

♪ ♪ So put our Bibles to [Luke](#), chapter 1, and we'll dismiss the middle school.
You guys are welcome to go back to your area at this point.
As you're turning to [Luke](#), chapter 1, last week we began our verse by verse study in the Gospel of [Luke](#), and that's the foundational aspect.
We'll continue a little bit in the foundation and we'll move beyond that.
In fact, we're going to cover the first 25 verses of [Luke](#), chapter 1.
By the way, this chapter is 80 verses long.
We could be here for a month and a half, right?
(laughs) You say, "Yeah, if it's you, teach and fill," that's probably the case.
(audience laughs) But you know, I love that devotional.
It was very sweet, it's powerful, right?
The fruit, remember, the fruit of the spirit.
It's the Holy Spirit work in our lives.
He's the one who produces that fruit.
And I love how [John](#) talked about literal fruit.
By the way, I was thinking when he was talking about that.
I remember being a kid, and maybe when you were younger, especially if you're old enough, you remember that your mom had a bowl on the coffee table and it had fruit in it.
And it was like apples, oranges, bananas, and grapes.
And they were vivid, you know, really colorful, but also if you would take one and put it in your mouth, it was plastic.
(laughs) Right, it wasn't real.
So here's another thing.
There are a lot of people who look like they're the real deal.
And they may not know the Lord, right?
That's a key.
So there is plastic fruit out there.
The reality is we want genuine fruit because the Holy Spirit indwelling us that we've been born again by the Spirit of God and then the Word moves mightily in our lives, amen.
So guys, join me, we're gonna read the first four verses of the Gospel of [Luke](#).
We'll pray and then we'll pick up from where we were last week.
So the Word of God tells us [Luke](#) was inspired by the Holy Spirit.
In as much as many have taken in hand to set an order a narrative of those things which have been fulfilled among us.
And just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the Word delivered to them and to us.
It seemed good to me also having had perfect understanding of all the things from the very first to write to you an orderly account, most excellent theophilus, that you may know the certainty of those things in which you were instructed, let's pray.
The fathers we begin, our adventure and our study in your Word this morning.
Jesus, you said the Holy Spirit would lead us into all truth and we simply pray, Holy Spirit, you would do that.
Just speak to our hearts this morning.
You know every person that's in this room, exactly where we're at in relationships to you.
And Lord, just meet us with a living and active word.
It's incredible how you do that Lord and how you just minister to us that we receive the spiritual nourishment that we need, the minds of who we are, Lord, or renewed through the washing of the water of your Word.
And Lord, we thank you that you can speak to the people who are online and those who may watch down the road as well.
So we just pray again.
You would direct us in this time of the Word.
Help me to stay out of your way.
And Lord, may your Word simply accomplish what you intended to in our hearts and lives this morning.
And Father, may we be willing participants with what you wanna do today, Father in Jesus' name.

Amen.

Amen, guys.

Turn with me to second Timothy, chapter three, as part of our introduction today, is we're gonna jump back into those verses we just read.

But before we do that, I feel compelled to go to second Timothy, chapter three, first.

And the reason that I'm doing that is, of course if you were here last week or if you watched the study online, if you have it, go ahead and go back, you can catch on our website, YouTube, our app, all the platforms that we have, 'cause we did set a foundation.

And we spent time looking at the reality that as we get into God's Word today, as we're looking at this person, [Luke](#), who was a physician by the way, but also a world-class historian.

How God used this man as a meticulously studied and researched, and we looked at the reality, too, of what God's Word communicates.

By going to second Peter, do you remember we did that?

That he talked about the reality that, with God's Word, by divine, his divine power, we've been given all the things that pertain to life and godliness through the Word.

We're not missing anything, are we?

Then he also said later on in that chapter that they didn't devise cunning stories and fairy tales and plans, right?

They didn't put something out there that wasn't real.

Why?

Because Peter himself was an eyewitness to the events.

We also know that [John](#), in the first [John](#), he talks about that reality, too, about being eyewitnesses of Jesus and his ministry.

He said that we saw him, we touched him, we heard him, they shared life together, there was genuine coignanía, and that's what that word means, is a sharing of life, having all things in common.

So there were eyewitnesses of these events.

They're not fairy tales, they're literal historical accounts.

And the reality is, well, I wanna share with you guys today and this will transition us back, we'll close that loop about the dependability of God's Word.

We find in [2 Timothy](#), chapter three, the Paul the Apostle was investing in Timothy, preparing him for pastoral ministry at Ephesus.

And he says this in verse 14 of [2 Timothy](#), chapter three, he says to Timothy, "But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been a short of, think about that, knowing from whom you have learned them.

" So you could personalize this as well, right?

God's Word being communicated.

And that's exactly what he's talking about with Timothy.

He says in verse 15, "And that from childhood, you have known the Holy Scriptures.

" So here's the reality, remember there's the Tanakh, that's the old covenant, that's from [Genesis](#) to [Malachi](#).

At this time during Euruchur's history, the Holy Spirit is inspiring the text that would make up the new covenant, but it was all by the Holy Spirit.

And so we find that he was communicated to, he was taught the gospel, the truth of God's Word, even from the time he was a child.

Again, it says in verse 15, "And that from childhood, you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise, right?

To bring to a place of understanding your need for salvation, that's redemption.

" Coming into a relationship with the Lord, of course, with Jesus coming up on the scene, he introduces and he brings in and initiates the new covenant with his sacrifice on the cruel altar, the cross for the sins of all mankind, and through the reality and the power of his resurrection.

Isn't that amazing?

The salvation that God provides.

Remember Jesus's name, Yeshua, Yeshua in the Hebrew means the Lord is salvation, in his very name we have that truth and that reality.

So, Paul is encouraging him to continue in what?

The Word, continue in the Word of God.

That's why we gather all the time, right?

For studies like this on Sunday morning, and in our small groups that you get in God's Word every day, to grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord, and to be nourished spiritually.

Now he goes on to say this, these two very powerful verses.

He says that all scripture is given by inspiration of God, so what the Lord inspired by the Holy Spirit, Genesis to [Revelation](#) Genesis to Revelation.

It says that all the scripture, "Groffet," the Greek word means all the writings that constitute what we have here as God's Word, are theop, nuestos, that means God breathed.

So remember when we were in [2 Peter](#) last week, we looked at how the Holy Spirit moved through the men that God used to pin the Bible, and they were moved along and inspired and used by the Holy Spirit to pin the Word.

God even used the uniqueness of those individuals, 40 authors over 1600 year period.

It was the Holy Spirit that inspired it though, right?

So that's the reality that all of this writing, the graph A is given by inspiration of God.

It is God breathed and it is profitable.

So if it's profitable, that's a positive word, right?

It's beneficial.

What is it beneficial for?

For doctrine, for teaching, for reproof, for correction.

So if we have a thinking in our hearts in our minds, it's not consistent with what God's Word says on a subject.

And we say, "Well, I think this is what this means.

" And then you find out, wait a minute, that's not what God's Word really says in context, that you are open to that transition to understanding what God's Word says in its context, and yours reproof, but there's also correction in our lives too when it relates to our conduct and our behavior and the Lord brings conviction in our lives.

God loves us enough that if our behavior and conduct is not consistent with how you'd have us to live, and by the way, none of us can live that out apart from the Holy Spirit, right?

The one who gives us the fruit as well.

The God then will show us, I call it the Holy Spirit highlighter.

You know, I love that when you're reading the Word of God, and the Holy Spirit just draws your attention to certain passages that just edify and build you up, and it's like, wow Lord, thank you for speaking to my heart through this.

And there are times that he does that too, and he brings correction to us in an area of our life that we need, that he speaks to us, he said, "Hey, this is an area that we need to draw your attention to because you struggle in this area, "it's an area of sin, it's an area of challenge.

" And remember, the Holy Spirit is working to conform us to the image of Jesus, right?

That's God the Father's desire that we would all look more like Jesus unless of us.

So it's profitable for teaching, we've proven correction, and by the way, and for instruction in righteousness, living rightly.

So as we study God's Word, the benefit should be, and the outflow of that is the living Word of God is also affecting our conduct and our behavior.

As our minds are renewed day in and day out, as our spirits, right?

Or nourished our souls, our minds are renewed, then we're walking more in the Word of God.

So it equips us for that to live in a right way.

By the way, I love verse 17 as well.

It says that the man, or the person of God, may be complete.

Now the King [James](#) says perfect.

The Word is telling us this, whether it's perfectly or complete, it means you're lacking nothing.

So when it says that truth, that the man or person of God may be complete, perfectly, thoroughly equipped for what?

Every good work.

All that God has called us to, we're not lacking anything, folks, God inspired Genesis to [Revelation](#) Genesis to Revelation, and we have what we need.

That's remarkable how He uses the living and active Word to speak to our hearts.

So as we go back to loop now, thinking about that reality, we have that foundational reality that we saw even last week, and we continue on today, about what [Luke](#) in spot was inspired to share.

We're going to pull those first far verses apart even more, because we really didn't open them that much last week.

And we're going to see again how meticulously [Luke](#) researched.

We're going to see how God worked so mightily in and through this man.

We saw last week that he was literally a physician.

The Paul refers to him in collotions to loop the beloved physician.
 He was a doctor.
 He was trained whether it was in Alexandria or Tarsus, we know certainly in Rome to be in a place where we were certified to serve as a physician in the Roman Empire.
 He had to have an education in Rome at the end of that, so we know that he had that.
 But he was a very intelligent man.
 He knew what it was to methodically research things.
 He was very intelligent.
 And it also turns out, by the way, that he's a world-class historian.
 And here's an amazing thing.
 I want to share a quote with you.
 I know that Travis has brought this up and may not show up all that great appears.
 So I'm going to read it to you.
 And hopefully you can see this, because there are a lot of people who are critics of the Bible and say, well, you can't trust this or that.
 The reality is they've never done their homework.
 Remember last week we talked about that there are over 5,000 complete manuscripts of the Greek text, that you'd back to early church history.
 There are 10,000 manuscripts in the Latin.
 Then you go into German and into English.
 All told over 25,000 manuscripts, complete and parcels.
 The early church leaders, the fathers, taught so much and shared so much of what we find the New Testament.
 You just from their writings, you can put together the entire New Testament based on their writings alone.
 God inspired His Word, He promised that He would preserve it, that He would super-intended.
 And He's done just that.
 But of course, the world doesn't believe that.
 You know what they'll believe in?
 So they'll believe in Socrates, right?
 You remember Bill and Ted's excellent adventure?
 Maybe some of you guys are old enough.
 You remember Socrates.
 So Socrates, right?
 Homer, who wrote the Iliad Neodicy, there are some manuscripts of the Iliad Neodicy written by Homer.
 But there's centuries after the point that He actually wrote them.
 And there's not a lot of them.
 But the world doesn't question at all their veracity or their reliability.
 And yet people will question the Word of God even though there's overwhelming evidence that substantiates its reliability, historically, archeologically, prophetically.
 And there's nothing that's even remotely close.
 So that's the amazing thing is that we can trust the Word when we come to it.
 So this man, [Luke](#), was an incredible historian.
 So there was a world class guy from the 1800s, his name was Sir William Ramsey.
 Some of you heard of him before.
 He's an archeologist.
 And many people doubted it.
 And so there was a question they came.
 Are there any historians who write about [Luke](#) as a real person?
 So the answer is there are many.
 And one is Sir William Ramsey.
 He's one of the most famous to discuss [Luke](#).
 And here is a quote about [Luke](#) from Ramsey.
 Ramsey says it is almost universally acknowledged that the Gospel of [Luke](#) and the Book of Acts, of course, [Luke](#) wrote that as well, were written by the beloved physician [LukeActs](#), of course, Luke wrote that as well, were written by the beloved physician Luke.
 The question must be asked how accurate a historian was [Luke](#).
 One of the greatest archeologists of all times, Sir William Ramsey didn't think [Luke](#) was very accurate.
 In fact, he traveled throughout the ASEA minor, Greece, and other places during the late 1800s and early 1900s in an attempt to by the way to refute [Luke's](#) historical records in the Book of [Acts](#).

So he set out to refute them.
Then it sounded like [Josh](#) McDowell and Lee Strobel, people who were people who did not believe in the Bible, right?
So as he sets out, we find this.
Before his travels, he believed that [Luke](#) couldn't have been very accurate because of a lack of archaeological evidence to support [Luke](#)'s claims.
But Ramsey, after years of study, found the exact opposite to be true, years of deep meticulous study by Ramsey.
And he completely reversed his position.
In fact, Ramsey went on to comment, [Luke](#) is a historian of the first rank.
Not merely are his statements of fact trustworthy.
He is possessed of the true historic sense.
In short, this author should be placed along the greatest of historians.
And that's just one guy among many who've done their homework.
So I had mentioned [Josh](#) McDowell who was a skeptic, right?
Who, in fact, he wanted to prove his friends who believed in Jesus that they were fools.
He was an academic graduated cumma-sum-lottie from college.
But he just thought, you Christians, you're so stupid.
You're so simple minded.
You believe in fairy tales.
So he took time to try to see if he could find evidence and show them that they were absolutely wrong.
They believed in the fairy tale.
What did he do?
He did what Ramsey did.
And he looked at the evidence over two years.
And he found so much overwhelming evidence that's insanciated the Bible and Jesus' historicity and his death and his resurrection that he came to this conclusion.
I at least need to leave my friends alone who are Christians because their faith is based on something that's tangible and it's real.
But also, if I'm going to be real with myself, and knowing that there's evidence that's real, what do I do with it?
You know what he did?
He put his faith in Jesus.
And he became a believer.
And he's been a world-class defender and apologized to the faith ever since.
Lee Strobel, some of you heard of him, right?
The case for Christ.
This man was a Harvard educated journalist.
By the way, journalism today, a lot of the stuff we see, it's not real journalism.
(laughs) Fake news, right?
There's a lot of that, frankly.
But if you're classically trained as he was, you investigate, you do the work to find the facts.
And he was an atheist, didn't believe in God at all.
His wife became a believer in the Lord, and it rocked his world.
He hated it.
He started to drink.
It started to change his marriage.
He saw his wife living a life where she had love and joy and peace and he didn't have it.
He was jealous of her.
And it was coming to a point, he was going to get a divorce.
But before he went to that place, he thought, "Well, you know what I'll do?
"I'll just do some research.
"I'll show her how stupid and naive she is.
" And she'll show her that what she believes is a fairy tale.
Guess what happened?
He did all the research as well.
And he found the overwhelming tangible evidence that cooperates the word of God.
And again, the reliability of God's word and who Jesus Christ is, and he became a believer.
And he's one of the greatest defenders and apologists of the Christian faith today.

We give away his books often.

The case for Christ, the case for the resurrection, the case for Christmas, all that stuff.

All based on what?

Tangible evidence.

And here's a guy, [Luke](#), who is the only Gentile who penned a book and then he'll test him by the way that God uses to pen the most writing in the New Testament.

Next to Paul, by the way, if Paul didn't write [Hebrews](#), I believe he did.

It doesn't say who did, but there are a lot of people believe that he didn't.

So if he wrote [Hebrews](#), that's 13 books.

If he didn't write [Hebrews](#), then by volume of scripture just in [Luke](#) and also the book of Acts, the writings of [LukeActs](#), the writings of Luke are more substantial in their volume than even what Paul wrote.

If you ever thought of that, two books at [Luke](#) wrote and how much it takes up with the New Testament and how incredibly powerful that is because it's accurate, it's authenticated.

And that's what we find as we jump into the fact that [Luke](#) is a world class, historian as well as a physician.

Let's go back to verse one of [Luke](#) chapter one, as much.

So since as many, or because many have taken in hand to set an order a narrative or a declaration or a communication of what, those things, he's relating to the ministry of Jesus by the way that have been past tense fulfilled among us, those in the early church history.

And the reality is he's going to talk again about eyewitnesses who saw this.

Now [Luke](#) wasn't eyewitness, but you know what he did?

In his research, he spent a lot of time with people who were.

So when he gets later into talking about Elizabeth and he talks about Mary specifically, right?

He sat down and he talked with Mary.

Mary is probably older at that point in time.

She was able to give him her perspective on how the Lord used her to give birth to the Messiah.

Can you imagine that?

He probably interviewed Peter and [John](#) and these other people as well because they were eyewitnesses to all of this and many others who were alive then and he could cooperate what they said.

So he sets about to make this declaration and this narrative and he compiles all these things of events that happened among us.

First two, he says, just as those who from the beginning speaking about the beginning of Jesus's life and his ministry, remember we're setting the gospels.

The first three, we talked about last week, [Matthew](#), Mark and Luke are the synoptics that means together seeing Jesus's ministry and his life but from unique perspectives, [MatthewMark](#) and [Luke](#) are the synoptics that means together seeing Jesus's ministry and his life but from unique perspectives, Matthew to the Jew.

Primarily, they would understand he's Messiah.

[Mark](#) to those of the Roman culture, those people who were servant oriented.

So in that, Jesus is the servant, he came not to be served but to serve, right?

To give his life a ransom.

[John](#)'s gospel is not a synoptic and the focus of [John](#) is that Jesus is God, his deity.

He is the word the logos made flesh, right?

[John](#) 114 in the word became flesh and dwelt among us.

So what we have in [Luke](#) is a letter written to Gentiles, written to those of the Greek culture who are philosophical and high-minded, so to speak and so it's very meticulous in detail.

And by the way, as a doctor, there are things that he will share that we'll go through that nobody else did.

Probably 30 terms or so that have a direct connection to medicine because of his background in that reality.

So you think again about what God did with him.

He says in the universe two, just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses, people who autops us actually saw with their own eyes, autoptace, saw with their own eyes.

But also think about this, this is interesting.

That word, we get that word, autoptace, we get autopsy from that.

Isn't that interesting?

So what happens when there is an autopsy?

So there's enough shows out there, right?

Where there's also always somebody in the morgue, laying there that they've done what?

That they've opened up and they've meticulously investigated the internal parts of that person to try to

determine the cause of their death.

So that word comes from this, together seeing but methodically examining how powerful is that.

And there were others who were doing that as well, but God had raised him up specifically for this reason. And there were eyewitnesses and there were ministers of the word, the God used and delivered the word to us as well.

He goes on to say in verse three, "And it seemed good to me also," he was inspired, "having had perfect." That means also complete or full understanding of all the things again from the very first relating to Jesus' life and ministry, to write to you and orderly.

So a structured and orderly account going line by line, down the line, and it was given to this guy that he refers to as who?

Most excellent, they offer us.

Now remember last week, we looked at that.

They are God, right?

And if I don't know, or if I don't love, so lover of God, a person who loves God.

Something that was actually the name of a person, it may have been, but probably it's a Roman authority because he's referred to as excellent, Paul would refer to in the book of [Acts](#), some of the Roman authorities there as well as most excellent as he had his time before them.

So he was probably a Roman authority.

He might have even been the one who owned [Luke](#) because [Luke](#) was a slave.

[Luke](#) was actually a slave.

Most of the doctors and the people back then were slaves of rich owners.

In fact, in the Roman kingdom, there were about 60 million slaves.

You imagine that?

So back then, you know what, it was less expensive to have your own doctor.

It might be that way today, even, right?

With the cost of medical things and medical expenses to have your own doctor.

But [Luke](#) is sharing this information with this man because either he's become a believer, somebody's been already been sharing with him.

We know that, but to help him understand that he can trust again God's word.

And if he hasn't become a believer in God he would.

But the fact that he calls him "faeophilus," lover of God, chances are this man has put his faith and trust in Jesus already as well.

So this was the guy, the [Luke](#) was compiling evidence for initially, but guess what?

For us too, and everybody else throughout the last 2,000 years of church history.

Thank the Lord for that, right?

Then he was so meticulous in his study.

So when he says that again, toothaeophilus, then he transitions into verse four, and he gives us the reason, the goal, that you may know, again, personalize that.

The certainty, if something is certain, it's absolute.

You don't have to worry about it being a little inaccurate.

So we think about the word hope, right, in our language.

Well, I hope that works out.

That's not a given.

Remember the word hope in the New Testament in Greek, for example, in [Colossians](#) 127, it's Christ's in us who is the hope of glory that word "elpis" means confident, assurance, and joyful expectation.

It's not iffy, it's a done deal.

This is a certain reality, and that was the goal, and it's a goal for us.

So we may know that the certainty of those things, the events that played out in Jesus' life, in which you were instructed, the things of God.

How cool is that?

So folks, as we jump into this amazing study, and the detail in it, I pray that you're just blessed.

It's God's living word.

We're getting such an accurate account from this world-class historian and physician [Luke](#) that it's very, very powerful.

So let's go ahead and jump into some of these passages.

And you're aware of most of these things relating to the season of Christmas.

So when he talks about going back to the first, the Lord inspired him, the Holy Spirit inspired him to go back to the point of even a man called [John](#) the Baptist, and how he came upon the scene.

Why is that important?

And why did [Luke](#) do that?

Because we find that the new covenant would begin, of course, when Jesus comes upon the scene. The old covenant, by the way, was still in place.

The Lord had not spoken to Israel for 400 years since the end of [Malachi](#).

But at this time, he's going to use [John](#) the Baptist, and Jesus referred to him, and he says, at the prophets were, until who [John](#) the Baptist.

He's the one that comes in the spirit of Elijah, and he declares, and he says, prepare the way of the Lord. He is the closing prophet of the old covenant that points people to Jesus the Messiah because he's come on the scene.

How cool is that?

So he gives meticulous detail, going all the way back to [John](#) even.

So let's pick it up in verse five.

So there was in the days of Herod, that would be Herod the Great.

The King of Judea, a certain priest named Zacharias of the division of Abia.

His wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth, or Elisabeth.

So Herod the Great, you guys have heard of him before, right?

So this guy was a wacko.

(laughing) So I think he gave himself the name great, you know why?

The guy was like four foot nothing.

He was like, seriously, he's like four foot 10, four foot 11.

Think Lord Farquad, right?

Shrek, that's what you would think.

So he probably had a complex.

He was crazy.

He had some of his sons and his wives even killed because of his jealousy or his neurotic attitude, thinking that they were going to try to kill him.

But he was a brilliant architect.

In fact, he's the one who added to and finished the second temple, and it was considered one of the architectural wonders of the world.

So he was a brilliant nut [Job](#), okay?

So that's who he was.

But it was during that time frame.

So we find Zacharias, right?

And it says he's of the division of Abija.

So back in that day, remember, with the temple in existence, there were groups of priests, they would call them courses or divisions.

David had established this all the way back in the chronicles to serve in the temple.

At this time, in the New Testament history, there were as many as 20,000 priests that their lineage could be traced all the way back.

They'll the vertical aspect and the neuronic aspect.

But it says, Zacharias came from this.

So he was one of those priests, and it just so happens that the lot, the choice for him to serve in this unique role had fallen on him.

So there would have be a division that would come in and serve in the temple for a week's period, they would rotate out, and they would do that throughout history.

So what we find is, as we talk about Zacharias, he was of the division of Abija.

We'd say Abija, but his wife Elizabeth was also a daughter of Aaron.

And her name was Elizabeth.

And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments, ordinances of the Lord.

They were blameless.

So what is it saying?

They really loved the Lord.

They were faithful.

They were committed individually and as a husband and wife to the Lord, they sought him.

And when it says they were blameless, folks, that doesn't mean they were sinless.

All of sin, and come short of the glory of God, but they were consistent in their relationship with God.

They were committed.

They were people of the Word, and they trusted the Lord.

And God worked in their lives.

And by the way, that word blameless, Paul used that in second Timothy, when he talks about raising up elders.

And when the Lord raises up elders, it said that they should be blameless.

What does that mean?

That the word means that if there's an accusation made against them, if somebody tries to throw something up against the wall of his accusation, it doesn't stick because they didn't do it.

But again, we have a sin nature.

We're gonna make choices sometimes that aren't good, by the way.

If somebody in leadership in the body of Christ is making very poor decisions, then God needs to expose them, and he needs to remove them, right?

'Cause that is not good, but there needs to be consistency in their walk and service, and that was a case with these guys.

Like of her seven, but they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and they were both well advanced in years, old.

Old enough certainly that she could not have a child.

You go all the way back and you think about [Genesis](#), Abraham, and Sarah, right?

Think about that dramatic reality, and God's provision.

The Lord is going to do the same for them.

By the way, one of the interesting things that Zacharias, that Hebrew name, means Yahweh remembers. Jehovah, or Yahweh, the Lord remembers.

Her name, Elisabeth, means oath or promise of God.

So here's gonna be an amazing thing, as he goes into the temple to do his priestly duties.

God is going to begin and initiate this amazing dynamic of the use of him and his wife to bring a very important player in the New Testament reality, ushering in Jesus as well.

And so God is ultimately what, faithful.

He remembers his promises to Israel.

He remembers that he's going to bring about a Messiah, and here's the reality, I'm sure, that Zacharias and Elisabeth had prayed many years for a child.

And it never happened.

At this point, she was barren by the way, in that culture and in a lot of the Semitic cultures, that was a reproach.

If a woman could not bear a child, I mean, she felt like this big, and a lot of the other people in the culture treated her that way.

And here's the reality, Zacharias, in that culture as well, if your wife could not bear you a child, then you could use that as a grounds for divorce.

Zacharias loved Elisabeth.

He was wholeheartedly committed to her, and he did not put her away, and marry somebody who could have a child with.

He was committed.

And God is ultimately what, faithful, amen?

Isn't that so great?

So as we think again about their backgrounds, and even what their names mean, that they were faithful and walking with the Lord, but they had no child, who were advanced in years, and in verse 8 says this.

So it was that while he was serving as a priest, a Cohen, before God in the order of his division, Abhiyah, according to the custom of the priesthood, his lot fell to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord.

This is an incredible thing.

If they were serving as priests, this is one of the most amazing honors you would have, and it would probably happen to you maybe once, if ever, that you would have the lot fall upon you to perform this role.

Why is that?

Because the altar of incense was right outside of the veil and the curtain separating the holy place from the holy of holies, in the most holy place.

It was right outside of that.

And we know in the holy of holies, only one person could go one time a year, and that was the high priest right on Yom Kippur.

So he gets to go in and he gets to put the incense on the altar and the smoke of the incense rises up and it represents the prayers of the people.

And in his priestly role, that's what he's doing.

He's interceding for Israel, for the people of Israel, for God's people.

And you know what he's probably praying more than anything else?
 Messiah, may Messiah come.
 The Messiah, can I guide?
 And that was a hard to pray for that.
 So God is going to use them, by the way, to have a unique role in this.
 So he gets to go in.
 He's just feet away from the holy of holies.
 Remember that incredibly large, we call it a veil or a curtain?
 Guys, that was 80 feet tall and ye thick.
 It was huge.
 That was the same curtain that is Jesus when he was hanging on the cross.
 So badly beaten, right?
 His face, you couldn't even recognize him as human being [Isaiah](#) prophesied.
 The beard was ripped from this face, and yet he's pouring out what love and grace and mercy.
 That there was one criminal who had been mocking him with the other who realized that he was Messiah.
 And he said, remember me when you come into your kingdom?
 That was a profession.
 He understood Jesus was a Messiah king.
 And Jesus said, today, you will be with me.
 Where?
 In paradise.
 Where Jesus says that's good place to be folks.
 So that reality, that Jesus, when he died, when he said it is finished to tell us, I that meant the price had been paid in full.
 And he drew his last breath physically, the God tore that temple veil that Zakiraius would go before.
 Topped a bottle.
 Huge, heavy veil and curtain, God tore it.
 Topped a bottle and Jesus said it's finished wide because the new covenant was going to be ushered in.
 And in the new covenant, we will have access if we know Jesus, we've been born again into the very throne room of God, of any second, of any hour of any day.
 Isn't that remarkable?
 Isn't that amazing?
 But until that point, only one guy could go in once a year and even with Zakiraius going in and being the one who had been praying and offering the incense and the smoke representing the prayers of the people, there were two other co-ins, a priest that would go in with him.
 Why?
 Because they would prepare everything, but they would also back out as not to offend God, right?
 But they wanted, it was known that typically the person who did the altar of incense would do it quickly because they were afraid that if they had too much time, they may think or do something sinful and maybe God wouldn't, you know, might have.
 So they were thinking that might be the case.
 But the reality again, this is an amazing privilege that he has.
 So we find that according to the custom of the priest at verse 9, his lot felt a burnt incense when he went into the temple of the Lord.
 And the whole multitude then of the people was praying outside in the hour of incense.
 So there would be people who, Jewish, who would be gathering outside of the proper temple proper area and they would be praying as well as he was in there.
 Certainly, his wife was there, Elizabeth, family members, and others that knew him, but others who had come to pray.
 So they're waiting for him as he's praying.
 And so it says then, at the whole multitude of the people were praying outside of the hour of incense, then an angel of the Lord.
 By the way, not the angel of the Lord.
 Remember, you will not see the angel of the Lord than New Testament.
 In the Old Testament, we see the angel of the Lord because it's Christ pre-incarnated.
 It's Jesus interacting with humanity multiple times, think, [Exodus](#) chapter three, when he interacts with Moses at the burning bush, that's Jesus.
 That's why when he said in [John](#) chapter 58 before Abraham was, I am a goi-me.
 He was claiming to be the great I am, the Hayah, Hayah, you showed Hayah, the I am that I am from

[Exodus](#).

And that's why the Jewish religious leaders said, you're not even 30 years old, dude.

I mean, I'm not even 50 years old.

What's the deal?

And Jesus said before Abraham existed, I am, I exist.

And they wanted to kill him.

He was declaring his deity.

So this is just an angel, but it's Gabriel.

He's a heavy hitter, right among the angelic realm.

And so [Zechariah](#) tried to picture that.

He's a fairly heavy curtain.

You see the smoke of the incense rising up.

And it was made of spices.

It smelled very, very pleasant.

It was pleasing aroma.

And all of a sudden it says an angel of the Lord appeared standing on the right side of the altar of incense.

And when [Zechariah](#) saw him, he was troubled and fear fell upon him.

What do you think he would do?

Right?

I mean, you'd be like, whoa, I mean, you're there praying.

You're in Hebrew, Katado, nah, you know, you're doing all the stuff.

And all of a sudden, whoa, an angel manifests literally physically right there in its Gabriel.

And he was filled with fear.

For certain he says, but the angel said to him, do not be afraid, [Zechariah](#)'s, for your prayer is heard.

And your wife Elizabeth will bear a son.

And you shall call his name Yohanan.

His name in Hebrew Yohanan means God is gracious.

That's what his name means.

How cool is that?

So [John](#), the Baptist, Yohanan, God is gracious.

How is God going to demonstrate graciousness through Yeshua, Jesus?

Whose name means the Lord of salvation?

God provides salvation through Jesus.

So they had prayed.

They hadn't prayed and probably anymore.

Since she reached the point that she could no longer conceive, they probably didn't pray anymore, right?

But God says, we've heard, I've heard your prayers.

That's what Gabriel tells them, the Lord has heard.

And you will bear a son.

And by the way, again praying for coming Messiah, he's going to give him insight to that too.

It says in verse 14, "And you will have joy and gladness.

And many will rejoice at his birth.

" [John](#) the Baptist's birth and how God will use him.

"For he will be great in the sight of the Lord "and shall drink neither wine or strong drink.

"He will also be filled with the Holy Spirit, right?

"It abled and powered by the Holy Spirit, "even from his mother's womb.

" And we'll see later on, that's exactly the case.

Not today, later on, the others will point through the study.

And again, and he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord, their God, bring them into right relationship through Jesus, Messiah.

That'll be his role, the one declaring that the way is being prepared for the Lord.

It says in verse 17, "And he will also go before him.

" You notice him is capitalized, speaking of Jesus, denoting his deity.

We'll go before him in the spirit of the power of Elijah to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just and to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.

That would be part of his role as to call Israel, call the people to repentance for pairing the way and for their hearts to get right with God.

And so when he talks about turning the hearts of the fathers to the children, he's talking about prophecy

from [Malachi](#), that that would be fulfilled.

Verse 18 says, "And Zacharias said to the angel, "How shall I know this?"

"Again, imagine being in his shoes.

I mean, it's easy for us to read this, but imagine that's you.

And Gabriel's talking to you.

And how shall I know this for I am an old man talking about having a child and my wife, well, she's well advanced in years.

It's like, "Why am I all but Elizabeth?"

" (laughing) It throws her into the bus.

It sounds like, (laughing) but he's trying to fathom, how can this possibly be?

I wonder if he thought in a moment, "Hey, Abraham, Sarah, look what God did there.

" If he didn't think about that in a moment, I bet he did later.

I bet he did later.

Verse 19 in the angel answering, "Said to you, "I am Gabriel, Gabriel, who stands "in the presence of God and was sent to speak to you "and bring you these glad tidings.

"But behold, you will be mute and not able to speak "until the day these things take place "because you did not believe my words, "which will be fulfilled in their own time.

" So in that moment, in his fear, he didn't believe, he's questioning, so this was what happened.

Now God used it for a reason, right?

But he would not be able to speak again, vocally, until [John's](#) birth, so he had to write things out, write maybe he had learned sign language, he goes, "Okay, two syllables, "he's doing charades with them, I don't know, "trying to help them understand.

" You do what you gotta do, right?

Look at this, verse 21, "and the people waited for Zacharias "and marveled that he lingered so long in the temple.

"Wow, what is taking him so long?

"He should have been out by now.

" I mean, the other people have been called to serve night capacity, they're not in there that long.

Elizabeth might be thinking, "I wonder if he's dead.

" (laughs) "I wonder if they're gonna be dragging him out in a minute.

" Probably all kinds of things, but look at this, verse 22, "But when he came out, "he could not speak to them.

" And they perceived that he had seen a vision in the temple for he beckoned to them and remained speechless.

So he walks out, the people are like, and he can't talk to them, so there's a wonderful movie made years ago called The Nativity, I don't know if you've seen that before.

It's really well done.

And so it does show very accurately this encounter and this reality of Zacharias in the temple and what happened and him coming out and just being overwhelmed and tears in his eyes and they're all like,

"What's going on?"

" And they realized something supernatural had happened like a verse 23, so it was, as soon as the days of his service were completed, that he departed to his own house.

And now after those days, his wife, Elizabeth conceived and she hit herself five months saying, this is her final verse today, "Thus the Lord has dealt with me "and the days when he looked on me "to take away my reproach among people.

" Remember in that culture, if you could not bear a child as a woman, it was considered a reproach.

So as she is conceived in her old age, it's a miracle.

It's God who's performed a miracle.

It's not like the miraculous miracle of Jesus being conceived with the Holy Spirit over shadowing Mary, but it was God who certainly gave her the ability to conceive.

So we set the stage here looking at these first 25 verses for a continuing journey.

So next week, we will not be here.

Remember we'll be having church at the park, 10 o'clock same time and we'll pick it up from then.

So I encourage you to read through the narrative, read through the text, have familiarity with it.

You may be familiar already.

So guys, I just wanna share with you again that God is ultimately faithful.

Remember what Zacharias's name, that Yahweh remembers.

An Elizabeth's name, right, that our God is the God of promise, that he is faithful.

He is the ultimate promise keeper.

So as the worship team comes up, I want you to close your eyes on this pray.
Let me transition back into time of worship.
By the way, our elders and their wives and Pastor Raleigh, is he teaching?
Okay, Chris, can you go back there as well for prayer?
So if you guys need prayer, we'll have some of our leadership ladies and our elders be back by the cross to pray with you guys.
Father in Jesus holy, an awesome name.
Let me thank you for the depths of our hearts for your love and your grace and your mercy, Lord, and your word that is living and powerful.
And it's sharper than a two-edged sword.
Thank you, Lord, for the time you've given us today to be in your presence and to spend this time in your word.
I pray, Lord, that you've brought encouragement to hearts.
And I pray that we'll reflect back on what your word said in our study today.
The gain encouragement, Lord, to be edified and equipped to live the life you've called us to.
And Lord, we do take away from this study that you are the faithful one.
God, the year the one that we can trust, your word, we can also trust because of the overwhelming evidence.
And again, because your word, according to [Hebrews 4](#).
12, is living and powerful, living and active, Lord.
We pray again that we would be willing participants inviting you to accomplish what you intend to in our hearts and lives through your word.
So be with us now.
It's required ourselves for a couple of moments before we've seen these closing songs.
And thank you again, Lord, for your faithfulness and the privilege of spending this time with you today in Jesus' name.
[MUSIC PLAYING] [Music]