was cast out of heaven because of his sin of pride and desire to be like God (Genesis 3:5; Isaiah 14:12–15). These fallen angels are a very real threat to Christians. That is why Paul warned the Ephesians to put on the whole armor of God to withstand the rulers, authorities, powers, and spiritual forces of evil (Ephesians 6:10–13). These fallen angels serve as messengers, as well. But their messages are filled with deception, death, and destruction. The Bible even warns us that Satan can masquerade as an angel of light, leading people astray (2 Corinthians 11:13–15).

When were angels created? The Bible doesn't give us an explicit answer, but we can find a reasonable answer based on all of Scripture. God created everything in six days (Exodus 20:11), so they must have been created during this time (Nehemiah 9:6; John 1:1–3; Colossians 1:16). The book of Job speaks of the

"morning stars" singing and "sons of God" (also terms for angelic beings) rejoicing as the foundations of the earth were being created (Job 38:4-7). Consequently, the angels could have been created on any of the first three days of creation.

When did the angels fall? Since God proclaimed everything he made to be "very good" at the end of the creation week (Genesis 1:31), there could not have been any evil angels present then. And we can safely assume that it was after day seven because God set that day apart as holy (Genesis 2:3). God did not choose to reveal to us how long it was before Satan fell into sin and then tempted Eve, but it probably wasn't long because there were no children conceived before Adam and Eve were banished from the garden.

Angels are God's creation. Some fell into sin; many did not. And after 400 years of silence from God (between the Old and New Testaments), the silence was suddenly broken when God sent his angel to communicate the hope of the coming Messiah to Zechariah and Mary. The promises given to prophets hundreds of years before were about to be fulfilled! Our God is faithful to his promises. Let us rejoice with the angels and praise God for his goodness in sending the Savior.

## Limited License to Reproduce

A limited, non-exclusive, non-transferable, nonsublicensable license is hereby granted to a single local church or organization to print copies of the PDF materials in the Teacher Digital Resources if 1) you are the original purchaser; 2) you are using the copies for noncommercial purposes (such as for teaching in class) exclusively within your single local church or organization (multi-campus churches, and national/regional denominations are not covered under this license); and 3) you follow the instructions provided in the curriculum pertaining to the printable materials.

This license is for the specific purchaser of the product and does not include affiliated groups or organizations, or other churches or groups in the same denomination as the purchaser, not identified as the actual purchaser. There is no limit to the number of printed copies for use within the single local church or organization which is the actual purchaser. None of the material in this curriculum may be reproduced for any commercial promotion, advertising, or sale of a product or service, or to share with any other persons, churches, groups, or organizations.

The media (audio/video) portions are copyrighted and duplication is prohibited. This license is for materials in the Teacher Digital Resources only and does NOT include reproduction rights for pre-printed teacher books, student guides, student take home sheets, or posters, except on an emergency basis when purchased quantities are not sufficient for a given week.

## Bible Version

Scripture quotations are from the ESV® Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®), copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.