

Luke 1

Luke 1:1-4 Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile an account of the things fulfilled among us,² just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and proved to be servants of the word have handed them down to us,³ it seemed fitting for me as well, having investigated everything carefully from the beginning, to write *it* out for you in consecutive order, most excellent Theophilus;⁴ so that you might know the exact truth about the things you have been taught.

Analysis of vv. 1-4:

- 1) The preface in vv. 1-4 is in the style of Hellenistic prologues.
- 2) In v. 1 Luke begins to elucidate the reason and primary purpose for the writing of his account with the conjunction, “Inasmuch.”
- 3) The author indicates that he was not alone in his endeavor.
- 4) He affirms, “Many have undertaken to compile an account of the things fulfilled among us.”
- 5) Evidently there was considerable interest about the details of Christ’s life and ministry (as well as the early church).
- 6) The Gospel of Luke and Acts should be considered sequentially.
- 7) Therefore the affirmations of this prologue also extend to Acts.
- 8) Our term “undertaken” is “to set one’s hand to, to attempt.”
- 9) The word only occurs 3x in the NT and in the other two instances indicates attempts that were unsuccessful (**Acts 9:26-30** And when he had come to Jerusalem, he was trying to associate with the disciples; and they were all afraid of him, not believing that he was a disciple.²⁷ But Barnabas took hold of him and brought him to the apostles and described to them how he had seen the Lord on the road, and that He had talked to him, and how at Damascus he had spoken out boldly in the name of Jesus.²⁸ And he was with them moving about freely in Jerusalem, speaking out boldly in the name of the Lord.²⁹ And he was talking and arguing with the Hellenistic *Jews*; but they were **attempting** to put him to death.³⁰ But when the brethren learned *of it*, they brought him down to Caesarea and sent him away to Tarsus, **Acts 19:11-16** And God was performing extraordinary miracles by the hands of Paul,¹² so that handkerchiefs or aprons were even carried from his body to the sick, and the diseases left them and the evil spirits went out.¹³ But also some of the Jewish exorcists, who went from place to place, **attempted** to name over those who had the evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, "I adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preaches."¹⁴ And seven sons of one Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, were doing this.¹⁵ And the evil spirit answered and said to them, "I recognize Jesus, and I know about Paul, but who are you?"¹⁶ And the

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man, in whom was the evil spirit, leaped on them and subdued all of them and overpowered them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded).

- 10) However we cannot conclude from these limited occurrences that all previous attempts to provide an adequate account of Christ were deficient.
- 11) For example, Mark and possibly Matthew are believed to have completed the writing of their gospels prior to Luke.
- 12) Clearly these gospels are not deficient!
- 13) Nevertheless God determined there was a need for Luke's account in spite of the attempts of the "many."
- 14) Considering mankind's predilection to distort the truth, Luke's account in its own right would refute the spurious gospels that had been spawned since Christ's death.
- 15) False gospels, doctrines, apostles, prophets, and teachers were as prevalent in Luke's lifetime as they are in our day (cf. 2 Cor. 11:4, Gal. 1:6-9, 2 Peter 3:16).
- 16) "Compile" is to compose a narrative in an orderly sequence.
- 17) Luke points out that this included an orderly description of the things "fulfilled among us."
- 18) The verb translated "accomplished" implies the fulfillment of some purpose.
- 19) It is preferable to translate "fulfill" as the person and work of Christ is a fulfillment of God's promises.
- 20) Moreover, the "things fulfilled" also encompasses the things and events of the early church as recorded in Acts.
- 21) There were numerous fulfillments of God's promises and prophecies in the life of Christ:
 - a) Christ would be preceded by a forerunner (Mal. 3:1, Isa. 40:3-5, Luke 4:3-5, 7:27).
 - b) He was born of a woman (Gen. 3:15, Gal. 4:4, Heb 2:14).
 - c) The woman would be a virgin (Isa. 7:14, Matt. 1:22-23, Luke 1:34-35).
 - d) Flight into Egypt (Hosea 11:1, Matt. 2:15).
 - e) Massacre of infants (Jer. 31:15, Matt. 2:17-18).
 - f) Christ was in the line of Abraham (Gen 12:2-3, Luke 3:34, Gal. 3:16, 29).
 - g) Jesus was from the tribe of Judah (Gen 49:10, Heb. 7:14, Rev. 5:5).
 - h) He was a descendant of David and through Him the throne of David is established forever (2 Sam. 7:16, 1 Kings 11:36, Luke 1:32, 3:31-32).
 - i) A promised Redeemer (**Job 19:25-27** "And as for me, I know that my Redeemer lives, And at the last He will take His stand on the earth."²⁶ "Even after my skin is destroyed, Yet from my flesh I shall see God;²⁷ Whom I myself shall behold, And whom my eyes shall see and not another. My heart faints within me, **Galatians 4:4-5** But when the fulness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a

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- woman, born under the Law, ⁵ in order that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons).
- j) God the Holy Spirit was upon Him (Isa. 11:2, 42:1, Mark 1:10-12, Luke 3:22, 4:1).
 - k) Christ would hold the following offices:
 - i) Prophet (Deut. 18:15-18, Acts 3:19-23).
 - ii) King (Psa. 2:1-12, Jer. 23:5, Zech. 9:9, Matt. 21:5, Luke 19:37-41).
 - iii) Priest (Psa. 110:4-6, Heb. 4:15, 5:5-6, 6:20, 7:26, 8:1-2).
 - l) Declared to be the Son of God (**Psalm 2:7** "I will surely tell of the decree of the LORD: He said to Me, 'Thou art My Son, Today I have begotten Thee., Matt. 3:17, Acts 13:33, Heb. 1:5, 2 Peter 1:17).
 - m) He was rejected and insulted (Isa. 53:3, Matt. 27:1-2, 12-14, Luke 18:31-33, John 1:10-11).
 - n) He would bear the transgressions of humanity (Isa. 53:4 Surely our griefs He Himself bore, And our sorrows He carried; Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, Smitten of God, and afflicted. ⁵ But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; The chastening for our well-being *fell* upon Him, And by His scourging we are healed., 1 Cor. 15:3).
 - o) He was silent when accused (Isa. 53:7, Matt. 26:63, Luke 23:9).
 - p) Crucified with criminals and given a rich man's grave (Isa. 53:9 His grave was assigned with wicked men, Yet He was with a rich man in His death, Because He had done no violence, Nor was there any deceit in His mouth, Mark 15:27-28, Luke 22:37, 23:32, 50-53).
 - q) He interceded on behalf of those who put Him to death (Isa. 53:12, Luke 23:34)
 - r) His resurrection (Psa. 16:10, Luke 24:46).
 - s) His ascension and session (Psa. 110:1, Luke 24:50-53).
- 22) Luke indicates in v. 2 that the facts regarding the life of Christ had been handed down via "eyewitnesses and servants of the word" (lit. trans. "Those who proved to be servants of the word").
- 23) The "eyewitnesses" are anonymous, but being a close associate of Paul, we may surmise that Luke was acquainted with other apostles and members of the early church that had observed first hand Christ and His ministry.
- 24) The "servants of the word," a group which appears to be distinct from the "eyewitnesses," comprised those believers that also played an active role in providing an accurate testimony of Christ.
- 25) In v. 2, Luke is also establishing the veracity of the information on which he relied upon to compose his account.

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- 26) Luke declares his intentions in v. 3.
- 27) As “many” had considered the matters regarding Christ and the early church worth writing about, Luke thought it “fitting” to write about them too.
- 28) Luke’s account was inspired so we may infer that his resolve to write was prompted by God the Holy Spirit (cf. **2 Timothy 3:16-17** All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; ¹⁷ that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.).
- 29) Moreover, Luke didn’t accept the information handed down without first vetting it.
- 30) That is, as he asserts here, he had “investigated everything carefully from the beginning.”
- 31) Our term “investigated” is to pay careful attention to something or to diligently check out (“parakoloutheo”).
- 32) The adverb “carefully” further emphasizes that he conscientiously maintained strict standards in verifying his source material (“akribos”).
- 33) Further, Luke didn’t conduct a careful investigation into some of the details passed down.
- 34) On the contrary, he carefully investigated “everything” that had been fulfilled among them from the “beginning.”
- 35) The “beginning” point for Luke is the anticipation of the births of John the Baptist and Jesus.
- 36) Following his investigation, Luke recorded the details in “consecutive order.”
- 37) The term translated “consecutive order” doesn’t strictly refer to a chronological sequence, but to an orderly thematic arrangement as well.
- 38) Luke’s careful investigation corresponds with his careful composition.
- 39) He doesn’t present his account in a disjointed manner, but as a coherent, comprehensive whole through the guiding of the Holy Spirit.
- 40) In v. 3 we see that gospel is primarily addressed to an individual named “Theophilus.”
- 41) The proper name “Theophilus” means “friend of God” and occurs frequently in the third century B.C. onward for both Jews and Greeks.¹
- 42) “Most excellent” is an honorific title which suggests that Theophilus is an official or a person of distinction (cf. Acts 23:26, 24:3, 26:25).
- 43) Despite the many attempts to identify Theophilus, a concrete identity has not been established.
- 44) Although addressed to one individual, Luke’s writing was also intended for a wider readership.

¹ John Nolland, Word Biblical Commentary, Luke 1-9:20 (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1989), 10.

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- 45) Luke presents his primary purpose in writing his account.
- 46) To Theophilus he declares, “so that you might know the exact truth about the things you have been taught.”
- 47) The verb “know” is not used here of a basic understanding or knowledge.
- 48) Rather our verb means “to fully know” or “to know exactly” (“epiginosko”).
- 49) Luke desires Theophilus to fully know the “exact truth” about the person and work of Christ.
- 50) It’s clear that Theophilus had been taught some fundamentals in regard to Christ (“the things you have been taught”).
- 51) Nevertheless, he was deficient in his knowledge and needed the assurance that Luke’s detailed, comprehensive account would provide.
- 52) It is possible that Theophilus was troubled by false gospel accounts and other erroneous information about Christ.
- 53) Luke may have intended his gospel to provide a potent counterpunch to the false doctrines circulating during his day.
- 54) As a polemic or not, his readers would be readily able to separate the facts from the fiction.

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Luke 1:5-7 In the days of Herod, king of Judea, there was a certain priest named Zacharias, of the division of Abijah; and he had a wife from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. ⁶ And they were both righteous in the sight of God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and requirements of the Lord. ⁷ And they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and they were both advanced in years.

Analysis of vv. 5-7:

- 1) After explaining his rationale for writing his account, Luke begins to recount the events surrounding the announcement of the birth of John the Baptist.
- 2) Interestingly, this infancy account is absent from the other Gospels (Matt. 3:1, Mark 1:4, John 1:6).
- 3) He fixes the timing of the narrative during the reign of “Herod, king of Judea.”
- 4) This citation with the many that will follow in the book, link the biblical account to the persons and events of secular history.
- 5) Here, “Judea” a Roman province, is a general reference to the whole of Palestine which also encompassed Galilee and Samaria (cf. Luke 4:44, 7:17).
- 6) At times Luke uses “Judea” to refer to a region that was distinct from Galilee and Samaria (cf. Acts 9:31).
- 7) Herod is referred to as “king of Judea” in part to distinguish him from other officials named “Herod” (e.g. Herod Agrippa I, Luke 3:1, Acts 12:21).
- 8) Herod is otherwise known as “Herod the Great” in other historical accounts (e.g. the writings of Josephus).
 - a) Herod encouraged the circulation of the tradition that his family descended from an illustrious Babylonian Jew.²
 - b) However, he was Idumean and therefore an Arabic descendant of the Edomites.
 - c) Previously the Idumeans had been subjugated by the Hasmonean rulers and compelled to convert to Judaism.
 - d) He was appointed “king of Judea” by the Roman senate.
 - e) Herod was cruel ruler who put to death many members of his own family including his wife and sons.
 - f) Additionally, it was Herod who ordered the execution of infants in Bethlehem in order to kill Jesus, the real king of the Jews (Matt. 2:16).
 - g) His rule is commonly dated from ~37 BC to 4 BC.
 - h) However a revised date of 1 BC will be posited when we examine the chronology of the birth of Christ in chapter 2.
- 9) Luke introduces a certain priest named Zacharias and his wife, Elizabeth.

² Flavius Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews, XIV, i, 3.

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- 10) Zacharias was priest of the division of Abijah.
 - a) The name Zacharias from Zechariah means “God remembers.”³
 - b) In addition to being a descendant of Levi, as a priest serving “before God” Zacharias had to be a descendant of Aaron (Ex. 27:21, 28:1ff, Num. 18:1ff).
- 11) Our term “division” refers to a class of priests that performed daily duties for a specified time in the temple in Jerusalem (“ephemeria”).
 - a) There were 24 such divisions in the priesthood (1 Chron. 24:1-19, 2 Chron. 8:14).
 - b) Zacharias was from the division of Abijah, the eighth division (**1 Chronicles 24:10** “...the seventh for Hakkoz, the eighth for Abijah...”).
 - c) Following the Babylonian captivity, only 4 divisions returned (Ezra 2:36-39, Neh. 7:39-42).
 - d) These 4 were further subdivided to make up the original 24 divisions.
 - e) Apart from the great feasts, these divisions performed their duties two separate weeks out of the year.⁴
- 12) Elisabeth is also a descendant of Aaron as Luke describes her as being “from the daughters of Aaron.”
- 13) A priest was expected to marry an Israelite virgin, yet it wasn’t mandated that she be of priestly descent (cf. Lev. 21:7, 14).
- 14) Both parents of John the Baptist were descendants of Aaron.
- 15) Furthermore Luke points out, “they were both righteous in the sight of God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and requirements of the Lord.”
- 16) Evidently Zacharias and Elizabeth were diligent to live in accord with God’s directive will so they were designated “righteous” before God.
- 17) The “righteous” designation was a result of their “walking blamelessly in all the commandments and requirements of the Lord.”
- 18) “Walking blamelessly” figuratively refers to their exemplary conduct in life (cf. Phil. 2:15, 1 Thess. 3:13).
- 19) This is in stark contrast to pursuing a lifestyle of debauchery (1 Peter 4:3, 2 Peter 2:10, 3:3).
- 20) They adhered to the “commandments and requirements” of the Law (e.g. Deut. 6:5, 12:28ff, Psa. 31:23, 97:10).
- 21) This doesn’t suggest or imply perfection, but that both of them made obedience to God a high priority in everyday life.

³ Walter L. Liefeld, *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, vol. 8, Luke (Grand Rapids: 1984), 825.

⁴ I. Howard Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke, A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids: 1978), 52.

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- 22) In v. 7 Luke indicates that Elizabeth was incapable of bearing children and that both were sexually dead (i.e. “they were both advanced in years” cf. other cases of childlessness, Gen. 17:15ff, 25:21, 29:31, Judges 13:2).
- 23) Both were “righteous” so their childlessness was not necessarily a result of sin (cf. Lev. 20:20-21).
- 24) Barrenness and advanced age would prove to be irrelevant as God had other plans.
- 25) These factors would only heighten the sense of the miracle birth that was going to take place.

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Luke 1:8-12 Now it came about, while he was performing his priestly service before God in the *appointed* order of his division,⁹ according to the custom of the priestly office, he was chosen by lot to enter the temple of the Lord and burn incense.¹⁰ And the whole multitude of the people were in prayer outside at the hour of the incense offering.¹¹ And an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing to the right of the altar of incense.¹² And Zacharias was troubled when he saw *him*, and fear gripped him.

Analysis of vv. 8-12:

- 1) The author now provides the setting for the announcement of the birth of John the Baptist.
- 2) It was the appointed time for the division of Abijah, which included Zacharias, to perform their priestly duties.
- 3) The daily ritual at the temple included the offering of the morning and evening sacrifices.⁵
- 4) In both offerings a burnt offering was made along with various accompaniments.
- 5) Zacharias' priestly service is said to be "before God."
- 6) Yet for Zacharias this was especially significant.
- 7) He would be going into the Holy Place to burn incense, and would be separated by a curtain from the place God manifested His presence, the Holy of Holies (Ex. 26:33 cf. Ex 25:8).
- 8) Therefore his service would place him "before" or opposite God in a literal sense.
- 9) He was chosen by lot to enter the temple to burn incense according to the custom of the priesthood at that time.
- 10) Offering incense in the Holy Place was a privilege and evidently there were a large number of priests.
- 11) As a consequence, a priest was not permitted to offer incense more than once in his lifetime.⁶
- 12) Therefore casting lots was an equitable way to determine who would perform this duty.
- 13) The "temple" refers to the inner sanctuary comprising the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies ("naos").
- 14) The Holy Place contained (in Herod's Temple):
 - a) The Altar of Incense (cf. Ex. 30:1-11).
 - b) The Table of Show bread (Heb. 9:2).
 - c) The Lampstand.

⁵ Ibid, 54.

⁶ Ibid

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- 15) At other times, Luke refers to the temple complex of buildings (“hieron”- Luke 2:27).
- 16) It’s not clear from the context if this was the morning or evening offering.
- 17) The incense offering was performed at a specific time each day as witnessed by the phrase “the hour of the incense offering.”
- 18) Incense was burned at a specific time twice daily in conjunction with the trimming of the lamps (Ex. 30:6-8).
- 19) The priest carried burning coals in a censer from the altar of burnt offering to the altar of incense and then burned the incense on the coals (cf. **Leviticus 16:12-13** "And he shall take a firepan full of coals of fire from upon the altar before the LORD, and two handfuls of finely ground sweet incense, and bring *it* inside the veil. ¹³ "And he shall put the incense on the fire before the LORD, that the cloud of incense may cover the mercy seat that is on *the ark of the testimony*, lest he die.).
- 20) The incense was made from a specific recipe and possessed a unique fragrance (Ex. 30:34-38, Ex. 37:29).
- 21) Furthermore, it was to be offered by the appropriate priest.
- 22) We see from other passages this seemingly obvious point was ignored by a number of individuals.
- 23) Failure to offer the incense properly or if offered by an unqualified individual brought about severe punishment (**Exodus 30:9** "You shall not offer any strange incense on this altar, or burnt offering or meal offering; and you shall not pour out a libation on it, Lev. 10:1ff, Num. 3:4, 16:35ff, 2 Chron. 26:16ff.).
- 24) Interestingly, the smoke of the incense offering was symbolical of ascending prayer to God (Rev. 5:8, 8:3-4).
- 25) Hence the need for the proper content and protocol in the offering.
- 26) There is an analogy between the incense offering and the believer’s prayer life in the CA.
 - a) As the priest was “before God” so the CA believer is figuratively before God and the throne of grace when in prayer (cf. Heb. 4:16).
 - b) The incense was offered twice daily at a certain time which demonstrates consistency. Likewise we should have a consistent prayer life (Eph. 6:18 cf. **Luke 18:1** Now He [Jesus] was telling them a parable to show that at all times they ought to pray and not to lose heart...).
 - c) The incense was composed of specific ingredients so our prayers ought to have certain ingredients when offered to God (e.g. thanksgiving, Dan. 6:10, Phil. 4:6, 1 Thess 1:2, 1 Tim. 2:1).
- 27) While Zacharias was offering incense in the Holy Place there was a multitude of people praying outside.

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- 28) Although he would be in the company of other priests for a time, at some point he is alone during the burning of the incense.
- 29) At this point an “angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing to the right of the altar of incense.”
- 30) Our term “appeared” in this context indicates that this is a physical appearance of an angel (“horao”).
- 31) That is, Zacharias was not seeing a vision or experiencing some type of dream (Luke 1 :26ff, Acts 12:5ff cf. Matt. 1:20, **Acts 9:10-12** Now there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and the Lord said to him in a vision, "Ananias." And he said, "Behold, *here am I*, Lord." ¹¹ And the Lord *said* to him, "Arise and go to the street called Straight, and inquire at the house of Judas for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for behold, he is praying, ¹² and he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him, so that he might regain his sight.", **Acts 16:9-10** And a vision appeared to Paul in the night: a certain man of Macedonia was standing and appealing to him, and saying, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." ¹⁰ And when he had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go into Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them, **Colossians 2:18** Let no one keep defrauding you of your prize by delighting in self-abasement and the worship of the angels, taking his stand on *visions* he has seen, inflated without cause by his fleshly mind).
- 32) The angel was tangible...standing before him.
- 33) Luke provides no description of the angel other than the appellation, “angel of the Lord.”
- 34) An “angel of the Lord” denotes an elect angel in contrast to a demon or an angel of Satan (cf. Matt. 25:41, Rev. 12:7-9).
- 35) In various passages this title refers to the physical appearance of God the Son prior to his incarnation (Judges 6:11ff, 13:3ff cf. Gen. 22:12).
- 36) However, in our context this particular angel is named Gabriel (cf. v. 19).
- 37) Zacharias’ response to the appearance of Gabriel was intense fear.
- 38) The word translated “troubled” indicates acute mental agitation (“tarasso”).
- 39) To further emphasize his agitated state Luke adds, “Fear gripped him.”
- 40) Our term “gripped” figuratively portrays fear suddenly falling upon Zacharias (“epipipto”).
- 41) In short, he was terrified.

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Luke 1:13-17 But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your petition has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will give him the name John. ¹⁴ "And you will have joy and intense gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth. ¹⁵ "For he will be great in the sight of the Lord, and he will drink no wine or liquor; and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit, while yet in his mother's womb. ¹⁶ "And he will turn back many of the sons of Israel to the Lord their God. ¹⁷ "And it is he, himself who will go *as a forerunner* before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers back to the children, and the disobedient to the thinking of the righteous; so as to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."

Analysis of vv. 13-17:

- 1) V. 13 begins with the angel enjoining Zacharias, "Do not fear" because he is the bearer of good news.
- 2) He affirms to Zacharias that his "petition has been heard."
 - a) "Petition" typically indicates a request asked with urgency ("deesis").
 - b) The term occurs 9x in the NT and is used exclusively of requests addressed to God (Luke 2:37, Rom. 10:1, 1 Tim. 5:5, 1 Peter 3:12, etc.).
 - c) The verb "heard" is not used here of a passive activity ("eisakouo").
 - d) Rather it indicates that God listened to Zacharias' petition and responded favorably (cf. Acts 10:31).
- 3) It is improbable that the angel refers solely to a petition that was just made by Zacharias while he was burning incense.
- 4) The nuance is that Zacharias had been making his petition known for some time.
- 5) The good news is that Elizabeth would bear him a son.
- 6) We may surmise that the favorable answer to the petition for a son was due in part to his righteous manner of life (v. 6, Heb. 5:7).
- 7) The birth of a son was an integral part of the answer to his petition.
- 8) In spite of old age and barrenness, it was no problem for God to bless Zacharias and Elizabeth.
- 9) As a righteous priest, Zacharias would also have been praying, especially when offering incense, for the coming Messiah (cf. Luke 2:25).
- 10) This certainly was another blessing for Zacharias.
- 11) In addition to the miraculous provision of a son, his son would have an important ministry as the forerunner of the Messiah.
- 12) Normally it was the father's privilege to name a son (cf. Luke 1:62).
- 13) Yet here Zacharias is told, "**You will** give him the name John."

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- 14) The fact that God instructed Zacharias, through Gabriel, to call his son by a particular name indicates that John held a unique position in the plan of God (cf. Gen. 17:19, Isa. 7:14, 49:1).
- 15) “John” was a common name, meaning “the Lord is gracious.”⁷
- 16) Furthermore, John’s birth would bring “joy and gladness” to Zacharias.
- 17) “Gladness” indicates “intense gladness” (“agalliasis”- Luke 1:44, Acts 2:46, Jude 1:24).
- 18) Additionally his birth would also be a source of joy for many in Israel.
- 19) At least those who were seekers and accepted his message.
- 20) For those who were negative, John was a gadfly (cf. Matt. 3:7, Luke 3:19).
- 21) The angel elaborates on the reason John will be a source of joy in v. 15 and following.
- 22) He declares, “He will be great in the sight of the Lord.”
- 23) The adjective translated “great” may refer to a number of things depending on the context:
 - a) An extent of space such as a large room.
 - b) A large quantity of something (e.g. eternal reward, **Hebrews 10:35** Therefore, do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward.).
 - c) Intensity or degree of something (e.g. a fierce storm, Mark 4:37, intense heat, **Revelation 16:9** And men were scorched with fierce heat; and they blasphemed the name of God who has the power over these plagues; and they did not repent, so as to give Him glory).
 - d) Used of persons possessing a high status or prominent position (e.g. those who are obedient to the word of God, Matt. 5:19).
 - e) It is this last meaning that is applicable to John.
- 24) The phrase “in the sight of” means in the estimation or judgment of the Lord.
- 25) Therefore we see that John would enjoy a high status before the Lord (Matt. 11:11, Luke 7:28).
- 26) His greatness would be due to his complete commitment and divine empowerment in fulfilling his role as the forerunner of the Messiah.
- 27) As a general principle, God holds those who are faithful to His plan in high esteem (cf. Num. 12:6-8, Dan. 10:11-12).
- 28) While many in the world are esteemed for their wealth, possessions, intellect, and talents, these things are inconsequential to God (cf. Luke 16:15, 1 Cor. 1:26-29, 3:19).
- 29) Instead, He cares about the spiritual state of the inner person (cf. 1 Cor. 14:20, 1 Peter 3:4).

⁷ Ibid, 56.

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- 30) What are some of the qualities of the inner person that will gain God's esteem?
- a) Love for Him (**Deuteronomy 6:5** "And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might, **Deuteronomy 10:12** "And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require from you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways and love Him, and to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, John 14:15, 21).
 - b) High quality thinking (i.e. think according to Divine viewpoint, Rom. 12:2-3, **Philippians 4:8** Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, let your mind dwell on these things).
 - c) Sensible thinking/sound judgment (Titus 2:6, 1 Peter 4:7).
 - d) Recognition of the importance of Bible doctrine, God's wisdom (Psa. 119:2, Prov. 4:4-5, Col. 3:1-2).
 - e) Focus on good works (Titus 3:8).
 - f) Lack of selfishness (Phil. 2:5).
 - g) Generosity with resources (Deut. 15:7-8, Prov. 11:25, 22:9, 1 Tim. 6:18).
 - h) Consistent prayer life (cf. Acts 1:14, Phil. 4:6, 1 Thess. 5:17).
 - i) Attitude of thanksgiving (Psa. 35:20, Eph. 5:4, Col. 3:15).
 - j) Inner joy/happiness regardless of circumstances (cf. Psa. 97:12, Col. 1:24, 1 Thess. 1:6, James 1:2).
 - k) Confidence in God (cf. 2 Cor. 3:4 vs. confidence in the flesh, Phil. 3:3 also Heb. 11:6).
 - i) His deliverance from adverse circumstances in life (e.g. oppression by –v, cf. Psa. 27:3, 34:17, Prov. 3:25, Luke 12:6-7).
 - ii) His provision of living grace (cf. Luke 12:29-31, Phil. 4:19, 1 John 5:14).
 - l) Contentment with God's provision (Phil. 4:11, Heb. 13:5)
 - m) Endurance of undeserved suffering (1 Peter 2:19 cf. Rom. 8:18).
- 31) The angel Gabriel further explains that John "will drink no wine or liquor."
- 32) In the Greek this is a very strong prohibition against the consumption of alcohol.
- 33) It indicates that John will **absolutely not** drink wine or liquor.
- 34) Total abstinence will be required during his life.
- 35) Our term translated "wine" is the standard word in the Greek for the fermented juice of the grape ("oinos"- John 2:3, Eph. 5:18, 1 Tim. 5:23).
- 36) "Liquor" is differentiated from "wine."
- 37) The word "liquor" is a general reference to other types of alcoholic beverages besides wine ("sikera" e.g. beer).

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- 38) Why the prohibition against the consumption of alcohol?
- 39) It would be wrong to see this as a general indictment against drinking.
- 40) We will see later in Luke that Jesus didn't abstain from drinking (Luke 7:33-35 cf. Matt. 11:18-19).
- 41) Furthermore His first miracle was turning water into wine (John 2:1-11).
- 42) Based on this, clearly producing and/or consuming alcohol is not sinful (cf. Deut. 14:23, 26).
- 43) The word translated "wine" in John 2 is the same basic Greek word for "wine" in our passage ("oinos").
- 44) Some points to consider regarding wine and alcohol.
- Wine is provided by God for mankind's enjoyment (Psa. 104:15).
 - Wine was part of the allotment given to the Levitical priests by the people of Israel (Num. 18:12, Neh. 10:37).
 - In Israel an abundance of new wine was sign of God's blessing (Deut. 7:13, 11:14, 33:28).
 - On a personal level, honoring God from the best of one's resources would assure one of a stellar wine harvest (Prov. 3:9-10)
 - Eating food and drinking wine metaphorically portrays learning Divine wisdom (**Proverbs 9:1-5** Wisdom has built her house, She has hewn out her seven pillars; ² She has prepared her food, she has mixed her wine; She has also set her table; ³ She has sent out her maidens, she calls From the tops of the heights of the city: ⁴ "Whoever is naive, let him turn in here!" To him who lacks understanding she says, ⁵ "Come, eat of my food, And drink of the wine I have mixed).
 - Of course the abuse of alcohol, drunkenness, is to be avoided (Prov. 20:1, 21:17, Rom. 13:13, Eph. 5:18).
 - Additionally we are to avoid having fellowship with those who engage in drunkenness (Prov. 23:20-21).
- 45) In v. 15 this prohibition against drinking wine or any other alcoholic beverage is similar to that prescribed for the one under the Nazirite vow (Num. 6:2-3).
- The basic meaning of the noun "Nazirite" is "devoted, consecrated, or separate" (נָזִיר, "nazir").
 - The term refers to someone who is separated or consecrated to God through making a special vow.
 - The "vow of the Nazirite" is literally the "vow of devotion or separation" and was voluntary.
 - Two notable exceptions were Samson and Samuel. Both were consecrated to God prior to birth (Judges 13:4, 1 Sam. 1:11, 22).

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- 46) The particulars of the special vow of the Nazirite (Num. 6:1ff).
- a) In the Hebrew, the form of the verb translated “special” carries the connotation of making a vow which is hard or difficult (נָזַר, pala in the Hiph, Lev. 27:2; in the Niphal, Deut 30:11).
 - b) This certainly gives the indication that the making of a Nazirite vow was not a frivolous matter.
 - c) Some of the Nazirite requirements were like those of the high priest.
 - d) Any similarities in requirements would not be unusual as Israel was viewed by God as His possession, “a kingdom of priests and a holy nation” (Ex. 19:6).
 - e) More importantly, the Nazirite vow was analogous to the incarnation of Jesus Christ (cf. Col. 2:16-17).
 - f) The ordinances were a teaching aid which foreshadowed the perfect person and work of Christ.
 - g) The one who consecrated himself to God faced three demanding limitations in regard to their diet, appearance, and associations.
 - i) Diet: Vv. 3-4 prohibit the consumption of wine and strong drink and it’s by products, along with all produce of the vine (lit: “wine vine”).
 - (1) Next we see the dietary limitations include grape juice, fresh or dried grapes, grape seeds even the grape skins.
 - (2) Normally, these proscribed items were legitimate and not considered as unclean (cf. vinegar: Ruth 2:14, wine as an indication of blessing: Deut. 7:13, 11:14, 32:14, 33:28, Psa. 104:15).
 - (3) Nor does this prohibition appear to be a preventative against drunkenness.
 - (4) It is interesting to note that priests were not to drink prior to serving (Lev. 10:9 cf. Ezek 44:21, also see Isa. 28:7).
 - (5) We have a common denominator with all of these items. They are all associated with fermentation which is a process that involves yeast or leaven.
 - (6) On a symbolical level leaven represents sin (Ex. 12:15, 1 Cor. 5:7).
 - (7) In relation to Christ, the absence of leaven portrays His sinless perfection (Heb 4:15, 1 John 3:5 cf. 2 Cor. 5:21).
 - (8) Another aspect of symbolic significance to be considered is the concept of self denial or self sacrifice.
 - (9) The one who made a Nazirite vow willingly abstained from something legitimate (e.g. wine, vinegar, grape juice, etc.) for the period of the vow.
 - (10) The abstinence of the Nazirite portrays the humiliation and condescension of Christ during the incarnation (cf. Phil 2:5-8).

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- (a) His humiliation refers to His voluntary submission to the sufferings and limitations associated with His life on earth, including His death on the cross (Heb. 12:2).
- (b) The condescension of Christ refers to His willingness to lower Himself and assume the nature of man (Heb. 2:9).
- ii) Appearance: V. 5 prohibits the Nazirite from having his hair cut.
 - (1) The Nazirite was to allow his hair to grow freely during the period of his vow (cf. Num. 6:13, 18).
 - (2) The directives “no razor shall pass over his head” and “he shall let the locks of hair on his head grow long” would prohibit even any trimming of the hair.
 - (3) The uncut hair was a distinctive characteristic which identified one as being separated to God by virtue of the special vow.
 - (4) In this regard, the Nazirite was viewed as “holy” until his vow was complete.
 - (a) The adjective “holy” connotes that which is distinct or set apart from the common (“qadosh”).
 - (b) Here the term describes the Nazirite who is set apart to God by his vow, and further, his “holiness” is contingent upon observing the requirements of the vow.
 - (c) In a similar manner, the priests were viewed as “holy” or set apart to God in their service (Lev. 21:6, 2 Chron. 35:3).
 - (d) In a larger sense as well, God is holy and as such calls His people, the Jews to be holy. This holiness is maintained through obedience to His standards (Lev. 11:44, 19:2ff, Num. 15:40, Deut 7:6).
 - (e) In comparison with the Nazirite, the CA believer is viewed as “holy” or set apart to God (“hagios,” 1 Cor 3:17, 1 Peter 2:9).
 - (i) In relation to believers, the Greek adjective translated “holy” means the one who is consecrated to the service of God.
 - (ii) Unlike the Nazirite, a believer is initially consecrated to God at the point of faith in Jesus Christ.
 - (iii) Believers in the NT are frequently referred to “saints” which is literally “holy ones” or “the consecrated ones” (Rom. 15:26, 1 Cor. 1:2, Phil. 1:1, etc.).
 - (iv) A believer is in a consecrated state, but evidence of this state ought to be manifested in daily life (i.e. the saint ought to exhibit saintly attitudes and conduct).

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- (v) As individuals consecrated to God, we are enjoined to abstain from OSN activities and comply with His righteous standards (cf. Eph 5:3, Col. 3:5ff).
- (5) Based on the prohibition to cut the Nazirite's hair and the instruction to allow the hair to grow long, we may surmise that the standard hair length for men was short (or at least not long).
- (6) The long hair of the Nazirite may be viewed to have a positive and negative significance.
- (7) On the positive side, the Nazirite's hair was a visible sign of his consecration to God. It bears a similar significance to the following:
 - (a) The anointing oil on the head of the high priest (Lev. 21:12 cf. Lev. 8:12).
 - (b) The "holy crown" worn by the priests was as an emblem of their consecration (Ex. 29:6, 39:30, Lev. 8:9).
 - (c) A crown was also worn by the king as sign of his consecration ("crown," כִּיָּוֶן, nezer, 2 Sam. 1:10, 2 Kings 11:12, 2 Chron. 23:11).
- (8) In a negative sense, the long hair was a sign of dishonor or shame.
 - (a) Other passages indicate that long hair is a dishonor to a man (cf. 1 Cor. 11:14).
 - (i) The term "nature" in this context refers to God's regular or established order of things (cf. use in Rom. 1:26).
 - (ii) The term doesn't refer here to what is natural in the animal kingdom, or one's natural condition as determined by one's birth (Gal. 2:15), etc.
 - (iii) The word translated "dishonor" means shame, dishonor or disgrace.
 - (iv) What does the divinely established order of things teach?
 - (v) Namely, that long hair is a "dishonor" to a man.
 - (b) Also see Deut. 32:42 where the designation "long-haired" is used in derogatory sense.
 - (c) In this sense we may see that the long hair of the Nazirite was a sign of shame or reproach.
 - (d) Furthermore, as the Nazirite was a representative of Jesus Christ, the long hair visibly portrayed the shame or reproach borne by the Lord during the 1st Advent.

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- (e) Crucifixion in particular was considered to be a shameful and disgraceful by both Jews and Roman alike (cf. Deut. 21:23, Gal. 3:13, Heb 12:2).
 - (f) Although perfectly innocent, Christ was publicly displayed as a criminal. Even Judas confessed to His innocence (Matt. 27:4).
- iii) Associations: Vv. 6-8 forbids the Nazirite from coming into contact with a corpse.
- (1) This requirement extended for the duration of the vow.
 - (2) The prohibition doesn't merely preclude physical contact.
 - (3) It even extends to being in close proximity to a dead person (v. 6: "near," v. 9: "beside" cf. Num. 19:14).
 - (4) Even at the death of the closest of one's immediate family, mother, father, brother, or sister, the Nazirite was prohibited from touching their corpse.
 - (5) There were no exceptions no matter how close or beloved the person.
 - (6) These stringent requirements are analogous to those of the high priest (Lev. 21:10-11).
 - (7) Once again it is emphasized that the Nazirite was separated and set apart to God ("holy," cf. v. 5).
 - (8) If the Nazirite violated this prohibition by being near or touching a corpse, then he would "make himself unclean."
 - (9) The verb translated "make himself unclean" is reflexive which indicates that the subject renders himself unclean ("unclean," טָמֵא, tame, in the H'pael).
 - (10) In this scenario involving approaching and touching the dead, physical cleanliness is not in view.
 - (11) Rather, the one who defiled himself was viewed as ritually or ceremonially unclean.
 - (a) It was a primary duty of the priests to distinguish the ritually unclean from the ritually clean (Lev. 10:10, Ezek 22:26, 44:23).
 - (b) Besides death some other things that rendered one unclean include various animals, bodily discharges, child birth, skin disorders, etc (Lev. 11:4, 12:2, 13:2ff.).
 - (c) Uncleanness is also equated with sinful actions in some contexts (Lev. 16:16, 18:24).
 - (12) Ritual uncleanness or defilement could not be reconciled with the holiness of God.

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- (13) This was readily understood considering that the physical defilement which resulted from being near or touching a corpse represented a spiritual defilement.
- (14) The spiritual defilement in view is the universal corruption of humanity via the OSA which resulted in spiritual death.
- (15) Physical and spiritual death is a consequence of the sin of Adam. After Adam, all mankind has been born physically alive but spiritually dead with an OSN (Gen 2:17, Rom 3:23, 5:12, 17).
- (16) In short, defilement from physical death symbolized the defilement of spiritual death.
- (17) Num. 6:9-12 provide instructions for the Nazirite who became defiled by a corpse.
- (a) The defilement in v. 9 is caused by the sudden death of a person who is “beside” or near a Nazirite.
 - (b) This example doesn’t involve the deliberate violation of the vow.
 - (c) Rather this involves an unexpected and unplanned event.
 - (d) After being defiled he or she must shave their head, but not immediately.
 - (e) Note that the head was to be shaved on the seventh day once he became clean.
 - (f) On the eighth day the Nazirite was to bring a sin offering and burnt offering to the priest who in turn would make atonement for him.
 - (g) Although the Nazirite’s defilement was not brought about by a deliberate act in this scenario, he was still charged with sin (v. 11).
 - (h) Following the sin and burnt offering on the eighth day the Nazirite re-consecrated himself to God.
 - (i) As a part of re-dedication, he offered a guilt offering.
 - (j) Also that the previous days of his vow were nullified and had to be restarted from day 1.
 - (k) As the Nazirite was a type, this represents that Christ perfectly kept the will of the Father and was free from any defilement during the incarnation (i.e. no OSN, OSA, personal sin).
 - (l) Therefore the Nazirite was to remain undefiled during the length of his vow.
- (18) The cleansing process alluded to in Num. 6:7 was not merely applicable to the Nazirite, but for the nation as a whole.

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- (19) Again the defilement of physical death represented the universal defilement of mankind by spiritual death. Therefore the need for ceremonial cleansing was a vital matter in the nation of Israel.
- (20) Everyone in the nation was required to go through a strict purification process if defiled by a corpse or by that which was associated with physical death.
- 47) Of the Nazirite requirements only the prohibition of drinking alcohol explicitly applies to John.
- 48) Conspicuously absent is any prohibition against consuming vinegar or anything produced from the grape.
- 49) Furthermore the angel doesn't give any indication that John was required to let his hair grow and avoid the defilement of the dead.
- 50) Based on these factors, it appears unlikely that he was a Nazirite.
- 51) Admittedly in the case of Samuel, there is no mention of any of the Nazirite requirements besides Hannah's vow, "a razor shall never come on his head."
- 52) Yet, as we have seen in Numbers and Judges this requirement exclusively applies to the one under the Nazirite vow.
- 53) We may then infer that the other requirements were in force during Samuel's life (e.g. no drinking, etc.).
- 54) However the command to abstain from the consumption of alcohol is not exclusive to the Nazirite vow.
- 55) It was (and will be) a requirement for priests serving in the temple (cf **Leviticus 10:8-11** The LORD then spoke to Aaron, saying, ⁹ "Do not drink wine or strong drink, neither you nor your sons with you, when you come into the tent of meeting, so that you may not die-- it is a perpetual statute throughout your generations-- ¹⁰ and so as to make a distinction between the holy and the profane, and between the unclean and the clean, ¹¹ and so as to teach the sons of Israel all the statutes which the LORD has spoken to them through Moses." Ezek. 44:21).
- a) While performing his service, a priest was not permitted to drink alcohol.
 - b) Presumably this would serve as a preventative to carelessness in their priestly duties.
- 56) John's abstinence during the fulfillment of his ministry was analogous to the abstinence of a priest while performing his service in the temple.
- 57) Abstinence from alcohol would compliment John's ascetic lifestyle (cf. Matt. 3:4, Mark 1:6, Luke 7:33).
- 58) The angel goes on to proclaim, "he will be filled with the Holy Spirit, while yet in his mother's womb."

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- 59) The angel's statement raises some questions regarding the filling ministry of God the Holy Spirit.
- 60) How can John be filled with God the Holy Spirit prior to his salvation? Even while an infant before the so-called age of accountability?
- 61) Let's begin by taking a look at the meaning of the Greek and its translation.
- 62) The language of the angel's proclamation is straightforward.
- 63) Our term "filled" denotes that which is filled up or completely full ("pimplemi").
- 64) What will John be filled with? The angel clearly states, "The Holy Spirit."
- 65) "Holy Spirit" is two words in the Greek, "pneumatos hagiou."
- a) "Spirit" means a spirit, state of mind, or disposition depending on the context (Acts 17:16, 18:25, Rom. 8:16, 1 Thess. 5:23).
 - b) "Holy" is used of things and beings that are consecrated to God; it denotes the quality of being pure and reverent (Luke 1:70, Eph. 3:5, 1 Peter 1:16).
 - c) Based on these general definitions, one might construe "holy spirit" to refer to a pure or reverent state of mind.
 - d) In other passages "Holy Spirit" refers to the 3rd member of the Godhead, God the Holy Spirit (**Acts 2:4** And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance, **Acts 7:55-56** But being full of the Holy Spirit, he gazed intently into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God; ⁵⁶ and he said, "Behold, I see the heavens opened up and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.", **Romans 15:13** Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit, **2 Timothy 1:13-14** Retain the standard of sound words which you have heard from me, in the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. ¹⁴ Guard, through the Holy Spirit who dwells in us, the treasure which has been entrusted to you.).
 - e) In other verses Luke uses the similar language to refer to the filling of God the Holy Spirit and not a state of mind or disposition (Luke 1:41, 67, Acts 2:4, 4:8).
 - f) For this reason, "Holy Spirit" in v. 15 refers to the 3rd member of the Godhead.
- 66) The angel indicates that the filling will be "while yet in his mother's womb."
- 67) The preposition translated "in" requires further examination ("ek").
- 68) The basic meaning of the Greek preposition, "ek" which frequently denotes source or origin, is "from or "out from" (Luke 6:45- "out of," "from that", 2 Tim. 2:26- "from").
- 69) If we revise our translation it would read, "he will be filled with the Holy Spirit, while yet **out from** his mother's womb."
- 70) "Out from his mother's womb" refers to the time of his birth.

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- 71) Here we see that John possessed a unique sort of filling of God the Holy Spirit at his birth.
- 72) It is a unique sort because it was provided prior to his salvation.
- 73) At birth he was in a spiritually dead condition and unable to be filled with the Holy Spirit in the same manner as a believer in Jesus Christ.
- 74) Basic principles of spiritual death:
- a) Spiritual death was a consequence of Adam's original sin.
 - b) When Adam sinned, God judged him by removing his human spirit thereby rendering him spiritually dead.
 - c) That is, Adam's soul was separated from his spirit.
 - d) All mankind is born physically alive, but exist in a spiritually dead condition at birth as a result of his sin (Gen.2:17, Rom. 5:12ff, 1 Cor. 15:22 cf. Psa. 51:5).
 - e) Therefore, every human being needs a spiritual re-birth (John 3:1-16, 1 Peter 1:3, 23).
 - f) One's spiritually dead condition is only rectified through faith in the person and work of Jesus Christ.
 - g) At the point of faith in Christ an individual is "born again" with a regenerated human spirit (John 1:12-13, Titus 3:5).
 - h) Jesus Christ's death on the cross made this spiritual rebirth a potential for all mankind (Matt. 27:45-46, John 3:16, 19:30, 1 Peter 3:18).
 - i) Nevertheless most will not believe due to their own negative volition (cf. Matt. 7:13-14).
 - j) The perpetuation of spiritual death until physical death manifested by the refusal to believe in Christ will eventuate in the "second death," the lake of fire (Rev. 20:14-15).
- 75) Besides being spiritually dead, as an infant John would not possess the cognition necessary to accept or reject Jesus Christ.
- 76) Clearly he would not have been conscious of the existence of God the Father much less God the Son.
- 77) Even so, at his birth he was filled with the Holy Spirit.
- 78) At some point John did believe and would enjoy the "normal" ministries of the Holy Spirit as a believer in the Age of Israel.
- 79) For example some ministries of the Holy Spirit in the Age of Israel included:
- a) Abiding ministry (external position- Hag. 2:5, John 14:16-17; not necessarily permanent- 1 Sam. 16:14 cf. Psa. 51:11).
 - b) Empowering/strengthening ministry to complete specific applications (Num. 11:17-25, Judges 3:10, 11:29-33, 14:5-6, 15:14-16, 1 Sam. 11:1-6).

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- c) Filling ministry (Ex. 31:3, Luke 1:41, 67).
- d) Leading/guiding ministry (Psa. 143:10, Neh. 9:20).
- 80) Evidently for John the filling of God the Holy Spirit was more passive than functional prior to his salvation.
- 81) Presumably the purpose of John's unique filling as an infant was to ensure his protection in order to fulfill his unique role as the forerunner of Christ.
- 82) In v. 16 the angel indicates that John will have an effective ministry among his countrymen.
- 83) He prophesies, "he will turn back many of the sons of Israel to the Lord their God."
- 84) The term translated "turn back" indicates a turnabout in a spiritual or moral sense for better or worse ("epistrepho"- better: 1 Thess. 1:9-10, 1 Peter 2:25, worse: Gal. 4:9-11 2 Peter 2:22 cf. Prov. 26:11).
- 85) In our verse the verb means a change in belief or course of conduct for the better.
- 86) It is used in other passages in a technical sense to refer to conversion to Christianity (Acts 9:35, 11:21, 14:15, 15:19, 26:18, 20, 28:27, 2 Cor. 3:16, 1 Thess. 1:9).
- 87) The focus here is on the Person to whom they turn, "to the Lord their God."
- 88) Many of the Jews would turn from their legalistic and apostate way of life because of John's message and believe in the Messiah.
- 89) In John's day, Judaism was primarily dominated by two major sects, the Pharisees and Sadducees.
- 90) The term "Pharisee" means "separated ones."
 - a) They were the largest and most influential sect in NT times.⁸
 - b) The Pharisees were in part the ideological descendants of the Hasidim (i.e. strict orthodox Judaism, cf. Acts 26:5 also Acts 22:3).
 - c) Their theology was founded upon the OT canon and oral tradition from Jewish sages (i.e. the "hakamim" cf. Mark 7:5).
 - d) The Pharisees employed an allegorical method of interpretation with great value given to the oral tradition.
 - e) They believed in the existence of angels, spirits, the immortality of the soul, and the resurrection of the body.⁹
 - f) Furthermore, they placed great emphasis on Sabbath observance, ritual prayer, fasting, and the meticulous tithing of their property (Matt. 12:1-2, 23:23, Luke 11:42).¹⁰
 - g) Two influential Pharisaic teachers and their ideologies:

⁸ Merrill C. Tenney, *New Testament Survey* (Grand Rapids: 1961), 110.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

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- i) Hillel: moderate, showed regard to the poor, and was more willing to accept Roman rule.
 - ii) Shammai: strict in his interpretation, and a bitter opponent of the Romans.
 - h) They sought proselytes to their religion (Matt. 23:15).
 - i) The Pharisees established the framework for modern orthodox Judaism.
 - j) Two notable converts to Christianity: Paul and Nicodemus (John 3:1ff, 19:39, Phil. 3:5).
- 91) According to tradition the Sadducees derived their name from the sons of Zadok, who was High Priest during the reigns of David and Solomon (1 Kings 2:35, Ezek. 44:15, 48:11).
- a) Although less numerous than the Pharisees, they possessed political power.
 - b) This sect was in part an off-shoot of the Jewish Hellenists.
 - c) They were the party of the high priesthood and the Jerusalem upper class.
 - d) The Sadducees were also political opportunists that were ever ready to ally themselves with the dominant power in order to maintain their prestige and influence.
 - e) Theologically they were at odds with the Pharisees:
 - i) Limited canon to the Torah, which they considered to have higher authority than the other portions of the OT canon.¹¹
 - ii) Strictly literal interpretation of the Torah.
 - iii) The oral tradition so readily accepted by the Pharisees was rejected.
 - iv) They denied the existence of angels, spirits, and the concept of a bodily resurrection (Matt. 22:23, Luke 20:27, Acts 23:8).
 - f) None but the members of the High Priestly and upper class families of Jerusalem could be Sadducees.¹²
 - g) The sect of the Sadducees ceased to exist following the destruction of the Temple in 70 AD by Titus.
- 92) Both of these prominent sects promoted false doctrine and were frequent antagonists to Christ (Matt. 16:6ff, Luke 11:37ff).
- 93) The religious leaders for their part did the nation great harm through their false teaching (cf. **Matthew 23:15** "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you travel about on sea and land to make one proselyte; and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves.", Mark 12:38, Luke 11:46).
- 94) Although John's ministry had a positive effect on many Jews, the nation as a whole remained negative to the Messiah (**John 1:11** He came to His own, and those who

¹¹ Ibid, 111.

¹² Idem, Between the Testaments, 115.

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were His own did not receive Him, **Luke 10:13-15** "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles had been performed in Tyre and Sidon which occurred in you, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. ¹⁴

"But it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the judgment, than for you. ¹⁵

"And you, Capernaum, will not be exalted to heaven, will you? You will be brought down to Hades, **Luke 23:20-24** And Pilate, wanting to release Jesus, addressed them again, ²¹ but they kept on calling out, saying, "Crucify, crucify Him!" ²² And he said to them the third time, "Why, what evil has this man done? I have found in Him no guilt *demanding* death; I will therefore punish Him and release Him." ²³ But they were insistent, with loud voices asking that He be crucified. And their voices *began* to prevail. ²⁴ And Pilate pronounced sentence that their demand should be granted.).

95) In v. 17, Gabriel elaborates on the timing and purpose of John's ministry.

96) The Greek is emphatic and reads, "And he himself will go before Him..."

97) God would use John as the forerunner to Christ's ministry.

98) This would be a fulfillment of prophecy (Isa. 40:3 cf. Matt. 3:3, Luke 3:4-6).

99) Note that Gabriel refers to Christ with only the pronoun, "Him."

100) As a righteous priest, it was clear to Zacharias that Gabriel was referring to the Messiah as "Him."

101) The time frame of the incarnation was revealed to those who were seeking the truth (Matt. 2:1-2, Luke 2:25-30).

102) We may infer that Zacharias sought this information through study and prayer.

103) John would fulfill his ministry "in the spirit and power of Elijah."

104) Although Gabriel refers to the prophet, he is not directly identifying John as Elijah.

105) Some of the Jews thought he was Elijah, but this was a misidentification as John himself makes clear (John 1:21-23).

106) This hope was primarily based on a prophecy in Malachi (Mal. 4:5-6).

107) Rather John would fulfill his role as a forerunner in same spirit and power that enabled Elijah to fulfill his role as a prophet.

108) Some similarities between John and Elijah:

a) Rugged manner and dress (2 Kings 1:8 cf. Zech 13:4, Matt. 3:4).

b) Ministries were operative while the nation was in apostasy (1 Kings 16:29-17:1).

c) Both were sustained in the wilderness (1 Kings 17:2-6, Mark 1:4-6).

d) Both vigorously opposed negative volition (1 Kings 18:17-18, Matt. 3:7).

e) Both endeavored to turn back their countrymen from apostasy to the proper worship of God (1 Kings 18:21ff, 2 Kings 1:3, Luke 3:7-9).

f) Both are forerunners to Christ:

Luke 1

- i) John to the Messiah 1st advent.
 - ii) Elijah to Christ before the 2nd advent (**Malachi 4:5** "Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the LORD).
- 109) It is this last similarity as forerunners, which is the most significant.
- 110) In this sense Christ identifies John as Elijah in the gospel of Matthew (Matt. 11:14, 17:10-13).
- 111) Based on Christ's words, John the Baptist was a type of Elijah.
- 112) That is, John foreshadowed the future appearance and role of the prophet before 2nd advent.
- 113) Next Gabriel elaborates on the goals of John's ministry.
- 114) He would aim to "turn the hearts of fathers back to the children, and the disobedient to the attitude of the righteous."
- 115) The first part this phrase is derived from Malachi 4:6 (**Malachi 4:5-6** "Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the LORD. ⁶ "And he will restore the hearts of the fathers to *their* children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the land with a curse.").
- 116) However the theme in our verse diverges from the Malachi passage.
- 117) The latter appears to stress familial harmony while our verse doesn't.
- 118) The following phrase in Malachi, "and the hearts of the children to their fathers" is omitted in Luke.
- 119) Although the phrase could be elided as it was presumably well known to Zacharias, its inclusion would make the following phrase, "and the disobedient to the attitude of the righteous" awkward.
- 120) A literal rendering of the Greek in v. 17 reads, "And he will go before Him... **in order to turn back the hearts of fathers to children.**"
- 121) The term "turn back," previously encountered in v. 16, indicates a positive change in belief or course of conduct ("epistrepho"- Acts 28:27- "return", 2 Cor. 3:16- "turns").
- 122) "Hearts" is frequently used to refer to one's emotions, thinking and volition ("kardia"- Luke 21:14 – "minds", Heb. 3:8, 12 cf. Prov. 28:14).
- 123) "Fathers" and "children" are not used here in the sense of a family relationship.
- 124) Further, the definite article is absent before both "fathers" and "children" in the Greek.
- 125) Gabriel uses these terms in a metaphorical sense to portray the nation.
- 126) The "hearts of fathers" portrays the volition or thinking of the nation.

Luke 1

- 127) Turning back their hearts “to children” depicts a new found humility and receptiveness to John’s message concerning the Messiah (at least in a segment of the nation, cf. **Matthew 18:2-4** And He called a child to Himself and set him before them,³ and said, "Truly I say to you, unless you are converted and become like children, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven.⁴ "Whoever then humbles himself as this child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven, **Luke 18:16-17** But Jesus called for them, saying, "Permit the children to come to Me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.¹⁷ "Truly I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it *at all.*).
- 128) In order to be receptive to God and His plan, child-like humility and trust is needed (cf. **Mark 10:15** "Truly I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it *at all.*").
- 129) The second part of the phrase, “and the disobedient to the attitude of the righteous” is analogous to the first.
- 130) The same term “turn back” used in the first part applies to the second (“And he will go before Him...to **turn back** hearts of fathers to children, and the disobedient to the attitude of the righteous).
- First part: “to turn back the hearts of fathers to children.”
 - Second part: “and [turn back] the disobedient to the attitude of the righteous.”
- 131) The adjective “disobedient” is used here to refer to those in the nation of Israel that were mired in unbelief and apostasy (“apeithes”- cf. **Titus 3:3** For we also once were foolish ourselves, **disobedient**, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another).
- 132) The noun “attitude” in our verse means a way of thinking (“phronesis”).
- 133) Specifically in view is the “thinking of the righteous.”
- 134) This is a way of thinking that is according to God’s righteous standards.
- 135) John would endeavor to turn back the prevailing apostate thinking of the people and instead urge them to adhere to the thinking of the righteous.
- 136) Exchange human viewpoint for divine viewpoint.
- 137) In context, to turn from disobedience included a change of mind demonstrated by the acceptance of the Messiah.
- 138) The last phrase, “so as to make ready a people prepared for the Lord” sums up the purpose of John’s ministry.
- 139) He would accomplish this task by enjoining the people to change their thinking and proclaiming the imminent arrival of Jesus Christ (Luke 1:76-77, 3:3-6).
- 140) Further, he would dispel any false information about the Messiah (e.g. misidentification, Luke 3:15-16 cf. John 1:19-23).

Luke 1

Luke 1:18-20 And Zacharias said to the angel, "How shall I know this *for certain*? For **I myself** am an old man, and my wife is advanced in years." ¹⁹ And the angel answered and said to him, "**I myself** am Gabriel, **who has stood** in the presence of God; and I have been sent to speak to you, and to bring you this good news. ²⁰ "And behold, you shall be silent and unable to speak until the day when these things take place, because you did not believe my words, which shall be fulfilled in their proper time."

Analysis of vv. 18-20:

- 1) One would suppose that after hearing the angel's stunning announcement, Zacharias would be joyful.
- 2) Instead he responded skeptically, "How shall I know this *for certain*? For I myself am an old man, and my wife is advanced in years."
- 3) He chose to focus on his own decrepitude and that of his wife.
- 4) This human viewpoint focus was the basis for his unbelief.
- 5) Clearly this was not his finest moment as a believer especially as a priest.
- 6) He disregarded the precedent that God set with Abraham and Sarah and the birth of Isaac (Gen. 17:17, 21:5).
- 7) It should be noted that Abraham and Sarah also responded with skepticism when Isaac's birth was prophesied (Gen. 18:11).
- 8) Nevertheless, based on Abraham and Sarah, Zacharias should have reasoned that old age would not deter God from accomplishing His directive will (also Judges 13:2-3).
- 9) Many believers like Zacharias inadvertently assign limitations to God based on their own limited human capabilities.
 - a) From the human perspective, it was impossible for Zacharias and Elisabeth to have a child, but this is a flawed perspective.
 - b) In contrast, from the divine viewpoint, it presented absolutely no difficulty at all (cf. Isa. 55:8-9).
 - c) With God nothing is impossible and He will accomplish all that He desires (cf. Job 23:13, Dan. 4:24, 33, Eph. 1:11, 3:11).
 - d) He is the preeminent authority over all (Deut. 4:39, Job 34:13-15, Psa. 93:1-2).
- 10) The query, "How will I know this?" is essentially a request for proof or a sign that all that the angel had spoken would be fulfilled.
- 11) Such a request points to a deficiency of faith (cf. Judges 6:17, 36-40, 2 Kings 20:8-9).
- 12) The angel reveals his identity and his God-given mission.
- 13) V. 19 is essentially a rebuke of Zacharias' request.
- 14) The angel declares, "I myself am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God."

Luke 1

- 15) The name “Gabriel” means “God’s mighty or valiant one.”
- 16) He is an elect angel that had previously ministered to Daniel and would in a several months in our context proclaim to Mary the birth of Jesus (Dan. 8:16, 9:21, Luke 1:26).
- 17) Gabriel doesn’t just give his proper name; he further describes himself as “one who stands in the presence of God.”
 - a) The phrase, “in the presence of God” indicates that as an elect angel he had access to the throne room in the 3rd heaven (cf. Matt. 18:10)
 - b) The phrase, “one who stands” is better translated “the one who stood” to correspond with the Greek.
 - c) The emphasis is on the fact that Gabriel had stood in the presence of God and received his assignment to notify Zacharias.
- 18) God initiated his assignment and Gabriel was following orders (“I **have been** sent...”- passive).
- 19) Gabriel further indicates the purpose of his mission.
- 20) Namely to speak to Zacharias and announce good news.
- 21) If Zacharias had been more spiritually astute at this point, he would have recognized the “sign” he sought was standing right before his eyes.
- 22) Yet he rejected Gabriel’s message which was tantamount to rejecting God’s message.
- 23) Zacharias asked for a sign and Gabriel fulfilled his request in v. 20.
- 24) Gabriel states, “And behold, you shall be silent and unable to speak until the day when these things take place...”
- 25) Evidently the vocal chords inside his larynx or “voice box” were completely silenced (“You shall be silent **and** unable to speak”).
- 26) In addition to being silenced, we will see in context which follows that Zacharias was also struck deaf (Luke 1:62 cf. 1:22- “kophos” trans. “mute” may refer to lack of ability to speak and hear- Mark 7:32, 37- trans. “deaf”, Luke 11:14- trans. “dumb”).
- 27) He would remain in this “deaf and dumb” state “until the day when these things take place.”
- 28) “These things” refer to the fulfillment of v. 13 (**Luke 1:13** But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your petition has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will give him the name John).
- 29) The two conditions that had to be fulfilled:
 - a) When Elisabeth gave birth to John.
 - b) When he named his son “John.”
- 30) Gabriel specifically cites Zacharias’ unbelief as the reason for the punitive measures.

Luke 1

- 31) He reaffirms these matters will be fulfilled in their proper time, according to God's timing.
- 32) Zacharias was given a supernatural sign, but it wasn't we may surmise what he expected or desired.
- 33) Despite his unbelief, we must keep in mind that Zacharias was "righteous in the sight of God" (Luke 1:6).
- 34) He "tripped up" briefly, but would recover and persevere.

Luke 1

Luke 1:21-25 And the people were waiting for Zacharias, and were wondering at his delay in the temple. ²² But when he came out, he was unable to speak to them; and they realized that he had seen a vision in the temple; and he kept making signs to them, and remained mute. ²³ And it came about, when the days of his priestly service were ended, that he went back home. ²⁴ And after these days Elizabeth his wife became pregnant; and she kept herself in seclusion for five months, saying, ²⁵ "This is the way the Lord has dealt with me in the days when He looked *with favor* upon *me*, to take away my disgrace among men."

Analysis of vv. 21-25:

- 1) Luke shifts the focus to the people waiting outside.
- 2) Evidently Zacharias was taking longer than expected to perform his duties.
- 3) As a result the people had been waiting with growing apprehension and wondering about his delay.
- 4) "The temple" specifically refers to the Holy Place where Gabriel appeared.
- 5) The people would expect Zacharias to reappear and pronounce upon them the Aaronic blessing (Num. 6:24-26).¹³
- 6) At some point he came out but was unable to speak (and hear).
- 7) Gabriel's words are proven to be true.
 - a) In addition to being God's messenger, we see that Gabriel was also capable of administering divine discipline.
 - b) This is consistent with other passage where elect angels execute judgments in accordance with God's directive will (Gen. 18:16ff, 19:12-13, Psa. 78:49).
 - c) They play an active role in the judgments in the Tribulation (Rev. 16:1ff).
- 8) He resorted to making signs presumably with hand gestures to communicate.
- 9) No amount effort could coax a sound from his voice box; he continued to be completely mute.
- 10) Those who witnessed this startling change in Zacharias perceived that he had seen some type of supernatural vision or appearance.
- 11) Despite these handicaps, Zacharias completed his priestly service and returned back to his home in the hill country of Judah (Luke 1:39-38, 65).
- 12) As foretold by Gabriel, Elizabeth became pregnant.
- 13) Luke indicates that she "kept herself in seclusion for five months."
- 14) While in seclusion, she attributed her pregnancy to the grace of God.
- 15) She viewed God as removing her "disgrace among men."

¹³ Idem, The Gospel of Luke, 61

Luke 1

- 16) Barrenness was considered a severe reproach among the Jews (Gen. 16:4, Gen. 30:1, Deut. 28:18).
- 17) Therefore, like Rachel, she praises God for removing her barrenness (Gen. 30:22-23, Psa. 113:9).
- 18) Her reasons for concealing herself is not evident in the context.
- 19) Perhaps she wanted to avoid further reproach and grief from incredulous neighbors until her pregnancy was obvious.
- 20) Regardless of the reason, she was very thankful for God's blessing of a miracle pregnancy.
- 21) Luke doesn't reveal whether Elizabeth was initially a skeptic like her husband when informed of her impending pregnancy.
- 22) God was now vindicating her after years of barrenness.

Luke 1

Luke 1:26-29 Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city in Galilee, called Nazareth, ²⁷ to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the descendants of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸ And coming in, he said to her, "Hail, favored one! The Lord *is* with you." ²⁹ But she was greatly troubled at *this* statement, and kept pondering what kind of salutation this might be.

Analysis of vv. 26-29:

- 1) Luke transitions to a different setting after giving the details concerning the future birth of John the Baptist.
- 2) The angel Gabriel has been dispatched by God to make another surprise announcement.
- 3) Luke dates Gabriel's mission in the "six month" which is a reference to the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy (cf. 1:36).
- 4) He has been sent to "a city in Galilee called Nazareth."
- 5) The term translated "city" doesn't necessarily refer to a major population center ("polis"- e.g. Jerusalem).
- 6) It may refer to a city or town with a population of varying size, but not so small as to be considered a "village" (Luke 13:22- village: "kome").
- 7) Regardless of population, Nazareth was not considered to possess many desirable qualities (cf. John 1:45-46 also 1 Kings 9:11-13).
- 8) Additionally the city was located in the region of Galilee which enjoyed an equally poor reputation (cf. John 7:41).
 - a) In the time of the conquest by Joshua, the majority of the region belonged to the tribe of Naphtali (cf. Josh. 20:7, 21:32, 1 Cor. 6:76).
 - b) Evidently the region included part of the territories originally allotted to Zebulun and Issachar as well.
 - c) It was also referred to as Galilee of the Gentiles presumably for its dominant Gentile population (Isa. 9:1, Matt. 4:15).
 - d) Presumably three primary factors contributed to the this appellation:
 - i) The initial failure of Naphtali and Zebulun to rid the land of the Canaanites during the conquest (Judges 1:30, 33).
 - ii) The conquest and removal of the Northern tribes followed by the re-settlement of the land with "foreigners" by the Assyrians in the 8th century BC (2 Kings 15:29, 17:5-6, 23-24).
 - iii) Following the Babylonian captivity in the 6th century BC relatively few Jews resettled the region.

Luke 1

- e) In Christ's lifetime, Galilee was a Roman province bordered to the south by the provinces of Samaria and Judea, to the north and west by Phoenicia, to the east by Gaulantis and Decapolis.
- 9) The recipient of the announcement is Mary described here as "a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the descendants of David."
- 10) Our term "virgin" in this context denotes one who has never engaged in sexual intercourse ("parthenos"- cf. Rev. 14:4 trans. "chaste").
- 11) Isaiah prophesied that Jesus would be born of a virgin, so this is a fulfillment of prophecy (Isa. 7:14 cf. Matt. 1:23).
- 12) Furthermore Luke indicates that Mary was "engaged" to Joseph.
- 13) "Engaged" indicates that Mary and Joseph were betrothed or pledged to marry ("mnesteuo").
 - a) In our day we consider a man and woman that have pledged to marry each other as engaged.
 - b) However, our modern concept of engagement is far less rigid and formal compared to the custom of betrothal in Scripture
 - c) Betrothal was considered to be a part of the marriage procedure and was a binding legal arrangement.
 - d) Typically marriages were arranged by the parents (cf. Judges 14:2-5).
 - e) Although both must remain chaste during this period, the future husband and wife were legally viewed as a married couple.
 - f) Illicit sex during the betrothal period was viewed as adultery (cf. Deut. 22:23-24).
- 14) This is significant because Mary's pregnancy took place before her marriage and consummation.
- 15) Therefore Jesus was born of woman but totally apart from a human father.
- 16) As we will see in this context, his DNA was supplied by God the Holy Spirit (1:35 cf. Matt. 1:18).
- 17) In this manner, Christ was able to avoid being born spiritually dead, contaminated by the paternally transmitted OSN (1 Cor. 15:21-23 cf. Psalms 51:5, 1 Peter 2:22, 1 John 3:5).
- 18) At this point we don't have extensive details regarding Joseph, but Gabriel reveals a significant fact regarding him. Namely that he is a direct descendant of King David (lit. "out of the house of David").
- 19) Luke includes this connection to show how Jesus was the "son of David" through Joseph as his legal father (Luke 3:23).
- 20) The birth of Christ would fulfill God's promise to David (2 Sam. 7:16, Isa. 9:6-7, Acts 13:22-23).

Luke 1

- 21) In v. 28 Gabriel suddenly appears to Mary and greets her.
- 22) He greets her, “Hail, favored one! The Lord is with you.”
- 23) The word translated “Hail” is a stereotypical greeting that implies a wish for well-being.
- 24) It is akin to our English greeting, “Good Day!” or “Greetings!”
- 25) Gabriel addresses Mary as “favored one.”
- 26) Based on a single Greek participle, this designation is literally translated, “one who has been favored” (“charitoo”).
- 27) Mary’s present favored status as soon to be mother of the humanity of Jesus came about because of God’s sovereign choice sometime in eternity past.
- 28) The language doesn’t convey any particular worthiness on Mary’s part.
- 29) Rather, she was the object or recipient of God’s blessing.
- 30) Therefore, it is a misinterpretation of the Greek to assert that Mary was (or is) somehow “full of grace” or actively a bestower of grace as is commonly believed in the RCC.
- 31) The salutation “Hail Mary full of grace” is traditionally used in prayer by those in the RCC to ask for the intercession of Mary.
 - a) Typical refrain: “Hail Mary full of grace. The Lord is with you. Blessed are you among women and blessed is the fruit of your womb”
 - b) Based on Luke 1:28 and 42.
 - c) For the RCC it is an integral part of the Rosary.
 - d) The Hail Mary” prayer is not exclusively used by the RCC.
 - e) It is used by others such as the Anglicans, the Eastern Orthodox, the Oriental Orthodox and the Lutherans.
 - f) The mistranslation “full of grace” arose in the RCC because the Latin exegetes rendered the Greek participle, “gratia plena” (“full of grace”).
 - g) This translation suggests that grace is a substance with which one may be filled; yet this is not supported by the Greek text.
- 32) The expression, “The Lord is with you” provides assurance of divine support (cf. Deut. 20:1, Josh. 1:9, Judges 6:12, 1 Chron. 28:20).
 - a) Although they had their shortcomings and struggles, Mary and Joseph were sufficiently adjusted to God’s plan to raise Jesus under the Mosaic Law (Luke 2:49-50, Gal. 4:4).
 - b) Nevertheless they would need divine assistance in their parenting of Jesus.
- 33) The sudden appearance of Gabriel and his unexpected greeting made a strong impact on Mary.

Luke 1

- 34) She was about to be placed in a unique situation which called for imperfect, sinful parents to raise a perfect, sinless child.
- 35) Undoubtedly a daunting proposition, but what an incredible privilege to be chosen to make such an application.
- 36) Mary and Joseph would not be left to fend for themselves.
- 37) God would supply all the necessary inner strength and resources to raise and take care of Jesus.
- 38) As believers in Satan's world we will face our own daunting circumstances in the CWL which will involve varying degrees of suffering.
- a) **1 Peter 4:12-13** Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; ¹³ but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing; so that also at the revelation of His glory, you may rejoice with exultation.
- i) Peter's audience faced daunting and difficult circumstances in their niche.
 - ii) Here, the circumstances are referred to as "the fiery ordeal" which portrays an intensely painful occurrence or experience ("purosis").
 - iii) Peter enjoins them, "Do not be surprised" at this ordeal or the severity of the suffering.
 - iv) Those who strive to live a righteous life will suffer in this world as Christ suffered.
 - v) He set the example of how to endure and overcome severe testing.
 - vi) Throughout "the fiery ordeal" the apostle's audience was commanded to "keep on rejoicing."
 - vii) The purpose of enduring and maintaining an attitude of joy is to experience great joy and reward at the Rapture (i.e. the revelation of his glory, cf. 1 Peter 1:7).
- b) As our adversary, Satan seeks opportunity to trip up the unwary believer (**1 Peter 5:8-9** Be of sober *spirit*, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. ⁹ But resist him, firm in the faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world.).
- i) To "be sober" is to be clear-headed and self-controlled in one's CWL (cf. 2 Tim. 4:5).
 - ii) To "be alert" is to be watchful and in state of readiness to identify and counter the many schemes of Satan (e.g. false teachers and defection from sound doctrine, Acts 20:31).

Luke 1

- iii) The lion imagery depicts Satan as a ravenous lion that is seeking to devour his next meal.
 - iv) Metaphorically, “devour” is used here to denote Satan’s activity in overpowering, controlling and ruining someone.
 - v) This is accomplished in a myriad of ways, hence the need for the believer to be sober and alert.
 - vi) For example, the believer is being devoured...
 - (1) If you habitually miss Bible class.
 - (2) If you rarely make applications.
 - (3) If you don’t apply under your spiritual gift(s).
 - (4) If you habitually drink to drunkenness.
 - (5) If you embrace friendships with –v.
 - (6) If you are generally lukewarm and apathetic to God’s word and plan.
 - vii) All of these conditions point to spiritual regression.
 - viii) For those who are regressing, it is God’s directive will to halt the process and once again resume their progress towards spiritual maturity (cf. Heb. 6:1).
 - ix) If any of these conditions apply to you, wake up, stop making excuses, and put your spiritual life in order.
 - x) Numerous passages exhort the believer to recover from regression.
 - (1) Calls to return (Deut. 30:2, 2 Chron. 30:9, Isa. 55:7. Lam. 3:40).
 - (2) Wake up (Eph. 5:14, Rev. 3:2-3).
 - (3) Repent (Rev. 2:5, 3:19).
 - (4) Submit (James 4:7-10, the passage includes other commands aimed at the believer in regression).
 - (5) God promises mercy to those who return to Him (cf. Isa. 44:21-22, Hosea 6:1, Joel 2:12-13 cf. 2 Cor. 1:3).
 - xi) Instead of compromising with the plans and policies of Satan, we are to resist him through adhering to the faith, sound doctrine.
 - xii) Bear in mind that your suffering as a believer in the Devil’s world is not unique; believers the world over suffer in the same manner.
- 39) Yet as in the case of Mary and Joseph, God will supply the growing believer with all the necessary resources to succeed in making each and every application (cf. Phil. 2:13, 2 Thess. 2:17).
- a) We must rely on God’s power to operate effectively in the CWL (primarily through FGHS cf. Eph. 6:10, 2 Tim. 2:1).
 - b) We are not to be self-reliant, but rely on God through prayer in order to persevere in our Christian life (cf. 2 Chron. 14:11, 20:1ff, Heb. 4:16).
 - c) As we place our trust in Him, He will bless us and make our paths straight (Psa. 32:10, Prov. 3:5-6, Jer. 17:7-8).

Luke 1

- d) Whatever the circumstances we must keep pressing on to spiritual maturity and relax in the knowledge that God is working for you.
 - e) In other words, faith-rest the various situations that you encounter in life.
 - f) Faith-rest produces a relaxed mental attitude and counteracts fear, worry, and anxiety (Isa. 41:10).
- 40) Luke informs us, “She was greatly troubled at this statement, and kept pondering what kind of salutation this might be.”
- 41) “Greatly troubled” indicates that Mary was in a severely agitated mental state (“diatarasso”).
- 42) Mary tried to carefully reason through Gabriel’s salutation, but was at a loss to explain the following:
- a) Why was addressed in exalted terms as “favored one?”
 - b) How would the Lord be with her?
 - c) Why is this being announced to her by an angel?

Luke 1

Luke 1:30-33 And the angel said to her, "Stop being afraid, Mary; for you have found favor with God.³¹ "And behold, you will conceive in your womb, and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus.³² "He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David;³³ and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever; and His kingdom will have no end."

Analysis of vv. 30-33:

- 1) Mary initially responded to Gabriel's appearance and announcement with fear.
- 2) Gabriel instructs Mary, "Stop being afraid."
- 3) He gave Zacharias the same instruction in v. 13 (**Luke 1:13** But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your petition has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will give him the name John.).
- 4) Gabriel was not a harbinger of anything negative. Instead he appeared to announce incredibly good news, the birth of the long-awaited Messiah.
- 5) Furthermore, it was imperative that Mary be in the right frame of mind to hear the details (i.e. be in fellowship).
- 6) As a general principle, sinful fear impedes the correct understanding of divine viewpoint.
 - a) It will often times disorient the believer to the spiritual realities of his niche.
 - b) We must not allow any type of sinful fear to gain a foothold in our thinking regardless of the circumstances (e.g. poor health, lack of living grace, persecution on the job, etc. Rom. 8:15, 1 Peter 3:14 cf. Ps. 46:1-2, 73:26).
- 7) Gabriel then reassures her, "You have found favor with God."
- 8) As evidence of this favor, he elaborates that she will conceive and give birth to a son.
- 9) Mary is instructed to name the son, "Jesus."
- 10) The Greek name "Jesus" is derived from the Hebrew name, "Joshua" which means "YHWH saves" or YHWH is deliverance."
- 11) Gabriel indicates that, "This one will be great."
- 12) The adjective "great" denotes that Jesus would be superior in rank and importance (cf. Col. 1:15-18).
- 13) Nevertheless, most were oblivious to his greatness during his incarnation and subsequently rejected Him (John 1:11, Acts 4:10-11).
- 14) Jesus would hardly prove to be your average son as seen in the lofty title bestowed upon Him.¹⁴
- 15) He will also be called "Son of the Most High."

¹⁴ Idem, The Gospel of Luke, 67.

Luke 1

- 16) “Most High” is a reference to God the Father and emphasizes His superlative essence (“Hupsistos”- cf. Mark 5:7, Luke 6:35, 8:28).
- 17) The title “Son of the Most High” emphasizes the true identity of Jesus Christ, the God-man.
- 18) It should be noted that Mary gave birth to the humanity of Jesus and not His deity.
- 19) Christ’s deity has existed eternally and therefore was not born (John 1:1, 14, 8:58, 17:5, Col. 1:16, Rev. 1:8 cf. Phil. 2:6-7).
- 20) His humanity conformed to normal physical and intellectual development (albeit without an OSN).
 - a) Physiologically, His birth was normal and not extraordinary (Luke 2:7).
 - b) His body possessed flesh and blood (Heb. 2:14, 1 John 4:2, 2 John 1:7).
 - c) The life of Christ subsequent to His birth in Bethlehem reveals the same normal human development and growth. Luke 2:52 “And Jesus kept increasing in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.”
 - d) In His life, He experienced similar feelings and limitations as other human beings. His physical movements corresponded to a genuine human nature and human body.
 - e) He, according to Scriptures, was able to suffer pain, thirst, hunger, fatigue, pleasure, rest, death, and resurrection (John 19:18).
 - f) Both before and after His resurrection, He could be seen and felt. His human body was tangible to human touch (Matt. 26:67, Luke 24:39, John 20:24-29).
 - g) His true humanity is also recognized in scripture by the human titles which were given to Him, such as "Son of Man", "the Man Christ Jesus", "the Son of David", etc. (Mark 2:10, 10:47).
 - h) The Scripture also indicates that He possessed a rational human soul (Matt.26:38, John 12:27).
- 21) The union of His deity and humanity occurred at His physical birth.
- 22) Moreover this was not a temporary arrangement that ended with His death.
- 23) This is a permanent, inseparable union for all eternity (cf. John 1:15, 30, 10:29-33, Col. 1:19, 2:8-9).
- 24) The continuance of His humanity following his death and resurrection is reflected in Matthew and other passages (Matt.26:64, 28:9, 1 Cor. 15:5-6).
- 25) The union of deity and humanity in the person of Christ is also referred to as the “hypostatic union.”
 - a) The term “hypostatic” is derived from the Greek word “hupostasis” which refers to the essential or basic nature of an entity (ὑπόστασις cf. Heb. 1:3 trans. “nature”).
 - b) When used of Christ, the noun signifies the union of His two natures, the divine and the human, in His person.

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- c) The two natures are united without any loss of any essential attributes, and the two natures maintain their separate identities.
 - d) From the point of the incarnation, the two natures have been inseparably united in such a way that there has been no mixture or loss of their separate identity, and without loss or transfer of any property or attribute from one nature to the other.
 - e) During the incarnation, no attribute of the divine nature was changed, although there was a change in the manifestation of His deity.
 - f) Jesus voluntarily restricted the independent use of His divine attributes (e.g. omnipotence and omnipresence).
- 26) Gabriel further elucidates, “The Lord God will give Him the throne of his father David.”
- a) The status of Jesus is further developed in connection with His ascension to the throne of David.
 - b) “Lord God” is a title for God the Father.
 - c) Yet here we see that Gabriel refers to David as the father of Jesus.
 - d) In our verse the term “father” denotes that Jesus was descended from David.
 - e) In this sense He was a “son of David” (Matt. 1:1, 21:9).
 - f) In light of this part of the announcement we see the significance of the earlier reference to Joseph’s Davidic lineage (**Luke 1:27** “...to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was **Joseph, of the descendants of David**; and the virgin's name was Mary. Cf. Matt. 1:20).
 - g) Jesus, as the legal first born of Joseph, had a legitimate claim to the throne through royal lineage (Matt. 1:6).
- 27) Jesus would “will reign over the house of Jacob forever; and His kingdom will have no end.”
- 28) “The house of Jacob” is a synonym for Israel.
- 29) He was specifically promised to rule the Jews and will do so from Jerusalem (Micah 4:1ff, Zech. 8:3ff).
- 30) However Christ will not merely reign over Israel, but His rule will extend over all of creation (Dan. 7:13-14, 27, Phil. 2:9-11).
- 31) David was promised that his kingdom would endure forever (2 Sam. 7:10-17, Psa. 89:3-4).
- a) We must not understand this to mean that there would be an unbroken succession of “Davidic” kings ruling over Israel.
 - b) At the time Gabriel made his announcement, it had been centuries since the last “Davidic” king, Zedekiah, had ruled over Israel, specifically Judah (~586 BC, Jer. 52:5-13).

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- c) Also at this time, Israel was no longer a sovereign nation, but was controlled by Rome.
 - d) The line of succession to occupy the throne had been disrupted due to the preponderance of negative volition among the Jews.
 - e) God's promise to David indicates that at some unspecified point in the future he will have an heir that will reign eternally (cf. Jer. 33:22-26).
- 32) "Forever", literally into the ages, and "no end" in v. 33 are parallel in meaning. Both express Christ's eternal reign.
- 33) Christ's actual ascension to the throne has yet to take place (cf. Eph. 1:20-22).
- 34) This will take place at the 2nd advent and beginning of the Millennium (cf. Isa. 13:6-11, Rev. 6:14-17).
- 35) The Millennium is the 1000 years reign of Christ over mankind from Jerusalem.
- a) Some synonyms for the Millennium:
 - i) 1000 yrs. (Rev. 20:2-7).
 - ii) Times of refreshing (Acts 3:19).
 - iii) Period of restoration (Acts 3:21).
 - iv) His kingdom (Dan. 7:13-14, 2 Tim. 4:1).
 - b) His kingdom follows 2nd advent (Dan. 2:44-45).
 - c) His rule is characterized by righteousness, justice, and faithfulness (Psa. 89:14, Isa. 11:5, 16:5, 61:11, Jer. 23:5).
 - d) Law and order prevails during his reign (cf. "rod of iron" metaphor: Psa. 2:9, Isa. 11:4, Rev. 12:5, 19:15).
 - e) It will be a period of unprecedented peace and security without war (Isa. 2:1-4, Jer. 30:10, 46:27, Micah 4:2-3).
 - f) Church Age believers in the Millennium.
 - i) We will reign with Christ (2 Tim. 2:12).
 - ii) Each believer will serve in a position in Christ's millennial administration (Rev. 2:26-27).
- 36) Some of the Jews desired to make Christ king during the 1st advent, but it was not according to God's timetable (John 6:14-15).
- 37) During his incarnation He was the suffering servant, but will return as the conquering Christ (Isa. 53:2ff, Rev. 19:11ff).

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Luke 1:34-38 And Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" ³⁵ And the angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy offspring shall be called the Son of God. ³⁶ "And behold, even your relative Elizabeth has also conceived a son in her old age; and she who was called barren is now in her sixth month. ³⁷ "For nothing will be impossible with God." ³⁸ And Mary said, "Behold, the bondservant of the Lord; be it done to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.

Analysis of vv. 34-38:

- 1) Evidently Mary understood the conception and birth of Jesus to be in the immediate future based on Gabriel's words in v. 31 (**Luke 1:31** "And behold, you **will conceive** in your womb, and **will bear** a son, and **you shall** name Him Jesus.).
- 2) Mary struggled to see how this was possible as she was only betrothed and not yet married.
- 3) She asks, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" (lit: "since I do not know a husband").
- 4) The literal rendering is a euphemism for not having sex.
- 5) Gabriel revealed to Mary the details of her conception.
- 6) He explains, "The Holy spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you."
- 7) That is, God the Father, referred to as the "Most High," would through the agency of the Holy Spirit supply the necessary DNA for Mary to conceive.
- 8) Clearly the manner of Mary's conception was singularly unique
- 9) Mary's conception didn't occur at this point, but is anticipated in the near future as indicated by the future tense of the Greek verbs ("...**will come upon** you... **will overshadow** you...").
- 10) As a result of this divinely supplied DNA, Gabriel refers to Jesus as "the holy offspring" and that He will be called "the Son of God" (cf. similar title in v. 32 "Son of the Most High").
- 11) At His birth Christ would also be singularly unique.
 - a) Without paternal DNA, the OSN would not be transmitted to Christ at birth therefore He would remain free from the contamination of sin (1 John 3:5 cf. Heb. 4:15, 7:26).
 - b) He would be born physically and spiritually alive.
 - c) Deity and humanity would be permanently united in His person at birth ("hypostatic union").
- 12) As a testimony to the veracity of his announcement about her conception, Gabriel emphatically reveals to Mary that her relative, the formerly barren Elizabeth, is now in her 6 mo. of pregnancy.
- 13) Here we see that Mary and Elizabeth are relatives.

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- 14) Our term “relative” only occurs here in the NT and denotes a related family member, but not necessarily a close relation. The term can denote distant, extended relatives (συγγενίς, suggestis).
- 15) He affirms in v. 37, “For nothing is impossible with God.”
- 16) The same divine power that enabled Elizabeth to miraculously conceive would also be operative in Mary.
- 17) Although her situation was unique, in view of His attributes, it was really a small matter for God to supply the necessary DNA to Mary and cause her to conceive.
- 18) His sovereignty, veracity, omniscience and omnipotence guaranteed the outcome (cf. Psa. 93:1-2, Isa. 46:10, Jer. 27:5).
- 19) We ought to have the utmost confidence that whatever God has declared will come to pass (cf. Psa. 119:89, Heb. 6:18, Isa. 40:8).
- 20) At this point Mary begins to wrap her mind around Gabriel’s stunning announcement.
- 21) She emphatically states, “Behold, the bondslave of the Lord, be it done to me according to your word.”
- 22) She refers to herself as “the bondslave of the Lord.”
- 23) This figurative expression indicates that she appropriately considered herself a servant of God (cf. v. 48).
- 24) She was committed to serving Him through obedient service which in her case included giving birth to the humanity of Jesus Christ.
- 25) Mary like other positive believers recognize their roles as God’s servants in the CWL (cf. Psa. 86:2, Rom. 1:1, Gal. 1:10, James 1:1, 2 Peter 1:1).
- 26) As servants we are to cease from living according to the OSN and instead be slaves of righteousness (Rom. 6:18 cf. 2 Cor. 6:4).
- 27) Mary humbly and respectfully requests, “Be it done to me according to your word.”
- 28) Rather than uncertainty, her request conveys the expectation of fulfillment.
- 29) This is in contrast to incredulity expressed by Zacharias upon hearing Gabriel’s announcement in the Temple (Luke 1:18).
- 30) After these words, Gabriel departed from her presence.

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Luke 1:39-45 Now at this time Mary arose and went with haste to the hill country, to a city of Judah,⁴⁰ and entered the house of Zacharias and greeted Elizabeth.⁴¹ And it came about that when Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.⁴² And she cried out with a loud voice, and said, "Blessed among women *are* you, and blessed *is* the fruit of your womb!⁴³ "And how has it *happened* to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?⁴⁴ "For behold, when the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby leaped in my womb for joy.⁴⁵ "And blessed *is* she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what had been spoken to her by the Lord."

Analysis of vv. 39-45:

- 1) Following the Gabriel's announcement about the virgin birth and Elizabeth's pregnancy, Mary immediately sets out to visit her relative.
- 2) Luke indicates that she proceeded "with haste to the hill country, to a city of Judah."
- 3) No details are given regarding her travel arrangements (e.g. traveling companions, mode of transportation, etc.).
- 4) The hill country of Judah is a mountainous region in southern Palestine west of the Dead Sea which is bordered by the Shephelah (foothills) and the coastal plain to the west and southwest.
- 5) Other than the general region, the Judean hill country, the precise destination is not specified.
- 6) It is referred to as "a city of Judah" which denotes that it was situated in the territory historically belonging to the tribe of Judah (cf. Judges 1:3ff, Matt. 2:6).
- 7) Luke later reveals that Zacharias and Elizabeth resided in the province of Judea (1:66).
- 8) Traveling south from Nazareth in Galilee to the hill country of Judah, Mary traveled in excess of 65 miles presumably through Samaria.
- 9) Upon entering into Zacharias' house, Mary gave a greeting to Elizabeth.
- 10) When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb.
- 11) Our word "baby" refers to an unborn child or an infant. Obviously the former is in view ("brephos").
- 12) Some interpreters have suggested that the baby was cognizant that Mary was the mother of Jesus and moved about from excitement.
- 13) However we must bear in mind that although John, as a fetus had physical life, he lacked a soul which is bestowed at physical birth via the breath of life (Heb: "neshamah" - Gen. 2:7, 1 Cor. 15:45 also Ex. 21:22- note the death of a fetus is not tantamount to the taking of human life, Job 34:14-15).
- 14) As an unborn, John possessed human form, but lacked true human life without a soul.
- 15) Absent a soul he would not possess the necessary volition, intellectual capability, emotion and self-awareness to identify Mary as the mother of Jesus much less that she

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had already conceived (v. 42: the Greek present tense is appropriately supplied, “Blessed **is** the fruit of your womb.”).

- 16) Many believers don't recognize the biblical distinction that the soul is a different entity than the physical body (Psa. 31:9, Micah 6:7, 1 Thess. 5:23, Heb. 4:12).
 - a) We are alive as humans because we possess a soul (cf. Gen. 35:18, Psa. 26:9).
 - b) Also, it is the soul that is created in the image of God (Gen 1:26-27).
 - c) God is a Spirit so this “image” would exclude the material body (John 4:24).
 - d) The soul is the “real you”, while the body is just a “tent” (2 Cor. 4:16-5:2).
 - e) In part the soul possesses memory, emotion, volition, and self-consciousness (Deut. 11:18, 28:65, Job 6:7, Psa. 119:167, Rom. 6:6).
 - f) A steady intake of Bible doctrine will ensure the health of the soul (Psa. 19:7, 25:12-13, 119:25, 28, Prov. 2:10, 3:22, 24:14 cf. Psa. 54:4).
- 17) The Greek indicates that it was Elizabeth and not the baby that heard Mary's greeting (Elizabeth is the subject of “heard”).
- 18) Extreme fetal movement is not uncommon (cf. Gen. 25:21-23).
- 19) In tandem with the movement of the baby, Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.
- 20) In light of this situation, the baby's movement was due to Elizabeth's excitement over Mary's visit and prompted by the Holy Spirit as a sign to her.
- 21) At this point she receives prophetic inspiration through the filling of the Holy Spirit and is enlightening about Mary and the identity of her child.
- 22) Up to this juncture in the narrative, we have no record of Mary sending any correspondence to Elizabeth with the good news.
- 23) There wasn't enough time as Mary had left Nazareth immediately after Gabriel's announcement and traveled with haste to Elizabeth.
- 24) Nor do we have a record of any other type of revelation to Elizabeth by any other means (e.g. dream, angelic announcement).
- 25) Prior to the completion of the canon of Scripture, direct revelation through the Holy Spirit was given to positive believers on various occasions. This is one such occasion (cf. Luke 1:67, 2:22-38).
- 26) The filling produced a loud and forceful declaration from Elizabeth (lit: “She cried out loudly with a great cry...”).
- 27) In addition to being a product of the filling of Holy Spirit, her cry is also an utterance of joyful praise (cf. Isa. 40:9).
- 28) She cries, “Blessed among women *are* you, and blessed *is* the fruit of your womb!”
- 29) The term translated twice as “blessed” describes God's bestowal of favor upon Mary and her child.
- 30) Similar to being “favored” in v. 28, Mary has been blessed to due to God's decision in eternity past for her to bear the humanity of Jesus.
- 31) Furthermore the welfare of her embryo, referred to here as “fruit of your womb,” has also been “blessed.”
- 32) It is confirmed at this point that Mary has conceived through the Divine action of God the Holy Spirit (v. 35).
- 33) The embryo was completely undefiled by the transmission of the OSN.

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- 34) Again, it must be asserted this pronouncement doesn't provide grounds for the exaltation of Mary.
- 35) She and Joseph each had an active OSN and at times even doubted the legitimacy of Jesus' ministry (cf. Mark 3:20-21, 31-35).
- 36) Nevertheless, they were sufficiently adjusted and mature to serve as the parents of Jesus.
- 37) Elizabeth expresses the full realization that Mary is pregnant with the Messiah and that it was an honor to have her visit.
- 38) She refers to Mary as "the mother of my Lord."
- 39) The title "Lord" portrays Jesus as the Messiah, the unique God-man (cf. Psa. 110:1, Luke 20:41-44).
- 40) Elizabeth explains that the joyous movements of her baby signaled to her that Mary was to be the mother of the humanity of the Messiah. Once more this happened in connection with the revelation through the filling of the Holy Spirit.
- 41) Finally, she pronounces further blessing upon Mary with the statement, "And blessed *is* she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what had been spoken to her by the Lord."
- 42) The fact that Elizabeth even knew of Mary's initial faith is further evidence of the impromptu Divine revelation via the Holy Spirit.
- 43) The pronouncement was due to Mary's faith that God would bring to pass all that He revealed to her through Gabriel.
- 44) The term translated "blessed" in v. 45 is a related but different word than in v. 41 ("makarios").
- 45) This word describes the one who is favored, blessed, or happy.
- 46) An implicit principle here is that happiness and blessing is derived from faith in God's word (cf. Psa. 40:4, 84:12, Prov. 3:18, James 1:25).

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Luke 1:46-56 And Mary said: "My soul exalts the Lord,⁴⁷ And my spirit has greatly rejoiced in God my Savior.⁴⁸ "For He has had regard for the humble state of His bondservant; For behold, from this time on all generations will count me blessed.⁴⁹ "For the Mighty One has done great things for me; And holy is His name.⁵⁰ "And His mercy is upon generation after generation Toward those who fear Him.⁵¹ "He has done mighty deeds with His arm; He has scattered *those who were* proud in the thoughts of their heart.⁵² "He has brought down rulers from *their* thrones, And has exalted those who were humble.⁵³ "He has filled the hungry with good things; And sent away the rich empty-handed.⁵⁴ "He has given help to Israel His servant, In remembrance of His mercy,⁵⁵ As He spoke to our fathers, To Abraham and his offspring forever."⁵⁶ And Mary stayed with her about three months, and *then* returned to her home.

Analysis of 46-56:

- 1) Vv. 46-55 comprise a hymn which is marked by O.T. motifs and language.
- 2) In form, the hymn employs parallelism which is typical of Hebrew poetry.
- 3) Although our translation indicates Mary is the singer, some interpreters favor Elizabeth.
- 4) Those who favor Elizabeth typically base their position on the reading of Old Latin manuscripts and three patristic writers.¹⁵
- 5) However according to the overwhelming preponderance of evidence including all Greek manuscripts and nearly all versional and patristic witnesses, the hymn was spoken by Mary.¹⁶
- 6) The passage, vv. 46-55, is commonly known as "the Magnificat."
 - a) The title "Magnificat" is derived from the Latin translation of the first word Mary utters in the Greek in v. 46 ("Magnificat anima mea, Dominum").
 - b) Mary's first word in the Greek text is the word translated, "exalts."
 - c) "Exalts" is the Greek verb, "megalunei" which means in this context "to praise, to exalt, to recognize the greatness of someone's reputation or name" (Μεγαλύνει, megalunei).
 - d) In the Catholic Church the hymn is also referred to as the Canticle or Song of Mary.
- 7) Mary responds to Elizabeth's excited pronouncement beginning with praise to God.
- 8) She affirms, "My soul exalts the Lord."
- 9) The verb "exalts" as previously discussed means to praise, to exalt."
- 10) The object of her praise is "the Lord"
- 11) The Greek portrays her praise as an ongoing activity.
- 12) Mary's praise is a natural response from her soul to the momentous blessing God bestowed on her.

¹⁵ Bruce M. Metzger, A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament, 2^d ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1994), 109.

¹⁶ Ibid.

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- 13) As Mary progresses through the hymn the content of her soul will be revealed.
- 14) In short, her response demonstrates an advanced knowledge of God's character and His dealings with mankind.
- 15) Luke doesn't mention whether Mary like Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit, but her words provide a testament to the Divine viewpoint in her soul.
- 16) Mary adds, "And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior."
- 17) The thought of v. 46 is reiterated in poetic parallelism in v. 47.
- 18) "My spirit" is a reference to Mary's human spirit.
 - a) The context precludes this from being a reference to the Holy Spirit.
 - b) "My spirit" is not in synonymous parallelism with "My soul" in v. 46.
 - c) Similar to the soul, the human spirit possesses self-awareness and is able to be refreshed (Mark 2:8, 2 Cor. 7:13).
 - d) Despite similar traits the soul and human spirit are distinct (cf. **1 Thessalonians 5:23** Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. ,**Hebrews 4:12** For the word of God is alive and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and is a critic of the thoughts and intentions of the heart.).
 - e) The soul is the "real you" that one receives at birth via the breath of life (Heb: "neshamah" - **Genesis 2:7** Then the LORD God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life [lit: lives]; and man became a living being [lit: soul].).
 - f) The human spirit like the soul is immaterial, but is received when one is saved (cf. Rom. 8:10).
 - g) It is part of the inner person that identifies one as a believer and in part gives us the capacity to know God (Rom. 8:16).
- 19) Mary emphatically expresses the joy in her spirit.
- 20) The standard translation "rejoiced" fails to portray the magnitude of her joy.
- 21) The Greek verb means to be exceedingly joyful, to be overjoyed ("agalliao").
- 22) Since she is experiencing intense joy the term is better translated as "greatly rejoiced."
- 23) Mary's rejoicing is directed at God who she refers to as "God my Savior."
- 24) "My Savior" expresses Mary's personal relationship with God and the recognition that He is ultimately the source of her salvation.
- 25) By sending Jesus Christ into the world to fulfill His perfect plan of redemption for mankind, God acted as Savior to humanity.
- 26) In addition to being a Savior to those who believe in His Son, He is also a Savior or Deliverer of ...
 - a) The nation of Israel (Psa. 43:3ff).
 - b) Believer's undergoing adversity (2 Sam. 22:3).
- 27) God is recognized elsewhere in Scripture as "Savior" (Psa. 106:21, 1 Tim. 1:1, 2:3, Titus 2:10, 3:4, Jude 1:25 also "God of my salvation"- Psa. 25:5, Hab. 3:18).

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- 28) Mary expresses her unrestrained praise and joy to God from her inner person (i.e. soul and spirit).
- 29) In v. 48 Mary provides the reason for her praise and great joy in God.
- 30) She explains, “For He has had regard for the humble state of His bondservant...”
- 31) The verb translated “regard” is quite intensive in the Greek (“epiblepo”).
- 32) To “regard” is to look intently, pay close attention to or to view someone with personal concern evidenced by providing help.
- 33) Mary praises God for showing special concern or attention to her “humble state.”
- 34) “Humble state” refers to Mary’s humble, unpretentious socio-economic circumstances (“tapeinosis”).
- 35) Both she and Joseph were not rich or persons of influence; on the contrary, they were from the lower classes or so-called peasant class in Israel.
- 36) Also, their humble station in life was an integral part of the humiliation of Jesus their son.
- 37) In addition to humbling Himself in submission to the directive will of God during the incarnation, humanly speaking, He came from humble origins (John 5:19, 30, 6:38, 8:28-29, 12:49 cf. John 1:46, 7:41).
- 38) His socio-economic status and even His appearance were far less than extraordinary (Isa. 53:1-3).
- 39) Furthermore, His lowly status and upbringing were not an impediment to fulfilling God’s directive will.
- 40) As a rule, “whoever exalts himself shall be humbled; and whoever humbles himself shall be exalted” (Matt. 23:12, Luke 18:9-14).
- 41) God takes pleasure in blessing the believer who manifests genuine humility in his thinking and behavior (Psa. 10:17, 25:9, 37:11, Prov. 22:4, Isa. 66:2, James 4:6).
- 42) Mary is one such example in Scripture.
- 43) Mary once again identifies herself as a “bond slave” which demonstrates her willingness to serve God according to his will (δούλης, doules cf. v. 38).
- 44) As we touched on previously in our study, like Mary we are to be ready and willing to serve to serve God in **any** capacity in the Christian life.
- 45) In relation to God’s special regard for her, Mary views her unique situation as evidence of His exaltation of the lowly.
- 46) From that point of time Mary would be subsequently known to all generations as the mother of the humanity of Jesus and will be considered especially blessed.
- 47) This is not a license for veneration as many presume in Christianity (e.g. RCC).
- 48) It is an unpretentious statement about the outcome of God graciously choosing her to bear Jesus.
- 49) Mary proceeds in v. 49 with a more general explanation why subsequent generations would consider her blessed.
- 50) She declares, “For the Mighty One has done great things for me; And holy is His name.”
- 51) Mary refers to God as “the Mighty One” which is a title that stresses His omnipotence.

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- 52) He is all powerful and is capable of doing all things (1 Chron. 29:11 cf. Deut. 3:24)
- 53) The exercise of His power is consistent with His essence and sovereign plan.
- 54) In context this involves “doing great things for Mary” by selecting her as the mother of Jesus and supplying the DNA for the “holy” child.
- 55) Our adjective “holy” denotes that which is set apart, pure, and holy in the sense of superior moral qualities.
- 56) In connection with God’s name, the term stresses His perfect essence and nature.
- 57) God’s holiness extends to His entire person and is not limited to His righteousness or justice or any other attribute.
- 58) He is completely perfect and pure without any blemish or defilement (cf. 1 John 1:5).
- 59) Other Scriptures ascribe holiness to God’s name (Lev. 20:3, 22:2, Psa. 30:4, 33:21, 105:3, 106:47, 111:9, Matt. 6:9 – “Hallowed be...” etc.).
- 60) The various names of God frequently communicate some aspect of His character and essence. Examples:
 - a) “Lord”: *YHWH*- proper name of God, Gen. 2:4, 15:7.
 - b) “I Am”: *Aehyeh*- Ex. 3:14, based on the Heb. Verb “to be” the title emphasizes God’s eternal existence.
 - c) “Most High”: *Elyon* – Gen 14:18-19, Psa. 57:2, sovereignty.
 - d) “Almighty”: *Shadday* - Psa. 91:1, omnipotence.
 - e) “God who sees”: *El Raiy*- Gen. 16:13, omniscience.
 - f) “The faithful God: *El Aman*- Deut. 7:9, Hosea 11:12 cf. 1 Cor. 1:9, 1 Peter 4:19, immutability.
- 61) God places great emphasis on His holiness (Lev. 11:44-45, 19:2, Josh 24:19-20, Psa. 99:5).
- 62) Furthermore, His viewpoint is holy (Psa. 77:13, Rom. 7:12).
- 63) The 66 books of the Bible are holy or set apart in their uniqueness:
 - a) All Scripture is God-breathed or inspired by God (**2 Timothy 3:16** All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; **2 Peter 1:20-21** But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is *a matter* of one's own interpretation,²¹ for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.).
 - b) The extent of inspiration.
 - i) It doesn’t ratify the lives or sins of individuals; it only guarantees that facts concerning their lives, and the sins, are accurately recorded (Gen. 3:4, Judges 17:10, 19:22ff).
 - ii) It doesn’t necessitate that illustrations are factual accounts (Luke 18:1-5).
 - c) The Word of God is perfect (Psa. 19:7).
 - d) The Word of God is pure (Psa. 19:8).
 - e) The Word of God is absolutely true without error (Psa. 19:9, 119:142, John 17:17).
 - f) The Word of God is righteous (Psa. 19:9, 119:7, 62, 123).
- 64) An individual is holy or sanctified when he believes in Jesus Christ (Acts 26:18, Rom 6:22, 1 Cor. 1:2).

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- 65) As His servants, we are to be sanctified in the Truth and in our conduct in the CWL (cf. John 17:19, Eph. 1:4, 2 Tim. 2:21, 1 Peter 1:15-16).
- 66) Some ways to be sanctified or set apart in the Truth and conduct.
- Delight in God's Word (**Psalm 119:16** I shall delight in Your statutes; I shall not forget Your word).
 - Meditate on God's Word (Josh. 1:8, **Psalm 119:97** O how I love Thy law! It is my meditation all the day.).
 - Be a student of God's Word (cf. Ezra 7:10).
 - Believe God's Word (**1 Thessalonians 2:13** And for this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received from us the word of God's message, you accepted *it* not *as* the word of men, but *for* what it really is, the word of God, which also performs its work in you who believe.).
 - Apply God's Word (Deut. 12:32).
 - Do not neglect His Word (e.g. lack of study, shortage of applications- cf. Psalms 119:10).
 - Separate from negative volition (cf. Psalms 1:1).
 - Seek out and enjoy fellowship with positive volition (cf. Rom. 1:12).
 - Do not get entangled in sexual sin (Eph. 5:3, 2 Thess. 4:3).
 - Be honest (cf. Prov. 11:1, Col. 3:9).
 - Rejoice even in the midst of suffering (James 1:2 cf. Psalms 119:92).
- 67) Mary continues to extol God in v. 50.
- 68) She declares, "And His mercy is upon generation after generation Toward those who fear Him."
- 69) The verse appears in capitals in the English translation.
- 70) This indicates that it is a quotation derived from an OT passage (**Psalm 103:17** But the lovingkindness of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear Him, And His righteousness to children's children.).
- The term "mercy" corresponds to the Hebrew term translated "lovingkindness."
 - The phrases, "Upon generation after generation" and "from everlasting to everlasting" portray the eternity of God's mercy (cf. Lam. 3:22).
 - He exhibits mercy regardless of age or dispensation.
- 71) The word translated "mercy" refers to the kindness, compassion, or concern expressed for someone in need ("eleos").
- Used of humans to humans (Matt. 23:23, Luke 10:37).
 - Used of God to man (1 Tim. 1:2, Jude 1:21 cf. **Hebrews 4:16** Let us therefore draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and may find grace to help in time of need.).
- 72) Scripture elsewhere affirms that God has an abundance of mercy, and it is because of His mercy and love that salvation is a potential for all humanity (Eph. 2:4, Titus 3:5, 1 Peter 1:3 cf. **John 3:16** "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.).
- 73) In connection with salvation, it is not withheld due to one's evil way of life (1 Tim. 1:13-16).

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- 74) For our part as believers, we are to show mercy to others, especially those who are spiritually compromised (Jude 1:22-23).
- 75) Bear in mind that those who show mercy in dealing with others will be blessed (Matt. 5:7).
- 76) Conversely, those who are merciless will face strict judgment (**James 2:13** For judgment *will be* merciless to one who has shown no mercy; mercy triumphs over judgment.).
- 77) A lack of mercy or compassion with others is a characteristic of those who are spiritually depraved (cf. Rom. 1:28-31).
- 78) In our verse Mary qualifies the object of God's mercy.
- 79) It is primarily exhibited "toward those who fear Him."
- 80) Mary doesn't mean fear in the sense of an apprehensive or agitated emotional state. That is, the emotion which is generated by the OSN in response to pain, danger, evil, ridicule, etc. (Jonah 1:4-5, Matt. 8:25).
- a) Believers are specifically commanded not to exhibit sinful fear (cf. Josh. 8:1, Isa. 35:4, 41:10, Matt. 14:27, Acts 27:24, Phil. 4:6, Rev. 1:17).
 - b) Despite all the rationalizations ultimately sinful fear is the result of the lack of confidence in God and the refusal to apply sound doctrine (Lev. 26:16).
 - c) We must have complete confidence in His ability to carry us through any adversity that we encounter in our life (Psa. 27:14; 37:5; 91:2ff, cf. Heb. 11:6).
 - d) The believer who is not overruled by fear and places his confidence in God will have peace (Psa. 112:7, Isa. 26:3).
 - e) We must learn to cast our cares upon our Heavenly Father (**Psalm 55:22** Cast your burden upon the LORD, and He will sustain you; He will never allow the righteous to be shaken., **Psalm 62:5-8** My soul, wait in silence for God only, For my hope is from Him. ⁶ He only is my rock and my salvation, My stronghold; I shall not be shaken. ⁷ On God my salvation and my glory *rest*; The rock of my strength, my refuge is in God. ⁸ Trust in Him at all times, O people; Pour out your heart before Him; God is a refuge for us. Selah., **1 Peter 5:6-7** Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, ⁷ casting all your anxiety upon Him, because He cares for you., cf. **Ephesians 6:10** Finally, be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of His might.).
- 81) Instead, fear in our verse refers to righteous, sanctified or legitimate fear (i.e. non-sinful fear).
- 82) To fear God is to have an attitude of profound reverence and respect for Him.
- 83) In addition to one's attitude, fear of God is manifested in righteous conduct.
- 84) Our faith should be evidenced by appropriate, observable applications.
- 85) Believers are commanded to fear God (1 Sam. 12:24, Psa. 111:10, Eccl. 12:13, 1 Peter 2:17).
- 86) This type of fear doesn't involve a sinful emotional reaction.
- 87) "Fear of the Lord" is a synonym for positive volition in the following areas:
- a) Belief in the Gospel (Acts 10:34-35).
 - b) Belief at the point of hearing sound doctrine (Prov. 1:7, 15:33).

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- c) The application of Bible doctrine (Psa. 112:1, Prov. 8:13 cf. Eph. 5:21).
- 88) Various traits of those who possess a true fear of God.
 - a) Recognition of the importance of sound doctrine (i.e. wisdom, Job 28:28, Psa. 86:11, Prov. 4:7, 8:11).
 - b) Readily discusses Divine viewpoint (Psa. 37:30).
 - c) Strong confidence in God and His plan (Prov. 14:26).
 - d) Separation from and hate for evil (Prov. 3:7, 8:13, Rom. 12:9 cf. 2 Cor. 6:14-18).
 - e) Contentment in one's niche (Prov. 15:16).
 - f) Does not envy those who are negative to the Truth (Prov. 23:17).
- 88) Blessings associated with the "fear of the Lord" (**Psalm 115:12-13** The LORD has been mindful of us; He will bless *us*; He will bless the house of Israel; He will bless the house of Aaron. ¹³ He will bless those who fear the LORD, The small together with the great.)
 - a) More doctrine and guidance (Psa. 25:12-14).
 - b) Blessings in time (Psa. 34:9, 112:1-10, Prov. 22:4).
 - c) Every legitimate desire (i.e. those desires which are in accordance with God's directive will, Psa. 145:19).
 - d) Deliverance and protection (Psa. 33:18-22; 34:7 cf. **Proverbs 19:23** The fear of the LORD *leads* to life, So that one may sleep satisfied, untouched by evil.).
 - e) Prolonged life (Prov. 10:27, 14:27).
 - f) Mercy from God (Psa. 103:13, 17-18, Luke 1:50).
- 89) Vv. 51-54 contain a series of verbs that express general truths about God's righteous dealings with mankind ("He has done..., has scattered...has brought down...has exalted...filled...sent away...given help...").
- 90) In v 51 Mary indicates, "He has done mighty deeds with His arm; He has scattered *those who were* proud in the thoughts of their heart."
- 91) She re-emphasizes God's omnipotence with the first sentence.
- 92) "He has done mighty deeds" refers to the outworking of His omnipotence (e.g. Ex. 6:1, 6, Acts 13:17).
- 93) "His arm" is an anthropomorphism that symbolizes God's great power (cf. Psa. 98:1, 118:15).
- 94) Mary further describes His "mighty deeds" in general terms.
- 95) Here God is portrayed as scattering those who are arrogant ("proud in the thoughts of their heart").
- 96) "Proud" indicates those who arrogantly oppose God primarily in their thinking ("huperephanos").
- 97) Arrogance begins in the mental attitude under the influence of the OSN and is often manifested in overt behavior (e.g. boasting, cf. Mark 7:21-23).
- 98) Generally, arrogance and pride is demonstrated by disobedience to God's commandments (cf. Neh. 9:29).
- 99) Whether in the MA or some overt expression, arrogance is unequivocally condemned in Scripture.
- 100) As a general rule, God is opposed to the proud (cf. James 4:6, 1 Peter 5:5).

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- a) The verb “opposed” is a colorful military term.
 - b) It means to meet face to face in battle, to range in battle against.
 - c) In this analogy, God is not immobile, apathetic, or unconcerned.
 - d) On the contrary, He will actively engage the arrogant (Psa. 119:21).
- 101) “To scatter” involves the following ideas:
- a) It conveys the image of a complete panicked rout (cf. 2 Kings 25:5, Acts 5:37).
 - b) It graphically serves as a metaphor for the Divine discipline on the proud (Psa. 89:10 also see analogy of “wicked” and chaff, Job 21:17, Psa. 1:4).
- 102) Pride goes before destruction (Prov. 16:18).
- 103) God may use severity in His dealings with the arrogant.
- a) Pride is particularly offensive to God (Prov. 16:5 cf. **Proverbs 8:13** "The fear of the LORD is to hate evil; Pride and arrogance and the evil way, And the perverted mouth, I hate").
 - b) The punishment of the conceited and arrogant by God is assured.
 - c) He will not put up with arrogance in the MA (**Psalm 101:5** Whoever secretly slanders his neighbor, him I will destroy; No one who has a haughty look and an arrogant heart will I endure.).
 - d) He will tear down the house of the proud (i.e. the proud will be ruined, Prov. 15:25 cf. Prov. 12:7, 14:11).
- 104) Mary next addresses God dealings with civil authorities.
- 105) God is the ultimate authority and His authority is not derived from any other source.
- 106) All authority among men is derived from God (John 19:10, 11; Rom. 13:1, 2).
- 107) Therefore it is His prerogative to remove rulers from their thrones.
- 108) Our term “rulers” refers to authorities in high political office and not minor court officials (“dunastes”).
- 109) We may infer from the context that Mary is referring to disobedient and therefore arrogant “rulers.
- 110) The deposing of this type of ruler is a testament to God’s power at work in human history. Biblical examples:
- a) Saul: 1 Sam. 28:16, 1 Chron. 10:1ff.
 - b) Ahab: 1 Kings 16:29-33, 22:34-38.
 - c) Sennacherib: Isa. 37:21-38.
 - d) Eglon: Judges 3:15ff.
 - e) Jabin and Sisera: Judges 4:2ff.
 - f) Belshazzar: Dan. 5:22ff.
- 111) Apart from “rulers” God’s mighty deeds extend to the rise and fall of nations and setting their boundaries (Job 12:23, Isa. 10:12ff, Acts 17:26).
- 112) If a nation adheres to an agenda(s) which violates God’s directive will, this is national arrogance. If perpetuated, the arrogance will lead to judgment (Isa. 37:21-29, Jer. 50:29-32, Rev. 18:7-8, **Nahum 3:1** Woe to the bloody city, completely full of lies and pillage; *Her* prey never departs.).

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- 113) In contrast to the demise of disobedient rulers, God exalts the humble. Biblical examples:
- a) Joseph: Gen 41:37ff.
 - b) Moses: Num. 12:3.
 - c) Rehoboam: 2 Chron. 12:2
 - d) Manasseh: 2 Chron. 33:11ff.
 - e) Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. 4:34-37, an example of personal humiliation that resulted in humility).
 - f) King and people of Nineveh (**Jonah 3:6-10** When the word reached the king of Nineveh, he arose from his throne, laid aside his robe from him, covered *himself* with sackcloth, and sat on the ashes. ⁷ And he issued a proclamation and it said, "In Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles: Do not let man, beast, herd, or flock taste a thing. Do not let them eat or drink water. ⁸ "But both man and beast must be covered with sackcloth; and let men call on God earnestly that each may turn from his wicked way and from the violence which is in his hands. ⁹ "Who knows, God may turn and relent, and withdraw His burning anger so that we shall not perish?" ¹⁰ When God saw their deeds, that they turned from their wicked way, then God relented concerning the calamity which He had declared He would bring upon them. And He did not do *it*).
 - g) Ezra & co: Ezra 8:11ff.
 - h) Esther and Mordecai: Est. 3:1-6, 10:3.
- 114) Humility is an essential quality of the positive believer.
- 115) Moreover it is absolutely essential to learn and practice sound doctrine (Psa. 25:8-9, James 1:21).
- 116) Believers ought to examine the attitude and conduct of Christ as the preeminent example of humility (**Hebrews 12:1-3** Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance, and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, ² fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. ³ For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you may not grow weary and lose heart.).
- 117) Christ's true humility was demonstrated by complete obedience to the will of the Father (John 8:28-29).
- 118) He voluntarily agreed to submit Himself to the sufferings and limitations associated with His life on earth, including His death on the cross.
- 119) Various examples of Christ's humility during the incarnation:
- a) His baptism (Matt. 3:13-15).
 - b) The washing of the disciples' feet (John 13:3-5).
 - c) Triumphal entry (Matt. 21:5).
- 120) Christ declared His own humility. This indicates that asserting one's own humility is not necessarily a case of arrogance (Matt. 11:29 cf. Num. 12:3).

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- 121) Furthermore, His humility functioned in harmony with His confident assertions, authority, uncompromising demands and severe rebukes (Matt. 7:28-29, 10:37-38, 16:22-23, 23:1ff, John 18:20).
- 122) As Christ manifested true humility by obeying the Father's will, so the believer ought to demonstrate humility through obedience.
- 123) Many believers today only give God's directive will a passing thought if at all.
- 124) Too many of us are focused on fulfilling our own desires rather than giving careful consideration to what God desires.
- 125) This applies to you if...
- a) You consistently miss Bible class for work (cf. Heb. 10:25).
 - b) Your "social network" is primarily negative volition (cf. Prov. 13:20, 2 Tim. 2:22).
 - c) You date those who are negative to God's plan.
 - d) You esteem educational achievements over learning God's word.
 - e) You value monetary success over sound doctrine (cf. Ps. 49:10ff, **Luke 16:13** "No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one, and love the other, or else he will hold to one, and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.").
 - f) You are enamored with the party scene (cf. 1 Peter 4:3).
 - g) You engage in an overabundance of "activities" that hinder the many applications required towards the local church.
 - h) You compromise doctrinal principles because of fear.
 - i) You consistently speak and conduct yourself according to your own moral standards (i.e. human viewpoint- cf. Ps. 37:30).
- 126) Of course this is a limited list. Nevertheless, many believers exhibit these characteristics.
- 127) Be wise and reassess your approach to the Christian life if any of these apply to you.
- 128) Correcting one's flawed approach demonstrates humility.
- 129) God doesn't merely desire our obedience, He demands it (cf. Deut. 6:17, 11:18ff, Zeph. 2:3, James 4:10).
- 130) This reality rubs some people the wrong way.
- 131) Many have a tough time adjusting to their "observable" earthly authorities much less the unseen, sovereign God of the universe.
- 132) Although this is a problem for many believers, it is unjustifiable.
- 133) As the perfect, gracious, sovereign of the universe, God has every right to demand obedience.
- 134) In light of the following realities the believer ought to be highly motivated to render humble obedience to God's will:
- a) God is infinitely superior to all things in every respect (Isa. 43:10-13, 44:8, 45:5-7).
 - b) He self-exists whereas mankind's existence depends on God (cf. Ex. 3:14, Job 12:10).

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- c) God is eternal whereas mankind's physical life is finite (Psa. 90:2, 10).
 - i) God is without beginning or end.
 - ii) He is free from all succession of time.
 - iii) He is the cause of time.
- d) God is omniscient. Mankind is constantly striving to increase his knowledge (Psa. 147:5, Prov. 1:5).
 - i) He knows Himself and all other things, whether they be actual or merely possible, whether they be past, present or future.
 - ii) He knows all things perfectly and from all eternity.
 - iii) From man's perspective, God's knowledge of the future is foreknowledge.
 - iv) However from His perspective, God has always known all things simultaneously. He has never had to learn anything.
 - v) It is important to remember that the foreknowledge of God is not causative (i.e. He allows volition to function). Acts of free will do not occur because they are foreseen by God.
- e) God is omnipotent. Humans possess very limited power and are vulnerable to weather, war, health problems, etc. (Job 1:19, 42:2).
 - i) God is able to do whatever He wills.
 - ii) However He is not free to do things that are contrary to His nature such as lie, deny Himself, etc. (2 Tim 2:13, Heb. 6:18).
- f) God is absolute veracity. Conversely, mankind is prone to questioning the truth and being disingenuous (John 18:38, Gal. 2:14, 1 Thess. 1:9).
- g) God is love whereas mankind is generally selfish and lovers of self (2 Cor. 13:11, 2 Tim.3:2).
 - i) God's love is founded in truth and holiness not on an emotional impulse.
 - ii) God's plan of grace for mankind is a manifestation of His love towards those who are undeserving.
- h) God is righteous and just. On the other hand, we are sinful and unjust (Psa. 89:14, Eccl. 3:16, 5:8).
 - i) Mankind is incapable of attaining the perfection of God's essence or nature (Rom. 3:23).
 - j) Furthermore, all mankind, since the fall of Adam, has been corrupted by the OSN which produced spiritual death (Gen 2:17, Rom. 5:12).
 - k) Due to this spiritually dead condition we were alienated from God in a state of hostility unable to affect a change through our own efforts (Rom. 3:9-18, Eph. 2:1-3, Col. 1:21).
 - l) Despite the state of hostility, God provided an escape from this condition. His love motivated Him to provide salvation as a free gift, strictly on the basis of grace, for every person who will believe in Jesus Christ (Eph. 2:1-9, 2 Tim. 1:7-10, Titus 2:11-14).
- m) Moreover, He sacrificed His own Son, Christ, on our behalf as part of the plan of salvation (**John 3:16** "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life",).

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- n) God's grace has been directed toward all mankind even while in a state of enmity. This is true grace (Rom. 5:8-10, cf. **1 Timothy 2:4** "... (God) Who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.").
 - o) Mankind is completely undeserving of His grace yet through faith in Christ, we may have a relationship with God which includes a new citizenship in the kingdom of Christ, redemption and forgiveness of sin, we have been declared righteous and have peace with God, etc. (Rom. 3:24, 5:1, Col. 1:13-14).
 - p) Moreover, God already knew we would be imperfect so He has graciously provided every means to manifest obedience and combat personal sin (e.g. rebound, 1 John 1:9; instruction in sound doctrine, Psa. 19:9-11, 119:9; inner strength, Eph. 3:16, Phil. 4:13).
 - q) In consideration of these facts, the believer that doesn't recognize the need to order his life around God's expectations is spiritually compromised and obtuse.
 - r) How could we possibly think it's acceptable to live a worldly life after all God has graciously done for us?
 - s) Sadly, many believers are hardened and would rather pursue the things of this world and turn a blind eye to Bible doctrine.
 - t) Do not be hardened by the sinful pursuits in this world (Prov. 28:14, Eph. 4:17ff, Heb. 3:13).
- 135) Remember, God takes pleasure in blessing the believer who manifests genuine humility in his thinking and behavior (**Isaiah 66:1-2** Thus says the LORD, "Heaven is My throne, and the earth is My footstool. Where then is a house you could build for Me? And where is a place that I may rest? ² "For My hand made all these things, Thus all these things came into being," declares the LORD. "But to this one I will look, To him who is humble and contrite of spirit, and who trembles at My word.).
- 136) A sampling of blessings that are bestowed on those who are humble:
- a) Ph. 1 salvation (cf. Matt. 18:1-4).
 - b) Ph. 2 deliverance (2 Chron. 12:7-12, 32:26, cf. **Jonah 3:10** When God saw their deeds, that they turned from their wicked way, then God relented concerning the calamity which He had declared He would bring upon them. And He did not do *it.*).
 - c) Divine viewpoint or wisdom (Prov. 11:2).
 - d) Effective prayer (Ezra 8:21, Psa. 10:17, Dan. 10:12).
 - e) Honor and prosperity (Psa. 37:11, Prov. 15:33, 18:12, 22:4).
 - f) National prosperity (Ezek. 17:24, Luke 1:52 cf. Israel in Millennium, Zeph. 3:12).
- 137) We are in the Church Age so it's particularly relevant to mention the role that humility plays in the local church.
- a) The corporate success and well-being of a LC is dependent upon the humility exhibited by its members (Eph. 4:2-3, 1 Peter 3:8).
 - b) Starting at the top, the p-t must possess humility in his ministry. This is demonstrated by teaching the truth of sound doctrine regardless of monetary gain (cf. 2 Cor. 11:7).

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- c) Individual service and applications toward other believers in the LC proceed from humility (**Philippians 2:3-4** Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind let each of you regard one another as more important than himself; ⁴ do not *merely* look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others; cf. **John 13:13-15** "You call Me Teacher and Lord; and you are right, for *so* I am. ¹⁴ "If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. ¹⁵ "For I gave you an example that you also should do as I did to you).
- d) Additional commands we are to obey:
- i) We are to be devoted ones another in brotherly love (Rom. 12:10).
 - ii) Pursue that which promotes peaceful relations and spiritual edification (Rom. 14:19).
 - iii) We are to serve one another in the LC (Gal. 5:13).
 - iv) Encourage one another to avoid sin (Heb. 3:13).
 - v) We are to stimulate one another to love and good works (Heb. 10:24).
 - vi) We are to bear one another's burdens which refers to oppressive suffering, difficult hardships (Gal. 6:2).
 - vii) Be hospitable to one another even if it's inconvenient (1 Peter 4:9).
 - viii) Be kind, compassionate, and forgiving to one another (Eph. 4:32).
 - ix) Speak the truth to one another (Eph. 4:25 cf. Col. 3:9).
 - x) Live in peace and be like-minded in Bible doctrine (2 Cor. 13:11).
 - xi) Comfort one another with Divine viewpoint (1 Thess. 4:18).
 - xii) Do not complain against other believers (James 5:9)
 - xiii) Love one another (1 Peter 1:22)..
- 138) Mary proclaims in v. 53, "He has filled the hungry with good things; And sent away the rich empty-handed."
- 139) The first statement is derived from Psa. 107:9 (**Psalm 107:9** For He has satisfied the thirsty soul, **And the hungry soul He has filled with what is good.**).
- 140) "The hungry" may be interpreted both literally and figuratively ("peinao").
- a) It may literally refer to hunger pangs or to one who is hungry (Luke 4:1-2, Phil. 4:12).
 - b) Yet in other passages "to hunger or to be hungry" clearly involves something different than suffering hunger pangs or a lack of physical nourishment.
 - c) "The hungry" refers to those who desire God's righteousness or seek to conform to His standards (Matt. 5:6).
 - d) The figurative meaning is applicable in our passage.
- 141) Many believers are occupied with their physical diet, and yet neglect their spiritual nourishment.
- 142) Spiritual nourishment is a necessity for every believer (Deut. 8:3, Matt. 4:3-4, John 6:35, 48-51, 1 Cor. 10:1-4 cf. Amos 8:11).
- 143) In the CA, this requires assembling in a local church that is functioning in accordance with the standards set for our dispensation.

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- 144) This begins with an adequately trained p-t that teaches sound doctrine, the whole counsel of God (2 Tim. 2:2, 15, 4:2, Titus 1:9, 2:1 cf. Acts 20:20, 27).
- 145) Of course merely assembling and being taught by a qualified p-t is not a panacea for living the Christian life.
- 146) A believer must also have a hunger for learning and applying God's word.
- 147) Ask yourself, "Do I have a hunger for learning and application?"
- 148) We possess the innate ability to choose for or against God and His plan.
- 149) This power of choice is our personal volition which resides in the soul.
- 150) It is God's directive will for all to exercise positive volition toward His person and plan (cf. Psa. 119:4).
- 151) Positive volition is manifested in a hunger for Divine viewpoint and its subsequent application in one's life (cf. Psa. 119:10ff, 167).
- 152) In contrast, negative volition is demonstrated by a lack hunger or interest in God and His plan.
- 153) The majority of humanity is negative to the plan of God beginning with the Gospel (Matt. 7:13-14).
- 154) While believers exercise positive volition towards the Gospel, many manifest negative volition towards sound doctrine over the course of their Christian life.
- 155) This type of believer squanders the opportunity of spiritual advancement and potential reward.
- 156) Even in our incredibly evil times, God has provided all the necessary resources for each and every believer to reach spiritual maturity and the wreath (cf. **2 Corinthians 9:8-11** And God is able to make all grace abound to you, that always having all sufficiency in everything, you may have an abundance for every good deed; ⁹ as it is written, "He scattered abroad, he gave to the poor, His righteousness abides forever." ¹⁰ Now He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food, will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness; ¹¹ you will be enriched in everything for all liberality, which through us is producing thanksgiving to God).
- 157) The issue is not the lack of God's resources, but a lack of commitment and desire to excel spiritually on the part of the believer.
- 158) Based on our freedom of volition, the fault and responsibility for failure in the Christian life rests upon the individual believer.
- 159) Perhaps in our day the concept of taking responsibility for one's actions and facing personal faults doesn't receive popular acceptance.
- 160) Nevertheless, there will be day, hopefully not too distant, where every Church Age believer will stand before the Lord at the Bema (2 Cor. 5:10 cf. Rom. 14:10).
- 161) There will be no arbitration or excuses. Each of us as believers will be held accountable for how we conducted ourselves during our lifetime (i.e. works).
- 162) The goal is to be able to give the best account possible when we have our meeting with the Lord at the Bema.

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- 163) Among those who believe the Gospel, only a small portion continues to exhibit positive volition over the long-haul in their Christian life (2 Cor. 2:17, Rev. 3:4 also Num. 14:5-10).
- 164) This is especially true for believers living in the last days of our dispensation (cf. 2 Peter 3:3, 1 Tim. 3:1ff, 4:1ff Rev. 3:14ff).
- 165) A large portion of which will simply not endure the teaching of sound doctrine (2 **Timothy 4:3-4** For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but *wanting* to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires; ⁴ and will turn away their ears from the truth, and will turn aside to myths).
- a) The reasons for the lack of tolerance of doctrinal teaching in our day are legion.
 - b) Some don't like to be challenged by God's word and others insist on pursuing studies that are of personal interest.
 - c) Instead of acclimating in a doctrinal local church and systematically learning Bible doctrine, the solution is to find a teacher(s) that will teach whatever you want.
 - d) Our word "accumulate" is literally "to heap together, pile up."
 - e) Sadly, this verse conveys the approach many believers take in their Christian life.
 - f) Note that the believer ceases to listen to the Truth and instead turns to "myths."
 - g) "Myths" in this verse refers that which is fictional or untrue.
- 166) Frankly, many believers are too busy pursuing the people and things of this world rather than pursuing that which is pleasing to God.
- 167) Essentially many believers love the world and not God based on their lack of hearing and doing His word (John 14:15, 21, 1 John 5:3).
- 168) Certainly many believers profess a great love for God, but their conduct in life tells a different story.
- 169) If any of us lack a hunger for learning about God and His plan we must take immediate steps to correct our mental attitude.
- 170) Those who pursue His plan will be blessed accordingly (Deut. 28:1-14, **Ecclesiastes 2:26** For to a person who is good in His sight He has given wisdom and knowledge and joy, while to the sinner He has given the task of gathering and collecting so that he may give to one who is good in God's sight. This too is vanity and striving after wind.).
- 171) God is said to fill the hungry with "good things."
- 172) Mary uses "good things" to refer to God's blessings in general.
- 173) If one is positive and hungers for spiritual nourishment, "good things" may include:
- a) Living grace (**Matthew 6:31-33** "Do not be anxious then, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'With what shall we clothe ourselves?' ³² "For all these things the Gentiles eagerly seek; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. ³³ "But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you).
 - b) Comfort and justice (cf. Isa. 51:1-3).
 - c) Material blessings (cf. Deut. 6:11).

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- d) General blessings (**Psalm 34:7-10** The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear Him, And rescues them. ⁸ O taste and see that the LORD is good; How blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him! ⁹ O fear the LORD, you His saints; For to those who fear Him, there is no want. ¹⁰ The young lions do lack and suffer hunger; But they who seek the LORD shall not be in want of any good thing., **Psalm 84:11-12** For the LORD God is a sun and shield; The LORD gives grace and glory; No good thing does He withhold from those who walk uprightly. ¹² O LORD of hosts, How blessed is the man who trusts in Thee!, **James 1:17** Every good thing bestowed and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation, or shifting shadow.).
- e) Aging “gracefully” (**Psalm 103:2-5** Bless the LORD, O my soul, And forget none of His benefits; ³ Who pardons all your iniquities; Who heals all your diseases; ⁴ Who redeems your life from the pit; Who crowns you with lovingkindness and compassion; ⁵ Who satisfies your years with good things, *So that* your youth is renewed like the eagle).
- f) A positive wife (**Proverbs 18:22** He who finds a wife finds a good thing, And obtains favor from the LORD cf. **Proverbs 12:4** An excellent wife is the crown of her husband, But she who shames *him* is as rottenness in his bones., **Proverbs 19:14** House and wealth are an inheritance from fathers, But a prudent wife is from the LORD., **Proverbs 31:10** An excellent wife, who can find? For her worth is far above jewels. ¹¹ The heart of her husband trusts in her, And he will have no lack of gain. ¹² She does him good and not evil All the days of her life., **Proverbs 31:30** Charm is deceitful and beauty is vain, *But* a woman who fears the LORD, she shall be praised).
- g) Monetary support (applies to the p-t, **Galatians 6:6** And let the one who is taught the word share all good things with him who teaches).
- h) Resources to carry out God’s will (**Hebrews 13:20-21** Now the God of peace, who brought up from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the eternal covenant, *even* Jesus our Lord, ²¹ equip you in every good thing to do His will, working in us that which is pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom *be* the glory forever and ever. Amen.).
- 174) In contrast to filling the “hungry” Mary indicates that God sends away “the rich empty-handed.”
- 175) Juxtaposed with the hungry, the rich would be those who have no interest in the plan of God beginning with the Gospel.
- 176) We must not suppose that this is a general condemnation of riches or wealthy individuals.
- 177) Some great believers were blessed with fantastic riches (e.g. Job: Job 1:3-4, 42:12, David: 1 Chron. 29:28, Solomon: 1 Kings 10:23, 2 Chron. 1:11-12, 9:22).
- 178) Rather it is the attitude of self-sufficiency and self-satisfaction that is frequently manifested by those who have wealth.
- 179) The fog of wealth obscures the spiritual realities of this life for many (e.g. the need for salvation, dependence on God, the need for Bible doctrine, etc.).

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- 180) The tendency under the OSN is to trust in one's riches and not in God (cf. Deut. 8:11-18, Prov. 10:45, 18:10-11, 28:11).
- 181) Again this applies to a certain segment of the wealthy.
- 182) Ultimately such trust in wealth proves to be foolishly misplaced (Psa. 49:1ff, 52:1ff, Prov. 11:28, Jer. 17:11, James 5:1ff).
- 183) Some become insatiable in their desire for wealth and possessions.
- 184) It is the basic motivation that drives them through life.
- 185) Their primary concerns in life center around how best to gain, maintain, and increase wealth.
- 186) Under the OSN, monetary greed gains traction in one's thinking.
- 187) For such an individual their desire for more or greed is idolatry.
- Typically the term "idolatry" calls to mind the worship of or devotion to the image of a pagan deity (e.g. Baal, Dagon, Buddha).
 - However in Colossians, Paul indicates that greed, which is centered in the mental attitude, is considered idolatry (Col. 3:5).
 - One might ask, "How is greed considered idolatry?"
 - The essence of idolatry is to devote oneself to anyone or anything other than God and His plan.
 - "Greed" in any form, in this case monetary greed, manifests a devotion to earthly things rather than devotion to God.
 - Ergo, greed is a form of idolatry (cf. Eph. 5:5).
- 188) The pursuit of riches supplants a relationship with God.
- 189) It's also widely condemned throughout Scripture (Prov. 23:4-5, 28:22, 1 Tim. 6:9-11).
- 190) Further, the one who is greedy fails to recognize that one cannot pursue both in their life (**Luke 16:13** "No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one, and love the other, or else he will hold to one, and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.).
- 191) Those who pursue wealth and possessions may be admired in the world, but it escapes their notice that God finds their motivations detestable (**Luke 16:14-15** Now the Pharisees, who were lovers of money, were listening to all these things, and they were scoffing at Him. ¹⁵ And He said to them, "You are those who justify yourselves in the sight of men, but God knows your hearts; for that which is highly esteemed among men is detestable in the sight of God).
- 192) Great wealth cannot prevent God's punitive measures from being meted out upon individuals or even nations (cf. Prov. 11:4, Nahum 2:8ff, Luke Rev. 18:16-19).
- 193) The circumstances of the rich are in contrast to the "hungry."
- 194) Unlike those who are filled with good things because they hunger after the Truth, the opposite is true for the rich.
- 195) In regard to this segment of the rich, for all their wealth, they are empty of Divine viewpoint.
- 196) They are satiated with their own accumulation of wealth and so forfeit being filled with "good things."

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- 197) In v. 53 our term “sent away” is an act of dismissal (“exapostello”).
- 198) Here the rich are sent away “empty-handed” by God because of their rejection and disinterest in the Truth (lit. empty- “kenos”).
- 199) Their priorities in life don’t include positive volition towards God and His plan.
- 200) The wealthy invest time, money, and energy into getting rich but in the end will get nothing for their endeavors.
- a) For some not only will they get nothing, but they will also spend eternity in the Lake of Fire because of failure to believe in Jesus Christ (cf. Luke 16:19ff).
 - b) For others that are believers, they experience a dearth of eternal reward at the Bema Seat (**1 Corinthians 3:12-15** Now if any man builds upon the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, ¹³ each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it, because it is *to be* revealed with fire; and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work. ¹⁴ If any man's work which he has built upon it remains, he shall receive a reward. ¹⁵ If any man's work is burned up, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved, yet so as through fire.).
- 201) In either case they should have been rich in the faith and toward God (cf. Luke 12:16ff, James 2:5).
- 202) God doesn’t delight in one’s intelligence, career choice, physical strength, or riches.
- 203) The world may place great emphasis on such things but from the biblical standpoint they are superfluous.
- 204) Instead God delights in one’s knowledge of Him and His dealings with mankind (Jer. 9:23-24).
- 205) The one who has the knowledge of sound doctrine or God’s viewpoint possesses incomparable and incalculable wealth (**Job 28:12-19** "But where can wisdom be found? And where is the place of understanding? ¹³ "Man does not know its value, Nor is it found in the land of the living. ¹⁴ "The deep says, 'It is not in me'; And the sea says, 'It is not with me.' ¹⁵ "Pure gold cannot be given in exchange for it, Nor can silver be weighed as its price. ¹⁶ "It cannot be valued in the gold of Ophir, In precious onyx, or sapphire. ¹⁷ "Gold or glass cannot equal it, Nor can it be exchanged for articles of fine gold. ¹⁸ "Coral and crystal are not to be mentioned; And the acquisition of wisdom is above *that of* pearls. ¹⁹ "The topaz of Ethiopia cannot equal it, Nor can it be valued in pure gold., **Psalms 19:9-11** The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; The judgments of the LORD are true; they are righteous altogether. ¹⁰ They are more desirable than gold, yes, than much fine gold; Sweeter also than honey and the drippings of the honeycomb. ¹¹ Moreover, by them Thy servant is warned; In keeping them there is great reward, **Proverbs 3:13-15** How blessed is the man who finds wisdom, And the man who gains understanding. ¹⁴ For its profit is better than the profit of silver, And its gain than fine gold. ¹⁵ She is more precious than jewels; And nothing you desire compares with her., **Romans 11:33-36** Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways! ³⁴ For who has known the mind of the Lord,

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or who became His counselor? ³⁵ Or who has first given to Him that it might be paid back to him again? ³⁶ For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him *be* the glory forever. Amen, **Hebrews 11:24-26** By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; ²⁵ choosing rather to endure ill-treatment with the people of God, than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin; ²⁶ considering the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he was looking to the reward.).

- 206) In v. 54 Mary transitions to God's dealings with Israel.
- 207) She states, "He has given help to Israel His servant, In remembrance of His mercy..."
- 208) In relation to God, the nation of Israel is designated as "His servant."
- 209) Our term "servant" has different connotations depending on the context ("pais").
- a) The word may focus on age as in a boy or youth (Luke 2:43).
 - b) It may refer to one's immediate offspring ("son"- John 4:51).
 - c) Here and elsewhere the word refers to one who is committed in total obedience to another. That is, a slave or servant (Luke 7:7).
- 210) Israel was chosen by God to serve Him and represent His plan among the nations (cf. Ex. 19:3ff, Deut. 7:6, 26:16-19).
- 211) The nation is referred to as God's servants in numerous passages in the OT (Lev. 25:55, 1 Chron. 16:13, Psa. 136:22, Isa. 44:21 cf. Jer. 46:27).
- 212) As His servant, God has promised to help Israel as part of his covenant with the nation (Isa. 41:9ff).
- 213) Mary affirms the fulfillment of His promise of help which in part is being fulfilled through the birth of the Messiah (Isa. 42:1 cf. Isa. 9:6).
- 214) She also indicates that God gives help to Israel based on his promises of mercy.
- 215) As He is omniscient, God doesn't fail to remember His promises.
- 216) He faithfully fulfills every promise He makes (unlike men- cf. Deut 7:9, 1 Thess, 5:24, 2 Tim. 2:13).
- 217) This is especially evident in His relationship with Israel (cf. **Psalm 98:1-3** *A Psalm*. O Sing to the LORD a new song, For He has done wonderful things, His right hand and His holy arm have gained the victory for Him. ² The LORD has made known His salvation; He has revealed His righteousness in the sight of the nations. ³ He has remembered His lovingkindness and His faithfulness to the house of Israel; All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God, **Isaiah 49:13-16** Shout for joy, O heavens! And rejoice, O earth! Break forth into joyful shouting, O mountains! For the LORD has comforted His people, And will have compassion on His afflicted. ¹⁴ But Zion said, "The LORD has forsaken me, And the Lord has forgotten me." ¹⁵ "Can a woman forget her nursing child, And have no compassion on the son of her womb? Even these may forget, but I will not forget you. ¹⁶ "Behold, I have inscribed you on the palms of My hands; Your walls are continually before Me).
- 218) God provides mercy to all humanity via the gift or salvation through His Son (cf. Eph. 2:5-7, 1 Peter 1:3).

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- 219) Nevertheless Jesus Christ the Messiah was specifically promised to come to the nation of Israel.
- 220) Therefore it is through the nation of Israel that all humanity would be blessed.
- 221) Mary continues in v. 55, “As He spoke to our fathers, To Abraham and his offspring forever.”
- 222) “Our fathers” refers to Mary’s descendants of which Abraham is one.
- 223) God is doing what He said He would do in centuries past.
- 224) We see the principle that God’s actions are in accordance with His promises.
- 225) Primarily in view here are God’s promises “to Abraham and his offspring.”
- 226) By virtue of these promises it is specifically through Abraham that “all the families of the earth shall be blessed” (Gen. 12:3, 18:18, 22:18, Gal. 3:29).
- 227) Some descendants of Abraham to whom God’s promises were re-affirmed:
- a) Isaac (Gen. 17:19, 26:3-4).
 - b) Jacob (Gen. 28:14).
 - c) David (Psa. 89:3-4, 36-37, Acts 2:29ff).
- 228) Abraham’s offspring, literally “seed”, would be the Messiah, Jesus Christ born of Mary (cf. Matt. 1:1, Acts 3:25-26, Gal. 3:16).
- 229) V. 55 concludes Mary’s song.
- 230) Salient points in the song:
- a) Mary praises God for His blessing upon her.
 - b) She responds with intense joy as a result of His blessing.
 - c) God has concern for those who are in humble socio-economic circumstances (i.e. Mary and Joseph were in the peasant class).
 - d) Mary identifies herself as God’s “bondslave.” This implies a willingness on her part to serve Him.
 - e) Mary emphasizes God’s omnipotence and holiness.
 - f) She extols His abundant mercy on those who fear Him.
 - g) God opposes the proud, but exalts the humble.
 - h) He blesses those who hunger for His righteousness, but withholds from the “self-sufficient” rich.
 - i) God honors His covenant to Abraham.
- 231) Luke abruptly returns back to the narrative in v. 56.
- 232) He indicates that Mary stayed with Elizabeth for an additional three months and then returned back to her home in Galilee.
- 233) Note that Luke states “**about** three months” and is not giving an exact timetable.
- 234) Mary left in Elizabeth’s nine month of pregnancy, but apparently prior to the birth of John the Baptist (cf. vv. 36, 57).

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Luke 1:57-64 Now the time had come for Elizabeth to give birth, and she brought forth a son.⁵⁸ And her neighbors and her relatives heard that the Lord had displayed His great mercy toward her; and they were rejoicing with her.⁵⁹ And it came about that on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child, and they were going to call him Zacharias, after his father.⁶⁰ And his mother answered and said, "No indeed; but he shall be called John."⁶¹ And they said to her, "There is no one among your relatives who is called by that name."⁶² And they were making signs to his father, as to what he wanted him called.⁶³ And he asked for a tablet, and wrote as follows, "His name is John." And they were all astonished.⁶⁴ And at once his mouth was opened and his tongue *loosed*, and he *began* to speak in praise of God.

Analysis of vv. 57-64:

- 1) Luke once more brings the narrative back to Elizabeth.
- 2) At this point in v. 57 she had reached full term and gave birth to a son.
- 3) News of the birth reached her neighbors and relatives.
- 4) She who was "called barren" and "advanced in years" had now been shown great mercy from God (v. 7, 36).
- 5) In its basic sense our term translated "mercy" means a kindness or concern expressed for someone in need ("eleos").
- 6) As Mary has just declared in her song, God extends His mercy toward those who fear Him (**Luke 1:50** "And His mercy is upon generation after generation Toward those who fear Him.).
- 7) The characteristics of mercy, kindness, and compassion are an inherent part of His essence (Psa. 103:8, 17, Eph. 2:4).
- 8) He is after all the Father of Mercies (**2 Corinthians 1:3** Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort;).
- 9) Luke's earlier statements about Elizabeth and Zacharias leave no doubt that both may be categorized as "God-fearers" (v. 6).
- 10) They were "both righteous in the sight of God."
- 11) This was evidenced in their personal conduct as they walked "blamelessly in all the commandments and requirements of the Lord."
- 12) The miraculous birth precipitated a period of great rejoicing.
- 13) The angel Gabriel's words were coming to fruition (**Luke 1:13-14** But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your petition has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will give him the name John."¹⁴ "And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth.).
- 14) On the eighth following the birth, the time had come to circumcise Elizabeth's son according to the Divine mandate first instituted by God with Abraham (Gen. 17:12, 21:4).
 - a) Circumcision entails the surgical removal of the male foreskin as a religious ritual.
 - b) It served as an overt sign of God's Covenant with Abraham.
 - c) Abraham himself was circumcised when he was 99 yrs. old.

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- d) From that point forward all Jewish male children were to be circumcised on the 8th day after birth.
- 15) The ritual was later mandated in the Mosaic Law.
- 16) Why on the eighth day? After giving birth to a male child, Elizabeth was considered “unclean” for seven days; therefore she was unable to present the child before that time (cf. Lev. 12:2-3).
- 17) As we will see in the next chapter, Jesus Christ was circumcised on the 8th day in accordance with the Law (Luke 2:21).
- 18) Compliance with this command was a very serious matter in the Age of Israel.
- a) Moses failed to circumcise his son and it nearly cost him his life (**Exodus 4:24-26** Now it came about at the lodging place on the way that the LORD met him and sought to put him to death. ²⁵ Then Zipporah took a flint and cut off her son's foreskin and threw *it* at Moses' feet, and she said, "You are indeed a bridegroom of blood to me." ²⁶ So He let him alone. At that time she said, "*You are* a bridegroom of blood "-- because of the circumcision.).
- b) The Exodus Generation, a generation of spiritual malcontents, failed to have their sons circumcised in Egypt or in the wilderness (**Joshua 5:3-7** So Joshua made himself flint knives and circumcised the sons of Israel at Gibeath-haaraloth. ⁴ And this is the reason why Joshua circumcised them: all the people who came out of Egypt who were males, all the men of war, died in the wilderness along the way, after they came out of Egypt. ⁵ For all the people who came out were circumcised, but all the people who were born in the wilderness along the way as they came out of Egypt had not been circumcised. ⁶ For the sons of Israel walked forty years in the wilderness, until all the nation, *that is*, the men of war who came out of Egypt, perished because they did not listen to the voice of the LORD, to whom the LORD had sworn that He would not let them see the land which the LORD had sworn to their fathers to give us, a land flowing with milk and honey. ⁷ And their children whom He raised up in their place, Joshua circumcised; for they were uncircumcised, because they had not circumcised them along the way.).
- c) Failure to be circumcised resulted in excommunication from Jewish society (**Genesis 17:14** "But an uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin, that person shall be cut off from his people; he has broken My covenant.").
- 19) Despite the requirement of physical circumcision during the Age of Israel, “inner” or spiritual circumcision was of primary importance.
- a) The inner circumcision was synonymous with obedience to God’s directive will (Lev. 26:41, Deut.10:16, 30:6, Jer.4:4, Ezek. 44:7).
- b) Although the rite is not a requirement in the Church Age, Paul affirms the primacy of “spiritual” circumcision over the physical (cf. Phil. 3:3).
- c) The “true” circumcision is composed of both Jews and Gentiles who believed in Christ apart from the observance of any physical ritual.
- d) Furthermore, in Col. 2:11 Paul refers to it as “a circumcision made without hands.”

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- i) It is a feature of our spiritual union with Christ.
- ii) Note that every Church Age believer is circumcised in Christ.
- iii) In contrast to the physical ritual, it is completely unseen and doesn't result in an external, visible mark.
- iv) God the Holy Spirit performs the inward circumcision at the point of faith in Christ (Rom. 2:28-29).
- v) The circumcision is nonphysical so the statement "removal of the fleshly body" may appear to be enigmatic.
- vi) However, it must be understood that "the fleshly body" is a reference to the Old Sin Nature (OSN).
 - (1) Adam is the source of the OSN.
 - (a) He acquired the OSN, in his "flesh," after his original sin and passed it on to the human race via procreation.
 - (b) In addition, Adam's sin was judged which resulted in his spiritual death. This also became mankind's legacy (cf. Gen 2:17; 3:6).
 - (c) After the fall, Adam could not perpetuate anything better than himself.
 - (d) Hence, since the fall, every member of the human race at birth possesses an OSN and is in spiritually dead condition. The one exception being Jesus Christ (Rom 5:12, 17-18, 6:17, 1 Peter 2:22).
 - (2) Scripture demonstrates that the OSN resides in the genetic code of the human body (Psa. 51:5 also see Job 14:4, 15:16, 25:4-6).
 - (3) In fact, the "flesh" and "body" are frequently cited as the place of sin and lust (Rom. 8:1-9, 12, Gal. 5:16, Eph.2:3, 2 Pet. 2:10, 18).
- vii) The "fleshly body" or OSN is analogous to foreskin which is removed during circumcision.
- viii) In the spiritual circumcision, the "removal" of the OSN is accomplished at salvation.
- ix) The Greek verb, "circumcised" indicates a completed event in the past (aorist of "peritemno").
- e) It is clear from other passages, that the believers continue to possess an OSN and sin after salvation (1 John 1:8-10 cf. Rom. 7:14-25).
- f) Rather, in the "circumcision of Christ," the OSN is positionally removed or set aside at salvation (Rom. 6:2-7, 18, Eph. 4:22, Col. 3:9).
- g) Prior to our salvation we were "in Adam."
- h) This is truly a hopeless position characterized by spiritual death and domination of the OSN (cf. Col 2:13).
- i) However, after salvation we are "in Christ."
- j) "In Christ" is a privileged position in which the domination of the OSN has been effectively terminated and the believer is spiritually alive (1 Cor. 15:22).

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- 20) Apparently without consulting Zacharias or Elizabeth, the neighbors and relatives intended to name the newborn child, Zacharias, after his father.
- 21) Naming a son after the father doesn't appear to have been a common practice (cf. Matt. 1:1-16, 10:2-3, Luke 6:15-16, John 6:71).
- 22) However it was not unusual for neighbors and relatives to be "involved" with the naming of a child (cf. Ruth 4:17).
- 23) If they had been told about Gabriel's imperative to Zacharias regarding the child's name, they clearly disregarded it.
- 24) In view of their reaction, it's unlikely that they had prior knowledge.
- 25) Elizabeth responds to their choice of a name with an emphatic "No indeed."
- 26) Rather she asserted, "He shall be called John."
- 27) Luke doesn't reveal how she became aware of the directive regarding her son's name.
- 28) It's highly likely that she had been informed by her husband (via writing) rather than through an independent revelation.
- 29) The neighbors and relatives were taken aback by her staunch refusal to acquiesce to their choice of a name.
- 30) They in turn refuse to accept Elizabeth's word and reply to her, "There is no one among your relatives who is called by that name."
- 31) After snubbing Elizabeth, they appeal to Zacharias to find out his wishes regarding a name.
- 32) As a consequence of his disbelief, Zacharias had been unable to speak and hear since Gabriel's announcement during his temple service.
- 33) Therefore those who desired to know his wishes had to perform a pantomime through various gestures to communicate with him.
- 34) Zacharias motioned for a tablet and wrote, "His name is John."
- 35) His succinct, firm response doesn't allow for any argument. The matter was settled.
- 36) Of course the name of his child had been a foregone conclusion for some time (**Luke 1:13** But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your petition has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will give him the name John.).
- 37) Nevertheless the neighbors and relatives were completely astonished at his reply.
- 38) Their level of surprise is not immediately clear.
- 39) It's likely that their astonishment was based on the combination of his firm response and the selection of an uncommon name in agreement with his wife.
- 40) Perhaps they imagined Zacharias and Elizabeth had not conferred on the matter and although he was unable to hear it, he confirmed his wife's response to them.
- 41) What happened next only magnified their astonishment.
- 42) Immediately after naming John, Zacharias' hearing and speech were fully restored.
- 43) By naming his son, John, Zacharias attested to his belief in Gabriel's prophecy and therefore God's directive will.
- 44) His first words are appropriately of praise to God which specifically begins in v. 68 in a hymn ("Blessed *be* the Lord God of Israel...").

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Luke 1:65-66 And fear came on all those living around them; and all these matters were being talked about in all the hill country of Judea. ⁶⁶ And all who heard them kept them in mind, saying, "What then will this child *turn out to* be?" For the hand of the Lord was certainly with him.

Analysis of vv. 65-66:

- 1) Vv. 65-66 provide a parenthetical note between Zacharias' recovery and his words of praise beginning in v. 68.
- 2) Prior to revealing the hymn of praise, Luke reports the initial response to Zachariahs' miraculous recovery.
- 3) The immediate response by those in the vicinity was "fear."
- 4) The news spread rapidly about his recovery following the naming of the child and his subsequent words of praise and prophecy.
- 5) "Fear" in this case wasn't necessarily sinful fear.
- 6) This would appear to be a righteous fear that came about through the knowledge of Divine involvement in the events surrounding the birth of John (cf. Luke 5:26, 7:16, Acts 2:43, 5:5, 11).
- 7) Furthermore believers are commanded to fear God (cf. Deut. 10:12, 1 Sam. 12:24, Psa. 111:10, Eccl. 12:13.).
 - a) This type of fear doesn't involve a sinful emotional reaction.
 - b) Rather it refers to reverence, honor, awe, and righteous behavior in relation to God.
 - c) As a general rule, it's arrogant and foolhardy not to fear Him (cf. Prov. 1:29-32, Jer. 5:21-25)
- 8) Other examples of non-sinful fear (otherwise known as righteous or sanctified fear):
 - a) Believers are to have a legitimate fear of our authorities (Prov. 24:21, Rom. 13:4 cf. 1 Peter 2:17).
 - b) The believer should fear failure to reach spiritual maturity (Phil. 2:12 cf. Heb. 4:1).
 - c) "Fear of the Lord" is a synonym for positive volition in the following areas:
 - i) Belief in the Gospel (Acts 10:34-35).
 - ii) Belief at the point of hearing sound doctrine (Prov. 1:7, 15:33).
 - d) The application of sound doctrine (Psa. 112:1, Prov. 8:13 cf. Eph. 5:21).
 - e) Various traits of those who possess a true fear of God.
 - i) Recognition of the importance of sound doctrine (i.e. wisdom, Job 28:28, Psa. 86:11, Prov. 4:7, 8:11).
 - ii) Readily discusses Divine viewpoint (Psa. 37:30).
 - iii) Strong confidence in God and His plan (Prov. 14:26).
 - iv) Separation from and hate for evil (Prov. 3:7, 8:13, Rom. 12:9 cf. 2 Cor. 6:14-18).
 - v) Contentment in one's niche (Prov. 15:16 cf. 1 Tim. 6:6).
 - vi) Does not envy those who are negative to the Truth (Prov. 23:17).

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- f) Various blessing associated with the “fear of the Lord” (**Psalm 115:12-13** The LORD has been mindful of us; He will bless *us*; He will bless the house of Israel; He will bless the house of Aaron. ¹³ He will bless those who fear the LORD, The small together with the great.).
 - i) More doctrine and guidance (Psa. 25:12-14).
 - ii) Blessings in time (Psa. 34:9, 112:1-10, Prov. 22:4).
 - iii) Every legitimate desire (i.e. those desires which are in accordance with God’s directive will, Psa. 145:19).
 - iv) Deliverance and protection (Psa. 33:18-22; 34:7 cf. **Proverbs 19:23** The fear of the LORD *leads* to life, So that one may sleep satisfied, untouched by evil.).
 - v) Prolonged life (Prov. 10:27, 14:27).
 - vi) Mercy from God (Psa. 103:13, 17-18).
- 9) By word of mouth the news spread throughout the region and these matters continued being discussed.
- 10) “These matters” would include the all the happenings from Gabriel’s announcement to Zacharias’ praise and prophecy.
- 11) These matters had made a considerable impact on the populace.
- 12) Those who knew the details “kept them in mind” (lit: “put them in their heart”).
- 13) Many wondered, “What then will this child turn out to be?”
- 14) Those who had knowledge of the details knew that John would be a special individual:
 - a) His father and mother were both advanced in years, well past the age of child bearing (Luke 1:7, 18).
 - b) Additionally his mother was barren yet was able to conceive and give birth (Luke 1:7, 36).
 - c) His father personally received the announcement from the elect angel Gabriel.
 - d) Gabriel affirmed that John would be “great in the sight of the Lord” (Luke 1:15).
 - e) He would have an effective ministry as the forerunner to the Messiah (Luke 1:16-17).
 - f) John’s father, a priest, was struck deaf and dumb until his birth and naming because of he didn’t believe the prophecy (Luke 1:20-22, 62).
 - g) His father’s speech and hearing were immediately restored upon his naming.
 - h) His name had been determined by God prior to his birth (Luke 1:13, 60, 63).
 - i) Zacharias’ prophetic hymn explicitly refers to John’s future ministry before the Messiah (Luke 1:75-76).
- 15) In light of these details, Luke explains, “the hand of the Lord was certainly with him.”
- 16) The hand of the Lord is an anthropomorphism for the presence of the active power of God (cf. 1 Chron. 4:10, Ezra 7:6, 28, Acts 11:21, 13:11).¹⁷

¹⁷ Nolland, 80.

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Luke 1:67-80 And his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Spirit, and prophesied, saying: ⁶⁸ "Blessed *be* the Lord God of Israel, For He has visited us and accomplished redemption for His people, ⁶⁹ And has raised up a horn of salvation for us In the house of David His servant-- ⁷⁰ As He spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from of old-- ⁷¹ Salvation from our enemies, And from the hand of all who hate us; ⁷² To show mercy toward our fathers, And to remember His holy covenant, ⁷³ The oath which He swore to Abraham our father, ⁷⁴ To grant us that we, being delivered from the hand of our enemies, Might serve Him without fear, ⁷⁵ In holiness and righteousness before Him all our days. ⁷⁶ "And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; For you will go on before the Lord to prepare His ways; ⁷⁷ To give to His people *the* knowledge of salvation By the forgiveness of their sins, ⁷⁸ Because of the tender mercy of our God, With which the Sunrise from on high shall visit us, ⁷⁹ To shine upon those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death, To guide our feet into the way of peace." ⁸⁰ And the child continued to grow, and to become strong in spirit, and he lived in the deserts until the day of his public appearance to Israel.

Analysis of vv. 67-80:

- 1) Following the parenthetical details of vv. 65-66, Luke resumes with Zacharias breaking forth in praise.
- 2) Chronologically, his words in vv. 68-79 immediately follow the events surrounding his recovery in v. 64 and provide the substance of his praise.
- 3) Vv. 68-79 compose what is commonly referred to as "The Benedictus."
- 4) "Benedictus" is the Latin translation of the Greek word meaning blessed or worthy of praise ("eulogetos").
- 5) "Eulogetos" is translated "Blessed" in the English.
- 6) "The Benedictus":
 - a) As a hymn, it is in the same general style as "The Magnificat" in vv. 46-55.
 - b) It may be divided into two parts.
 - i) The first part, vv. 68-75, is a blessing. God is the object of praise primarily because He has brought about salvation and shown faithfulness towards Israel.
 - ii) The second part, vv. 76-79, celebrates the significant role John will have preparing the way for the Messiah.
- 7) In v. 67 Luke indicates, "Zacharias was filled with the Holy Spirit, and prophesied, saying..."
- 8) Take note that although Zacharias incurred discipline because he refused to believe the Divine prophecy from Gabriel, this didn't spell the end of his spiritual momentum.
- 9) He had failed, endured his discipline, and learned from it.
- 10) Like Zacharias we all fail and endure varying degrees of discipline in our Christian lives.
- 11) Yet we must be careful with the notion that failure is inevitable.
- 12) Some believers take this and use it to rationalize a habitual lack of self-control and ongoing sin in one's CWL.

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- 13) Although an incredibly prevalent trait in the last days, a lack of self-control of one's OSN is completely unacceptable from the Divine viewpoint (2 Tim. 3:3).
- 14) Don't rationalize your sin. Deal with it in a biblical manner.
- 15) Although failure is inevitable, God expects the believer to take active measures to master his OSN and consistently conduct oneself according to His standards (cf. 1 Cor. 9:24-27, 1 Tim. 4:7-8, Heb. 5:14).
- 16) Self-control is a characteristic of the filling of God the Holy Spirit and is a necessary element of spiritual growth (**Galatians 5:22-23** But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law., **2 Peter 1:5-8** Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in *your* moral excellence, knowledge; ⁶ and in *your* knowledge, self-control, and in *your* self-control, perseverance, and in *your* perseverance, godliness; ⁷ and in *your* godliness, brotherly kindness, and in *your* brotherly kindness, love. ⁸ For if these *qualities* are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.).
- 17) Those who are spiritually astute learn from their discipline and make the necessary corrections in their thinking and conduct (Heb. 12:5-13 cf. Prov. 15:5, 32, 19:20).
- 18) Those who refuse to learn will repeat their folly, receive further discipline, and stray from Bible doctrine (Prov. 19:27 cf. Jer. 5:3, Zech. 7:11-12).
- 19) Divine discipline is a manifestation of God's love for us as believers (Rev. 3:19 cf. Prov. 3:11-12).
- 20) When we are disciplined by God it is for our spiritual betterment.
- 21) Scripture has many examples of believers who failed at various points yet moved on and continued to function in their niches like Zacharias. Thankfully, God is gracious and compassionate (e.g. Gideon: Judges 6:36ff, 8:27, Heb. 11:32, David: 2 Sam. 24:10ff, Solomon: 1 Kings 11:1ff, John-Mark: Acts 12:25, 13:5, 13:13, 15:37-38, Col. 4:10).
- 22) The fact that Zacharias wrote, "His name is John" is a testament to the absence of his previous skepticism and unbelief.
- 23) In addition to praising God, his words are prophetic in nature.
- 24) However before progressing we must be clear about the varied nature of prophetic utterances ("propheteuo").
 - a) In a general sense as in our passage, to prophesy is to proclaim information under the filling of God the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:17-18, 19:6).
 - b) Essentially the "prophet" becomes a conduit for the declaration of Divine viewpoint (cf. Neh. 9:30, Acts 28:25, 2 Peter 1:21).
 - c) In contrast false prophets function apart from the filling of God the Holy Spirit and proclaim information that is various parts human viewpoint and doctrines of demons. We must be on guard against these types (cf. Jer. 14:14, Matt. 7:15, 24:11, 2 Peter 2:1, 1 Peter 4:1).
 - d) Many times the act of prophesying is predictive and involves the foretelling of future events (1 Peter 1:10, Jude 1:14, Rev. 10:11).

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- e) By comparison in other instances, to prophesy is to reveal or bring to light that which is concealed or previously unknown (cf. Mark 14:64, Luke 22:64, 1 Cor. 14:1ff.).
- 25) Certain elements of Zacharias' prophecy are predictive, yet other elements involve the revelation of that which has already occurred (e.g. v. 68- aorist tense verbs cf. 76- future tense verbs, "you will...").
- 26) Our term "filled" denotes that which is filled up or completely full ("pimplemi").
- 27) Whether predictive or otherwise, Zacharias was filled by the Holy Spirit so we may be certain that his prophecy is unvarnished Divine viewpoint.
- 28) Also, our narrative takes place during the dispensation of the Age of Israel.
- 29) The filling ministry of the Holy Spirit was not common or universal as it is in our current dispensation the Church Age (cf. Ex. 31:3).
- 30) Common ministries of the Holy Spirit in the Age of Israel included:
- a) Abiding ministry (external position- Hag. 2:5, John 14:16-17; not necessarily permanent- 1 Sam. 16:14 cf. Ps. 51:11).
 - b) Empowering/strengthening ministry to complete specific applications (Num. 11:17-25, Judges 3:10, 11:29-33, 14:5-6, 15:14-16, 1 Sam. 11:1-6).
 - c) Leading/guiding ministry (Psa. 143:10, Neh. 9:20).
- 31) Zacharias' filling and prophecy is indeed something special.
- 32) He opens with the blessing, "Blessed *be* the Lord God of Israel..."
- 33) This is a familiar blessing found in the OT (**1 Samuel 25:32-33** Then David said to Abigail, "**Blessed be the LORD God of Israel**, who sent you this day to meet me, ³³ and blessed be your discernment, and blessed be you, who have kept me this day from bloodshed, and from avenging myself by my own hand., **1 Kings 1:48** "The king has also said thus, '**Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel**, who has granted one to sit on my throne today while my own eyes see *it*.'" , **1 Kings 8:14-16** Then the king faced about and blessed all the assembly of Israel, while all the assembly of Israel was standing. ¹⁵ And he said, "**Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel**, who spoke with His mouth to my father David and has fulfilled *it* with His hand, saying, ¹⁶ 'Since the day that I brought My people Israel from Egypt, I did not choose a city out of all the tribes of Israel *in which* to build a house that My name might be there, but I chose David to be over My people Israel.', **Psalm 41:12-13** As for me, Thou dost uphold me in my integrity, And Thou dost set me in Thy presence forever. ¹³ **Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel**, From everlasting to everlasting. Amen, and Amen, **Psalm 72:18-19** **Blessed be the LORD God, the God of Israel**, Who alone works wonders. ¹⁹ And blessed be His glorious name forever; And may the whole earth be filled with His glory. Amen, and Amen., **Psalm 106:48** **Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel**, From everlasting even to everlasting. And let all the people say, "Amen." Praise the LORD).
- 34) Furthermore this opening reflects the predominant Jewish focus of his praise which is expected considering the man and his dispensation.
- 35) Zacharias proceeds to indicate the reasons for praising God beginning with the statement, "For He has visited us and accomplished redemption for His people..."

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- 36) The verb “visit” means to look after or to come to help (“episkeptomai”).
 - a) It’s usage in our verse precludes the notion of an informal social call or merely going to see someone.
 - b) Other passages indicate the term connotes trying to help or looking after someone in need (Acts 15:36, James 1:27).
- 37) Furthermore, the verb is used of God “visiting” men in the sense that He comes to bless and deliver them.¹⁸
- 38) In context Zacharias’ words convey God’s great blessing on Israel.
- 39) This may be seen in the birth of his son John, the forerunner of the Messiah
- 40) However, of greater importance, the fetus inside of Mary was tangible proof that God had “visited” and blessed the nation of Israel (cf. John 4:22, Rom. 9:5).
- 41) As God had brought about the Messiah’s forerunner, so He would also bring about the birth of the Messiah.
- 42) The general idea of God visiting Israel is further developed in that He has “accomplished redemption for His people.”
- 43) In a general sense the term “redemption” means to liberate, to redeem, or to release (“lutrosis”).
- 44) It was a legal and commercial term that signified the redemption of someone or something for a price.
- 45) More precisely, the term commonly referred to the release of a slave for a price often from oppressive circumstances.
- 46) The capturing, buying, and selling of slaves was the norm throughout the Greco-Roman world in the time of Christ.
- 47) Slaves were essential labor within the Roman Empire.
 - a) They worked for city governments on engineering projects such as roads, aqueducts, and buildings.
 - b) Additionally, slaves worked in private households as secretaries of the master of the house, cooks, litter bearers, etc.
- 48) Apart from the Roman Empire, slavery was common in other nations of antiquity (e.g. Egypt, Assyria, Israel).
- 49) Additional sources of slavery according to Scripture:
 - a) Military conquest (Deut. 20:10-14).
 - b) Via purchase (Ex. 12:43-45; 21:2; Lev. 25:44, Eccl. 2:7).
 - c) Via birth (Ex.21:4).
 - d) Via kidnapping (Ex. 21:16)
 - e) As recompense for thievery (Ex. 22:3).
 - f) Inability to pay debt (Prov. 22:7).
 - g) The sale of oneself or a family member (Gen. 47:18-19, Lev. 25:39, also Ex. 21:7).
 - h) Corporate degeneracy (Josh. 9:1-27).
- 50) Zacharias views God’s redemption as it relates to Israel.

¹⁸ Marshall, The Gospel of Luke, 90.

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- 51) Historically, God had redeemed or delivered Israel from various circumstances, most notably from slavery in Egypt (Deut. 4:32-38, 9:26, 15:15, 2 Sam. 7:23).
- 52) Here also on a theological level Zacharias refers to the redemption of those who believe in the Messiah (cf. Luke 1:77-79, Col. 1:14).
- 53) Maintaining the analogy of a slave redeemed or released from slavery, we must understand that all mankind, with the exception of Christ the Messiah, is born into the slave market of sin (cf. Rom. 6:17, 8:15, Heb. 2:15).
- 54) In our natural state, each member of humanity is born spiritually dead enslaved by an OSN as a consequence of Adam's fall (Rom. 5:14-5, 1 Cor. 15:22).
- 55) At the point of the fall, some major changes occurred including:
- a) God executed the human spirits of both the man and the woman and they experienced spiritual death just as He had promised (Gen. 2:16-17, 3:6).
 - b) The old sin nature became the ruler of life (Eph. 2:1-3).
 - c) Since Adam exalted his body over God's directive will, God also judged his body so Adam became the source of the old sin nature for the entire human race.
 - d) Both the man and the woman acquired an old sin nature.
 - e) There are numerous Biblical references to the flesh and body as being the place of sin and lust; hence it is a part of human genetics (Rom. 7:17-18, 23-25, Gal. 5:16, Eph. 2:3, Col. 2:11, 2 Peter 2:10, 18, 1 John 2:16).
 - f) Adam and Eve could still produce children as God had directed them to do, but they could not produce children better than themselves (i.e. without an old sin nature).
 - g) As a result, all of Adam's progeny possess the old sin nature and thus share in his spiritual death.
 - h) Satan became the god the world (2 Cor. 4:4).
 - i) It is through the OSN that he maintains control over his domain (John 8:44, 1 John 3:8)
- 56) Based on the fact that we are all Adam's progeny, we cannot free ourselves from this natural, human condition through our own efforts.
- 57) As slaves we lack the resources to gain our own freedom.
- 58) The price for our freedom had to be paid by a free man, one who was uncorrupted by the Adam's original sin and an old sin nature.
- 59) Jesus Christ was the only One that was qualified to pay the price for our freedom (Heb. 7:26-28).
- 60) Due to the virgin birth, He was completely undefiled by an old sin nature.
- 61) Furthermore over the course of His 1st Advent He lived a completely sinless life (**Hebrews 4:14-15** Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. ¹⁵ For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as *we are*, yet without sin., **1 John 3:5** And you know that He appeared in order to take away sins; and in Him there is no sin.).

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- 62) Therefore Christ was not burdened with sin of any kind.
- 63) As a result of His sinlessness, He also was not burdened with the penalty of sin, spiritual death.
- 64) Another aspect to consider is Christ's personal volition in the matter.
- 65) He willingly fulfilled all that was necessary in order to redeem mankind.
- 66) Ergo His volition and God's sovereignty were in complete agreement (**Luke 22:42** saying, "Father, if Thou art willing, remove this cup from Me; yet not My will, but Thine be done.", **Romans 5:19** For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous., **Philippians 2:5-8** Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷ but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, *and* being made in the likeness of men. ⁸ And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.).
- 67) The price to redeem mankind was His own life frequently referred to as the blood of Christ (Rom. 3:25, Eph. 1:7, 2:13, 1 Peter 1:18-19, Rev. 5:9).
- 68) Specifically His work of bearing all sin effectively purchased the freedom of all mankind.
- 69) The freedom is universally applicable to every member of the human race (1 Tim. 2:5-6, Matt. 20:28).
 - a) Although paid the redemption price for all mankind, we must not assume that His work eliminates the response of an individual's volition to God's plan.
 - b) Universal redemption doesn't result in universal salvation for all mankind.
 - c) One must first believe in Jesus Christ in order to effectively realize his freedom from the slave market of sin.
 - d) It is the soul of the believer that is redeemed at salvation (cf. Psalms 34:22).
 - e) Apart from saving faith, one's freedom is positional and not actual (cf. **Acts 13:39** and through Him everyone who believes is freed from all things, from which you could not be freed through the Law of Moses.).
 - f) Some are overjoyed to be freed while others gauging by their negative volition to God's plan prefer a life of servitude to the OSN.
- 70) Various results of Christ's redemptive work on the cross:
 - a) The total forgiveness of sins (Isa. 44:22, Eph. 1:7, Col. 1:13-14, 2:13-14).
 - b) It forms the basis of our adoption as children of God (Rom. 8:15-17).
 - c) Provides deliverance from the curse of the Law (Gal. 3:13, 4:4-6 cf. Rom. 8:1-3).
 - d) The basis for our justification (Rom. 3:24).
 - e) We are promised a resurrection body, of which the Holy Spirit is a pledge, which will be without an OSN in Phase 3 (redemption of our bodies— Rom. 8:23; Eph. 4:30).
 - f) It is the basis for Phase 2 sanctification (Eph. 5:25-27).
 - g) Eternal inheritance (Heb. 9:15).
 - h) The devil is rendered powerless (Heb. 2:14-15).

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- 71) Although the Messiah was not yet born and His work of redemption was incomplete, by using the past tense Zacharias views it as already accomplished.
- 72) His words epitomize confidence in God's word and the ability to accomplish His directive will.
- 73) In v. 69 Zacharias alludes to the means of redemption.
- 74) Namely that God "has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of David His servant."
- 75) The reference to the house of David His servant in relation to the "horn of salvation" identifies the "horn" as Jesus Christ the Messiah.
- 76) "House" refers to the descendants or ancestors of King David (cf. Judges 4:17, Jer. 21:11-12, et al).
- 77) David was promised that his throne would be established forever through one of his descendants (2 Sam. 7:16, Psa. 89:3-4, Jer. 33:15ff).
- 78) This is a key provision promised by God to David as part of the Davidic Covenant.
- 79) This illustrious descendant was the Lord Jesus Christ (**Matthew 1:1** The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham...cf. **Matthew 21:9** And the multitudes going before Him, and those who followed after were crying out, saying, "Hosanna to the Son of David; Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest!", **Luke 2:4** And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the city of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David..., **Luke 3:23, 31** ²³ And when He began His ministry, Jesus Himself was about thirty years of age, being supposedly *the* son of Joseph, the *son* of Eli...³¹ the *son* of Melea, the *son* of Menna, the *son* of Mattatha, the *son* of Nathan, the *son* of David)
- 80) Other passages affirm this covenant (Psa. 89:34-37, Matt. 20:30-31, Rev. 22:16).
- Although the covenant is unconditional, it doesn't stipulate that the descendants of David would **continually** occupy the throne.
 - The house of David had been dethroned because of apostasy and disobedience by the time of Christ.
 - Rather, the covenant guaranteed the eternal establishment of David's throne at some point in the future (Luke 1:30-33).
 - This point of time begins at the 2nd Advent and Millennium (Isa. 9:6-7, 11:1-10, Jer. 23:3-8).
- 81) The term "horn" suggests the strength of a powerful animal.
- 82) The word retains the same connotation when used of people especially in the OT.
- 83) It's frequently used to symbolize power and strength (cf. Lam. 2:3, 17 – "strength" and "might" is lit. "horn" in the Heb.).
- 84) When used in our verse in reference to the Messiah, it connotes **exceptional** power and strength.
- 85) Zacharias portrays Christ as the Mighty Savior who delivers the following:
- Those who believe in Him from spiritual death and eternity in the Lake of Fire (Acts 4:8-12, 1 Thess. 5:9).
 - Secondarily, the nation of Israel at the 2nd Advent (v. 71, Rom. 11:26).

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- 86) In v. 70 he affirms that God has accomplished this “just as He spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from of old...”
- 87) The promise of salvation which was soon to be fulfilled in the person and work of the Messiah had been declared during the Age of Israel long before Zecharias’ day.
- 88) Zacharias emphatically upholds God’s veracity.
- 89) Veracity or truth is an intrinsic part of His essence.
- a) God is absolute truth (cf. Psa. 31:5, 86:15, 117:2, Jer. 10:10, John 3:33, 17:3).
 - b) He is the one True God in contrast to false deities (cf. **1 Thessalonians 1:9** For they themselves report about us what kind of a reception we had with you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God.).
 - c) Therefore it is impossible for Him to do or say anything that is in contradiction to the truth (cf. **Titus 1:1-2** Paul, a bond-servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, for the faith of those chosen of God and the knowledge of the truth which is according to godliness,² in the hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised long ages ago, **Hebrews 6:17-18** In the same way God, desiring even more to show to the heirs of the promise the unchangeableness of His purpose, interposed with an oath,¹⁸ in order that by two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we may have strong encouragement, we who have fled for refuge in laying hold of the hope set before us).
 - d) He manifests truth in:
 - i) His ways (Psa. 25:10, Rev. 15:3).
 - ii) His works (Psa. 111:7-8, Dan. 4:37 cf. Rev. 16:7).
 - iii) His words (cf. **Colossians 1:5** because of the hope laid up for you in heaven, of which you previously heard in the word of truth, the gospel, **Revelation 19:7** "Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready." ⁸ And it was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen, bright *and* clean; for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. ⁹ And he said to me, "Write, 'Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.'" And he said to me, "These are true words of God.).
 - e) Since His word is bound to His essence, it is completely trustworthy and reliable (2 Sam. 7:28, Psa. 119:142, 151, 138:2, John 17:17).
 - f) Our heavenly Father expects us as His children to conduct ourselves in truth (cf. Prov. 3:3, 12:19, Eph. 4:25, 2 John 1:4, 3 John 1:3-4).
 - g) It ought to be our ardent desire to know His truth (cf. Psa. 25:5, 86:11, 119:43, Prov. 23:23).
- 90) Note that God used the “holy prophets” to communicate His promise of salvation.
- 91) The primary function of a prophet was to speak on behalf of God (cf. Ex. 7:2, Jer. 1:17).
- 92) Additionally the prophetic information was revealed supernaturally by God (cf. Num. 12:6, Ezek. 2:3ff, Nahum 1:1, Zech. 1:1).
- 93) A **legitimate** prophecy was not based on the bias or will of the prophet (**2 Peter 1:20-21** But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is *a matter* of one's

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own interpretation, ²¹ for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God).

- 94) The standards set for a prophet were black and white:
- The prophecy couldn't contradict sound doctrine or other Divine viewpoint (Deut. 13:1-5).
 - The prophecy had to be fulfilled (**Deuteronomy 18:20-22** 'But the prophet who shall speak a word presumptuously in My name which I have not commanded him to speak, or which he shall speak in the name of other gods, that prophet shall die.' ²¹ "And you may say in your heart, 'How shall we know the word which the LORD has not spoken?' ²² "When a prophet speaks in the name of the LORD, if the thing does not come about or come true, that is the thing which the LORD has not spoken. The prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him cf. 1 Sam. 3:20-21).
 - Failure to meet these standards was a capital offense.
 - The penalty for failure attests to the supreme importance of accuracy and maintaining the proper mental attitude when communicating God's word.
 - His word is His thinking, therefore the utmost care should be taken to prevent any distortion (cf. 2 Tim. 2:15).
- 95) The adjective "holy" is used to describe the prophets who declared God's message.
- 96) The term preceded by "His" connotes that the unnamed prophets were legitimate and true prophets of God ("**His holy** prophets").
- 97) These holy prophets faithfully and accurately predicted the coming of the Messiah.
- 98) Some of the prophets included:
- Moses (Deut. 18:15-18).
 - Isaiah (Isa. 9:6, 28:16, 53:1-12).
 - Jeremiah (Jer. 33:15-17).
 - Zechariah (Zech. 6:12-13, Zech. 9:9).
 - Daniel (Dan. 7:13-14, 9:24-27).
 - Micah (Micah 5:2-3).
- 99) Regardless of the message the true prophet spoke as commanded by God via Divine revelation (Jer. 26:12, 16, Ezek. 4:7, 6:2, 11:4).
- 100) V. 71 begins a loose description of the salvation that was a result of God's action and what He had communicated through His holy prophets in vv. 68-70.¹⁹
- 101) Zacharias declares that God provides "salvation from our enemies, and from the hand of all who hate us."
- 102) Our term "salvation" refers to a physical and temporal deliverance and is unrelated to eternal salvation gained by faith in Jesus Christ.
- 103) Notice that the NASB renders most of the verse in caps ("Salvation **FROM OUR ENEMIES, And FROM THE HAND OF ALL WHO HATE US**").
- 104) The language here is drawn from Psalm 106, but is not a direct quotation (Psa. 106:10).

¹⁹ Marshall, The Gospel of Luke, 91.

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- 105) In Psalm 106 the psalmist cites God's deliverance of Israel from the hands of the Egyptians following the Exodus (Psa. 106:7-9).
- 106) There are many other examples of God delivering the nation from its enemies sometimes in miraculous fashion (Judges 7:8ff, 1 Sam. 7:7ff, Isa. 36:1ff).
- 107) On a personal level, David experienced God's deliverance from many of his enemies (Psa. 18:1ff).
- 108) Nevertheless Zacharias is not expecting a deliverance from the Romans, the current rulers of the land.
- 109) Although this was certainly an aspiration of many of his peers, Zacharias has in mind the ultimate deliverance of the nation.
- 110) He is looking ahead to the future fulfillment of God's promise that Israel's enemies will "be as nothing" when the Messiah returns 2nd Advent (Isa. 41:10-16, 49:24-26, Zeph. 3:15-20, Rev. 19:11-20).
- 111) Even today Israel is surrounded by enemies that would rejoice at her destruction (e.g. Syria, Iran).
- 112) They may scheme and employ various stratagems but ultimately their efforts will result in failure.
- 113) Israel's restoration in the land is secure despite great international opposition (Isa. 11:11-16, 51:11, Jer. 16:14-16, 23:3-8, 30:18-20, Ezek. 37:1-28, Hosea 3:4-5, Amos 9:14-15).
- 114) This opposition reaches a high point prior to the 2nd advent and beginning of the Millennium (Joel 2:18-20, 3:18-21, Zech. 12:1-9).
- 115) Additional facts regarding Israel at 2nd Advent and the Millennium:
- a) God's covenants with Israel are fulfilled (e.g. the Abrahamic Covenant).
 - b) The Lord will rule in her midst with absolute righteousness (**Isaiah 2:1-4** The word which Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. ² Now it will come about that In the last days, The mountain of the house of the LORD Will be established as the chief of the mountains, And will be raised above the hills; And all the nations will stream to it. ³ And many peoples will come and say, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, To the house of the God of Jacob; That He may teach us concerning His ways, And that we may walk in His paths." For the law will go forth from Zion, And the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. ⁴ And He will judge between the nations, And will render decisions for many peoples; And they will hammer their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not lift up sword against nation, And never again will they learn war., also Isa. 11:4-5).
 - c) Israel is vindicated and the reproach of the nation is removed (Isa. 54:4-17, 62:1-9, Ezek. 36:1-15).
 - d) Israel will enjoy high prestige among the nations (Isa. 49:22-23).
 - e) The nation will also become incredibly affluent (Isa. 60:1ff).
 - f) The borders will be expanded to include all the land that was apportioned to them by God (Ezek. 36:28 cf. Gen. 15:18, Josh 1:3-4).
 - g) The land will be divided among the tribes of Israel (Ezek. 47:21ff).

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- h) Unbelievers will initially be purged from the nation (Ezek. 20:33-44, Matt. 25:31-46).
 - i) The birthrate will skyrocket (Isa. 54:1-3, Ezek. 36:37-38).
 - j) The topography will be altered (Zech. 14:4-10).
 - k) The temple, priesthood and offerings will be restored (Ezek. 44:15, 46:1ff, also **Jeremiah 33:14-18** 'Behold, days are coming,' declares the LORD, 'when I will fulfill the good word which I have spoken concerning the house of Israel and the house of Judah. ¹⁵ 'In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch of David to spring forth; and He shall execute justice and righteousness on the earth. ¹⁶ 'In those days Judah shall be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell in safety; and this is *the name* by which she shall be called: the LORD is our righteousness.' ¹⁷ "For thus says the LORD, 'David shall never lack a man to sit on the throne of the house of Israel; ¹⁸ and the Levitical priests shall never lack a man before Me to offer burnt offerings, to burn grain offerings, and to prepare sacrifices continually.'").
- 116) In v. 72 Zacharias cites the purpose of God bringing about salvation for His people.
- 117) His actions were intended “to show mercy toward our fathers, And to remember His holy covenant.”
- 118) This is reminiscent of Mary’s words in the Magnificat where she relates God’s mercy towards Israel just “as He had spoke to our Fathers” (**Luke 1:54-55** "He has given help to Israel His servant, In remembrance of His mercy, ⁵⁵ As He spoke to our fathers, To Abraham and his offspring forever.").
- 119) Our word “fathers” refers collectively to all Jewish descendants from Abraham (“pater”).
- 120) God is cited in various passages as showing mercy toward His people as He has promised (Deut. 13:17, Jer. 31:20, Ezek. 39:25 cf. Psa. 86:15).
- 121) Furthermore, His actions are in accord with “His holy covenant” with Israel; more specifically, with Abraham as we will see in the following verse.
- 122) The term “covenant” was commonly used in the Greco-Roman world to refer to the settlement of an inheritance (“diatheke”).
- 123) In this sense it was used as a legal technical term to refer to one’s last will and testament.
- 124) In other usage, the word referred to a compact or contract.
- 125) However in many of its occurrences in the NT including our passage, “covenant” refers to the promises made by God made to Abraham and the nation of Israel (cf. Rom. 9:4, Eph. 2:12).
- 126) The fact that His “covenant” is designated as “holy” emphasizes its uniqueness and irrevocability.
- 127) “Remember” should be understood that in the sense that God is bringing to pass certain provisions of His covenant with Israel.
- a) The most significant provision is that of sending the Messiah as part of Abraham’s seed (Acts 3:25).

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- b) It does not suggest that God forgot, then suddenly remembered, and began fulfilling His promises.
 - c) God's omniscience precludes forgetfulness (cf. Deut. 4:31, Isa. 49:15).
 - d) Indeed, it was Israel that "forgot" their covenant with God at various periods throughout her history (Deut. 4:9 cf. Jer. 2:32, 23:26-27).
 - e) In spite of Israel's and even mankind's great proclivity to "forget" God, He is gracious and "remembers" those who fear Him (Psa. 50:20, 147:11, Prov. 2:17 cf. Psa. 106:44-46, Luke 1:50).
- 128) God's "holy covenant" is further defined in v. 73 as "the oath which He swore to Abraham our father."
- 129) God swore an oath by Himself that He would bless Abraham in various ways.
- 130) Synopsis of the Abrahamic Covenant.
- a) The Abrahamic Covenant consists of the promises God made to Abraham from the time he resided in Ur to the command to sacrifice his son, Isaac (cf. Acts. 7:2-3, Gen. 22:16-18).
 - b) Initially the promise made to Abraham, known as Abram in Ur, was contingent upon the fulfillment of various conditions (Gen. 12:1-3).
 - c) In Gen. 12:1 the command translated "Go forth..." is emphatic in the Hebrew.
 - d) Abram was expressly commanded by God to "Go forth" from:
 - i) "Your country (i.e. your current residence in Mesopotamia)."
 - ii) "Your relatives."
 - (1) We may deduce from this command that his relatives were unsuitable company for a positive believer.
 - (2) As a rule, the company of negative volition, those who are disinterested in the plan of God are unsuitable company for the positive believer.
 - (3) In addition to being unsuitable, keeping company with those who are disinterested in God's plan is extremely detrimental to one's relationship with God (**James 4:4-8** You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. ⁵ Or do you think that the Scripture speaks to no purpose: "He jealously desires the Spirit which He has made to dwell in us"? ⁶ But He gives a greater grace. Therefore *it* says, "God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble." ⁷ Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. ⁸ Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.).
 - (4) Quite simply, it will ruin your spiritual growth (cf. expanded translation **1 Corinthians 15:33** Stop being deceived: "Bad company customarily ruins good morals.).
 - (5) We must choose our companions wisely according to biblical standards not the superficial standards of the world (cf. Psa. 119:63, Prov. 13:20, 28:7).
 - iii) "Your father's house (i.e. the household of Terah)."

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- (1) This command to separate from his relatives is specifically applied to his father.
 - (2) Apparently his father Terah was also having a negative spiritual impact and was a stumbling block for Abram.
 - (3) This scenario illustrates the necessity to separate even from those in your closest, immediate family (e.g. father, mother).
 - (4) A blood relation doesn't equate to spiritual compatibility.
 - (5) The issue is one's attitude toward God beginning with eternal salvation.
 - (6) Jesus Christ asserted that a believer's enemies might be the closest members of his own household (Luke 12:51-53).
 - (7) Furthermore, the one that values one's familial relationships over a relationship with Christ renders himself unworthy (Matt. 10:37 cf. Luke 14:26).
- iv) "To a land which I will show you."
 - e) This is a case where God reveals His operational and geographical will.
 - f) God clearly give instruction as to what he expects Abram to do and where he wants him to be.
 - g) In order for the covenant to become binding these conditions had to be met by Abram.
 - h) In other words he had to obey God's commands.
 - i) For his obedience, Abram would be blessed in the following areas:
 - i) Land (**Genesis 12:1-2** Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go forth from your country, And from your relatives And from your father's house, **To the land which I will show you;** ² **And I will make you a great nation,** And I will bless you, And make your name great; And so you shall be a blessing;).
 - (1) The land itself is first specified in Gen 12:7 and later expanded upon in Gen. 13:14 (**Genesis 12:5-7** And Abram took Sarai his wife and Lot his nephew, and all their possessions which they had accumulated, and the persons which they had acquired in Haran, and they set out for the land of Canaan; thus they came to the land of Canaan. ⁶ And Abram passed through the land as far as the site of Shechem, to the oak of Moreh. Now the Canaanite *was* then in the land. ⁷ **And the LORD appeared to Abram and said, "To your descendants I will give this land."** So he built an altar there to the LORD who had appeared to him., **Genesis 13:14** And the LORD said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him, "Now lift up your eyes and look from the place where you are, northward and southward and eastward and westward; ¹⁵ for all the land which you see, I will give it to you and to your descendants forever).
 - (2) The promise of land was ratified in Gen. 15 (**Genesis 15:18** On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, "To your descendants I have given this land...).
 - (3) Associated with this blessing is God's promise to make a great nation of his descendants.

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- (4) The blessing also carried a promise of protection (**Genesis 12:3** And I will bless those who bless you, And the one who curses you I will curse...., e.g. Egypt, Assyria).
 - (a) This in part was demonstrated by his association with Mamre, Melchizedek, and Abimelech (Gen. 14:13, 18-20, 21:22-32).
 - (b) At certain times it also involved protection from his own lack of discernment (Gen. 12:1ff, Gen. 20:1ff).
- ii) Abundant progeny.
 - (1) God's promise "I will make you a great nation" presupposes the possession of land and a sizeable population (**Genesis 12:2** "And I will make you a great nation...").
 - (2) Abram was also promised an heir that would be from his own "body" (Gen. 15:1-4).
 - (3) He was promised descendants as numerous as the dust of the earth and as numerous as the stars of heaven (Gen. 13:16, Gen. 15:5 cf. Gen. 17:2).
 - (4) His progeny includes:
 - (a) A multitude of nations (Gen. 17:4).
 - (b) Kings (Gen. 17:6).
 - (5) They would enjoy an everlasting covenant (Gen. 17:7).
 - (6) Abraham's sexual prosperity was specifically said to come through Sarah (Gen. 17:15-16, 19).
- iii) The Line of Messiah.
 - (1) The original promise was sworn in Gen. 12 (**Genesis 12:3** And I will bless those who bless you, And the one who curses you I will curse. **And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.** cf. Gal. 3:8).
 - (2) The ratification of this provision of the covenant came after Abraham offered up Isaac in obedience to God's directive (Gen. 22:16-18).
 - (3) This prefigured or served as a type of the future messiah's substitutionary death and resurrection (Gen. 22:1-10, 13 cf. Heb. 11:17-19).
- iv) Additional areas of blessing:
 - (1) Great reward (**Genesis 15:1** After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, saying, "Do not fear, Abram, I am a shield to you; Your reward shall be very great.").
 - (2) Great reputation (**Genesis 12:2** And I will make you a great nation, And I will bless you, **And make your name great;** And so you shall be a blessing).
 - (3) Great prosperity (Gen. 24:1, 35).
 - (4) He lived to an old age and died in peace (Gen. 15:15, 25:8).
- v) Abraham's great blessing came about as a direct result of his obedience to God's word.
- vi) His obedience was also the basis for the establishment of the covenant with Isaac (Gen. 26:3-5).

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- vii) The Jews were beneficiaries of his obedience throughout their history (Ex. 2:24, 2 Kings 13:23, Psa. 105:8-9, 42, Micah 7:20 cf. Deut. 30:7).
- viii) By virtue of our being in Christ, Church Age believers also share in the Abrahamic Covenant as heirs (Gal. 3:29, 4:28).
 - (1) This was a stipulation of the original promise of the Messiah to Abraham (**Genesis 12:3** And I will bless those who bless you, And the one who curses you I will curse. **And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.**" cf Gal. 3:8-9).
 - (2) Christ also alluded to this when he spoke with "the centurion" (Matt. 8:5-13).
- 131) Besides the Abrahamic covenant God entered into several other major covenants with men; some are applicable only to Israel:
 - a) The Edenic covenant (Gen 2:4-17).
 - i) Involved the cultivation and preservation of the garden.
 - ii) Applicable to Adam and Eve.
 - b) The Adamic covenant (Gen 3:9-19).
 - i) Involved the consequences of the Fall.
 - ii) These consequences affect Adam, Eve, their progeny, and the creation.
 - c) The Noahic covenant (Gen 9:1-17).
 - i) God promised that He would never again flood the whole earth (cf. Gen. 8:20-22).
 - ii) This covenant is established forever and extends to all humanity because we are descendants of Noah.
 - iii) The flora and fauna of this planet are also beneficiaries of this covenant.
 - iv) The covenant is unconditional.
 - v) God indicates that He is ultimately responsible for maintaining the covenant when He states it is "My covenant."
 - vi) The sign of the covenant is the rainbow.
 - vii) God refers to it as "My bow in the cloud."
 - viii) Applicable to all mankind.
 - d) The Mosaic Covenant.
 - i) The Mosaic Covenant encompasses the legislation conveyed through Moses to Israel from the time of the Exodus through its reaffirmation on the plains of Moab (Ex. 20:1ff, Deut 29:1ff also Leviticus and Numbers).
 - ii) Israel agreed without coercion of any type to enter into a covenant according to the terms dictated by God, the primary party of the covenant (Ex. 19:1-25).
 - iii) The covenant was conditional (Deut. 11:26-28, 28:1ff).
 - (1) If Israel obeyed the terms of the covenant, God promised to prosper the nation.
 - (2) If however the nation did not abide by the terms stipulated by God then cursing was guaranteed to ensue.
 - iv) The legislation communicated to Moses is generally referred to as "the Law" (cf. John 8:5, Gal. 3:10).

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- v) The Mosaic Law is commonly divided into parts:
 - (1) The Moral Law: The part of the law that gives guidance in principles of right and wrong in regard to God's directive will (e.g. the "Ten Commandments").
 - (2) The Social Law: This part governed Israel in secular, social, political, and economic matters (e.g. capital crimes, taxation, Ex. 21:1ff).
 - (3) The Ceremonial Law: This portion guided the nation in regards to their worship and spiritual relationship with God (e.g. Tabernacle, the priesthood, sacrifices, Lev. 1:1ff).
- vi) The nation of Israel was the sole recipient of the Law (Ex. 19:3-6).
- vii) Israel was to serve as God's representative to the excluded Gentile nations (Deut. 4:1-8 cf. Rom. 2:14).
- viii) This applies to Israel during the dispensation of the Age of Israel.
- ix) Additionally the Law was not intended for the Church (cf. Acts 15:5-10).
 - (1) Believers in the Church Age are not under the Law, but under grace (Rom. 6:14).
 - (2) Yet this must not be used as a rationale for sin or misconduct in the Christian life (Rom. 6:15 cf. Rom. 13:14, Eph. 4:24).
 - (3) It is through the Law that we knowledge or recognition of sin (**Romans 3:19-20** Now we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law, that every mouth may be closed, and all the world may become accountable to God; ²⁰ because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law *comes* the knowledge of sin).
 - (4) Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law in order that we in the Church Age might receive the promise of the Holy spirit through saving faith (**Galatians 3:13-14** Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us-- for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree" -- ¹⁴ in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith).
 - (5) The Law functioned as a tutor so that we might be justified by faith (Gal. 3:23-25).
- x) Israel was given specific directives by God regarding warfare with other Gentile nations and peoples.
 - (1) God directed a policy of perpetual war against the Amalekites (aka Hyksos) until they were exterminated (Ex. 17:8-16).
 - (a) This policy was instituted because of their unprovoked aggression against Israel following the Exodus (Deut. 25:17-19).
 - (b) They were periodic aggressors at other points in Israel's history (Judges 3:13, 6:3, 1 Sam. 30:1).
 - (c) Saul was charged with this directive but failed to carry it out; this transgression in part would cost him the throne (1 Sam. 15:1-26, 28:18).

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- (2) The Canaanite tribes and their culture were to be eradicated (Deut. 20:17 cf. Deut. 7:1-5).
- (3) Those nations or peoples that would not agree to terms of peace were to be dealt with severely. This did not apply to the nations nearby or those inhabitants in the land of Canaan (Deut. 20:10-15).
- (4) The Jews were not to detest or abhor Egyptians or Edomites (Deut. 23:7-8).
- (5) Ammon and Moab were considered pariah nations (Deut. 23:3-6).
- (6) We see that God sanctioned war at various times throughout Israel's history.
 - (a) The military conquest of the land Canaan was a divine mandate.
 - (b) At other times, wars were waged to administer punishment (e.g. the predatory Amalekites).
 - (c) Armed conflict was also necessary for the defense of the nation. In this regard, the Jews frequently went to war in self-defense to preserve the nation.
 - (i) Philistines: 2 Sam. 21:15, Ethiopia: 2 Chron. 14:8ff, Assyria: 2 Chron. 32:2-8).
 - (ii) The modern wars of Israel include:
 1. Israeli War of Independence (1948-1949)--Upon independence, Israel was invaded by the armies of six Arab nations: Egypt, Syria, Transjordan (later Jordan), Lebanon, Iraq and Saudi Arabia. In addition, local Arab Palestinian forces also fought the Jewish Israelis (Many Palestinians refer to this as "al-Nakba"-The Disaster).
 2. The Sinai War (1956-Also known as the Suez War): The invasion and temporary conquest of Egypt's Sinai Peninsula by Israel, while France and Great Britain seized the Suez Canal.
 3. The Six-Day War (1967): In a rapid pre-emptive attack, Israel crushed the military forces of Egypt, Jordan and Syria and seized large amounts of land from each. Iraq also participated in the fighting on the Arab side.
 4. The Yom Kippur War (1973): In a surprise attack launched on the Jewish Yom Kippur holiday, Egypt and Syria attacked Israel. Despite aid from Iraq, the Arab forces failed to defeat Israel.
 5. Invasions of Lebanon: 1978, 82-84 (occupied S Lebanon until 2000), 2006. Each invasion was preceded by attacks on Israel by various terrorist organizations (e.g. PLO, Hamas, and Hezbollah).

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6. Rocket attacks and suicide bombings by Muslim extremist groups have been commonplace in Israel.
- xi) Directives concerning military organization and operations.
- (1) Military service was compulsory for males among the tribes (Num. 1:1ff).
 - (2) There were however some exceptions:
 - (a) Those from the tribe of Levi were exempt from military service (**Numbers 1:45-49** So all the numbered men of the sons of Israel by their fathers' households, from twenty years old and upward, whoever *was able to* go out to war in Israel, ⁴⁶ even all the numbered men were 603,550. ⁴⁷ The Levites, however, were not numbered among them by their fathers' tribe. ⁴⁸ For the LORD had spoken to Moses, saying, ⁴⁹ "Only the tribe of Levi you shall not number, nor shall you take their census among the sons of Israel.).
 - (b) Instead Levi was responsible for the service of the Tabernacle and later, the Temple (**Numbers 1:50-53** "But you shall appoint the Levites over the tabernacle of the testimony, and over all its furnishings and over all that belongs to it. They shall carry the tabernacle and all its furnishings, and they shall take care of it; they shall also camp around the tabernacle. ⁵¹ "So when the tabernacle is to set out, the Levites shall take it down; and when the tabernacle encamps, the Levites shall set it up. But the layman who comes near shall be put to death. ⁵² "And the sons of Israel shall camp, each man by his own camp, and each man by his own standard, according to their armies. ⁵³ "But the Levites shall camp around the tabernacle of the testimony, that there may be no wrath on the congregation of the sons of Israel. So the Levites shall keep charge of the tabernacle of the testimony.").
 - (c) The one who built a new house or planted a new vineyard (Deut. 20:5-6).
 - (d) An engaged man (Deut. 20:7).
 - (e) Those who were afraid or the "weak of heart." This provision was a preventative measure that was designed to weed out those who might have a detrimental impact on morale (Deut. 20:8).
 - (f) Plunder could be seized in certain situations (Deut. 20:14).
 - (g) A newlywed man was exempt for a period of one year (Deut. 24:5).
 - (h) Individually the army was not to fear their enemies even if their opponent had superior numbers and weapons (Deut. 20:1-4).
 - (i) God was to be the source of their confidence regardless of their foe (cf. 2 Chron. 20:15-30, 32:8).
 - (j) "Faith-rest" in God's promises was the key component for military success.
- xii) Miscellaneous penalties for crimes in the "Social" code of the Law:
- (1) Public lashing (Deut. 25 1-3).
 - (2) Restitution for theft and negligence (Ex. 22:1-5).

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- (3) Confinement to a city of refuge for manslaughter/unintentional killing (Num. 35:6, 9-28).
- (4) Perjurers were dealt with according to their malicious intent (Deut. 19:15-20).
- (5) Capital crimes:
 - (a) Murder (**Exodus 21:12** "He who strikes a man so that he dies shall surely be put to death, **Leviticus 24:17** 'And if a man takes the life of any human being, he shall surely be put to death).
 - (b) Sorcery, divination, and other pagan occult practices (Ex. 21:12, Lev. 20:27 cf. **Deuteronomy 18:10-14** "There shall not be found among you anyone who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, one who uses divination, one who practices witchcraft, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer, ¹¹ or one who casts a spell, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead. ¹² "For whoever does these things is detestable to the LORD; and because of these detestable things the LORD your God will drive them out before you. ¹³ "You shall be blameless before the LORD your God. ¹⁴ "For those nations, which you shall dispossess, listen to those who practice witchcraft and to diviners, but as for you, the LORD your God has not allowed you *to do so*).
 - (c) Idolatry (Ex. 22:20).
 - (d) Promotion of idolatry (Deut. 13:6-10).
 - (e) Kidnapping (Ex. 21:16, Deut. 24:7).
 - (f) Rape (**Deuteronomy 22:25-26** "But if in the field the man finds the girl who is engaged, and the man forces her and lies with her, then only the man who lies with her shall die. ²⁶ "But you shall do nothing to the girl; there is no sin in the girl worthy of death, for just as a man rises against his neighbor and murders him, so is this case.).
 - (g) Adultery (Lev. 20:10 cf. Lev. 18:20).
 - (h) Incest (Lev. 20:11-12, 14).
 - (i) Homosexuality (Lev. 20:13 cf. Lev. 18:22).
 - (j) Profaning the Sabbath (**Exodus 31:14-15** "Therefore you are to observe the sabbath, for it is holy to you. Everyone who profanes it shall surely be put to death; for whoever does any work on it, that person shall be cut off from among his people. ¹⁵ 'For six days work may be done, but on the seventh day there is a sabbath of complete rest, holy to the LORD; whoever does any work on the sabbath day shall surely be put to death).
 - (k) Death of a person due to the failure to control an animal known to be dangerous (Ex. 21:28-29).
 - (l) Physically striking parents (Ex. 21:15).
 - (m) Refuse to obey the ruling of a priest or judge (Deut. 17:8-12).
 - (n) False prophecy (Deut. 18:17-22).
 - (o) Bestiality (Ex. 22:19, Lev. 20:15-16).

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xiii) Miscellaneous laws:

- (1) Those who were guilty of a capital offense alone bore full responsibility (Deut. 24:16 cf. 2 Kings 14:6).
- (2) Neglect of a countryman's straying animal was not permissible (Deut. 22:3).
- (3) Cross dressing was prohibited (Deut. 22:5).
- (4) An ox and donkey were to plow separately (Deut. 22:10).
- (5) The king must be especially careful to observe the Law and fear God (Deut. 17:19).
- (6) The people were to provide for the living grace of the Levitical priests (Deut. 18:1-5; of course were priests that abused this provision, 1 Sam. 2:12-17, 22-25, 3:13).
- (7) Levirate marriage (Deut. 25:5-10).
 - (a) Designed to produce descendants for the deceased.
 - (b) Provided for the protection and security of the widow.
 - (c) Provided for a legal heir of the deceased and so keep the inherited property of the family within a particular branch of the family.
- (8) Sin offerings were required (Lev. 4:2ff).
- (9) The Law made a distinction between clean and unclean food (Lev. 20:25, Deut. 14:3ff).
- (10) The consumption of blood was prohibited (**Deuteronomy 12:16** "Only you shall not eat the blood; you are to pour it out on the ground like water.).
- (11) Israel was to show regard for foreigners within the nation (Lev. 19:33-34, Deut. 10:19).
- (12) Priests were to avoid defiling themselves from the dead except for those relatives closest to him (Lev. 21:1-2).
- (13) The High Priest was to avoid any defilement from the dead (Lev. 21:11).
- (14) Defilement from the dead required ritual purification (Num.19:11ff).
- (15) Ritual cutting or marking was prohibited (Lev. 19:28).
- (16) Vows were to be honored expeditiously (Deut. 23:21-23 cf. Eccl. 5:4).
- (17) Every seventh year the land was to be given a Sabbath rest (Lev. 25:3-5, 20).

xiv) Provisions concerning the poor (i.e. the legitimate poor).

- (1) Obedience to God's directives would mitigate poverty (Deut. 15:4-6).

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- (2) Assistance was to be given to the poor (Deut. 15:7-10 cf. CA responsibility, 1 Tim. 6:18, James 2:15-17).
 - (3) Loans were made to fellow countrymen without interest (**Exodus 22:25** "If you lend money to My people, to the poor among you, you are not to act as a creditor to him; you shall not charge him interest., **Leviticus 25:35-37** 'Now in case a countryman of yours becomes poor and his means with regard to you falter, then you are to sustain him, like a stranger or a sojourner, that he may live with you. ³⁶ 'Do not take usurious interest from him, but revere your God, that your countryman may live with you. ³⁷ 'You shall not give him your silver at interest, nor your food for gain).
 - (4) The poor could sell themselves into slavery for a limited time (Ex. 21:1-2).
 - (5) Slaves were not to be treated with severity (Lev. 25:39-43, Jer. 34:6ff).
 - (6) Furthermore the owner was responsible to provide a fresh start for the freed slave (Deut. 15:12-14).
 - (7) A portion of the third year tithe of produce was given to the poor (Deut. 14:28-29).
 - (8) Eating off the land was permitted with certain conditions (Lev. 23:22, Deut. 23:24-25, 24:19-21 cf. Ruth 2:2ff).
 - (9) In the jubilee year certain property reverted back to those with ancestral rights (Lev. 25:10, 28).
- xv) Obedience to the law would result in blessing and prosperity for the nation.
- (1) Israel would be a lender and not a borrower among nations (Deut. 15:6, 28:12).
 - (2) Personal affluence (Deut. 8:6-20, 28:4-5).
 - (3) An abundance of offspring (Deut. 7:13-14, 28:11).
 - (4) Good health (Ex. 15:26, Deut. 7:15).
 - (5) Military success (Ex. 23:22-27, Deut. 28:7).
 - (6) Good weather for crops (Deut. 11:13-17).
- xvi) The greatest commandment contained in the Law
- (1) Love God (lit: "Love YHWH, your God..."- Deut. 6:4-5, Matt. 22:34-38).
 - (2) Obedience to this command is demonstrated by knowing and applying God's word, Bible doctrine (Luke 11:27-28, John 14:15, 321, 24, 1 John 5:3).
 - (3) Obedience to this command brought about great blessing on both a personal and national level.
- xvii) The second greatest commandment contained in the Law.
- (1) Love your neighbor as yourself (Matt. 22:39-40 cf. Lev. 19:18, Gal. 5:14).

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- (2) “Neighbor” refers to fellow human beings or those with whom one comes into contact over the course of life.
- xviii) The failure to adhere to the Law would result in catastrophic consequences for the nation (Lev. 26:14-39, Deut. 11:26, 28, 28:15ff. cf. Deut. 31:14-29).
- xix) The Lord Jesus Christ perfectly fulfilled the Law (cf. Matt. 5:17).
 - (1) Christ is the end of the Law to believers in the Church Age (Rom. 10:4).
 - (2) We are now under a new “law,” the filling of God the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:2-4, Gal. 5:18-23).
- xx) The limitations of the Mosaic Law.
 - (1) Unable to provide justification (Rom. 3:20, Gal. 2:16).
 - (2) Unable to provide eternal life (Gal. 3:21-22).
 - (3) Unable to provide the Holy Spirit (Gal. 3:2).
 - (4) Unable to control the OSN (**Romans 8:3-4** For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God *did*: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and *as an offering* for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh, ⁴ in order that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.).
- xxi) The current purpose of the Law.
 - (1) Convinces man that he is a sinner (Rom. 7:7).
 - (2) Defines crime and sin (1 Tim. 1:8-10).
 - (3) It provides parameters for our personal freedom.
 - (4) Its many rituals symbolically declare the person and work of Jesus Christ (Col. 2:13-14, Heb. 8:5, 10:1).
 - (a) This involves the study of typology.
 - (b) The term typology is in part derived from the Greek word “tupos” (τύπος, tupos).
 - (c) A “tupos” is a figure or image of something or someone else.
 - (d) In a biblical sense, a “tupos” or type is something or someone that symbolically foreshadows a future item, doctrine, even, or person.
 - (e) Different kinds of types:
 - (i) Things (The Tabernacle, the Ark of the Covenant, the ark of Noah, Heb. 8:1-5, 1 Peter 3:20-21).
 - (ii) Actions (cf. John 3:14 where the lifting up of the serpent foreshadows or typifies the crucifixion of Christ).
 - (iii) Offices (e.g. High Priest Heb. 4:14-15, also prophet, priest and king – Heb. 6:20, 7:11, 17 cf. Gen 14:18, Psa. 110:4).
 - (iv) Persons (e.g. Adam, David, Melchizedek, Rom. 5:14).

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- (v) Institutions (e.g. sacrifices, feasts such as Passover, cf. John 1:29, 36, 1 Peter 1:19).
- e) The Promised Land Covenant (aka the Palestinian Covenant).
- i) Reaffirmation and specification of certain provisions in the Abrahamic covenant (**Genesis 12:7** And the LORD appeared to Abram and said, "To your descendants I will give this land." So he built an altar there to the LORD who had appeared to him., **Genesis 17:7-8** "And I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your descendants after you. ⁸ "And I will give to you and to your descendants after you, the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.").
 - ii) This occurred just prior to the death of Moses and the passing of the mantle of leadership to Joshua.
 - iii) While poised to enter the Promised Land, God once again stated His covenant promise to Israel concerning the inheritance and possession of the land.
 - iv) Even gross disobedience would not abrogate the promise God made to Israel.
 - v) Although the Jews were dispossessed of the land for unfaithfulness to the Mosaic Covenant at various points throughout their history, they never lost the title deed to the land (cf. 2 Kings 17:5-23, Dan. 1:1-2).
 - vi) Some key provisions of the covenant (Deut. 30:1ff).
 - (1) The Jews would be removed from the land for unfaithfulness to God (Deut. 28:63-68, 30:1-3).
 - (2) However a spiritual recovery would eventually occur (Deut. 30:1-2).
 - (a) This would precipitate a full restoration of the land to the Jews.
 - (b) Despite the re-establishment of the nation of Israel in 1948 and a massive return from the diaspora, the Jews largely remain in unbelief and apostasy.
 - (c) In other words this partial restoration is not a result of a spiritual recovery.
 - (d) The final, full restoration occurs following the 2nd Advent of Jesus Christ.
 - (i) The people of Israel dispersed among the nation (Deut. 30:3-6, Isa. 11:11-12, Amos 9:9-15, Acts 15:15-17).
 - (ii) The full restoration of the land (Deut. 30:5, Jer. 16:15ff, Joel 3:17-18).

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- (e) Paul alluded to the future conversion of Israel in the book of Romans (Rom. 11:26).
- (3) Christ will return and rule from Jerusalem (Isa. 2:3, 11:1-10, Jer. 23:3-5, Micah 4:2).
- (4) The nation will come under full blessing (Deut. 30:8-9).
- f) The Davidic Covenant.
 - i) This covenant was studied under the analysis of v. 69.
 - ii) David was promised that his throne would be established forever through one of his descendants (2 Sam. 7:16, Psa. 89:3-4, Jer. 33:15ff).
 - iii) Other passages in Scriptures attest to the covenant (Psa. 89:34-37, Matt. 20:30-31, Rev. 22:16).
 - iv) The covenant guaranteed the eternal establishment of David's throne **at some point in the future** (Luke 1:30-33).
 - v) The covenant will be fulfilled at the 2nd Advent and Millennium (Isa. 9:6-7, 11:1-10, Jer. 23:3-8).
- g) The New Covenant.
 - i) The covenant is made with Judah and Israel which refer to the Southern and Northern kingdom respectively. In a collective sense this refers to the nation of Israel (Jer. 31:31, Heb. 8:8).
 - ii) The Church is not one of the partners in the covenant.
 - iii) The covenant is fulfilled following the restoration of the Jews at 2nd Advent (Jer. 32:37-44, 33:14-17, Ezek. 11:14-21, 36:22-38, 37:16-23).
 - iv) Some primary characteristics and provisions of the covenant.
 - (1) It is unconditional, totally dependent upon God.
 - (2) This is conveyed by the frequent "I will" clauses in Jer. 31 (**Jeremiah 31:31** "Behold, days are coming," declares the LORD, "when **I will** make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah,³² not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them," declares the LORD.³³ "But this is the covenant which **I will** make with the house of Israel after those days," declares the LORD, "**I will** put My law within them, and on their heart **I will** write it; and **I will** be their God, and they shall be My people.³⁴ "And they shall not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they shall all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them," declares the LORD, "for **I will** forgive their iniquity, and their sin **I will** remember no more.").
 - (3) It is an everlasting covenant (cf. Isa 61:8-9).
 - (4) It includes the indwelling of God the Holy Spirit (Ezek. 36:24-27, Joel 2:28).
 - (5) A comprehensive knowledge of Divine viewpoint (Jer. 31:33).

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- (6) National prosperity and abundant personal blessing (**Jeremiah 32:40-42**)
"And I will make an everlasting covenant with them that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; and I will put the fear of Me in their hearts so that they will not turn away from Me. ⁴¹ "And I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will faithfully plant them in this land with all My heart and with all My soul. ⁴² "For thus says the LORD, 'Just as I brought all this great disaster on this people, so I am going to bring on them all the good that I am promising them., Ezek. 34:23-31).
- (7) The work of Christ on the cross guarantees the covenant (Heb. 7:22 cf. Heb. 12:18-24).

- 132) In v. 74 Zacharias makes reference again to the deliverance of Israel from her enemies.
- 133) As we have seen in our study, Israel's ultimate deliverance will come about when Christ returns 2nd Advent.
- 134) At that point Christ will vanquish the enemies of Israel (cf. **Jeremiah 33:15-16** 'In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch of David to spring forth; and He shall execute justice and righteousness on the earth. ¹⁶ 'In those days Judah shall be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell in safety; and this is *the name* by which she shall be called: the LORD is our righteousness.', Rev. 19:11).
- 135) He is also known as "The Deliverer" (**Romans 11:26** and thus all Israel will be saved; just as it is written, "The Deliverer will come from Zion, He will remove ungodliness from Jacob.").
- 136) Following Christ's victory, Israel will enjoy peace and security.
- 137) At this point, the nation will be able to serve God "without fear" of attack by predatory nations (Isa. 2:4, 54:4-17, Zeph. 3:15-16).
- 138) Our term "serve" places emphasis on faithful service to God ("latreuo").
- 139) Israel's physical deliverance coincides with the nation's spiritual recovery.
- 140) Prior to the deliverance the nation is disobedient and remains in apostasy.
- 141) Therefore according to the terms of the Mosaic Covenant the nation will be afflicted with varying degrees of cursing (Deut. 28:15, 30:15-20).
- 142) Part of the cursing for unfaithfulness to God involves a compromised mental state.
- 143) Fear and terror in particular has been prevalent among the Jews while in apostasy (Lev. 26:14-17, 36, Deut. 28:28, 32:25, Psa. 78:33 cf. Prov. 28:1).
- 144) This type of fear is brought about by negative volition to God's will.
- 145) In comparison, the Jews were commanded to fear God and keep His commandments (Deut. 6:2, 8:6, 10:12, 1 Sam. 12:14, 24, 2 Chron. 19:7, Prov. 23:17, et al).
- 146) The first type of fear is irrational and fanned by the OSN.
- 147) The second demonstrates a reverence for God and His plan.
- 148) Furthermore, "to fear" God in various passages is essentially synonymous with conducting one's life according to righteous standards (cf. Lev. 19:14, 25:17, Deut. 17:19, 2 Kings 17:34, Prov. 8:13).
- 149) God blesses those who fear Him (cf. Psa. 33:18, 34:7-9, 115:13, Prov. 10:27, etc.).

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- 150) The service to God is characterized by “holiness and righteousness.”
- 151) The word translated “holiness” indicates the proper mental attitude toward God as manifested in action (“hosiotes”).
- 152) “Holiness” is paired with “righteousness” (cf. Eph. 4:24).
- 153) The classification of “righteousness” varies with context in the NT.
- 154) A discussion of righteousness ought to begin with God’s righteousness as He sets the standard.
- a) Of God’s attributes, righteousness is paramount and is at times referred to as His holiness (Isa. 5:16).
 - b) He is perfect in person and essence (Deut. 32:4, Psa. 11:7, 111:3, 119:142).
 - c) He is completely free from sin of any kind (cf. Job 34:10, Psa. 92:16, 1 John 1:5, 3:5).
 - d) His righteousness is absolute (Ex. 15:11, 1 Sam. 2:2, Isa. 6:3, Rev. 4:8).
 - e) He is righteous in his attitudes, declarations, and actions (Judges 5:11, 2 Chron. 12:6-7, Psa. 145:17, Isa. 41:10, 45:19, 23, Dan. 9:14, 2 Tim. 4:8, 1 John 1:9, Rev. 19:2, 11).
 - f) In an ironic twist God’s righteousness was recognized by the Pharaoh of the Exodus (Ex. 9:27).
 - g) Activities that are opposed to His righteousness are described as wicked, evil, even abominable (Psa. 14:1).
 - h) God detests activities and people that are unrighteous (cf. 2 Chron. 19:7, Psa. 5:4-6, Prov. 15:9, Rom. 1:18).
 - i) Righteousness will characterize the Millennial rule of Jesus Christ (Isa. 11:4).
- 155) God desires mankind to share in His righteousness.
- 156) However, no one can attain this righteousness through their own efforts (cf. Rom. 3:23, Titus 3:3-5).
- 157) There is only one way to attain this righteousness and be acceptable to God.
- 158) God’s righteousness is imputed or credited to the person at the point of faith in Christ (aka +R, Rom. 4:3-8, 5:17, 9:30, 2 Cor. 5:21, Gal. 3:6-7, Phil. 3:9).
- a) The righteousness imputed at saving faith is positional or non-experiential.
 - b) It is an intrinsic part of the “new man” which is analogous with God’s righteousness (Eph. 4:22-24).
- 159) Although believers enjoy positional righteousness in Christ, far more is expected of us.
- 160) We are to be experientially righteous in the CWL (“do” righteousness cf. Gen. 18:19, Prov. 21:3, Rom. 14:17, 1 Peter 2:24).
- 161) That is, we are also expected to think and behave in a righteous manner adhering to God’s directives (cf. Ezek. 18:5-9, Zeph. 2:3, Rom. 6:13, 1 Tim. 6:11, 2 Tim. 2:22, Titus 2:11-12).
- 162) Some distinguishing traits of the righteous:
- a) Hate for falsehood and lying (Prov. 13:5).
 - b) Dependence on God (Prov. 18:10).
 - c) Exercises discernment in thinking and speech (Prov. 15:28).

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- d) Possesses integrity and honesty (Prov. 20:7).
 - e) Experiences joy over the execution of justice (Prov.21:15).
 - f) Generous (Prov. 21:26).
 - g) Courage, fearlessness (Prov. 28:1).
 - h) Concern for the poor and needy (Prov. 29:7).
 - i) Contempt for the unjust (Prov. 29:27).
 - j) Makes righteous judgments (Prov. 31:9, John 7:24).
 - k) Refuses to be bound together with unbelievers (2 Cor. 6:14).
 - l) Obedience to God's directive will (Hosea 14:9).
 - m) Lives the CWL by faith (Hab. 2:4).
- 163) Of course all believers have an active OSN and will not therefore live a perfectly righteous life. Absolute experiential righteousness is unattainable (Eccl. 7:20).
- 164) God has affection for those who are experientially righteous (Psa. 146:8, Prov. 15:9 cf. Prov. 10:6).
- 165) Blessings for the righteous (Matt. 5:6):
- a) Answered prayer (Prov. 10:24, 15:29, 1 Pet. 3:12).
 - b) Prosperity (Prov. 13:21).
 - c) Physical deliverance (Prov. 11:4, 8, 19).
 - d) Living grace (Prov. 13:25).
 - e) Life, righteousness, honor (Prov. 21:21).
 - f) Joy (Prov. 10:28).
 - g) Stability (Prov. 12:3).
 - h) Leniency, grace (Ezek. 18:21-23).
- 166) In our verse, "righteousness" is used to refer to the quality of upright or righteous conduct.
- 167) It is righteous conduct that God requires of persons which is based on His righteous standards.
- 168) The combination of "holiness" and righteousness" was considered by various Greek authors to be the mark of an exceptional citizen.
- 169) Such a citizen was viewed as having a high degree of moral virtue.
- 170) Nevertheless the usage here possesses a specialized meaning in relation to Israel's service to God.
- 171) To serve God in "holiness and righteousness" is to maintain the proper mental attitude and conduct that is in obedience to His criteria (i.e. in fellowship and according to Bible doctrine).
- 172) Israel will be able to serve God in this manner without interference from other nations or antagonists during the Millennium.
- 173) Zacharias does not imply that Israel cannot serve God in holiness and righteousness prior to the Millennium.
- 174) Rather, they will be able to do so freely and much more extensively "before Him" as the preeminent nation during the Millennium.
- 175) "All our days" is a closing expression that portrays Israel's continuing service to God (similar expression: "forever" cf. Psa. 16:11, 18:50).

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- 176) With the v. 75 Zacharias closes his praise for God.
- 177) In v. 76 the style of the prophecy changes.
- 178) Zacharias addresses his son in regard to the role John will play in God's plan.
- 179) He begins, "'And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; For you will go on before the Lord to prepare His ways'"
- 180) The standard translation doesn't reflect the emphasis of Zacharias' words in the Greek.
- 181) He begins, "**And you yourself**, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High..."
- 182) John would be "called the prophet of the Most High..."
- 183) The meaning of the verb translated "called" varies with the context in view ("kaleo").
- a) To summon; a legal technical term used when one is summoned before a court or legal body (**Acts 24:1-2** And after five days the high priest Ananias came down with some elders, with a certain attorney *named* Tertullus; and they brought charges to the governor against Paul. ² And after *Paul* had been **summoned**, Tertullus began to accuse him, saying *to the governor*, "Since we have through you attained much peace, and since by your providence reforms are being carried out for this nation,).
 - b) To request the presence of someone, to invite (e.g. a wedding, **Luke 14:8** "When you are **invited** by someone to a wedding feast, do not take the place of honor, lest someone more distinguished than you may have been invited by him).
 - c) To identify or call by name or attribute (**Luke 1:5-60** And it came about that on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child, and they were going to **call** him Zacharias, after his father. ⁶⁰ And his mother answered and said, "No indeed; but he shall be **called** John.").
- 184) This last meaning fits the context; John would be identified as a prophet.
- 185) The emphasis of "called" approaches closely the meaning "to be." John would not merely be called a prophet but he would "be" a prophet.
- 186) He would not just any prophet, but a "prophet of the Most High" who would faithfully fulfill his role.
- 187) John is explicitly identified as a prophet; whereas earlier in the chapter this was strongly implied when Gabriel told Zacharias that he would function "in the spirit and power of Elijah" (v. 17).
- 188) In order to faithfully fulfill his ministry he would also be "filled with the Holy Spirit" and as a result of his faithfulness, he would be "great in the sight of the Lord" (cf. **Luke 1:15** "For he will be great in the sight of the Lord, and he will drink no wine or liquor; and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit, while yet in his mother's womb.)).
- 189) Zacharias affirms the preparatory role of his son for the Messiah.
- 190) The prophet of the Most High will precede the Son of the Most High (cf. **Luke 1:32** "He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David;)).

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- 191) As in v. 32, “Most High” is a reference to God the Father and emphasizes His superlative essence (“Hupsistos”- cf. Mark 5:7, Luke 6:35, 8:28).
- 192) John is said to “go on before the Lord to prepare His ways” which indicates that his ministry would precede Christ’s.
- 193) His role as forerunner to the Messiah had been prophesied in other Scriptures (Isa. 40:3, Mal. 3:1 cf. Matt. 3:1-3).
- 194) John’s purpose was “to prepare His ways” by disseminating the particulars of the coming of Jesus Christ.
- 195) If John had to prepare the way for the Messiah, this portrays the Jews as being on the wrong path or way.
- 196) This was necessary due to the prevalence of apostasy and false religion during the period of the 1st advent.
- 197) His primary goal was to proclaim the true Gospel of the coming Messiah in opposition to the false gospel espoused by the religious leaders of his day (e.g. Pharisees, Sadducees).
- 198) This meant he had to face up against the monolith of false doctrine in the form of legalism.
- 199) Although John held a minority position he was undeterred in his battles with the religious opposition (cf. Matt. 3:5-10).
- 200) The religious establishment had led the nation astray with the false doctrine of salvation by works, etc. (Matt. 23:27-33).
- 201) Those who didn’t follow their teaching and instead, accepted the Gospel faced retaliation and intimidation (John 9:22, 12:42, 19:38, 20:19 cf. John 7:13).
- 202) The beginning of v. 77 with the infinitive “to give” clarifies how John was to prepare the way for the Messiah.
- 203) Namely by giving “to His people the knowledge of salvation.”
- 204) The word translated “give” frequently means to give something out (“didomi”).
- 205) Here the sense is “to cause something to happen.”
- 206) In connection with our verse, John was to give or cause the people to have the knowledge of salvation.
- 207) Our term “knowledge” refers to understanding or insight (“gnosis”).
- 208) However this knowledge described was not meant to be theoretical, but experiential.
- 209) It refers to the appropriation of salvation through faith in Christ.
- 210) Furthermore, the salvation in view consists in the forgiveness of sins.
- 211) The noun translated “forgiveness” involves the release or pardon from the penalty of sin (“aphesis”).
- 212) This is not a trifling matter as the inherent penalty of sin is spiritual, physical, and eternal death (Gen. 2:17, Rom. 5:12-14, 6:23).
- 213) In addition to the penalty of sin, unregenerate mankind is viewed in disfavor by God (John 3:36, Rom. 1:18, 5:9, Eph. 2:3).
- 214) Sin, by its very definition is committed against God so it is He who pardons or forgives (cf. 1 Kings 8:50, Psa. 51:4).

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- 215) The pardon or forgiveness of man's sin is the legal act of God whereby He removes the charges that were held against mankind.
- 216) This pardon from sin was accomplished through the redemptive work of Jesus Christ on the cross (Isa. 53:5-12, 1 Peter 2:24).
- a) Subsequent Christ's perfect work, the penalty of sin was removed and forgiveness was made possible (Acts 13:38-39, Rom. 8:1, 33-34).
 - b) Christ was fully cognizant of and adjusted to His role during the incarnation (Matt. 20:28, 26:28).
 - c) His perfect sacrifice provides the basis for the forgiveness of mankind by God (Rom. 4:7, Col. 2:13-14 cf. John 1:29).
 - d) Although mankind has been forgiven by God, an individual doesn't secure His forgiveness until he changes his thinking and believes in Jesus Christ as Savior (Luke 3:3; 24:46-47; Acts 2:38; 26:18).
 - e) At the point of saving faith, the individual is "officially" forgiven by God and is exonerated from the guilt of sin (Mark 2:5; Luke 7:48-50).
 - f) The believer is justified or declared righteous by God (i.e. imputation of +R) thereby enabling him to have fellowship with God (2 Cor. 5:21).
 - g) Formerly viewed in disfavor, the justified person is now deemed to be a friend of God (2 Chron. 20:7, James 2:23, cf. Gal. 3:26).
- 217) In v. 78 God is again portrayed as merciful.
- 218) Here in connection with John's ministry and the coming Messiah in vv. 76-77.
- 219) God's mercy is described as "tender" ("splaḡchnon").
- 220) The Greek term translated "tender" is literally the inward parts of a body (e.g. hearts, lungs, liver, kidneys).
- 221) In the ancient world, inner body parts were thought to be the seat of emotions or affections.
- 222) In both the OT and NT physiological terms are used to refer to various aspects of God's essence as well qualities of the human soul (Psa. 40:8, Isa. 63:15 – "heart" is **מֵעָהָר**, meeh: internal organs, inward parts).
- 223) In relation to God, our word "tender" is used figuratively to refer to His compassion.
- 224) The word translated "mercy" has already been encountered in our study ("eleos"- Luke 1:50, 54, 58, 72).
- 225) Apart from God's mercy toward Elizabeth, the other occurrences of "mercy" referred more to the His loyalty to Israel based on His covenant.
- 226) However the phraseology, "tender mercy" reflects God's action is motivated by His loving compassion.²⁰
- 227) His mercy or loving compassion is a manifestation of his perfect love (cf. Eph. 2:4-5, Titus 3:4-5).
- 228) As an indication of God's loving compassion Zacharias makes mention of a divine visitation (cf. Luke 1:68).²¹

²⁰ Marshall, The Gospel of Luke, 94.

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- 229) He refers to the Messiah in symbolic language.
- 230) Previously he referred to Christ as the “horn of salvation” which alludes to His exceptional power to provide salvation.
- 231) Here Christ is described as “the Sunrise from on high.”
- 232) The word translated “Sunrise” typically meant the rising of a celestial body (“anatole”).
- 233) It more specifically refers to the change from darkness to light which occurs at dawn in the early morning.
- 234) Symbolically Christ the Messiah is portrayed as the light from on high that provides illumination to those who are hopelessly mired “in darkness and the shadow of death” (Isa. 60:1-3, Matt. 4:14-16 also Isa. 42:6, Luke 2:30-32).
- 235) In other passages He is referred to symbolically as star or sun (Num. 24:17, Mal. 4:1-2, 2 Peter 1:19 cf. in His own words, Rev. 22:16).
- 236) His message brought to light man’s naturally depraved, spiritually dead condition and provided the remedy...faith in Him (Acts 26:23- His message is “light”, 2 Cor. 4:4-6).
- 237) He is the light of the world and those who believe in Him no longer reside in spiritual death or darkness (John 1:1-15, 8:12, 9:5, 12:46).
- 238) Furthermore according to Zacharias, His purpose was “to guide our feet into the way of peace.”
- 239) Zacharias is primarily referring to the nation of Israel as seen by the use of the pronoun, “our” in “our feet.”
- 240) In a universal sense, it is also Christ’s goal to guide all of mankind into the way of “peace.”
- 241) The “peace” referred to here is the peace with God that one enjoys following belief in the Gospel of Jesus Christ (Eph. 2:14-18 cf. Col. 1:19-20).
- 242) There is absolutely no other way to obtain peace with God (cf. John 14:6).
- 243) V. 78 concludes the prophecy of Zacharias (i.e. the Benedictus).
- 244) Zacharias and Elizabeth are not mentioned again in Luke.
- 245) V. 80 briefly mentions John’s normal physical growth to maturity along with his spiritual growth.
- 246) He is said “to become strong in spirit” which refers to his spiritual maturation.
- 247) The Greek verb translated “to become strong” is passive indicating that his strengthening came from an outside agent.
- 248) We may deduce that the agent is God the Holy Spirit as John was “filled with the Holy Spirit” from birth (Luke 1:15).
- 249) Until the advent of his public ministry, John lived “in the deserts.”
- 250) We are largely left uninformed about John’s activities prior to his commission (Luke 3:2-3).

End: Chapter 1

²¹ Ibid.