





**DEDICATION:**

To my Megan

**THANK YOU:**

To the best mother I've ever had for editing this book.



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**PURPOSE FOR WRITING:**

I don't know Jesus half as well as I would like... but I want to share what I know with those who want to know Him better.

**HOW TO USE THIS BOOK:**

This book can be used as a stand alone resource. However, it was designed to be used alongside our free video study series on the Gospel of Luke. You can find the videos on our YouTube channel (2BeLikeChrist).

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCygDFdZnOKlaRmdjHDldcaQ>

**DISCLAIMER:**

Everything in this book could be wrong. I am a student of the Bible. This book represents my best current understanding of the biblical text. Critically examine everything I've written.





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# LUKE 1



In 5 minutes...

## INTRODUCTION TO THE GOSPEL OF LUKE:

- Gospel means “good news.”
- Luke the author of this book wrote it to record the good news about Jesus.
- Luke was a travelling companion of the Apostle Paul.
- He was a doctor (Colossians 4:14) and may have been a Gentile (Colossians 4:10-14).
- Luke wrote more of the New Testament than any other author (based on word count).
- He wrote the book of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles.
- Luke’s gospel is addressed to a man named Theophilus who may have been a Roman official.
- He wrote to him to give him confidence about the details of the Christian faith.
- Some believe Luke’s writings were used as part of Paul’s legal defense during his trial in Rome.
- The book records events which occurred in the 1st Century A.D..

## WHEN:

- The events of chapter 1 occurred around 1 A.D..
- Herod the Great was king of Judea and Augustus was Caesar in Rome.

## CHARACTERS:

- Zechariah - A Jewish priest from the tribe of Levi, described as a righteous man.
- Elizabeth - The wife of Zechariah also a Levite, described as a righteous woman.
- John - Zechariah and Elizabeth’s newborn son.
- Mary - A young woman from the town of Nazareth. She was a virgin betrothed to be married.
- Joseph - Mary’s betrothed husband (similar to a fiancé).
- Gabriel - An angel who was sent from the presence of God to bring good news.

## WHERE:

- The events of chapter 1 take place in Nazareth, in the hill country of Judea, and the city of Jerusalem.

# LUKE 1



## OVERVIEW:

- INTRODUCTION (1:1-1:4):
- JOHN'S BIRTH FORETOLD (1:5-1:25):
  - + Zechariah is serving God in the Temple in Jerusalem when an angel appears to him.
  - + The angel tells him he and his wife will have a son who will be a prophet of God.
  - + Not just any prophet, he will be the prophet who prepares the way for the Messiah.
  - + This was big news because Elizabeth had been barren and she was getting old.
  - + Zechariah isn't confident about the angel's promise and expresses doubts.
  - + The angel isn't pleased, and makes Zechariah mute until his words become reality.
  - + After finishing his work in the Temple, Zechariah returns home to his wife and she conceives.
- JESUS' BIRTH FORETOLD (1:26-1:38):
  - + 6 months later, Gabriel makes another appearance, this time to a girl from Nazareth named Mary.
  - + Mary is a virgin but Gabriel tells her she is going to have a son.
  - + The Spirit of God would come upon her and a child would be created in her womb.
  - + The child would be a fulfillment of many of the prophecies God previously made to the Jews.
  - + He would be called the "Son of the Most High" and He would sit on King David's throne.
  - + Mary accepts the words of the angel and the role God has given her to play.
- MARY VISITS ELIZABETH (1:39-1:56):
  - + Mary makes a trip to the hill country of Judea to visit her relative Elizabeth.
  - + Upon arriving, Elizabeth is filled with the Holy Spirit and blesses Mary.
  - + Then Mary is filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesies about the work John and Jesus will accomplish.
- THE BIRTH OF JOHN (1:57-1:80):
  - + Elizabeth gives birth to a son.
  - + Eight days later, the boy is circumcised and given the name John.
  - + Zechariah's voice is restored.

## BIG PICTURE:

- The Jews have been waiting for the Messiah for hundreds of years. He is about to arrive. Little did the world know, Jesus would be a blessing, not just to the Jews, but to people from every nation and every generation.

## TAKEAWAYS:

- God can take someone/something seemingly insignificant and use it/them in powerful ways.
- Even the faithful struggle with doubt (1:18). Accepting God's correction will lead us to maturity (1:64).



## LUKE 1

### INTRODUCTION:

- Who was Luke?
  - Luke was a traveling companion of Paul the Apostle.
  - In Colossians 4:14, Paul calls him the “beloved physician.”
  - He was a doctor by trade.
  - Luke may have been a Gentile.
    - Colossians 4:10-14 seems to suggest he wasn’t Jewish (there is still some debate on the issue).
    - Col 4:10-14 Aristarchus my fellow prisoner greets you, and Mark the cousin of Barnabas (concerning whom you have received instructions—if he comes to you, welcome him) and Jesus who is called Justus. **These are the only men of the circumcision among my fellow workers for the kingdom of God**, and they have been a comfort to me. Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ Jesus, greets you, always struggling on your behalf in his prayers, that you may stand mature and fully assured in all the will of God. For I bear him witness that he has worked hard for you and for those in Laodicea and in Hierapolis. **Luke the beloved physician greets you**, as does Demas.
  - If Luke was a Gentile, it means a Gentile wrote more of the New Testament than any single Jewish author.
    - Luke wrote the book of Luke and the book of Acts.
    - Together they combine to a length slightly longer than the writings of Paul.
- Why was Luke written?
  - Luke’s reason for writing is explained in verses 1-4. He wanted to give “Theophilus” confidence about the things he had come to believe.
  - The book of Luke and the book of Acts are addressed to this “Theophilus.”
  - We know very few details about this “Theophilus.”
    - The name Theophilus means “friend of God.”
    - Luke referred to him with the title “most excellent.”
      - Paul addressed Felix and Festus with this title (Acts 24:2; 26:25).

- Like Felix and Festus, Theophilus may have been a Roman official.
  - Some people suggest the book of Luke and the book of Acts may have been used as part of Paul’s defense when he was on trial in Rome.
  - Such a suggestion is plausible, especially considering the book of Acts ends with Paul awaiting trial in Rome.
- If Luke was addressed to just one man, how did it become so popular in the Church?
    - Luke didn’t specifically tell Theophilus to share his writings with others, but this was very common in the early church.
    - Paul intended some of his writings to be shared and sent from congregation to congregation.
      - He wrote a letter to the Church in Colossae.
      - Col 4:16 And when this letter has been read among you, have it also read in the church of the Laodiceans; and see that you also read the letter from Laodicea.
    - Whether Luke originally intended this letter to be shared or not, the Holy Spirit intended the writing to traverse the globe in the upcoming centuries.
  - It’s important to note, Luke wrote with a Gentile reader in mind.
    - In contrast, Matthew’s gospel was written for Jewish readers.
    - Luke excluded many of the “Jewish details” included by Matthew because they wouldn’t have meant as much to a Gentile reader.
    - Both offer unique insights into Jesus’ life and work.
    - In a sense, all modern Christians must become a little bit Jewish and a little bit 1st Century Gentile.
      - We must learn the Old Testament Jewish scriptures and customs.
      - We must learn about the culture and practices of the 1st Century Gentile world.

Luk 1:1 Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile a narrative of the things that have been accomplished among us,

Luk 1:2 just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word have delivered them to us,

Luk 1:3 it seemed good to me also, having followed all things closely for some time past, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus,

Luk 1:4 that you may have certainty concerning the things you have been taught.

- I find the language in these first 4 verses to be a bit challenging.
    - o Perhaps a paraphrase will be helpful. I've attempted to put verses 1-4 into my own words:
    - o Paraphrase: "Many people have tried to compile a narrative about Jesus' life based on eye witness accounts. Having followed all of these events closely myself, I thought it would be to your benefit, Theophilus, if I did the same for you."
  - Luke addressed his book to Theophilus with the intent of giving him clarity and confidence about the things he believed.
    - o Theophilus may have come to faith in Christ after listening to someone preach an oral sermon.
    - o Luke wanted to give him a written record of the events surrounding Jesus.
    - o Having a written record would have given Theophilus something to reference when teaching others and would have been a huge blessing for all the Christians in that area.
  - Luke was not one of the original 12 Apostles, but he spent a significant amount of time with an Apostle called Paul (we will meet him in the book of Acts). Additionally, he would have had opportunity to interact with some of the original 12, along with other eye witnesses of Jesus' ministry.
  - By the time Luke wrote his book (probably around 60 AD) many other records of Jesus' life had been written.
  - SIDE NOTE:
    - o Were the 4 gospels in our Bible the only inspired accounts of Jesus' life?
    - o It is possible but not certain.
    - o The Holy Spirit may have inspired other people to write about Jesus' life, but only intended their records to serve the Church in the short-term.
  - There is no question Luke had some very unique insights into the early Church, not only the events occurring in Jerusalem where it all began, but the events of the gospel frontier as the message made its way across Europe.
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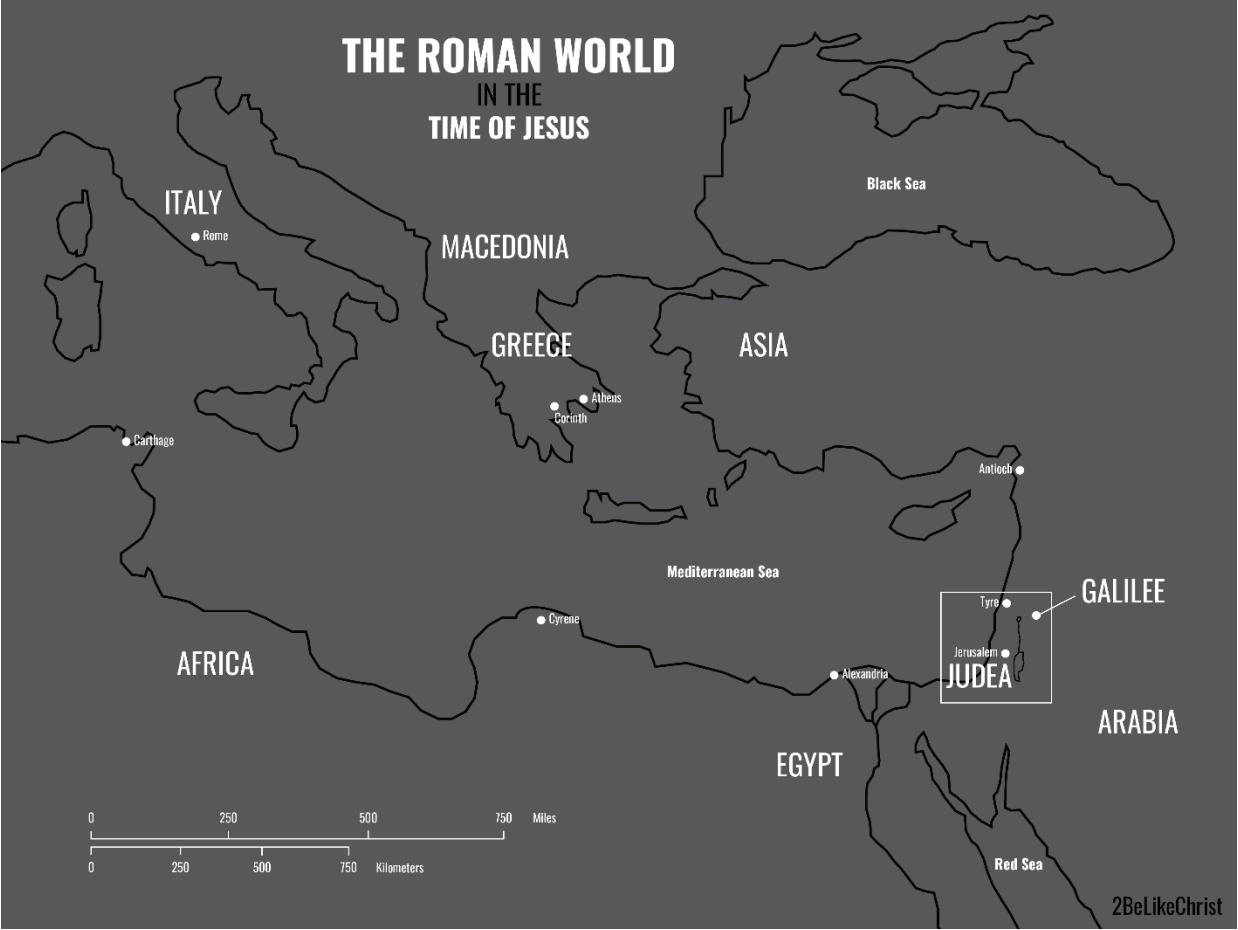
- APPLICATION:

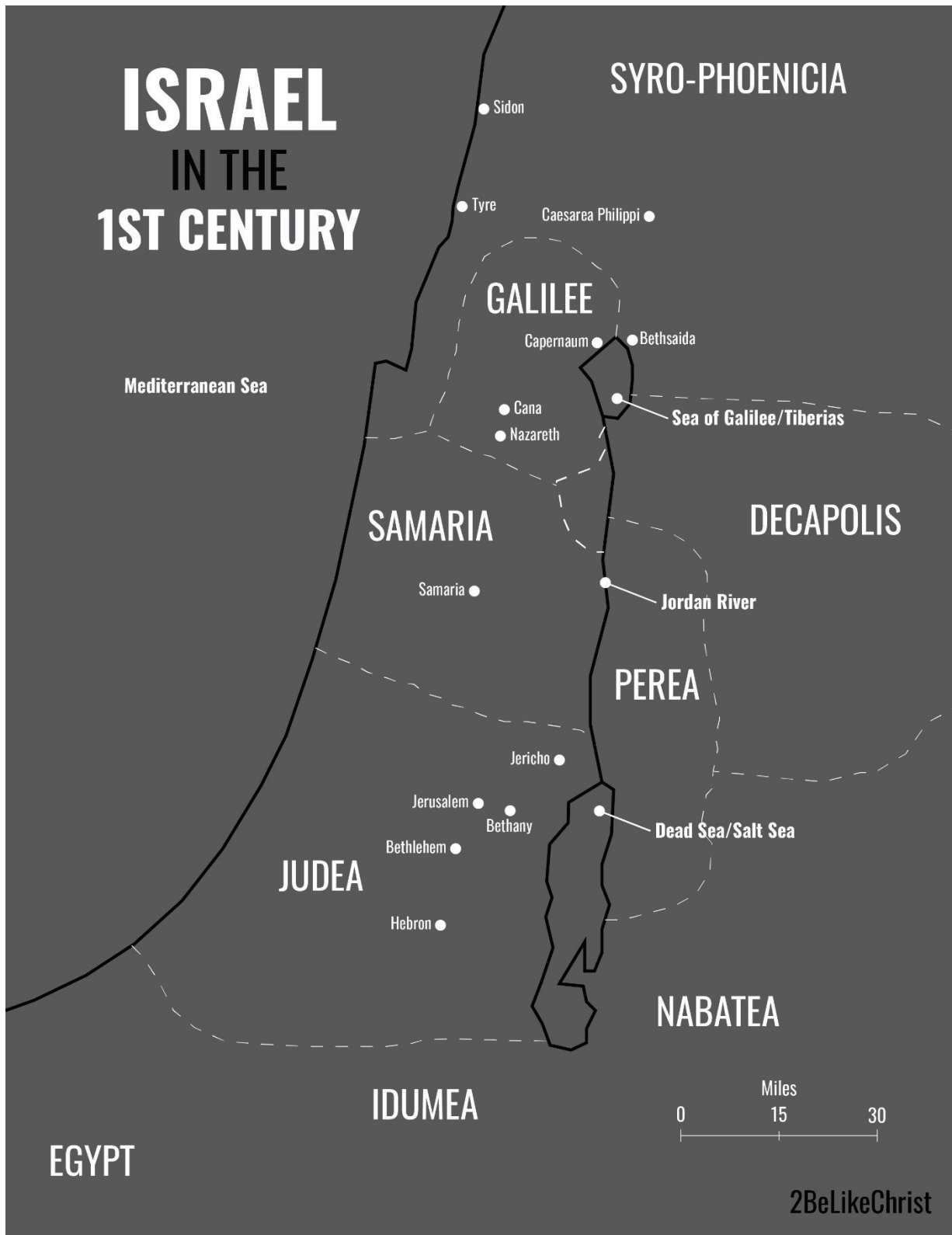
- Luke's gospel accomplishes the same thing for us that it did for Theophilus.
  - It gives us confidence we can know who Jesus was, what He accomplished during His ministry, and what He taught.
  - Luke's gospel is especially good at giving the reader confidence about the historicity of Jesus.
  - Luke includes a lot of details not mentioned by the other gospel writers.
    - Historical details.
    - Geographic details.
    - Etc.
  - These details are valuable when it comes to authenticating Luke's writing.
  - When a person's writing includes a lot of details, those details can be fact checked, and Luke's details have been fact checked by Bible students and Bible critics alike and have been found to be accurate.
  - A book that can withstand scrutiny gives confidence to the reader.
  - Confidence is exactly what Luke was trying to give Theophilus.
- 

Luk 1:5 In the days of Herod, king of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah, of the division of Abijah. And he had a wife from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth.

- Where was Judea?





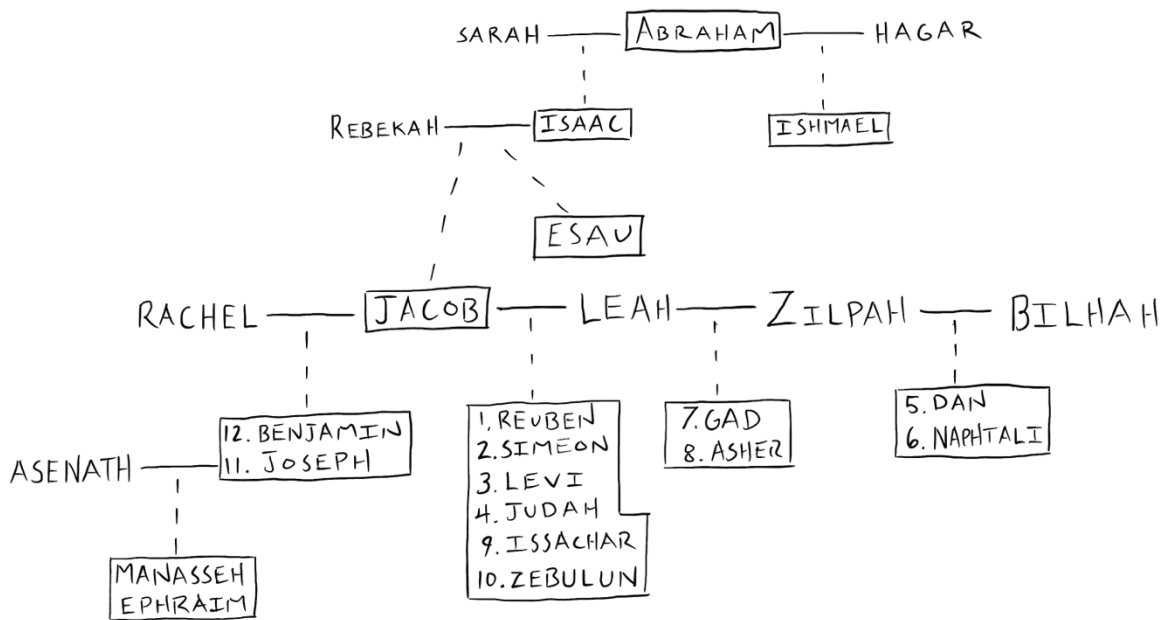


- Where are we in history?
  - o The events we are about to read about happened around 1 AD.

- Our modern way of recording the years revolves around Christ's birth (Before Christ) to AD (Anno Domini, "In the year of our Lord").
- Who was Herod?
  - He reigned for 34 years in Judea.
  - He was a half-Jew.
  - He managed to convince the Romans he could maintain peace in Judea.
  - The Romans gave him the title "King of Judea."
  - He was a ruthless killer who murdered many of his own family members to remain in power.
  - He spent a lot of time and money rebuilding the Temple of the Jews in Jerusalem.
  - He had at least two reasons for wanting to rebuild the Temple:
    - To win favor with the Jews (who were his subjects).
    - He had a love of accomplishing great architectural feats.
- Verse 5 introduces us to a few of chapter 1's main characters, Zechariah and Elizabeth.
  - Zechariah and Elizabeth were Jews.
    - In fact, most of the characters in this book are Jews.
    - The story Luke is about to tell us takes place primarily among Jewish people, in Jewish culture, and it's a story that begins where Jewish history (the Old Testament) left off.
  - Zechariah was a special kind of Jew, he was a priest.
  - The priests came from a specific Jewish tribe (there were 12 tribes), the tribe of Levi, and they were in charge of taking care of religious worship at the Temple in Jerusalem.
    - THE 12 TRIBES OF THE JEWS:
      - Gad
      - Issachar
      - Reuben
      - Levi
      - Simeon
      - Joseph
      - Judah
      - Zebulun

- Benjamin
- Asher
- Naphtali
- Dan

## PATRIARCHS OF THE JEWS



- The Levite priests were then broken down into smaller divisions and they worked in rotating shifts at the Temple.
- Zechariah was from the division of Abijah (1 Chronicles 23-24).
- Zechariah's wife was from the same tribe (Levi), but she wasn't a priest (only men could be priests).
  - Out of all the priests, there was one High Priest.
  - Aaron, Moses' brother, was the first High Priest.
  - He lived 1500 years before Luke wrote his book.

Luk 1:6 And they were both righteous before God, walking blamelessly in all the

commandments and statutes of the Lord.

Luk 1:7 But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and both were advanced in years.

- They were both very spiritually minded people and they kept God's commands.
- The "commandments and statutes of the Lord" mentioned here refers to the religious system given by God to the Jews.
- God gave the Jews a set of religious laws back during the time of Moses and all the Jews were supposed to be obedient to those laws.
  - o That old religious system can be read about in books like Exodus and Leviticus.
  - o It goes by many names in the Bible: the Law, the Law of Moses, the Old Covenant, the Old Testament, the Law and the Prophets, the Scriptures, etc...
- They were very godly people but they had a problem...
- Elizabeth was barren (couldn't have children) and they were both old, so their hope of having children was dwindling, if not completely evaporated.
  - o To a modern reader, not having children might not seem like a big deal.
  - o But it was a really big deal during this time and in this culture.
  - o In fact, women who couldn't have children were stigmatized.
    - They were looked down on.
    - It was considered a shame on a woman if she couldn't have kids.
    - In verse 25, Elizabeth describes her barrenness as a "reproach."
    - Reproach = "the expression of disapproval or disappointment" (Oxford).
  - o As she got older, her fate of being a childless woman must have seemed unescapable.

Luk 1:8 Now while he was serving as priest before God when his division was on duty,

Luk 1:9 according to the custom of the priesthood, he was chosen by lot to enter the temple of the Lord and burn incense.

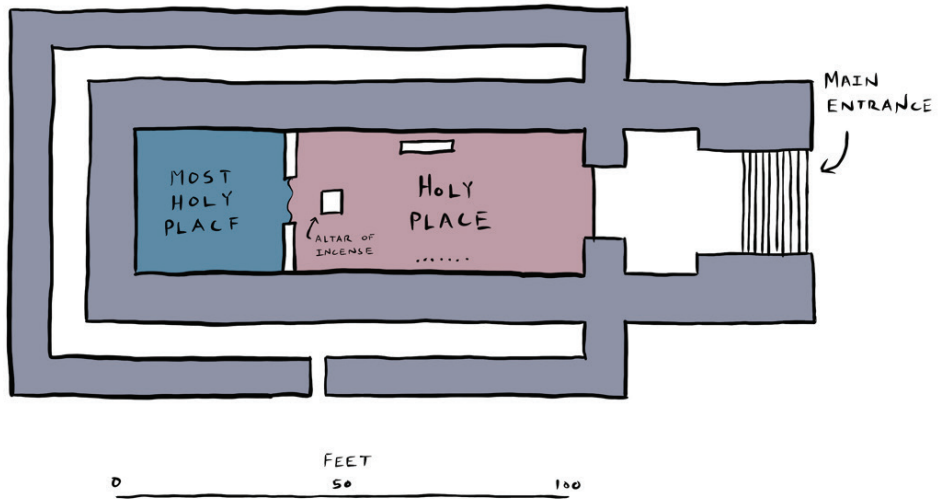
Luk 1:10 And the whole multitude of the people were praying outside at the hour of incense.

- It was Zechariah's turn to serve in the Temple and on this particular day he was selected to offer the sacrifice of incense.
- The Temple Complex:



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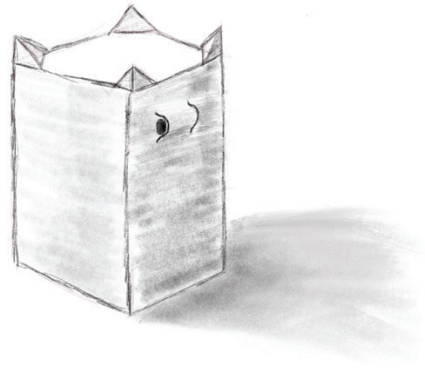


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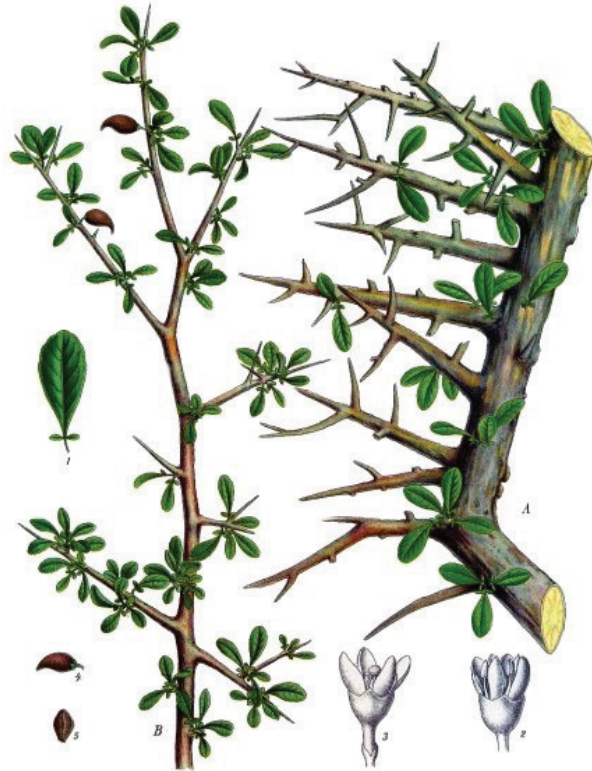
## THE ALTAR OF INCENSE:

SEE EXODUS 30:1-10

- MADE OF ACACIA WOOD
- OVERLAYED WITH GOLD
- 1 CUBIT WIDE
- 1 CUBIT DEEP
- 2 CUBITS TALL
- SAT IN FRONT OF THE VEIL SEPARATING THE HOLY PLACE FROM THE MOST HOLY PLACE.
- INCENSE WAS OFFERED ON IT EVERY MORNING AND EVENING.
- IT HAD RINGS ON EACH SIDE TO ALLOW IT TO BE CARRIED WITH POLES.



- 
- \*Cubit = Approximately 18 in or 45 cm.
- He was selected “by lot.”
  - We don’t know the exact process of “casting lots.”
  - It may have been similar to drawing straws or rolling dice.
  - But we know there were times when God providentially used it to accomplish His will.
  - This was one of those times (as we will see in the upcoming verses).
  - Pro 16:33 The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the LORD.
- Exodus chapter 30 describes the priest’s daily practice of burning incense in the Temple.
  - Incense is a combination of spices and perfumes which give off a pleasing smell when burnt.
    - The recipe for this specific incense was given in Exodus 30:34-35.
    - Exo 30:34 The LORD said to Moses, “Take **sweet spices, stacte**, and **onycha**, and **galbanum**, sweet spices with pure **frankincense** (of each shall there be an equal part), and make an incense blended as by the perfumer, seasoned with **salt**, pure and holy.
    - Stacte = Gum/resin, probably from the myrrh tree.



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- Onycha = Identity debated:
  - Some believe it to be the shell of a sea snail.

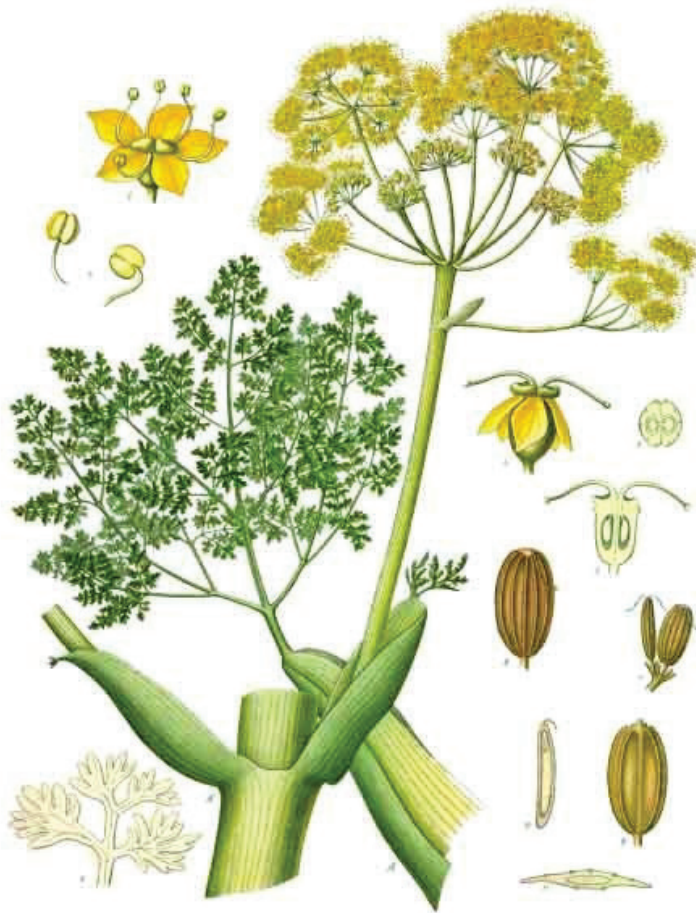


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- Others suggest it is the gum of the Cistus plant.





- Galbanum = Gum/resin from Ferula trees.



- 
- Frankincense = Gum/resin of the frankincense tree.



- The incense was burnt every morning and evening on an altar specifically designed for the purpose.
- The text seems to indicate it was common for people to gather at the Temple during this time for prayer.

Luk 1:11 And there appeared to him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense.

Luk 1:12 And Zechariah was troubled when he saw him, and fear fell upon him.

- While Zechariah was going about the business of making the incense sacrifice, an angel appeared to him.
- Zechariah was the only one who saw the angel because he was the only one inside the Temple at the time.
- The appearance of the angel struck fear into Zechariah.
  - This was the most common response to seeing an angel, per the other Biblical accounts.
  - The appearance of angels was overwhelming and frightening to almost everyone who saw them (apparently, they don't look like little baby angels with wings).
  - We aren't told exactly what this angel looked like.
  - Angels appeared in different forms at different times.

- They acted as the messengers and servants of God.

Luk 1:13 But the angel said to him, “Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John.

Luk 1:14 And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth,

Luk 1:15 for he will be great before the Lord. And he must not drink wine or strong drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb.

Luk 1:16 And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God,

Luk 1:17 and he will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready for the Lord a people prepared.”

- Although Zechariah was afraid, he soon realized the angel brought good news.
- Zechariah’s prayers had been heard by God and God had decided to give him a son.
- The child would be named John and would have a special place in God’s plan.
- John was to abstain from wine, which was a common practice for Jews who dedicated themselves to the Lord.
- He was going to be “filled with the Holy Spirit.”
- Who or what is the Holy Spirit?
  - The Bible talks about 3 “beings” who share the characteristics of God.
    - God the Father
    - Jesus Christ
    - Holy Spirit
  - These 3 are commonly referred to as the Godhead or the Trinity.
  - Each played a unique role in the plan to save mankind from sin.
  - In the Bible, we commonly see the Holy Spirit empowering men and women to accomplish God’s work.
- John would be empowered by the Holy Spirit to do the job God was going to give him.
  - John’s job was to announce the arrival of the Messiah.
  - The Messiah was a hero figure who had been prophesied about by the Jewish prophets.
  - The Messiah was to “save” the Jewish people.

- Save them from what?
  - Well, the Jews thought the prophecy was about a Messiah who was going to save them from oppressive political rule (i.e. the Romans).
    - They thought the Messiah would raise an army and overthrow their conquerors.
    - They thought he would raise the Jewish nation to world prominence.
  - But God’s intention was to use the Messiah to save the Jews from their greater enemy, their spiritual enemy, Satan, and from the consequences of their disobedience to God (sins).
  - The Jews thought the Messiah was an earthly deliverer.
  - God intended the Messiah to be a spiritual deliverer.
- John’s job was to announce the arrival of the Messiah.
  - He would prep the people for the Savior’s arrival and prepare their minds for what was coming.
  - The Holy Spirit would enable John to prophesy about the Messiah’s imminent arrival.
  - John’s preaching would be a cause for rejoicing among the people.
  - Many people would be drawn to the Messiah on account of John’s message.
  - SPOILER: Jesus = Messiah.
- In verse 17, the angel told Zechariah, John would go before the Messiah in the “spirit and power of Elijah...”
- Who was Elijah?
  - Elijah was one of God’s prophets to the Jewish people in the Old Testament.
  - You can read about him in 1 Kings and 2 Kings.
  - There was a prophecy in the Jewish scriptures that God would send Elijah to the Jews before the Messiah arrived.
    - Malachi 4:5 “Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes. And he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers...”
    - The angel was quoting from this prophecy when talking to Zechariah about his future son.
  - God wasn’t going to resurrect the old prophet Elijah from the dead.
  - He was going to send a man who was like Elijah in spirit to prepare the way for

the Messiah.

- This may have been difficult for many of the Jews to understand because their scribes appear to have taught a literal/physical return of the prophet Elijah.
  - Mat 16:14 – And they said, “Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.”
  - Mat 17:10 – And the disciples asked him, “Then why do the scribes say that first Elijah must come?”
- What does it mean that God would use John to “turn the hearts of the fathers to the children” (verse 17).
- There is some debate about this, but two possibilities seem likely to me:
  - 1. It may be a general statement about the reconciliation of relationships. John was going to announce a message that had the power to reconcile even the most bitter relationships. The gospel of Jesus has the power to mend broken hearts and broken relationships.
  - 2. The “fathers” mentioned here may be a reference back to the patriarchs, the fathers of the Jewish nation. The fathers of the Jewish nation were men of great faith (Abraham, Joseph, David, etc), but their children/ancestors repeatedly turned away from God. The repentance brought about by John’s message would allow the Jewish fathers to look favorably upon their children again.
    - As mentioned above, Malachi wrote about turning the hearts of the fathers to the children (Mal 4:5).
    - At the end of the book of Malachi, the need for reconciliation had never been greater.
    - The Jews had abandoned God and strayed very far from their fathers’ example.
    - Luke begins his book by announcing the time for reconciliation had come.
    - God was prepared to send the right people with the right message to make reconciliation possible.
- Key takeaways from these verses:
- Zechariah and Elizabeth were going to have a son.
  - Their son would be dedicated to the Lord and filled with the Holy Spirit.
  - He would announce the arrival of the Savior/Messiah.
- We will discuss John’s work further in chapter 3.

Luk 1:18 And Zechariah said to the angel, “How shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife is advanced in years.”

Luk 1:19 And the angel answered him, “I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I was sent to speak to you and to bring you this good news.

Luk 1:20 And behold, you will be silent and unable to speak until the day that these things take place, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their time.”

- Zechariah had some doubts about the angel’s promises.
- He was old, his wife was old, how were they going to have a child?
  - o Do you remember another couple in the Bible who had a child in their old age?
  - o Abraham and Sarah in the book of Genesis.
- The angel isn’t pleased with Zechariah’s doubts.
  - o Evidently, the presence of the angel should have been enough to cause him to believe.
  - o Not to mention the angel knew about his prayers for a son.
  - o And this wasn’t just any angel.
  - o This was Gabriel who stood in the presence of God.
  - o He had been sent from the presence of God to speak good news to Zechariah.
  - o But because Zechariah didn’t believe, he wouldn’t be able to speak until the angel’s words came true.

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- APPLICATION:

- o God can use ordinary people in extraordinary ways.
- o Zechariah and Elizabeth weren’t famous.
- o There is no indication they were that much different than any other priestly family.
- o But they were faithful to God.
- o Our small faith can be used powerfully by God.

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- APPLICATION:

- o God’s servants aren’t perfect people.
- o They don’t always have bullet proof faith.

- In the Bible, it was pretty common for God to tell someone He was going to work through them to accomplish something, only to have them turn around and start expressing their doubts.
    - Moses
    - Jeremiah
    - Gideon
    - Zechariah
  - All these men doubted their competence to complete the task God gave them.
  - But in every case, the task was accomplished.
  - God can work powerfully in weak people.
  - He does it in part so He gets the glory.
  - We need to be willing in our imperfection to let God use us for His purpose.
  - We should be willing to take on big, challenging, difficult, maybe even seemingly impossible things in God's service and rely on Him to give us what is needed to finish the job.
  - God probably won't work through a person who refuses to accept God's ability to overcome their inadequacy.
- 

Luk 1:21 And the people were waiting for Zechariah, and they were wondering at his delay in the temple.

Luk 1:22 And 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.

Luk 1:23 And when his time of service was ended, he went to his home.

Luk 1:24 After these days his wife Elizabeth conceived, and for five months she kept herself hidden, saying,

Luk 1:25 "Thus the Lord has done for me in the days when he looked on me, to take away my reproach among people."

- While Zechariah was talking to the angel, the multitude of people were standing outside waiting for him and wondering what was taking him so long.
- When he finally came out, he couldn't speak and resorted to sign language.
- Remarkably, he stayed to finish his working shift at the Temple.

- We don't know how many days he had left or if he was able to tell Elizabeth what had happened.
  - Here is a man who received the correction of the Lord well.
  - Zechariah was corrected by the angel for doubting his words.
  - Instead of getting angry that the Lord for making him mute, he accepted the correction and continued on doing God's work.
  - Zechariah went home after his time at the Temple was complete and Elizabeth got pregnant.
  - Elizabeth chose to keep the pregnancy private for the first 5 months.
    - The reasons for this aren't 100% clear.
    - She may have dedicated those 5 months to praising God as she does in verse 25.
  - God had answered her prayers, taken away the stigma of barrenness, and given her a son.
- 

- APPLICATION:

- Just because God doesn't immediately answer your prayer doesn't mean He isn't going to answer it.
  - Gabriel told Zechariah his prayers had been heard.
    - Zechariah was an old man.
    - He and Elizabeth had probably been praying that prayer for years.
    - They may have assumed God wasn't going to answer it.
  - God gave the couple a son when the time was best.
  - He gave them a son that was unmistakably a miraculous gift.
  - He gave them, not just a son, but the privilege of bearing a son who would be used by God in important ways.
  - They were faithful to God even though God hadn't given them a child.
  - That may have been part of the reason He chose to bless them.
  - Unanswered prayers (even prayers that go unanswered for years) are not always an indication God is refusing our request.
  - They may be a set up for a greater blessing.
  - While you wait, live a life of faithfulness like Zechariah and Elizabeth.
- 

- SIDE NOTE: God using barren women to bear important children is a theme in Scripture.



- Sarah
- Rachel
- Hannah
- Elizabeth

Luk 1:26 In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth,

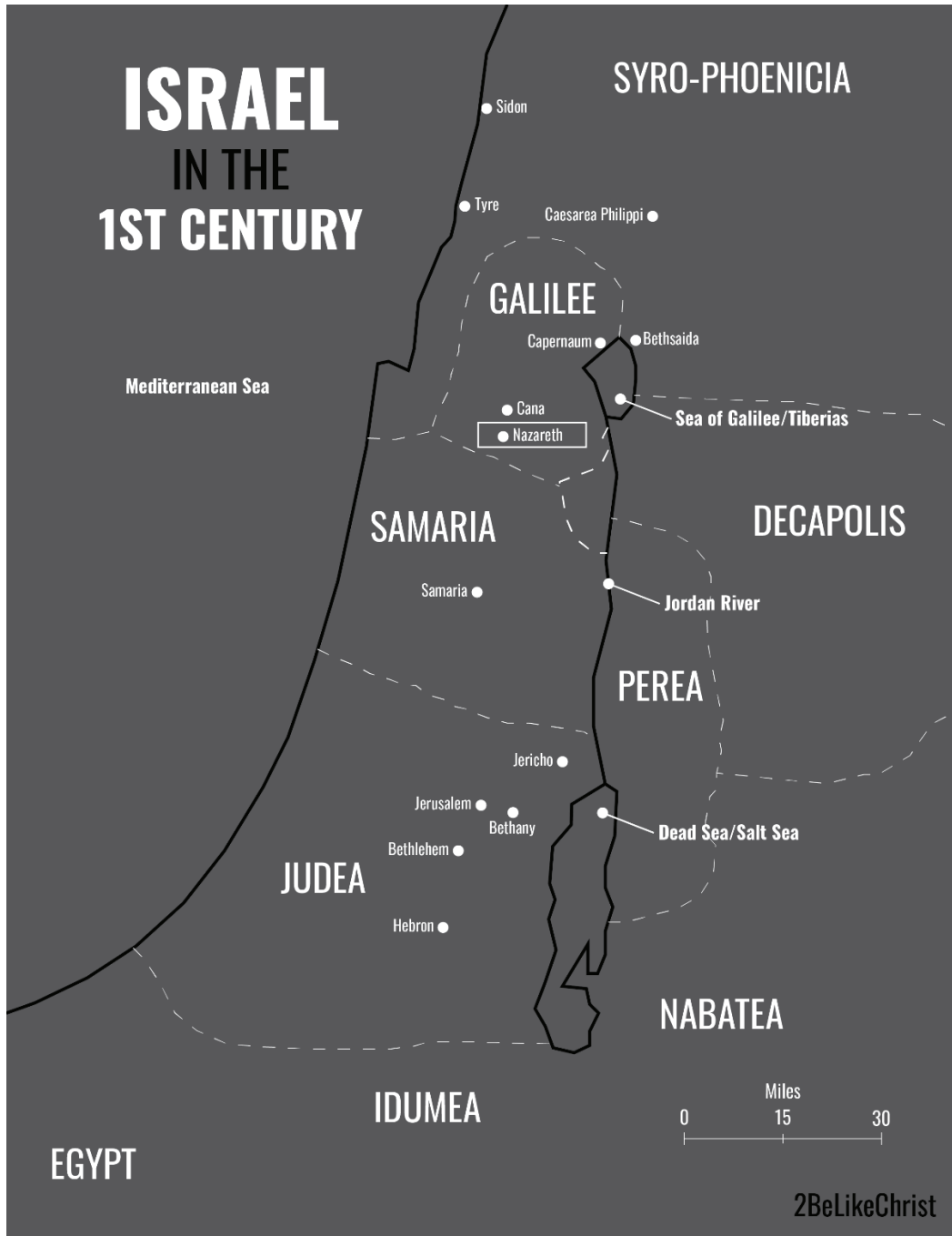
Luk 1:27 to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary.

Luk 1:28 And he came to her and said, "Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!"

Luk 1:29 But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be.

Luk 1:30 And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God.

- 6 months after Elizabeth got pregnant, Gabriel made another appearance.
- God sent him to the city of Nazareth to find a young virgin girl named Mary.



- 
- Mary was betrothed to a guy named Joseph.
  - o Betrothal is often compared to modern day engagement but was likely much more binding.
  - o A betrothal may have involved formal agreements between the involved families and the exchange of a dowry.
  - o The union was not consummated until after the betrothal period.
- Joseph was from the “house of David.”

- King David is one of the most famous kings of Israel and lived approximately 1,000 years before Jesus.
- Joseph was from the “house of David” meaning he was a Jew, specifically from the tribe of Judah.
- The fact that Joseph is from the tribe of Judah is significant because the Messiah was prophesied to come from the tribe of Judah.
- It was also prophesied the Messiah would sit on David’s throne.
- But we are getting ahead of ourselves.
- Gabriel said to Mary, “Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!”
  - You may recognize the KJV rendering of the angel’s greeting “Hail.”
  - The text says Mary was initially troubled at the appearance of the angel. She wasn’t exactly sure what was happening (an understandable response).
  - I’m going to jump ahead and tell you what Gabriel is going to tell Mary:
    - Mary was going to be the earthly mother of Jesus.
    - Jesus was the Messiah.
    - Jesus was the Son of God.
    - He was God born as a man to live on earth in order to be the Savior.
  - The privilege being given to Mary was even greater than the one given to Elizabeth.
    - Bearing children was an honor to all women.
    - Bearing a son was a greater honor.
    - But bearing the Messiah/The Son of God was a privilege given to one woman out of the billions of women born into the world.
  - Why was she favored? Why her out of the billions?
    - ???
    - Was she famous? No.
    - Was she from a family of high status? No.
    - We don’t really know why God selected Mary.
    - We know Mary trusted God and was unquestionably obedient to Him (per the upcoming verses).
    - Other than that, we aren’t told anything more than “she found favor with God” (verse 30).
  - The Bible doesn’t spend a lot of time telling us about Mary.

- The gospel writers are focused on her Son, Jesus.
  - That is important because there are some in the Christian world who make more of Mary than the gospel writers make of her and more than God made of her.
  - We've been through all 4 of the gospels now and while it is undeniable that Mary was favored by God and highly honored by God, there is no evidence to suggest she is an integral part of our relationship with Jesus and God the Father.
- SIDE NOTE:
- We are so familiar with the Bible story some of the details are sometimes lost on us.
  - God's actions here are odd by almost any human standard.
    - God is initiating this unique event of incalculable importance to the human race and He places in the center a girl of no societal importance who lives in a nowhere town.
    - This isn't how I would have written the story.

Luk 1:31 And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus.

Luk 1:32 He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David,

Luk 1:33 and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."

Luk 1:34 And Mary said to the angel, "How will this be, since I am a virgin?"

Luk 1:35 And the angel answered her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God.

- Mary was going to have a baby and she was to name Him "Jesus."
- This was shocking news to Mary as she was still a virgin.
  - Gabriel told her the child wouldn't be conceived the natural way (man and a woman).
  - Instead the power of God would put the child inside of her.
  - It was done miraculously by the Holy Spirit, the same being who was going to

empower John (verse 15).

- Jesus was both man and God.
  - Miraculously placed inside a woman by God.
  - He grew inside His mother and was born like every other man.
  - There is definitely some mystery in how the process worked.
- The angel is in no way vague about the greatness of this child.
- Jesus would be called the Son of the Most High.
  - There were princes and children of dignitaries but Jesus was going to be the Son of the highest King.
  - God would set Him on the throne of David.
    - In 2 Samuel 7, God promised David his throne and his son's throne would be established FOREVER.
    - 2Sa 7:13 He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.
    - But if you know anything about Jewish history, you'll know there was no longer a king in Israel or Judah who was a relative of David.
    - So how was God's promise to David in 2 Samuel 7 true?
    - Well, the throne was empty but it had only been vacated for a period of time.
    - It was awaiting a new King.
    - That new King was Jesus.
    - When Jesus took the throne it would be occupied forever.
    - Jesus never dies, nobody ever throws Him off the throne, He is the permanent ruler.
  - The child in Mary's womb was that king.
  - That may be a difficult concept to grasp for us Gentiles but the significance of this would have been immediately clear to a Jewish person.
  - They were waiting for the Messiah King to rule.
  - The Messiah King whose reign would have no end.
- The "Jacob" mentioned in verse 33 was one of the prominent patriarchs of the Jewish nation.
  - The families of his 12 sons became the 12 tribes of Israel (Jews).
  - You can read about him and his sons in the book of Genesis.

Luk 1:36 And behold, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren.

Luk 1:37 For nothing will be impossible with God.”

Luk 1:38 And Mary said, “Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.” And the angel departed from her.

- Elizabeth’s pregnancy had remained a secret, even from her relative Mary.
- Gabriel tells Mary about Elizabeth’s miraculous pregnancy as a sign God would have no problem accomplishing all he had just told her.
- I find Mary’s response incredible.
- Without hesitation or question (unlike Zechariah who was many years her senior) she gave her life over to the will of God.
- Her trust in God doesn’t falter.
- Keep in mind, Mary is almost certainly in her teenage years when this takes place.
  - o Many historians believe she was between 12 and 15.
  - o Jewish customs allowed for betrothal at 12.
  - o That may seem shockingly young to modern Bible students, especially because Mary is almost never portrayed as being that young in pictures or movies.
  - o But if you look back through history, not just Jewish history, it is very common to read about women/girls getting engaged and married in the early teenage years.
- Not only is the strength of her faith relative to her age impressive, but the social stigma she was willing to take on to do God’s will is admirable.
  - o Neighbor Lady - “Mary, how did you get pregnant? Was it Joseph? Or some other man?”
  - o Mary – “God miraculously put this child inside me.”
  - o Was anyone going to believe that?
    - Would your parents have believed it?
    - Would you believe it if your child told you that?
  - o The stigma surrounding Elizabeth was removed when she was blessed with a child.
  - o The stigma surrounding Mary was just beginning when she was blessed with a child.

- To have people look down on you in your early years for something you didn't do and then to have people hate your son and kill Him in your later years... that isn't an easy life!
- So yes, Mary was blessed to be the mother of Jesus but it didn't come without a price.
- Yet no record of her faith wavering exists.
- Joseph deserves a great deal of credit for his decision to remain with Mary.
  - He probably did not imagine his new married life involve a scandal of either premarital sex or betrothal unfaithfulness.
  - There was no easy way out of the situation for Joseph.
    - Either people assumed the child was his and he had had a sexual relationship with Mary before their marriage
    - Or, people assumed Mary had been with another man during her betrothal.
  - Either possibility would have reflected badly on Joseph but rather than run from the situation, he embraced the role God gave him to play.

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○ APPLICATION:

- God can turn your life upside down in a very short period of time.
- All of a sudden, Mary goes from being an obscure women to being an integral part of God's world changing plan.
- The same thing could potentially happen to me.
- But my question for myself is, "Would I let Him."
  - Most of us like living our lives in a predictable way.
  - We have a plan for how we think things will go.
  - But what if God wants to use us in a different way?
  - Are we open to that?
  - Or would we be resistant to God coming into our lives and turning things upside down.
- Who knows what we will miss if we don't give God control!

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Luk 1:39 In those days Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country, to a town in Judah,  
 Luk 1:40 and she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth.

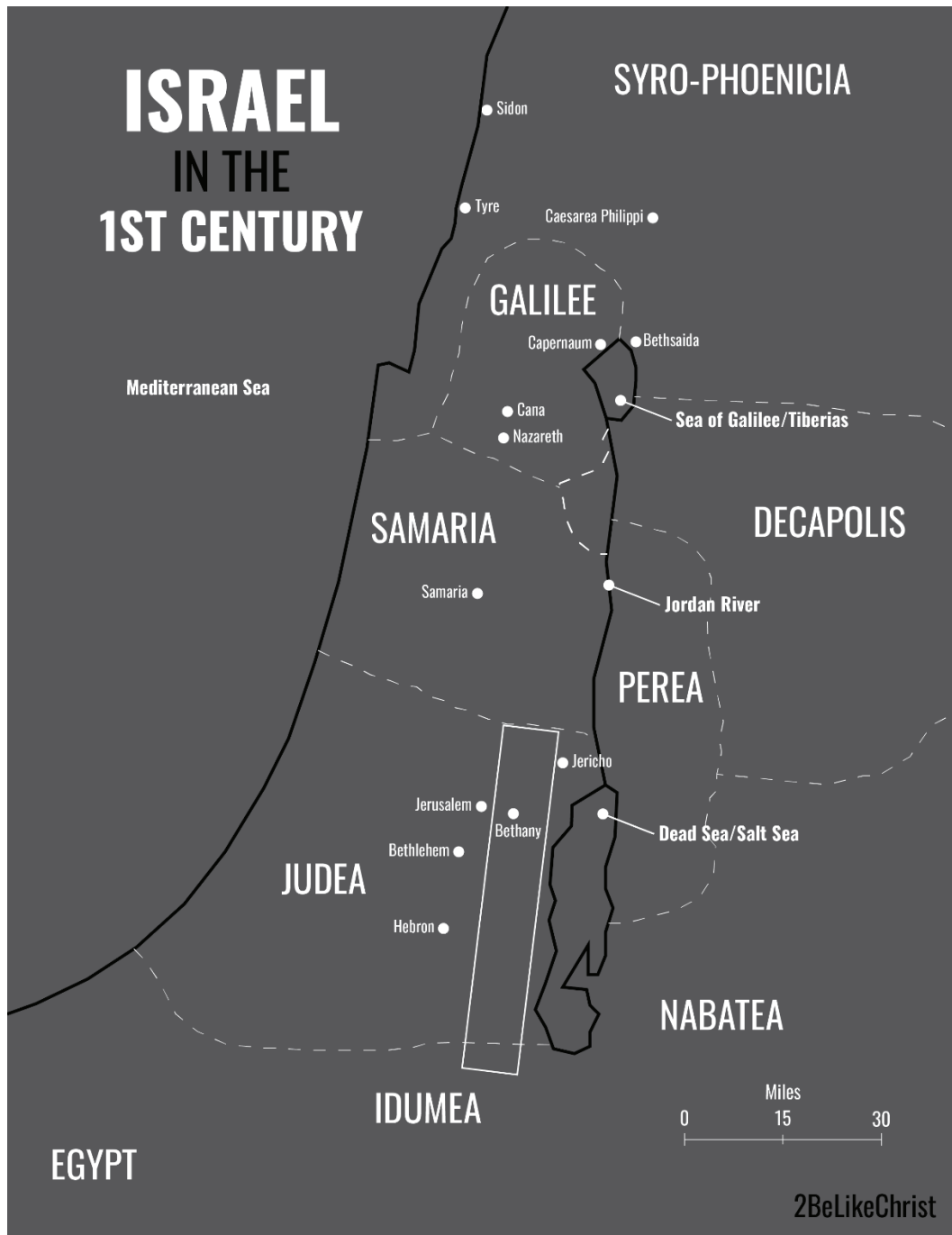
- When Mary had received the news of Elizabeth’s pregnancy and her own miraculous conception, she went to visit Elizabeth at her home in the hill country.
- It is hard to lock down the exact location because the “hill country” is a somewhat broad term.
- The hills of Israel run all along the west side of the Jordan River, stretching from Galilee to the Dead Sea.
  - o The book of Joshua refers to the hill country as running from Kedesh to Hebron (see map).
  - o Jos 20:7 So they set apart Kedesh in Galilee in the hill country of Naphtali, and Shechem in the hill country of Ephraim, and Kiriath-arba (that is, Hebron) in the hill country of Judah.
- Verse 39 indicates the town was in Judah (the southern region).
- Nazareth to the southern hills would have been an 80-100 mile trip.



*hills of Judea).*

*(The*





Luk 1:41 And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the baby leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit,

Luk 1:42 and she exclaimed with a loud cry, “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb!

Luk 1:43 And why is this granted to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me?

Luk 1:44 For behold, when the sound of your greeting came to my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy.

Luk 1:45 And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord.”

- Elizabeth was at least 6 months pregnant when Mary arrived at her house.
  - When Mary greeted her, the baby inside of her “leaped.”
    - o I’m not sure what that felt like but it must have been unique.
    - o It was more than the baby kicking.
    - o How did the baby know Jesus and his mother had arrived?
    - o It must have been miraculous.
- 

- APPLICATION:

- o Isn’t it interesting God chose an unborn baby to be the first person to recognize the Messiah.
  - o That stands in stark contrast to the opinion of many who consider babies in the womb to be disposable clumps of cells.
- 

- Elizabeth is then “filled with the Holy Spirit” and speaks to Mary.
    - o This is the same Holy Spirit who was foretold to empower Jesus and John.
    - o It now empowers Elizabeth giving her knowledge of the situation and an understanding of the blessing that has been given to Mary.
  - She blesses Mary and the baby inside her.
  - She is honored that the mother of her “Lord” would come to visit.
    - o She calls Jesus her Lord even though He hadn’t been born.
    - o We don’t know how much Mary told her before arriving (if anything) but it is clear a lot of this information and her comprehension of it is coming via the Holy Spirit.
    - o It’s possible the Holy Spirit gave this knowledge to Elizabeth so her words would encourage Mary and confirm the Lord’s work through her.
  - Finally, in verse 45, she blesses Mary for believing that God would accomplish all He told her through His angel messenger.
-

- APPLICATION:

- Do we believe the things God tells us through His words (the Bible)?
  - One might say, “Well, I would believe too if an angel appeared to me and told me!”
  - But we have the complete revelation of God.
  - We have the full gospel story which confirms the faithfulness of God’s words across centuries of history.
  - Precedent upon precedent.
- 

- APPLICATION:

- Don’t think miracles are what you need to see to believe.
  - A lot of people, including myself, have thought, “Well, if I could see a miracle, I would never question God.”
  - The Bible was given to us to learn about human nature.
  - Again and again in the Bible we read about people who witnessed incredible miracles...
    - The 10 plagues on Egypt (book of Exodus).
    - Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead (John 11).
    - Etc...
  - There were people who were eye witnesses of those events who in a shockingly short amount of time started questioning the faithfulness and power of God.
  - The precedent of history is that miracles aren’t a guarantee of faith.
- 

Luk 1:46 And Mary said, “My soul magnifies the Lord,

Luk 1:47 and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,

Luk 1:48 for he has looked on the humble estate of his servant. For behold, from now on all generations will call me blessed;

Luk 1:49 for he who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name.

Luk 1:50 And his mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation.

Luk 1:51 He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts;

Luk 1:52 he has brought down the mighty from their thrones and exalted those of humble estate;

Luk 1:53 he has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent away empty.

Luk 1:54 He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy,

Luk 1:55 as he spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his offspring forever.”

Luk 1:56 And Mary remained with her about three months and returned to her home.

- Mary’s response is the correct response when someone complements us for something God is accomplishing through us.
    - o She didn’t say, “Yeah, I know I’m pretty special. They don’t let just anybody be the mother of the Messiah.”
    - o Her thoughts weren’t fixed on her own greatness, they were focused on God’s greatness.
    - o She magnified God and rejoiced in the blessing given to her and the blessing that Jesus would be to her Jewish countrymen.
    - o She recognizes the privilege given to her.
      - She knew it was a high privilege.
      - It was a once in the universe privilege.
      - She was right in saying, “from now on all generations will call me blessed.”
      - That is why we are here 2,000 years later talking about a girl from an obscure town that otherwise would have quickly been lost to history.
    - o She understood the blessing was a result of God’s goodness, not her super awesomeness.
    - o “for He who is mighty has done all things for me, and holy is His name” (verse 49).
- 

- APPLICATION:

- o In verse 47, Mary says “my spirit rejoices in God my Savior.”
- o In what does your spirit rejoice?
- o Most people’s spirit rejoices in themselves, what they’ve accomplished, what they’ve done.
- o Even Christians can spend more time rejoicing in their accomplishments than in God as their Savior.
- o We can go to worship on Sunday and rejoice because we’ve had a pretty good week, kept most of the rules, haven’t committed any terrible sins.

- But that shouldn't be the primary reason for our rejoicing, we don't go to worship to rejoice about how good we've been, we go to worship to worship God for His goodness.
  - We are the ones who need saved!
  - Our hearts rejoice in the fact that God is a Savior.
  - Mary was rejoicing because God was coming to the earth as a Savior.
  - What does your heart rejoice in?
- 

- APPLICATION:

- God definitely doesn't look at people the way we look at people, otherwise he wouldn't have chosen a woman of "humble estate" for such an incredible work.
  - We need to make sure a non-Christian world isn't defining the Church's criteria for competence.
  - Otherwise we will never evaluate a person's potential the way God does.
  - Many of God's greatest servants would never have been considered for the job if the world had been conducting the interviews.
- 

- "And His mercy is for those who fear Him in every generation."

- Jesus' work on earth was going to be to extend mercy to every person, no matter what generation, century, millennia they were/are a part of.
- God's mercy is extended to anyone who "fears" Him.
- The Bible uses "fear" in the sense of respect, those who properly respect God, who treat Him and His words with the reverence they deserve.

- "He has shown strength with His arm; He has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts. He has brought down the mighty from their thrones and exalted those of humble estate."

- Jesus' life was going to be a display of God's strength.
- Jesus was coming to establish God's reign/kingdom on earth.
- God's Kingdom has and will outlast every earthly kingdom.
- Jesus was to be the king of the Kingdom of Heaven.
- Jesus' reign was to be a display of God's supremacy over everything, even the most powerful human institutions.
- Those who fight against the Kingdom of Heaven, the "proud" of verse 51, will be

scattered and humbled.

- Jesus would invite all people, regardless of their social status to be a part of His Kingdom and reign with Him forever.
- He would give “those of humble estate” the right to be exalted as children of God.
- “He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich He has sent away empty.”
  - This seems to be a general statement about God’s care for those who are so often denied care.
    - No matter what period of history you research, its common to see the rich abuse the poor.
    - The rich have the resources, but aren’t especially concerned with the welfare of the have-nots.
  - Not so with God, the One who possesses the storehouses of mercy pours out the abundance of His blessings on those who need it most.
    - He cares for the spiritual have-nots.
    - Matthew 5:6 Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.
    - Luke 6:21 Blessed are you who are hungry now, for you shall be satisfied.
  - On account of Jesus’ life, those with nothing would be given much, but those with much, those who abused the poor, and cared nothing for the needy would be brought to judgement.
    - Luk 6:24-25 But woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation. Woe to you who are full now, for you shall be hungry.

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- APPLICATION:

- Is selfishness something we need to take seriously?
- Is generosity something we need to take seriously?
- God seems to take both very seriously!
- Jesus’ life was a selfless sacrifice and the world’s most generous gift.
- Our lives need to reflect those qualities.

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- “He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, as he spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his offspring forever.”

- If you are familiar with the Old Testament, you’ll know why the nation of Israel

needed God to remember His mercy.

- The 800-900 years leading up to Jesus' birth weren't a bright spot in Jewish history.
- God continually sent the Jews reminders to keep His commands, but His people continually disobeyed Him.
- Bad king after bad king led the nation into ruin.
- It was only by God's mercy the nation still existed (no exaggeration).
- On top of the mercy already extended to them, God was going to send Jesus as His greatest act of mercy.
- Incredibly, God had foretold this gift of grace before the Jewish nation ever existed.
  - All the way back in the book of Genesis, God promised Abraham, the father of the Jews, He would bless the world through His descendants.
  - Genesis 12:2-3 And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, **and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.**
- When you study the Old Testament, you'll find it all points to Jesus.
  - The more you understand the Old Testament the more you'll understand how Jesus' birth, life, and death complete the picture God began painting at the beginning of time.
  - The Old Testament isn't just a bunch of random stories about the nation of Israel.
  - I know it can feel that way.
  - But it is actually full of storylines, plots, characters, and events meant to lead the reader to the Messiah.
  - It was designed to show Jews and non-Jews their need for a Savior.
- Mary's words here in Luke 1 give us some insight into the work Jesus is going to accomplish in the rest of the book.

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- APPLICATION:

- When was the last time you took 5 minutes to magnify the Lord?
- To praise Him for blessing you.
- For caring for the needy.
- For using you to accomplish His work.

- For being a powerful king.
  - For giving you a place in His kingdom.
  - For remembering His promises and His mercy.
  - Do we ever take time out of day to tell God how great He is?
- 

- APPLICATION:

- Are we as honored as Elizabeth and Mary to participate in God's work?
  - They acted as if was an awesome blessing.
  - Sometimes we act like working for God is a hardly bearable responsibility.
- 

Luk 1:56 And Mary remained with her about three months and returned to her home.

- Mary stayed with Elizabeth three months before returning to home to Nazareth.
- I suspect she stayed to see John's birth.
- If not, she must have left just days before.

Luk 1:57 Now the time came for Elizabeth to give birth, and she bore a son.

Luk 1:58 And her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had shown great mercy to her, and they rejoiced with her.

Luk 1:59 And on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child. And they would have called him Zechariah after his father,

Luk 1:60 but his mother answered, "No; he shall be called John."

Luk 1:61 And they said to her, "None of your relatives is called by this name."

Luk 1:62 And they made signs to his father, inquiring what he wanted him to be called.

Luk 1:63 And he asked for a writing tablet and wrote, "His name is John." And they all wondered.

- Just as Gabriel had said, Elizabeth gave birth to a baby boy, and all of her neighbors and relatives rejoiced with her.
- God had instructed all the Jews to circumcise their male babies on the eighth day after birth (Leviticus 12:1-3).



- Apparently, that was also the day they named their children..
- All the relatives wanted to name the child “Zechariah,” but Elizabeth told them they were going to name him John.
- That didn’t make any sense to any of them, so they made signs to Zechariah for confirmation.
  - o This text seems to suggest Zechariah was both unable to speak and unable to hear.
  - o If he could hear why would his relatives need to make signs to him?
- Acquiring a writing tablet, Zechariah confirmed Elizabeth’s words, “His name is John.”

Luk 1:64 And immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue loosed, and he spoke, blessing God.

Luk 1:65 And fear came on all their neighbors. And all these things were talked about through all the hill country of Judea,

Luk 1:66 and all who heard them laid them up in their hearts, saying, “What then will this child be?” For the hand of the Lord was with him.

- If I were Zechariah I think I would have been a little worried when my tongue wasn’t loosed at John’s birth.
- God made him wait 8 more days for the restoration of his voice.
- I find it interesting, the first thing he did with his voice was bless God.

- APPLICATION:

- o Hopefully our tongues mature like Zechariah’s.
- o Zechariah went from expressing his doubts in God’s promises (1:18) to blessing God for His faithfulness (1:64).

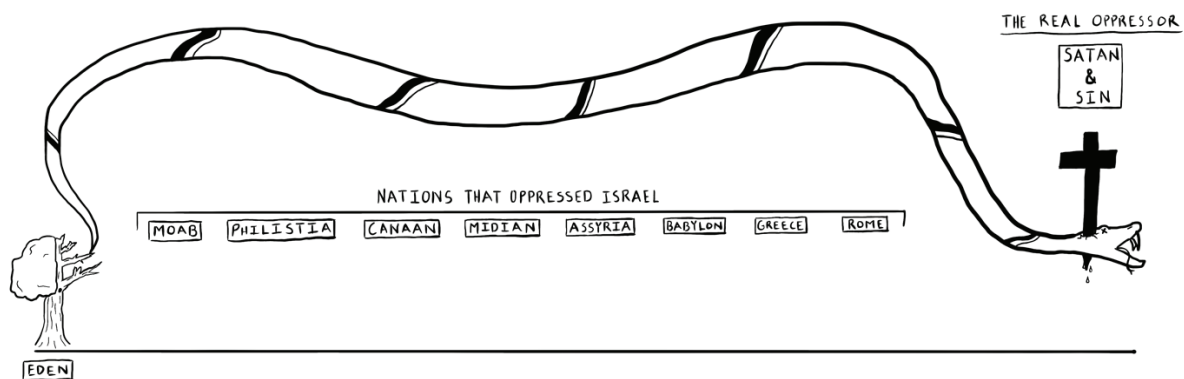
- The news of John’s birth and the events surrounding it spread throughout the hill country of Judea.
- People took note that God was at work.
- They didn’t exactly know what God was doing, but they knew something special was taking place.

Luk 1:67 And his father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied, saying,

Luk 1:68 “Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has visited and redeemed his people  
 Luk 1:69 and has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David,  
 Luk 1:70 as he spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets from of old,  
 Luk 1:71 that we should be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us;  
 Luk 1:72 to show the mercy promised to our fathers and to remember his holy covenant,  
 Luk 1:73 the oath that he swore to our father Abraham, to grant us  
 Luk 1:74 that we, being delivered from the hand of our enemies, might serve him without fear,  
 Luk 1:75 in holiness and righteousness before him all our days.  
 Luk 1:76 And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; for you will go before the  
 Lord to prepare his ways,  
 Luk 1:77 to give knowledge of salvation to his people in the forgiveness of their sins,  
 Luk 1:78 because of the tender mercy of our God, whereby the sunrise shall visit us from on  
 high  
 Luk 1:79 to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet  
 into the way of peace.”

- It is not specifically stated that Mary was filled with the Holy Spirit when she spoke the words in verses 46-55, but I think we are meant to understand she was.
- Here, Zechariah is filled with the Holy Spirit and begins to prophecy about what the Lord is going to accomplish with his son, John, and ultimately through Mary’s son Jesus.
- You’ll notice a lot of similarities between Mary and Zechariah’s words.
- Let’s work through Zechariah’s words phrase-by-phrase:
  - “Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for He has visited and redeemed His people”
    - John was going to prepare the people for the arrival of God (Jesus).
    - God was literally going to visit the earth for the purpose of redeeming people.
    - Redeem = gain or regain possession of (something) in exchange for payment.
    - Jesus was going to sacrifice Himself and give His blood as payment to fix the relationship between sinners and God.
  - “and has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of His servant David, as he spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from of old,
    - This may be an odd statement for most modern readers.

- Was God going to take an animal horn and give it some kind of saving power?
  - No, “horn” in the Bible symbolizes power and strength.
  - Zechariah is saying God is going to give His people a powerful salvation through a strong Savior.
  - And that Savior is going to come through the house of David.
  - As we mentioned, the Messiah/Savior was prophesied to be a descendent of King David and to sit on David’s throne forever.
- “that we should be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us;”
- Zechariah mentioned salvation from enemies...
  - What did God’s people need saved from?
    - In a sense, Jesus will save people from their earthly enemies and the earthly troubles those enemies bring on them.
    - But in a greater sense, God intends to save us from our spiritual enemy, Satan.
    - Satan wants people to be separated from God forever.
    - He wants them to be destroyed by their sins, which is why he tempts people.
    - The Savior was going to overthrow the power of Satan, save His people from the Devil’s hand, put them in His own hand, and ensure their safety forever.



- “to show the mercy promised to our fathers and to remember His holy covenant, the oath that He swore to our father Abraham, to grant us that we, being delivered from the hand of our enemies, might serve Him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him all our days.

- In this verse, Zechariah mentions a promise God made to Abraham.
  - God had just kept a promise to Zechariah that had taken 9 months, but in doing so, He was keeping a promise He had made to Abraham 1,500 years earlier, to send a Savior to the world from Abraham's family.
- 

- APPLICATION:

- Our stories may be used to impact those who come a 1,000 years after us.
  - Our stories may be the culmination of a work God has been orchestrating for the past 1,000 years.
  - It can be beneficial to take a step back and think about how we fit into the bigger Christian story.
    - To appreciate the things God has done in the past to place us where we are.
    - And to think about how God might use us to benefit future generations.
  - I don't think we should see the Bible story as separate from modern history.
  - It's all one unified work of God.
- 

- Zechariah continued, "And you child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways, to give knowledge of salvation to His people in the forgiveness of their sins, because the tender mercy of our God, whereby the sunrise shall visit us from on high to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace."
  - Zechariah turned to his son and prophesied he would become God's prophet.
  - John would proceed the arrival of the Messiah and steer people towards Him when He finally arrived.
  - John would preach that forgiveness for sins was available on account of what the Messiah was going to do.
    - John would call Jesus the "Lamb of God."
    - The Jews sacrificed Lambs as part of their religious system.

- Jesus was the Lamb given to them by God.
- Jesus was the perfect sacrifice whose blood had the power to save/redeem men.
- If I understand it correctly, the “sunrise” mentioned by Zechariah was also a picture of the Messiah.
  - In the gospel of John, Jesus calls Himself the light of the world.
  - The world was in darkness until Jesus came and brought the light.
  - Every morning, the sun gives us a picture of what Jesus did for the world.
    - At night the world is dark.
    - Then the sun rises and fills it with light.
  - Spiritually speaking, the world was stuck in darkness until Jesus arrived.
  - When you are in the dark you can’t see where you are going.
  - Jesus arrived to light the way for us.
  - To show us how to walk in the “way of peace.”
    - Peace with who?
    - Peace with God.
    - People who live in sin are enemies of God because God hates sin.
    - Rom 5:10 For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life.
    - Zechariah prophesied that the Messiah was going to make it possible for sins to be forgiven and for the forgiven to live at peace with God.

Luk 1:80 And the child grew and became strong in spirit, and he was in the wilderness until the day of his public appearance to Israel.

- We aren’t told hardly anything about John’s early years.
- All we know is what is mentioned in this verse.
- He lived in the wilderness until he began preaching about the arrival of the Messiah.

NOTES

Lined area for notes with horizontal ruling lines.



# LUKE 2



In 5 minutes...

## WHEN:

- The events in the 1st half of chapter 2 occur around 1 A.D. (when Jesus was born).
- The events of the 2nd half of chapter 2 occur around 12 A.D. (when Jesus was 12 years old).

## CHARACTERS:

- Mary - A young woman from the town of Nazareth. She was chosen by God to be the mother of Jesus the Messiah.
- Joseph - Mary's betrothed husband (similar to a fiancé).
- Jesus - God's Son and Mary's child who was conceived miraculously by the Holy Spirit.
- Shepherds - Shepherds keeping sheep around Bethlehem who visited Jesus at His birth.
- Simeon - A righteous and devout man who Mary and Joseph meet in Jerusalem.
- Anna - A widow and prophetess who served God in the Temple "with fasting and prayer night and day."

## WHERE:

- The events of chapter 2 open in Bethlehem.
- Nazareth, Mary and Joseph's hometown is briefly mentioned.
- The remainder of the chapter is based in Jerusalem.



# LUKE 2



## OVERVIEW:

### - JESUS IS BORN (2:1-2:7):

- + Caesar Augustus decreed that the people of his empire should be "registered" (probably for tax purposes).
- + Joseph left Nazareth in Galilee and traveled to his hometown in Bethlehem for the registration.
- + Mary was close to giving birth when they departed.
- + When they arrived in Bethlehem, Mary gave birth.
- + There was no room in the inn so they laid their son in a manger.

### - THE SHEPHERDS VISIT NEWBORN JESUS (2:8-2:21):

- + Following the birth of the child, an angel appeared to shepherds in the fields around Bethlehem.
- + The angel told them the newborn baby was the Savior and Christ the Lord.
- + They were told they would find Him in a manger and wrapped in swaddling cloths.
- + Suddenly a multitude of heavenly beings were visible to the shepherds and they heard them praising God.
- + The shepherds went and found the child in the manger and told Joseph and Mary what they had seen.
- + Eight days after his birth, the baby was circumcised and named Jesus according to the angel's instruction.

### - JESUS, MARY, AND JOSEPH VISIT JERUSALEM TO KEEP THE LAW OF MOSES (2:22-2:38):

- + In order to keep some of the Old Testament commands regarding childbirth, Jesus' family visited Jerusalem.
- + This took place approximately 1 month after Jesus' birth.
- + They took an offering of either two turtledoves or two young pigeons according to God's law in Lev. 12:6-8.
- + In Jerusalem, they met a man named Simeon who God had promised would see the Messiah before he died.
- + Simeon took Jesus in his arms and worshipped God for allowing him to see the future Savior.
- + In the Temple, Mary and Joseph met a prophetess named Anna.
- + When she saw Jesus she also worshipped God and started telling everyone about Him.
- + Following these events, Joseph, Mary, and Jesus returned to their home in Nazareth.

### - JESUS' PARENTS LOSE HIM IN JERUSALEM (2:41-2:52):

- + 12 years later, Jesus and His parents return to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover Feast.
- + When returning home, Jesus' parents assumed He was with their relatives and traveling companions.
- + After a days journey, they realized Jesus wasn't with them and returned to Jerusalem.
- + They search for 3 days before finding Him in the Temple talking to the religious teachers.
- + When He was located, He asked His parents, "Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?"

## BIG PICTURE:

- After creating the world and watching human beings try and fail to solve their sin problem, the Creator has now stepped onto the world He created to be the solution to and Savior from sin.

## TAKEAWAYS:

- God is often working in huge ways through subtle means. For years, the Messiah was being raised by normal parents in a normal town and almost nobody knew world altering events were about to happen.



## LUKE 2

Luk 2:1 In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered.

Luk 2:2 This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria.

Luk 2:3 And all went to be registered, each to his own town.

- This chapter is about the birth of Jesus, but before we can talk about Bethlehem and the manger, we have to get into some historical study.
- We are going to have to spend some time digging into the details of these first three verses.
- The reason is because they are some of the most often cited verses by Bible critics claiming they've found contradictions in the Bible.
- The point of supposed contradiction isn't immediately obvious unless you are really familiar with Roman history.
- THE PROBLEM:
  - o Jesus' birth is typically dated around 6-4 B.C..
  - o Augustus was emperor in Rome at that time, no problems there.
  - o Matthew's gospel places Jesus' birth within the lifetime of Herod the Great. Herod died sometime around 4 B.C., so that isn't a problem.
  - o Quirinius became governor of Syria in 6 A.D. (served till 12 A.D.) when Judaea became a Roman Province and the Herods were taken out of power.
  - o Quirinius didn't become governor until 8-10 years after the birth of Jesus.
  - o Yet, Luke tells us he was already governing during the birth of Jesus.
- POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS:
  - o 1. Quirinius was governor in Syria twice:
    - From 9-7 B.C., Sentius Saturninus was governor of Syria.
    - From 7-4 B.C., Publius Quinctilius Varus governed the province.
    - The governor who followed Varus is unknown.
    - It is possible Quirinius filled the role of governor in Varus' absence.
      - Luke's gospel validates this view.

- The Titulus Tibertinus (a stone inscription) also alludes to this possibility.
  - Titulus Tibertinus speaks of a man who was twice governor (legate) in Syria. Quirinius' name is not mentioned on the stone (the stone is broken) but the description of the man's accomplishments match those of Quirinius.
- 2. Quirinius served as procurator in Syria when Jesus was born.
- The term translated “governor” in the ESV does not necessarily refer to the person holding the office of *Legatus Augusti pro praetore* (the imperial governor).
  - It means to “act as a ruler” or to “govern.”
  - The Greek word is “hegemoneuo.”
  - This allows the possibility that Quirinius was not the imperial governor of Syria, but was serving in a place of authority.
  - One potential role of authority Quirinius may have held was that of a *procurator*.
    - A procurator worked alongside the imperial governor.
    - He was not a subordinate of the imperial governor, instead he reported directly to the emperor.
    - The imperial governor was responsible for the management of the military and judicial matters.
    - The procurator was responsible for the financial affairs, including taxes.
    - This would make perfect sense considering Caesar's command in verse 1 related to registration of property/people for tax purposes.
  - Question: Is it reasonable Luke would use the term “hegemoneuo” to refer to both the imperial governor and the procurator.
  - When examining the writings of the Jewish historian Josephus we find him using the term “president” to refer to both the imperial governor and the procurator.
    - When Saturninus was imperial governor (9-7 B.C.) and Volumnius his procurator, Josephus refers to them as the “presidents.”
    - “But Sylleus, who had laid Obodas aside; and managed all by himself; denied that the robbers were in Arabia, and put off the payment of the money. About which there was an hearing before

**Saturninus and Volumnius, who were then the presidents of Syria” (*Antiquities 15.9.1*).**

- In light of Josephus’ words, it is reasonable Luke might use “hegemoneuo” to refer to Quirinius governing as procurator.
- Justin Martyr, born around 100 A.D., gives credibility to this theory.
  - He referred to Cyrenius (same as Quirinius) as the procurator of Judaea.
  - “Now there is a village in the land of the Jews, thirty-five stadia from Jerusalem, in which Jesus Christ was born, as you can ascertain also from the registers of the taxing made under Cyrenius, your first procurator in Judæa” (First Apology, chapter 34).
    - In my view, either of these possibilities dismiss the claim of a contradiction.
- It is common to hear critics say, “There is no historical evidence to suggest such a tax/registration could have happened.”
  - This is easily disprovable.
  - Similar registrations were done regularly throughout the empire.
  - We know Augustus decreed a registration when he accepted the title of “Father of the Country.”
  - This occurred around 2 B.C..
- SIDE NOTE: Does the Bible (generally) and Luke’s writing (specifically) deserve the benefit of the doubt when it comes to points of historical debate?
  - Luke’s writings have been heavily scrutinized by Bible lovers and Bible critics alike and have been found to be historically accurate again-and-again.
  - Yes, Luke deserves the benefit of the doubt.
  - Unfortunately, you will almost never hear a Bible critic acknowledge Luke’s spotless track record.
  - As soon as the critic comes across a difficult text, they throw their hands up in faux exhaustion and announce to everyone around them, “This text can’t be reconciled.”
  - The only real contradiction is that these “educated” men are claiming to be Bible scholars but aren’t putting in the historical study to understand the text properly.
  - Critics of the Bible once claimed the city of Jericho didn’t exist and the Bible writers made it up... until archeologists discovered it’s remains.

- Critics once claimed the Bible made up the Hittite nation... until archeologists dug up their civilization.
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- APPLICATION:
  - Be careful whenever someone presents something to you and acts as if the case is closed.
  - A person without an open mind isn't worthy of your trust.
  - These people appear in college classrooms all around the country.
  - They appear in church buildings and religious debates.
  - People will present their biased side of an argument and pretend they've given the complete picture.
  - We need to practice critical thinking.
  - We need to question what we hear, especially when it's about a topic as important as eternity and the destiny of our souls.
- 

- In summary, there is no reason to believe that Luke, who so accurately records the 1<sup>st</sup> Century world, opened his gospel with a glaring error.
  - Possible explanations are not lacking.
  - Claims of an irreconcilable contradiction are invalid.
  - Additional archeological finds in the future may give additional clarity and answers.

Luk 2:4 And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David,

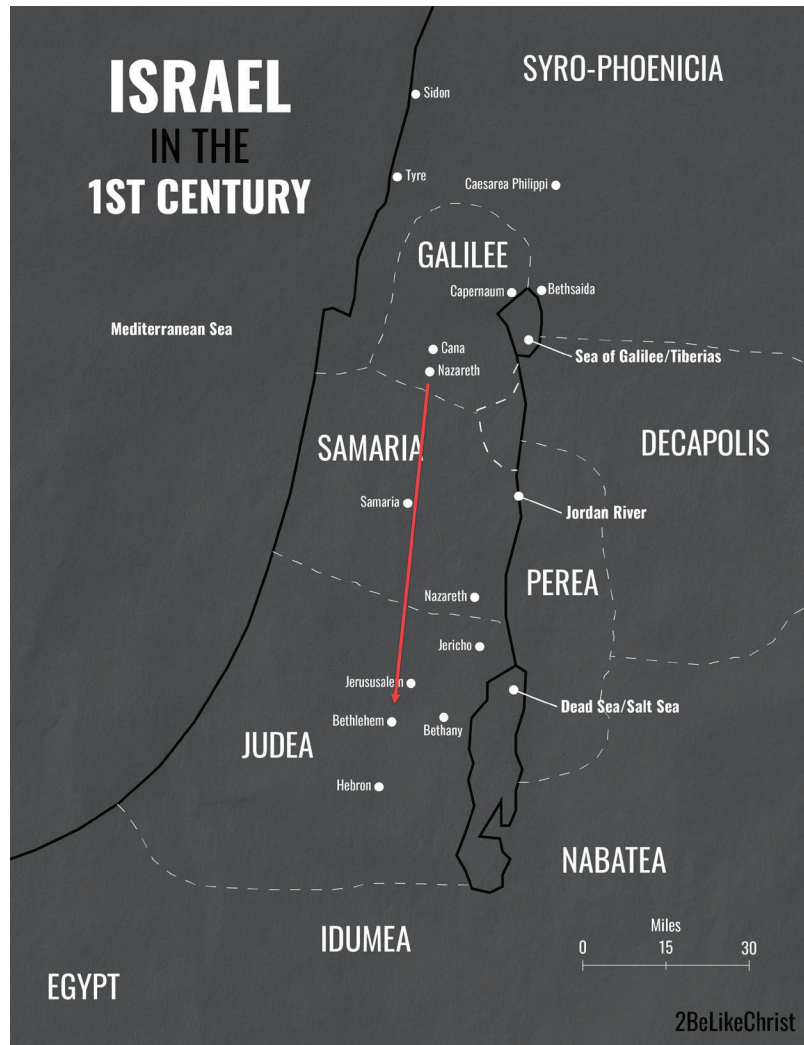
Luk 2:5 to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child.

Luk 2:6 And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth.

Luk 2:7 And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

- In order to complete the registration, which was probably similar to a modern census, Joseph, Mary's betrothed husband, had to travel back to the city of his lineage.
- In Joseph's case, that city was Bethlehem, the city of David.
  - Bethlehem is called the city of David because it was David's hometown.

- In 1 Samuel 16:4, Samuel went to Bethlehem to the house of Jesse to anoint his youngest son, David, king of Israel.
- Joseph's family line is recorded in Luke chapter 3, David specifically in verse 31.
- Mary was very pregnant when they set out on their journey of approximately 90 miles to Bethlehem.



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- The Romans must not have given the Jews a lot of flexibility with the registration window, otherwise you would think Joseph would have waited to make the trip until the baby was born.
- No doubt the registration's time, place, and requirements were providentially arranged by God.
  - The Messiah had to be born in Bethlehem according to an Old Testament prophecy.
  - It just goes to show God rules over the nations.

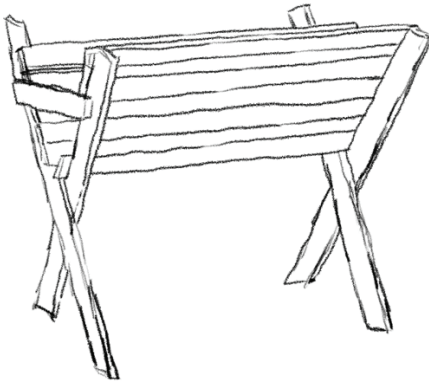
- The Roman government decreed a registration because they believed it in the interest the Roman kingdom, but God was using it to introduce the world to a new King whose kingdom would outlast the Romans.

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- APPLICATION:

- Imagine all the people who thought the Roman census of Luke 2 was just a huge inconvenience.
- Most of them likely never found out God had used it to bring a Savior into the world in Bethlehem.
- To them it was just another government mandate.
- God was and still is working in secret for our good even though we may be clueless as to His affect on the world.

- 
- When Mary and Joseph arrived in Bethlehem, their son was ready to make His appearance.
  - Luke doesn't tell us exactly where Mary delivered the baby, but we are told she put Him in a manger after His birth.
    - A manger is an animal feeding/watering trough.



MANGER:

- A MANGER IS AN OPEN WOODEN BOX OR TROUGH IN WHICH THE FARMER PLACES AN ANIMAL'S FEED.

- Why would a couple put their newborn baby in a manger?
  - Luke tells us there was no rooms left in the inn, the stable was apparently the next best thing.
  - It isn't surprising that all the lodging places would be full when you think about all the other visitors who would have been travelling on account of the census.



- Due to being 9 months pregnant, Mary and Joseph probably would have been travelling at a slower pace than the others and would have arrived later than most.
- Mary and Joseph wrapped Jesus in swaddling cloths.
  - When you swaddle a baby, you wrap its arms and legs tightly in cloth or blankets.
  - This restricts the baby's movement.
  - Swaddling is still practiced today but is less common than it was a few centuries ago.
  - Some people suggest it helps the baby sleep and gradually acclimate to life outside the womb (where its movement was restricted).
  - Some suggest it has health benefits and keeps the baby from scratching or injuring itself.
  - Its basically a little baby cocoon.
  - We will discuss these "swaddling cloths" in the upcoming verses.
- Isn't it interesting, God could organize all the necessary events of history to have Jesus born in Bethlehem, but didn't bother saving Mary and Joseph a room at the inn?
  - Of course, it wasn't an oversight.
  - So why did He do it?
  - I think, in part, to show the humility of the Messiah.
    - Jesus, the Lamb of God, wasn't born in a palace like a normal king.
    - He was born where the animals ate.

Luk 2:8 And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.

Luk 2:9 And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear.

Luk 2:10 And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people.

Luk 2:11 For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.

Luk 2:12 And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger."

- In the fields around Bethlehem that night shepherds were watching their sheep.
- An angel appeared to them.

- The glory of the God “shone around” the shepherds.
- This was probably something like a bright light.
- The shepherds were terrified.
- The angel told them not to be afraid because he had come to bring them good news, not just good news for them, but for the whole world.
- That very day, the Savior had been born, the Christ (anointed one).
- They were to go find Him and they would know it was Him when they found Him wrapped in swaddling cloths and laying in a manger.
- SIDE NOTE:
  - *\*I am still researching the historical validity of the following idea but wanted to include it for your consideration\**
  - Some believe Jewish shepherds used to wrap the lambs they intended to use as Passover lambs in swaddling cloth.
  - In order for a Passover lamb to be acceptable for sacrifice, they had to be “without blemish” (Exodus 12:5).
  - In order to keep a newborn lamb from flailing around and potentially injuring itself, thereby disqualifying itself from use, it was wrapped by the shepherd in swaddling cloth after birth and laid in the manger.
  - If true, this would be a powerful image to the shepherds.
  - Jesus would later be known as the Lamb of God and He would be killed (on the cross) at Passover time.

Luk 2:13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying,

Luk 2:14 “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!”

- After telling the shepherds about Jesus, suddenly a “multitude of the heavenly host” became visible to the men.
- These heavenly beings were praising God saying, “Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace among those with whom He is pleased.”
- This is the gospel message in a nutshell:
  - Jesus came to the earth to die for the sins of the world so humans could have peace with God.
  - And God is to be praised and glorified because He has done this for us.

- As we see, this was an important event for mankind, but it was also being celebrated in the spiritual world.
  - o God’s plan to save men had existed for a long time.
  - o Peter tells us in 1 Peter 1:19-20, God had come up with this plan before the world ever existed (because God knows everything and can see into the future).
  - o The angels and “heavenly host” were praising God because the time had finally come for Jesus to save the world.
  
- Why do we call Jesus the “Savior”?
  - o From what do we need saving?
  - o We need saved from the consequences of our sins and for violating the purity of the world God in which God created us.
  - o The Bible tells us God hates sin and because all human beings have sinned God’s justice demands they be punished.
  - o We call Jesus the Savior because He sacrificed Himself to pay the price for our sins and to fix our relationship with God, giving us peace.

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- o APPLICATION:
  - o Apart from Jesus there is no way to have peace with God.
  - o Jesus is the only solution to our sin problem.
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Luk 2:15 When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us.”

Luk 2:16 And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger.

Luk 2:17 And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child.

Luk 2:18 And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them.

Luk 2:19 But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart.

Luk 2:20 And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

- The angels left and the shepherds determined to go to Bethlehem to find this special baby.
- When they found Jesus in the exact condition the angel described Him, they told those who were there about their encounter with the angel and the heavenly host.
  - o Verse 18 seems to imply there were more people present than just Mary and Joseph.
  - o Everyone who heard the shepherd's words marveled.
- Mary is specifically said to have pondered these things in her heart.
  - o No doubt, even for the mother of Jesus, many of the events surrounding His life were a wonderful mystery.
  - o Other things were probably a terrible mystery to her.
  - o She had to watch her Son be crucified.
    - She was at the foot of the cross as He died.
    - It must have been a terrible mystery to her to see the child she knew had been miraculously born of God dying on a cross.
    - I can't imagine what was going on in her head as she was trying to put all the pieces together.
- After seeing Jesus, the shepherds returned to their flocks and worshipped God as they went.

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- o APPLICATION:
  - o We ought to be as excited about a Savior as the shepherds.
  - o They dropped everything and went to see Jesus as soon as they heard the news.
  - o We need to have similar priorities, especially considering we don't know how much longer we will be alive.
  - o There isn't anything more important than having peace with God.
- 

Luk 2:21 And at the end of eight days, when he was circumcised, he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

- Just like John and all Jewish males, Jesus was circumcised on the eighth day.
- And just like John, Jesus received His name on the eighth day.

- Jesus means “deliverer.”
  - The name was fitting considering His future work to “deliver” mankind from sin.
  - Although it isn’t recorded in Luke’s gospel, Matthew tells us about an angel who appeared to Joseph and explained why God wanted Mary’s son to be called Jesus.
  - Matthew 1:21 She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.”
- SIDE NOTE:
  - Luke doesn’t record anything about the star that stood over Bethlehem or the wise men from the east that used it to find Jesus.
  - You can read about those details in Matthew’s gospel.

Luk 2:22 And when the time came for their purification according to the Law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord

Luk 2:23 (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, “Every male who first opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord”)

Luk 2:24 and to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the Law of the Lord, “a pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons.”

- A bit of time goes by between verse 21 and 22.
- In order to understand what is going on in these verses we need to know a little bit about God’s religious law for the Jews.
- Many of the details and commands of the Law are found in the book of Leviticus.
- The details relevant to verse 22 and 24 are found in Leviticus 12:1-8.
  - When a male child was born, the mother was considered ceremonially unclean 7 days.
  - On the eighth day the child was to be circumcised.
  - If the child was male, the mother’s uncleanness lasted an additional 33 days.
  - (Be careful not to think being unclean was always a bad thing. God decreed it as part of the good and natural process of giving birth and it wasn’t meant to as a shame upon the woman.)
  - So, in Mary’s case, she was ritually unclean for 40 days follow the delivery.
  - When the 40 days were complete, Mary went to Jerusalem to offer a sacrifice at the Temple.

- This is described in Leviticus 12:6-8.
  - Lev 12:6-8 “And **when the days of her purifying are completed**, whether for a son or for a daughter, she shall bring to the priest at the entrance of the tent of meeting a lamb a year old for a burnt offering, and a pigeon or a turtledove for a sin offering, and he shall offer it before the LORD and make atonement for her. Then she shall be clean from the flow of her blood. This is the law for her who bears a child, either male or female. **And if she cannot afford a lamb, then she shall take two turtledoves or two pigeons**, one for a burnt offering and the other for a sin offering. And the priest shall make atonement for her, and she shall be clean.”
- Those who had money were instructed to offer a lamb and a pigeon or turtle dove.
- Those who didn't have a lot of money weren't required to bring the lamb, but were to offer two turtledoves or two pigeons.
- Although I'm not sure we can know for sure, Luke seems to imply Mary and Joseph offered two turtledoves or two pigeons.
- You'll notice he quotes the sacrifice of the poor rather than the sacrifice of the well-off.

- 
- APPLICATION:
  - In the scriptures, God repeatedly shows His care and concern for the poor.
  - He accounted for them in His Old Testament laws.
  - He repeatedly condemned those who mistreated the poor.
  - Men and women have a tendency to look down on poor people.
  - But God honored the poor when He determined a poor family in Nazareth was fit to raise a King.
  - In chapter 1, Mary praised God for honoring her even though she wasn't a significant person in the eyes of many.
  - If the eyes of God looked into a poor home in Nazareth and deemed it fit to raise the King of Glory, let us think twice before our eyes look down on the poor.

- 
- The Old Testament details relevant to verse 23 can be found in Exodus 13 and Numbers 18.
    - According to God, all firstborn males, humans and animals alike, belonged to Him.

- The firstborn of sheep and oxen were to be sacrificed to the Lord.
  - Other animals had to be “redeemed.”
    - They were redeemed with money.
    - Almost as if the owner of the newborn animal was buying their animal back from the Lord.
  - Firstborn male children were also redeemed with money.
    - Numbers 18:15-17 Everything that opens the womb of all flesh, whether man or beast, which they offer to the LORD, shall be yours. Nevertheless, the firstborn of man you shall redeem, and the firstborn of unclean animals you shall redeem. And their redemption price (at a month old you shall redeem them) you shall fix at five shekels in silver, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, which is twenty gerahs. But the firstborn of a cow, or the firstborn of a sheep, or the firstborn of a goat you shall not redeem: they are holy. You shall sprinkle their blood on the altar and shall burn their fat as a food offering, with pleasing aroma to the LORD.
  - This practice was designed to remind the Jews of how God had delivered them from slavery in Egypt.
    - Exodus 13:14-15 And when in time to come your son asks you, ‘What does this mean?’ You shall say to him, ‘By a strong hand the LORD brought us out of Egypt, from the house of slavery. For when Pharaoh stubbornly refused to let us go, the LORD killed all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both the firstborn of man and the firstborn of animals. Therefore I sacrifice to the LORD all the males that first open the womb, but all the firstborn of my sons I redeem.’
  - In the book of Exodus, God brought 10 plagues on the nation of Egypt.
    - The final plague killed all the firstborn of the Egyptians.
    - But God provided a way for the firstborn of the Jews to be saved.
  - The redeeming of the first born was meant to remind the people of what God did for them.
  - SIDE NOTE: This “redeeming” command is still practiced by some Jewish communities today.
- I said all that to say, 40 days after Jesus’ birth, Joseph and Mary went to Jerusalem to make a sacrifice of two turtledoves or two pigeons and 5 shekels of silver to “redeem” their firstborn Son.

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- APPLICATION:

- The Jews were required to pay a price to redeem their firstborn.
  - God gave His firstborn (only begotten) as the price to redeem the world from Satan and sin.
  - God paid for us (Christians) and now we belong to Him.
- 

Luk 2:25 Now there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon, and this man was righteous and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him.

Luk 2:26 And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ.

- This is a very interesting text and this man's encounter with Jesus is only recorded in Luke's gospel.
- A "righteous and devout" man named Simeon was in Jerusalem when Mary and Joseph arrived.
- He was waiting for the "consolation of Israel."
  - Consolation = a person or thing providing comfort to a person who has suffered (Oxford).
  - Simeon was waiting for a person who would bring comfort to Israel (the Jews).
  - Their nation had fallen on some hard times.
  - They were no longer the great nation of 1,000 years previous when David and Solomon sat on the throne.
  - They had been conquered and oppressed by many nations.
  - And a lot of that was their own doing.
  - They had turned away from God, and as He had promised them, He gave them into the hands of their enemies to punish them.
  - But like a parent who disciplines a child, God still loved them, and He wasn't going to break His promise to send the Messiah.
  - The Messiah was going to bring comfort to His broken people.
- Simeon was waiting to see the consolation of his people and had been promised by the Holy Spirit his eyes would see the Lord's Christ (anointed) before he died.
- SIDE NOTE:
  - We don't know how many people God communicated with throughout history.



- I have a tendency to think God only directly communicated with the people we read about in the Bible.
- But we actually know that wasn't the case.
- God probably spoke to people and revealed things to them that we will never know about.
- Melchizedek in Genesis 14 is a good illustration of this point
- The wise men who came from the east and gave gifts to Jesus are another example.
  - We don't know how they knew about the star.
  - We don't know how they knew it pointed to the "king of the Jews" (Matthew 2:2).
- The Bible writers were focused on the history of the Jews and pointing us to Jesus, they weren't trying to write down everything God had done throughout all time (if they had the Bible would probably be 1,000,000 pages long).

Luk 2:27 And he came in the Spirit into the temple, and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him according to the custom of the Law,

Luk 2:28 he took him up in his arms and blessed God and said,

Luk 2:29 "Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace, according to your word;

Luk 2:30 for my eyes have seen your salvation

Luk 2:31 that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples,

Luk 2:32 a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to your people Israel."

- God's Spirit led Simeon into the Temple and somehow gave him the ability to recognize Jesus was the Messiah.
- Simeon took Jesus in his arms and worshipped God for letting him see Him.
- Verse 32 is noteworthy because Simeon mentioned that Jesus was going to be a blessing to both the Jews and the Gentiles (non-Jews).
- The Jews thought the Messiah was coming for their benefit and their benefit alone.
- Even throughout Jesus' ministry most Jews didn't consider the idea His life was intended to be a blessing to all nations.
- Simeon, with insight from the Holy Spirit, mentioned this important detail.

- The promise God gave to Abraham (the father of the Jewish nation) in Genesis was clear about this.
- Gen 22:17-18 I will surely bless you, and I will surely multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of his enemies, and **in your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed**, because you have obeyed my voice.”
- It is easy to look back and wonder how the Jews missed it.
- It shows the power of tradition and assumptions.

- 
- APPLICATION:
  - Preconceived ideas and biases can blind us to what should be obvious.
  - This can be dangerous when studying the scriptures.
  - We need to ask God for help and consciously work to discard any ideas we hold that might hinder us from seeing what God wants us to see.
- 

Luk 2:33 And his father and his mother marveled at what was said about him.

Luk 2:34 And Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, “Behold, this child is appointed for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign that is opposed

Luk 2:35 (and a sword will pierce through your own soul also), so that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed.”

- It must have been an adventure to be in Mary and Joseph’s position, never knowing what was around the corner or what God was going to do next.
- They didn’t know this man, but somehow, he knew their Son.
- They marveled at Simeon’s words.
- Simeon blessed Mary, but his blessing can be a little bit hard to understand.
- Let’s break it down piece by piece:
  - “Behold, this child is appointed for the fall and rising of many in Israel...”
    - Jesus’ life and teaching in Israel would literally and figuratively turn tables.
    - He would elevate the poor and lowly to positions of greatness.

- The humble, who had been trampled on by the proud, were pronounced the greatest in the Messiah's kingdom.
- The men who were closest to Jesus were common men, but He spoke of the honor God bestowed on them.
- In contrast, Jesus condemned the proud powerholders of Israel.
- He didn't honor them as they expected the Messiah would do.
- He told them their abuse of power was not unnoticed and would not go unpunished by God.
- Jesus' life would bring about the rise of those who were willing to accept God's plan and the fall of those who refused to accept it.
  - Most of the Jews were expecting an earthly king who would sit on a physical throne and rule over the nation of Israel, bringing it back to world prominence.
  - But God had a bigger work in mind.
  - Jesus would invite all people (not just Jews) to be a part of a spiritual kingdom, one He would rule from heaven.
  - This truth brought about the fall of many Jews who weren't willing to give up their dreams of an earthly king.
  - But those who were willing to trust that what God was doing was better than anything they could have imagined, were given the privilege of being a part of a kingdom greater than any physical Jewish kingdom could have ever been.
  - They were raised to a privilege higher than they could have ever imagined, adopted children of God.
    - Gal 3:26-27 for in Christ Jesus **you are all sons of God**, through faith. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.
  - At the end of time, all men will either rise to glory with God in heaven or fall to destruction with Satan in hell.
  - The way a person responds to the instruction of Christ will be the deciding factor.
    - Joh 12:47-48 If anyone hears my words and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world. The one who rejects me and

does not receive my words has a judge; the word that I have spoken will judge him on the last day.

- “and for a sign that is opposed...”
  - Jesus was a sign of God’s love and faithfulness, but He was opposed by the Jews.
  - His enemies worked vigorously to contradict His message.
- “and a sword will pierce through your own soul also, so that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed.”
  - Remember who Simeon was speaking to...
  - These words were directed to Mary.
  - Jesus’ message was going to be so violently opposed that Jesus would be crucified by His enemies.
  - No matter how much Mary knew about the crucifixion and the ultimate work of God, watching her Son be tortured and crucified would have been like a sword through the soul/heart.
  - I think this is the meaning behind Simeon’s words.
    - Through the opposition of her son...
    - Through the events that would break her heart...
    - The thoughts of many hearts would be revealed.
    - People’s true colors would be shown by the way they treated the child in Simeon’s arms.
    - Religious phonies would be exposed.
    - Genuine believers would be revealed.
    - The haters of God would be distinguished from the lovers of God.
- SIDE NOTE: You have to wonder if Mary recalled Simeon’s words when she was standing by Jesus’ cross three decades later.
- SIDE NOTE: Can you imagine Simeon holding Jesus in his arms as Jesus was simultaneously holding up the universe. (Colossians 1:17).

Luk 2:36 And there was a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was advanced in years, having lived with her husband seven years from when she was a virgin,

Luk 2:37 and then as a widow until she was eighty-four. She did not depart from the temple, worshiping with fasting and prayer night and day.

Luk 2:38 And coming up at that very hour she began to give thanks to God and to speak of him to all who were waiting for the redemption of Jerusalem.

- Luke now introduces us to another very intriguing character at the Temple, Anna the prophetess.
  - A prophet or prophetess is a person who receives a message from God and shares it with others.
  - How she became a prophetess we aren't told.
  - She was from the Jewish tribe of Asher.
  - She was "advanced in years" (we would say "she was really old").
    - She was married but her husband died after 7 years.
    - She was 84 when she encountered Jesus' family in the Temple.
    - She was very devout and loved God.
    - She worshiped, fasted, and prayed day and night.
    - She never left the Temple.
- Evidently, she came up to Jesus in the Temple (we don't know if Simeon was still there or not).
  - She began giving thanks to God and telling everyone the salvation of Jerusalem had arrived.
  - The whole city of Jerusalem (really the whole world) was dependent on this tiny baby.

Luk 2:39 And when they had performed everything according to the Law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth.

Luk 2:40 And the child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom. And the favor of God was upon him.

- The Bible gives us very limited information about the childhood of Jesus.
- In my curiosity, I would love to know if Jesus was a well behaved baby, how much He knew and when He knew it, did He perform miracles as a child, did He get straight A's in school, did He read His parent's minds, what happened to Joseph, etc...
- But the Bible is focused on the important events of God's salvation story, not the interests of our curiosity.

- The story recorded in the last few verses of this chapter is only found in Luke's gospel and is the last insight we get into Jesus' life until He is around 30 years old.

Luk 2:41 Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover.

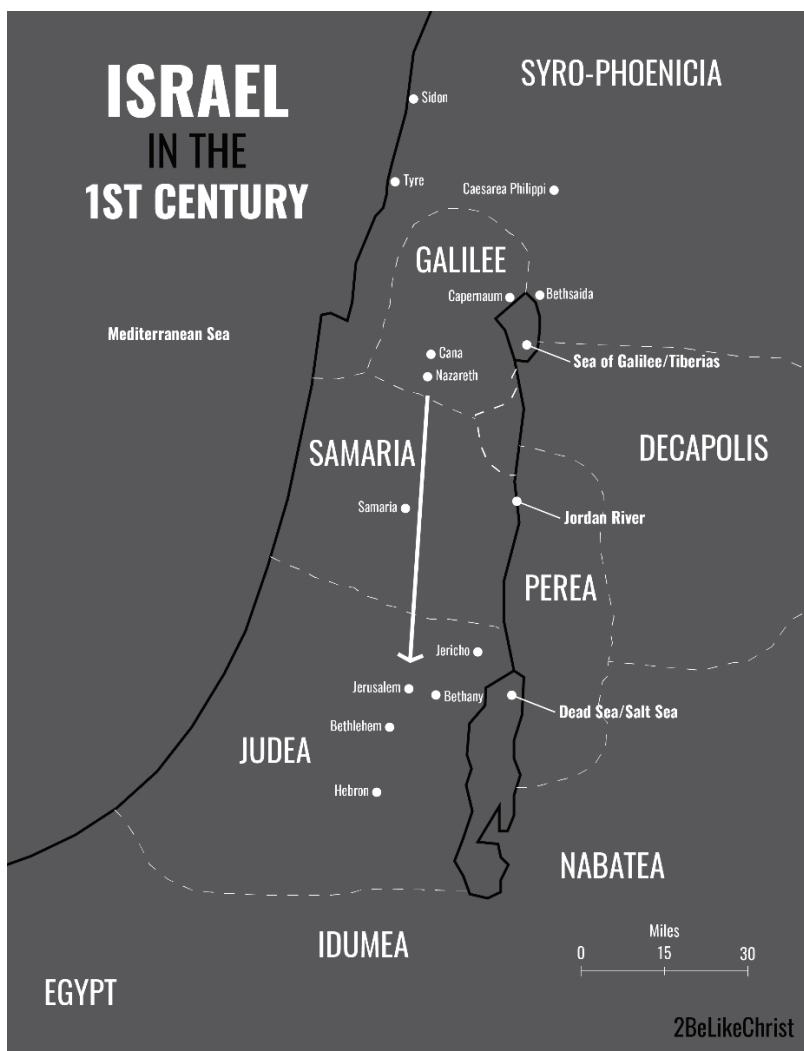
Luk 2:42 And when he was twelve years old, they went up according to custom.

Luk 2:43 And when the feast was ended, as they were returning, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. His parents did not know it,

Luk 2:44 but supposing him to be in the group they went a day's journey, but then they began to search for him among their relatives and acquaintances,

Luk 2:45 and when they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem, searching for him.

- When Jesus was 12, He, His family, and people from their town went down to Jerusalem (approximately 70 miles) to celebrate the annual Passover feast (March/April).



- On their way back home, Mary and Joseph didn't know the exact whereabouts of Jesus but assumed He was travelling along with them in the caravan of relatives and acquaintances.
- After a day of travelling, they realized their assumption was wrong.
  - o Nobody knew where Jesus had gone.
  - o Imagine Mary's terror when she realized she had lost God's miracle child.
- Mary and Joseph split off from the others and returned to Jerusalem in search of their Son.

Luk 2:46 After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions.

Luk 2:47 And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers.

Luk 2:48 And when his parents saw him, they were astonished. And his mother said to him, "Son, why have you treated us so? Behold, your father and I have been searching for you in great distress."

Luk 2:49 And he said to them, "Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?"

Luk 2:50 And they did not understand the saying that he spoke to them.

Luk 2:51 And he went down with them and came to Nazareth and was submissive to them. And his mother treasured up all these things in her heart.

Luk 2:52 And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man.

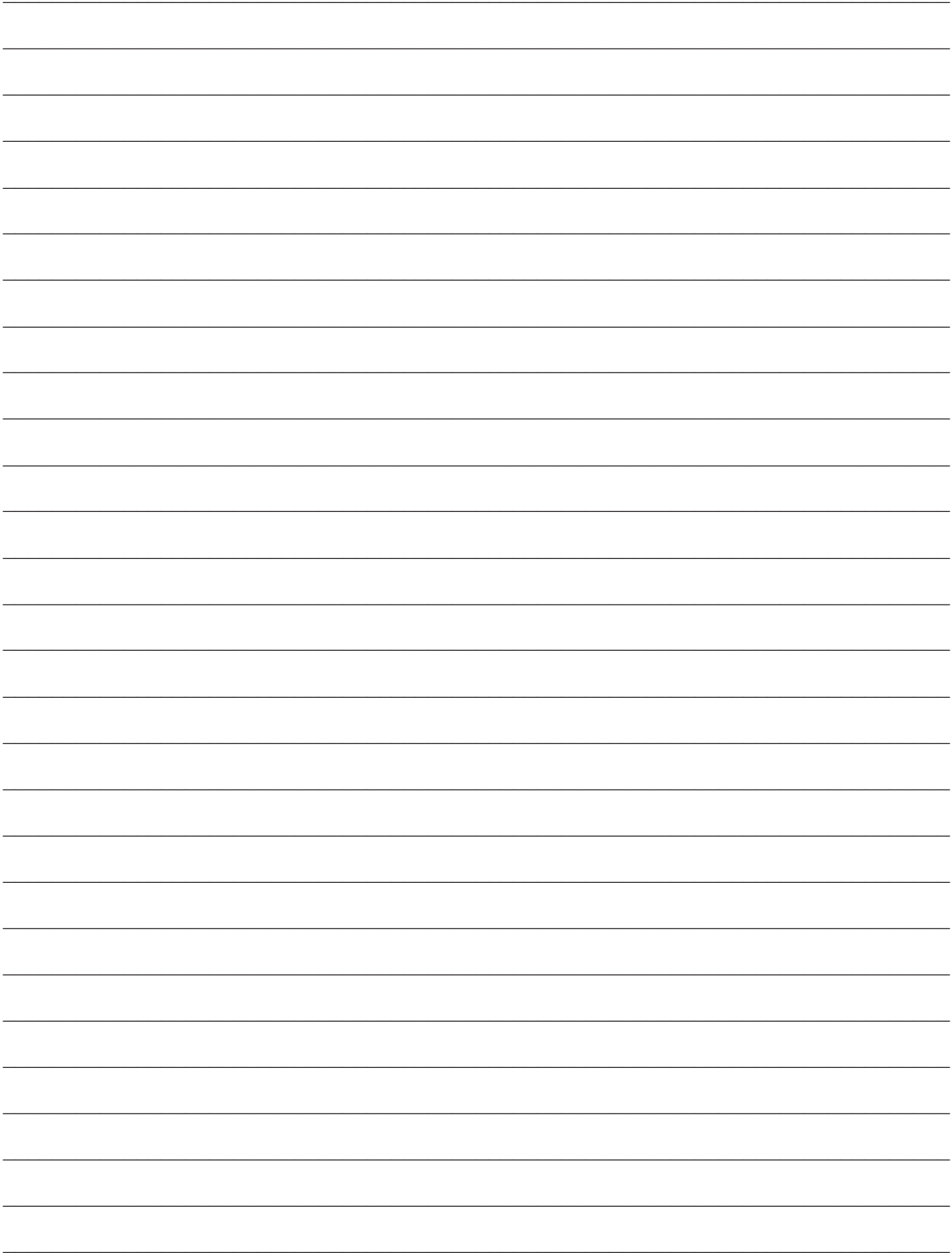
- It took them three days to find Him!
  - o No GPS
  - o No texting
  - o No phones
  - o Can you imagine trying to find one person in a big city without any of those things?
- Eventually, they found Him sitting in the Temple listening to the religious teachers and asking them questions.
- Those who observed Him were amazed at His comprehension.
- Mary had a question of her own for Jesus. The text indicates she was frustrated with Him.
  - o "Son, why have you treated us so?"

- Jesus would have known His parents were departing Jerusalem to go home.
- Why had He not come with them?
- Why had He made His parents search three days for Him?
- Sons generally aren't supposed to cause "great distress" to their mothers intentionally.
- Jesus responded, "Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?"
  - It's easy to read these words with a tone of disrespect, but undoubtedly, they weren't said that way.
  - I believe, Jesus was taking this opportunity to educate His parents and us about His divine mission, nature, and purpose.
    - Jesus had no greater loyalty than that of His parents, save one.
    - His greatest loyalty and devotion were, not to His earthly father, but to His heavenly father.
    - He implies they should have known where to look for Him.
    - Where else do you find a child than in His Father's house?
    - Mary and Joseph had been attempting to take Jesus back to His earthly father's house in Nazareth.
    - Instead, Jesus' priority was to go to the house of His heavenly Father.
- His parents didn't understand what He was trying to say.
- Nevertheless, we are told Mary stored the event away in her mind, just as she had done with the visit of the shepherds 12 years ago.
- Jesus returned to Nazareth with Joseph and Mary (this is the last we hear of Joseph).
- The next 18 years of Jesus' life are summed up in the phrase, "Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man."









# LUKE 3



In 5 minutes...

## WHEN:

- The 15th year of Tiberius Caesar.
- Tiberius began to reign on September 18th, 14 A.D. which places the events of Luke 3 in 29-30 A.D..
- The genealogy in the 2nd half of the chapter records Jesus' relatives from 1 A.D. back to the beginning of the world.

## CHARACTERS:

- Tiberius Caesar - Emperor of Rome from 14 A.D. to 37 A.D..
- Pontius Pilate - 5th Roman governor of the region of Judea who presided at the trial of Jesus.
- Herod the Tetrarch (Herod Antipas) - Appointed by the Roman Empire to reign over Galilee and Perea.
- Philip the Tetrarch (Herod Philip II) - Half-brother of Herod Antipas and ruler of Iturea and Trachonitis.
- Lysanias Tetrarch of Abilene - Abilene was a small region north of Philip's territory, to the west of Damascus.
- Annas - Appointed High Priest of the Jews in 6 A.D., was removed from office in 15 A.D..
- Caiaphas - Appointed High Priest of the Jews by Pontius Pilate, was removed from the office in 37 A.D..
- John (John the Baptist) - Son of Zechariah and Elizabeth, chosen by God to prepare the way for the Messiah.
- Jesus' Relatives - Dating all the way back to Adam and Eve.

## WHERE:

- John was preaching in the wilderness of Judea.
- This wilderness was/is located on the west side of the Dead Sea.

# LUKE 3



## OVERVIEW:

- LUKE SETS THE STAGE ON WHICH JOHN PREACHES AND THE MESSIAH APPEARS (3:1-3:2a):
  - + Luke records the imperial and regional leaders in power when John began preaching in the wilderness.
  - + Tiberius, Pilate, Antipas, Philip, Lysanias, Annas, and Caiaphas were all governing in the Roman Empire.
- MINISTRY OF JOHN (3:2b-3:14):
  - + John (John the Baptist) began preaching in the wilderness of Judea and the region around the Jordan River.
  - + He instructed his Jewish audiences to be baptised for the forgiveness of sins.
  - + John's ministry fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah 40:3-4
  - + He condemned the Pharisees and Sadducees for their hypocrisy.
  - + He told them to repent and stop relying on their Jewish heritage to save them.
  - + The honest hearts in the audience came to John and asked what they ought to do to please God.
  - + He taught the common people, the tax collectors, and the soldiers how to live and work in a godly way.
- JOHN'S IDENTITY IN QUESTION (3:15-3:20):
  - + After a while, some of the Jews started to suspect John might be the Messiah.
  - + John didn't leave any question, he was not the Messiah.
  - + The Messiah was going to come with power and blessing more robust than he could bestow.
  - + John baptized with water, the Messiah would baptize with the Holy Spirit and fire.
- JESUS IS BAPTIZED BY JOHN (3:21-3:22):
  - + Many people were being baptized by John.
  - + Jesus came from Nazareth and was baptized in the Jordan River (Mark 1:9).
  - + Jesus was anointed with the Holy Spirit as He descended on Jesus like a dove (Luke 3:22; Acts 10:38).
  - + A voice spoke from heaven, "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased."
- THE GENEALOGY OF JESUS (3:23-3:38):
  - + Jesus was 30 years old when He was baptized and started His ministry.
  - + The remainder of the verses in the chapter record Jesus' family tree.
  - + It begins with Jesus' parents and records His male ancestors all the way back to the creation of the world.
  - + Several important Old Testament figures are listed: David, Boaz, Abraham, Noah, Seth, and Adam.
  - + The genealogy proves Jesus was qualified to fulfill the role of the Messiah.

## BIG PICTURE:

- The prophets, even the angels, had long desired to understand how God would save His people (1 Peter 1:12). John is giving the world an introduction to God's method.

## TAKEAWAYS:

- John never pointed people to himself, he was unwavering in giving Jesus the attention. We need to be like John!
- The boring parts of the Bible matter. Genealogies aren't fun to read, but the details they contain are vital to the Bible's story.



## LUKE 3

Luk 3:1 In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene,

Luk 3:2 during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John the son of Zechariah in the wilderness.

- The details at the opening of this chapter are important because they tell us a significant amount of time has passed since the events of chapters 1 and 2.
  - Caesar Augustus died in 14 A.D. and was succeeded by his stepson, Tiberius.
  - Tiberius would reign as emperor of Rome until 37 A.D.
    - So the remainder of the events recorded in Luke's gospel took place in the reign of Tiberius.

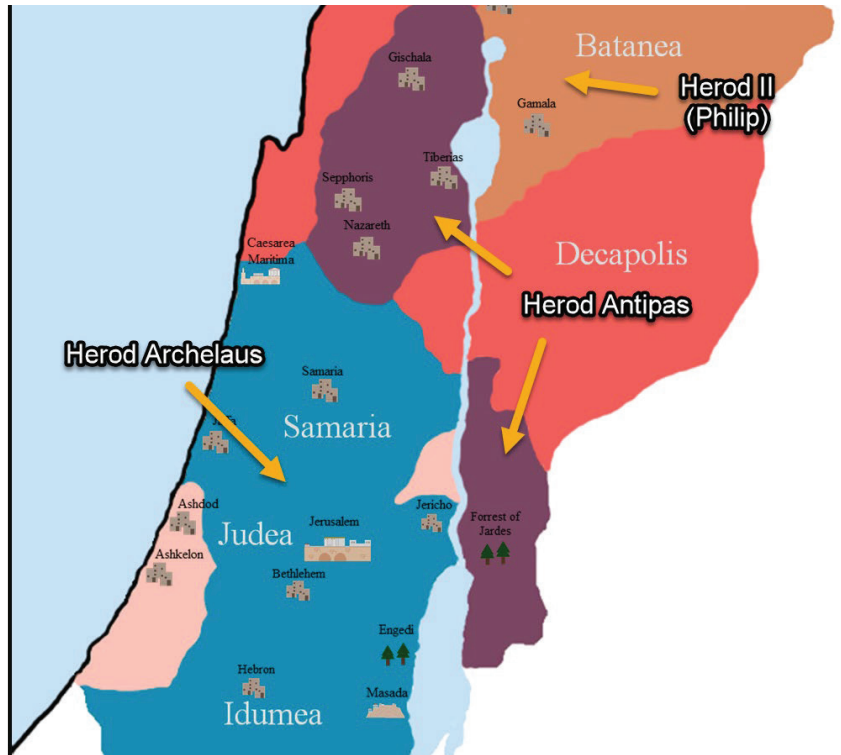


- (A bust of emperor Tiberius).
- In Mark 12 when Jesus asked for a coin and said, “Render to Ceasar the things that are Ceasar’s, and to God the things that are God’s,” it was Tiberius’ face looking up at Him from the coin.



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- Who was Pontius Pilate?
  - Pilate was the 5th Roman governor of the region of Judea.
  - He was preceded as governor by Valarius Gratus.
  - Historical records of his life and rule are sparse and many of the details of his reign are still debated.
  - He remained in the office of governor for 10 years according to Josephus (Antiquities 18.4.2).
  - Pilate had many run-ins with the Jews which eventually led to his removal.
  - Pilate is most famous for permitted the Jews to crucify Jesus.
- Who was Herod the tetrarch of Galilee?
  - Tetrarch = (Greek: “ruler of a quarter”) in Greco-Roman antiquity, the ruler of a principality; originally the ruler of one-quarter of a region or province (Britannica).
  - This Herod was also known as Herod Antipas.
  - He was one of the sons of Herod the Great who was king of Judea when Jesus was born.
  - Relations:
    - Herod Antipas was the son of Herod the Great with Malthea
    - Herod Archelaus was Antipas’ full brother through Malthea
    - Herod II (Philip) was Antipas’ half-brother through Mariamne II
  - Antipas reigned over Galilee and an area known as Perea.

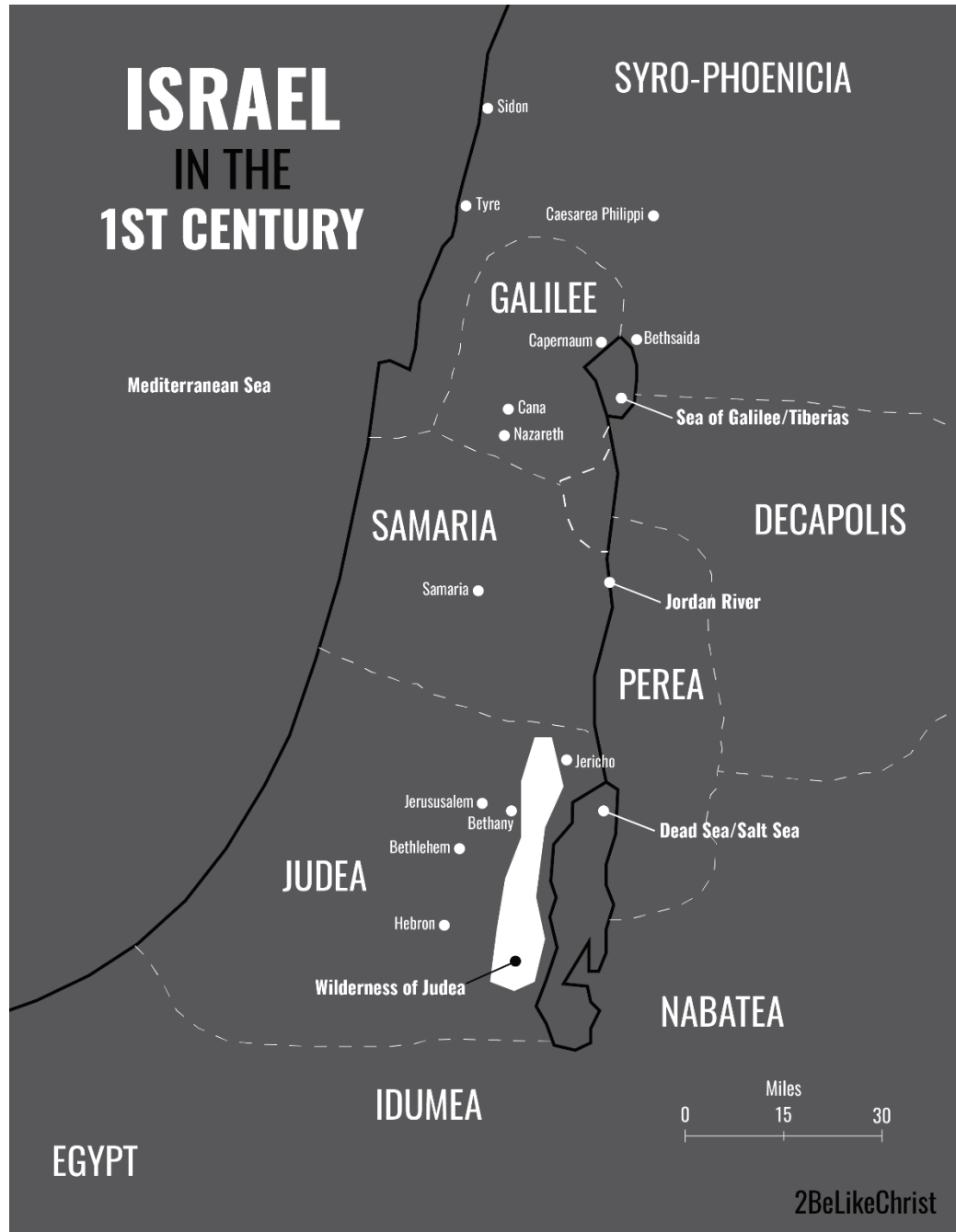




- Antipas’ brother Archelaus ruled Judea until 6 AD (Mat 2:22).
- Antipas’ half-brother Philip reigned in the area of the Golan Heights.
- Understanding this division gives clarity to Joseph’s decision to move to Nazareth in Matthew 2.
- Antipas was the man who had John, Zechariah and Elizabeth’s son, thrown in prison because he condemned Herod for marrying his brother’s wife (see Matthew 14).
- Who was Philip?
  - As mentioned, Philip was Herod Antipas’ half brother who ruled the regions of Iturea and Trachonitis (same as “Batanea”).
  - He was married to Herodias, but she left him to live with Herod Antipas.
  - He built the city of Caesarea Philippi (hence the name).
  - He also did a lot to advance the city of Bethsaida, a city Jesus spent time in.
  - Josephus wrote, “He also advanced the village Bethsaida, situate at the lake of Gennesareth, unto the dignity of a city; both by the number of inhabitants it contained, and its other grandeur: and called it by the name of Julias; the same name with Cesar’s daughter (Antiquities 18.5.1).

- He reigned until his death in the 20<sup>th</sup> year of Tiberius Caesar (33 or 34 A.D.).
  - Ituraea and Trachonitis were then absorbed into the territory of Tiberius as Philip had no heir.
- Who was Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene?
  - Abilene (not the one in Texas) is a small region north of Philip's territory in Ituraea and Trachonitis.
  - It sits to the west of the city of Damascus.
  - Lysanias' reign is mentioned by Josephus in Antiquities 19.5.1 and Jewish Wars 2.12.8.
  - His kingdom was later given to Agrippa by Emperor Claudius.
- Who were Annas and Caiaphas?
  - Joseph Caiaphas was appointed high priest by the Roman governor Valerius Gratus (governor before Pontus Pilate).
  - Before Caiaphas, Annas (Luke 3:1-2) was appointed High Priest of Judaea in 6 A.D., but was removed by the Romans in 15 A.D.
  - Although Annas had been removed, it is thought he still pulled many strings in the background.
  - The fact that Jesus was brought to Annas first during His trial in John 18 is a statement of how much power and influence he still had even though he "technically" had been removed from office.
  - Caiaphas was Annas' son-in-law.
  - 5 of Annas' sons would proceed him as high priests.
  - Caiaphas was removed by the Romans in 37 A.D.
- SIDE NOTE: The Law of God required the high priests to be descendant of the tribe of Levi.
  - In the 1st Century, this law was no longer being respected.
  - The Romans turned the position of High Priest into a position of political appointment for allies and those willing to pay the largest bribes.
  - It was time for a new High Priest.
  - The book of Hebrews is going to tell us how Jesus stepped in to become the new High Priest.
- By giving us this list of historical leaders, Luke is setting the scene on which he will reintroduce us to a 30 year old John.

- In Luke 1:80 we were told John wasn't a city dwelling man, instead he dwelt in the wilderness of Judea.
  - o Luk 1:80 And the child grew and became strong in spirit, and he was in the **wilderness** until the day of his public appearance to Israel.
  - o This wilderness was/is on the west side of the Dead Sea and east of Jerusalem.
  - o The wilderness descends from the hill country of Judea down to the Dead Sea, which is the lowest land point on earth (413 meters/1,355 feet below sea level).



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- If you search for “wilderness of Judea” on YouTube you will find some great videos highlighting the region.

Luk 3:3 And he went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.

Luk 3:4 As it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet, “The voice of one crying in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.

Luk 3:5 Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall become straight, and the rough places shall become level ways,

Luk 3:6 and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.”

- John spent his time in the wilderness baptizing for the forgiveness of sins.
  - The concept of spiritual cleansing by immersion in water was not a completely new concept to the Jews.
  - The existence of “mikveh,” Jewish ritual cleansing pools, as early as the Hasmonean Period have been discovered by archaeologists.
  - Jewish ritual cleansing of people and household items by immersion is described in the Mishnah (collection of the Jewish oral traditions).
    - Some individuals who had become ceremonially unclean were required to be immersed in water before being pronounced “clean.”
    - New converts to Judaism were required to be immersed.
    - The Jews had very specific rules for the kind of water in which these individuals needed to be immersed.

- As with the Jewish handwashing traditions, these rituals had nothing to do with cleansing dirt from the body. They were a ceremonial washing for spiritual cleanliness.
    - For more information, check out Mishnah Mikva'ot.
- John's baptism shared similarities with the Jewish purification ritual but was different in significant ways.
  - Being unclean under the Old Testament system didn't necessarily mean the unclean person had sinned.
  - So, the immersion of the Jews in the mikveh wasn't equivalent to having their sins washed away, but it was a good picture of the transition of a person from the dirtiness of sin to the cleanliness of righteousness.
  - John's baptism offered forgiveness of sins through the power and sacrifice of the coming Messiah.
  - This would have been a huge mindset change for the Jews because when they thought about having sins forgiven, they probably thought about the need to offer animals as sacrifices.
  - The closest thing the Jews had to forgiveness of sins were the priestly sacrifices offered in the Temple.
  - Upon hearing John's message, some of the Jews may have asked, "what about the sacrifices? How will our sins be forgiven without a sacrifice?"
  - What they didn't know was that God was going to be arranging the sacrifice for them (Jesus, the Lamb of God).
  - To a 1<sup>st</sup> Century Jew, purification by immersion in water would have been a familiar concept. But having sins forgiven through immersion in water would have been a new concept.
- The prophecy in verses 4-6 is from Isaiah 40:3-4.
  - John didn't just come out of nowhere. He wasn't a man who just woke up one day and decided he would start preaching about the Messiah. He was specifically designated by God to fill a role that had been prophesied about in the Old Testament. He was to "prepare the way" for Jesus.
  - We've already discussed the miraculous announcement of his birth by the angel Gabriel.
  - But that wasn't the only foretelling of John's birth and life.
  - Isaiah, who lived approximately 750 years before this time, spoke of a man who would precede the Messiah.

- Isaiah's prophecy is what Luke was citing in verses 4-6.
- In ancient days, especially before roads were common, whenever a king/military commander would go on a journey, he would send part of his entourage ahead of his caravan/army to prepare the way.
  - They would build bridges, fill potholes in the path, cut trees to make clearings for camps, shape new roads, find fresh water sources, etc...
  - This is the picture in the words of the prophecy.
  - "Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall become straight, and the rough places shall become level ways..."
- In the same way, John was sent before Jesus to prepare the way for the King of the Kingdom of Heaven.
  - John wasn't going to physically reshape the land on which the Messiah was going to walk.
  - His job was to spiritually prepare the hearts of the Jewish people for the Messiah's arrival and subsequent teaching.

Luk 3:7 He said therefore to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?"

Luk 3:8 Bear fruits in keeping with repentance. And do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children for Abraham.

- Luke tells us John addressed the "crowds" when speaking these words.
- Matthew tells us these words were specifically addressed to the Pharisees and Sadducees.
- The Pharisees and Sadducees will appear many times throughout the rest of Luke, so it will be beneficial to know something about them.
  - Who were the Pharisees?
    - They were generally made up of wealthy men (sometimes merchants or businessmen) who turned their attention to religion. They had significant influence among the common Jewish citizens.
    - They promoted strict adherence to the Old Testament Laws and oral traditions.
    - They promoted Jewish culture rather than Hellenization.

- They believed in the supernatural.
  - They believed in an afterlife
- Who were the Sadducees?
  - They came from the upper economic class of the Jews (contrast with Jesus followers). They had significant influence with the governing Roman authorities.
  - They rejected the Pharisees' binding of tradition. Viewed the written Torah (first 5 books of the Old Testament) as the only binding law.
  - They were more friendly to Hellenization.
  - They had limited belief in the supernatural.
  - They rejected the resurrection of the body, the afterlife, and the existence of angels.
  - They were responsible for the Temple in Jerusalem (upkeep, management, and daily affairs).
- As we continue through Luke's book, we will see the Pharisees and Sadducees at continual odds with Jesus. Having read the descriptions above, it is not hard to see why...
  - The Pharisees didn't like Jesus because He repeatedly condemned them for creating unauthorized laws and rules that they bound on their fellow Jews. In addition, Jesus condemned them for their hypocrisy, because they didn't even keep the laws they bound on others.
  - The Sadducees didn't like Jesus because He was always talking about the afterlife, and resurrection, and angels, and was just generally WAY to supernatural for their liking. They also disliked Him because He threatened their lucrative money-making operation at the Temple and condemned them for turning Temple worship into a business for profit.
- John wasted no time pointing out the moral failures of these two sects.
  - He called them a "brood of vipers."
    - Essentially a family of snakes.
    - Snakes are rarely viewed in a positive light in the Bible.
      - They are symbols of deception and evil and venom.
      - This is probably due to the appearance of Satan in the Garden of Eden as a serpent (Genesis 3).
      - John may have been alluding to Satan when calling the Pharisees and Sadducees snakes.

- They were part of Satan’s family and were accomplishing his work.
  - In John, we see Jesus directly call these people the children of the Devil.
  - Joh 8:44 You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires.
  - In Matthew 23:33, Jesus says, “You serpents, you brood of vipers, how are you to escape being sentenced to hell?
    - Some people think Jesus may have been calling up a familiar farming scene in these words.
    - When farmers burned piles of chaff/stubble from their field, snakes would slither out to escape the flames.
    - But there would be no escape for the brood of vipers in the fire of hell.
    - Yikes!

- 
- APPLICATION:
  - Not everything Jesus and His disciples said would be considered “loving and accepting” by our modern culture.
  - I recently got into a discussion with some people who were promoting gay rights who tried to argue Jesus’ whole message was one of “love and acceptance.”
  - In reality, Jesus and His disciples often called people to repentance and told them their lives needed to change if they wanted to please God.
  - Jesus wasn’t afraid to condemn the lifestyles of those who were living in ungodly ways.
  - This is important to remember because there is a lot of misrepresentation of Jesus going on in the world.

- 
- SIDE NOTE:
    - If you know the story of the venomous serpents who killed the Israelites in the wilderness (Numbers 21) you may also be familiar with Jesus telling Nicodemus He (Jesus) would be like the bronze



serpent lifted up in the wilderness for the people's salvation.

- In 1<sup>st</sup> Century terms, Jesus was lifted up on the cross to save the people from the venom of the “brood of vipers” who were a spiritual threat to the people.
  - John called the Jewish religious leaders to repentance.
    - “Bearing fruit” is a way the Bible talks about a person's actions.
    - People are often pictured as trees that bear fruit.
    - Good people bear good fruit.
    - Bad people bear bad fruit.
    - \*This is a bit of an oversimplification but the fuller picture will become clear as we study through the text.\*
    - John calls these Pharisees and Sadducees to repent, to stop bearing bad fruit, and start doing the things God wanted them to do (bear good fruit).
  - John advised them of the future judgement and punishment that awaited them if they didn't repent (the wrath to come).
  - He warned them of the danger of assuming their right standing with God because of their descendance from Abraham.
    - Abraham was considered the “father” of the Jewish nation.
    - Many Jews thought they were right with God solely due to the fact they were a part of God's chosen people (Abraham's children).
    - John informed the hypocritical Pharisees and Sadducees they would not be saved on the basis of their pedigree.
    - They needed to repent of their hypocrisy and ungodliness.
    - Their bloodline wasn't what pleased God.
      - If God wanted to, He could turn the stones of the wilderness into Jews.
      - God was interested in obedient hearts, not their family's heritage.
- 
- APPLICATION: Do we assume we are in a right relationship with God because we claim the name Christian? Here we have an example of those who claimed the name “Jew” (God's chosen people), but were very far removed from God. You can verbally claim the name Christian but it is your heart that tells the true story.
-

Luk 3:9 Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.”

- If you had an orchard, what would you do with a tree that for years grew nothing but bad fruit?
- You would probably cut it down.
  - o It takes up valuable vineyard space.
  - o It takes nutrients from the soil and produces nothing of value.
- In a similar way, God cuts down those who don't produce good fruit.
- John told them to repent and if they refused, they would have to answer to God.
- The image of the axe being laid at the root of the tree gives a sense of nearness to their potential judgement.
  - o God had had enough and was ready at any time to judge them.
  - o SPOILER: In 70 A.D. God's anger at the hypocritical Jews arrived in the form of the Roman empire intent on destroying Jerusalem.
  - o Within one lifetime the axe was picked up and the tree chopped down.
- This message was probably pretty shocking to a lot of Jews because many of them had the idea the Messiah was coming to establish a kingdom and restore the Jewish nation to prominence in the world while bringing judgement on all their enemies.
- They thought the Messiah was going to be 100% positively biased towards the Jews.
- They thought they were going to be the apple of His eye.
- They thought He was all about giving them victory.
- John's introduction of the idea that the Messiah was coming to judge them for wickedness probably took some of the Jews aback.

Luk 3:10 And the crowds asked him, “What then shall we do?”

Luk 3:11 And he answered them, “Whoever has two tunics is to share with him who has none, and whoever has food is to do likewise.”

Luk 3:12 Tax collectors also came to be baptized and said to him, “Teacher, what shall we do?”

Luk 3:13 And he said to them, “Collect no more than you are authorized to do.”

Luk 3:14 Soldiers also asked him, “And we, what shall we do?” And he said to them, “Do not extort money from anyone by threats or by false accusation, and be content with your wages.”

- These verses don't need a whole lot of explanation.
- Essentially, John was telling the Jews what the Old Testament Law had already told them.
- They were to love God supremely and love their neighbor as themselves.
  - o If you are well off and have two tunics and you love God and your neighbor, you will share one of them with someone less fortunate.
  - o If you are a tax collector and you love God and your neighbor, you won't demand more taxes than a person actually owes so you can skim the extra off the top (tax collectors were notorious for this in 1<sup>st</sup> Century Judea).
  - o If you are a soldier and you love God and your neighbor, you won't extort money from people by threatening to have them arrested on phony charges if they don't fork over some cash. You are going to be thankful and content with the wages that you earn.
- This teaching wasn't necessarily groundbreaking, but it was necessary to remind people about the parts of the Law that were often neglected.
- Additionally, it was necessary for John to remind the people about these principles because the people who should have been exemplifying them (Pharisees and Saducees) failed to model them for the people.
- They stressed the importance of certain doctrines to the finest detail, but then neglected obvious commands about loving God and their neighbors.

- 
- o APPLICATION:
  - o This can still happen in churches.
  - o People spend so much time debating and enforcing certain doctrines and forget about some of the most basic and most plain teachings of God.
  - o We can get caught up in the details and minutia of the Scriptures and completely neglect the big and simple commands.
- 

Luk 3:15 As the people were in expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Christ,

Luk 3:16 John answered them all, saying, "I baptize you with water, but he who is mightier than I is coming, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.

Luk 3:17 His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat

into his barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.”

- John was baptizing and teaching and it had people wondering, “Maybe he is the Messiah?!”
- John answered them with clarity.
  - o Someone greater than him (Messiah) was coming.
  - o He wasn’t Him!
  - o He humbled himself and told the people he wasn’t even worthy to assume the role of a common servant and untie the sandals of the Messiah.
- John, never for a moment, confused people about who he was and the work he had been given to do.
  - o He didn’t claim to be something greater than what he was.
  - o He always pointed people to Jesus.

- 
- APPLICATION:
  - This should be our attitude as Christians.
  - We aren’t here to steal some of the attention that belongs to Jesus.
  - The only thing special about us is what Jesus has given us.
  - We need to be as clear and as willing to bounce people’s attention off of ourselves and on to Jesus.
  - That isn’t easy!

- 
- John compared his baptism with the baptism that the Messiah was going to implement.
    - o John’s baptism was one of water for the forgiveness of sins, but it was still only a precursor to the full image of Jesus’ baptism.
    - o Those baptized into Jesus are baptized into an image of His death, burial, and resurrection (Romans 6:1-11)
    - o Obviously, that had not happened yet when John was preaching.
    - o Jesus’ baptism would come with 2 marks:
      - 1. The Holy Spirit - likely referencing the gift of the Holy Spirit given to baptized believers on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:38).
      - 2. With Fire – In light of verse 9 and 17, this likely refers to the fires of judgement on the wicked.

- Jesus' baptism would give the Holy Spirit as a powerful gift to believers, but it would bring nothing but judgement on those who rejected it.
- The point was, there were significant differences between John's baptism and the baptism Jesus was going to institute.
- In verse 12, Jesus references a winnowing fork



- This fork was used to throw grain into the air so that the chaff (bad part of the crop) would blow away in the breeze, while the wheat (the good part) would fall to the ground. The chaff would then be burned, and the wheat gathered into the barn.
- Those who genuinely repented would be gathered into God's house (the barn) but the unrepentant (Scribes and Pharisees) would face judgement (be burned).
- Notice, just as the axe was laid at the root of the tree, the winnowing fork was in the hand of the farmer, perhaps signifying God was prepared to execute judgment at any time.

Luk 3:18 So with many other exhortations he preached good news to the people.

Luk 3:19 But Herod the tetrarch, who had been reproved by him for Herodias, his brother's wife, and for all the evil things that Herod had done,

Luk 3:20 added this to them all, that he locked up John in prison.

- John was a bold man, so bold in fact he condemned, not just the Jewish religious leaders,

but one of the regional leaders mentioned at the beginning of the chapter.

- Herod Philip II's wife, Herodias, had left him in order to marry his half-brother, Herod Antipas.
- John condemned the new union.
  - o Mat 14:3-4 For Herod had seized John and bound him and put him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, because John had been saying to him, "It is not lawful for you to have her."
  - o Evidently, John also condemned other things Herod had done (verse 19).
- Herodias wanted John killed for speaking up against her adulterous decision.
- So, Antipas had him thrown into prison.
- \*You can check out the Matthew 14 notes for a more in-depth discussion of this situation.\*
- Other details about John's ministry are recorded in the other gospel accounts.
- In Luke, John's ministry starts at the beginning of chapter 3 and by the end of the chapter he is already locked up in prison.

Luk 3:21 Now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heavens were opened,

Luk 3:22 and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form, like a dove; and a voice came from heaven, "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased."

- Sometime after John's condemnation of the Pharisees and Sadducees, Jesus came from Galilee to Jordan to be baptized.
- Why did Jesus need to be baptized?
  - o Obviously, Jesus wasn't baptized for the forgiveness of sins.
  - o Jesus was sinless.
  - o Jesus said His baptism was necessary to "fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15).
    - The term "fulfilling" usually indicates that an action has been taken which requires a follow-up.
      - Example: You place an order on Amazon.com, Amazon then "fulfills" your order.
      - Example: A prophecy is made, that prophecy is later "fulfilled."

- Jesus' baptism confirmed the fulfillment of long-standing prophecies in the Old Testament.
      - Jesus was confirming that John is, in fact, the prophesied forerunner of the Messiah. Allowing Himself to be baptized by John communicated His approval of John's message to the onlookers.
      - He was also announcing the fulfillment of the prophecies about a coming Messiah, by claiming that identity for Himself.
- The icing on the cake immediately follows in verse 22.
- The Holy Spirit descended on Jesus in the physical form of a dove.
  - As we've observed in the last few chapters, the Holy Spirit's presence was typically not visible.
  - The Holy Spirit was in John, Zechariah, Elizabeth, and Mary but there is no evidence His presence was visible in any way, rather He worked invisibly within them.
- Here the Spirit takes on a visible form to visually confirm the identity of Jesus to the onlookers.
- And God (a voice from Heaven) gives the final confirmation of Jesus' identity.
- So, to sum up:
  - Jesus confirmed that John's message was from God.
  - Jesus confirmed that He was the Messiah from God.
  - The Holy Spirit confirmed Jesus as the Messiah.
  - God then confirmed all three claims.
- This would have been a powerful sign to all of the Jews present that the Christ had finally arrived.

#### THE GENEALOGY OF JESUS FROM JESUS TO ADAM

Luk 3:23 Jesus, when he began his ministry, was about thirty years of age, being the son (as was supposed) of Joseph, the son of Heli,

Luk 3:24 the son of Matthat, the son of Levi, the son of Melchi, the son of Jannai, the son of Joseph,

Luk 3:25 the son of Mattathias, the son of Amos, the son of Nahum, the son of Esli, the son of Naggai,

Luk 3:26 the son of Maath, the son of Mattathias, the son of Semein, the son of Josech, the son

of Joda,

Luk 3:27 the son of Joanan, the son of Rhesa, the son of Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, the son of Neri,

Luk 3:28 the son of Melchi, the son of Addi, the son of Cosam, the son of Elmadam, the son of Er,

Luk 3:29 the son of Joshua, the son of Eliezer, the son of Jorim, the son of Matthat, the son of Levi,

Luk 3:30 the son of Simeon, the son of Judah, the son of Joseph, the son of Jonam, the son of Eliakim,

Luk 3:31 the son of Melea, the son of Menna, the son of Mattatha, the son of Nathan, the son of David,

Luk 3:32 the son of Jesse, the son of Obed, the son of Boaz, the son of Sala, the son of Nahshon,

Luk 3:33 the son of Amminadab, the son of Admin, the son of Arni, the son of Hezron, the son of Perez, the son of Judah,

Luk 3:34 the son of Jacob, the son of Isaac, the son of Abraham, the son of Terah, the son of Nahor,

Luk 3:35 the son of Serug, the son of Reu, the son of Peleg, the son of Eber, the son of Shelah,

Luk 3:36 the son of Cainan, the son of Arphaxad, the son of Shem, the son of Noah, the son of Lamech,

Luk 3:37 the son of Methuselah, the son of Enoch, the son of Jared, the son of Mahalaleel, the son of Cainan,

Luk 3:38 the son of Enos, the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God.

- There is so much to talk about here, let's begin by mentioning the difficult part of this passage.
  - o If you've read the book of Matthew, you'll know Matthew's book begins with a genealogy of Jesus.
  - o The difficulty arises when you compare the names in Matthew's list with the names in Luke's list.
  - o The names are different.
  - o Not just a little different, they are a lot different!
  - o Both of the family trees list Joseph as Jesus' "earthly father" but give different names for the father of Joseph.
- How can we reconcile these two texts?



- There are several theories about how to accomplish a harmony between the two gospel writer's lists.
- If you want, you can spend many hours digging into all of the details of the different theories (I know because I did it lol).
- I struggled with how many possible theories and how many details of each theory to cover in this study.
- In the end, I decided only to include the solution that seems most plausible to me and a few points of explanation.
- I encourage everyone to look into the other possible solutions.
- I believe the best harmony of these two genealogies is to understand Matthew's list as the bloodline descendance of Joseph and Luke's list as the bloodline descendance of Mary.
  - One might immediately object, "But Luke clearly says Joseph was the son of Heli" (3:23) therefore Luke cannot be talking about Mary's bloodline.
  - The obvious objection to this theory is that Luke explicitly lists Joseph as Jesus's predecessor, with no mention of Mary: "And Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age, being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph, which was *the son* of Heli" (Luke 3:23, KJV). Supporters [of the theory]... say that the genealogical language is not as precise here as it is in Matthew. The early Greek manuscripts read "Joseph, of Heli" "**the son**" is an editorial insertion, acknowledged by italics in the King James Version. Luke does not use the verb *gennaō* (Hebrew for "to father" or "to beget") that Matthew uses to describe the relationship between the two generations, which leaves it open to speculation that perhaps Joseph was the *son-in-law*, not the biological son, of Heli (thejesusquestion.org).
  - The punctuation of this verse was also not present in the original, and some translators suggest that the closed parenthesis belongs after "Joseph" instead of after "supposed," as in "Jesus . . . being the son (as was supposed of Joseph) of Heli." With this formulation the implication would be that Jesus's maternal grandfather, Heli, is his closest male ancestor.
  - Some commentators have gone even further to suggest that Mary's father, Heli, had no sons, so he made Joseph his adoptive heir when he and Mary wed. (See Numbers 27:1–11, 1 Chronicles 2:34–35, Ezra 2:61, and Nehemiah 7:63 for Jewish precedents.)
  - If Luke really is tracing Mary's ancestry, then why not just say so? Because like most ancient cultures, the Hebrews omitted women's names from genealogical records. Luke (unlike Matthew, who very brazenly cites four women in his genealogy for Jesus) is simply following custom by sticking to male names only.

- It would have been natural for Luke, who acknowledges the unique case of the virgin birth, to give the maternal genealogy of Jesus, even if that meant expressing it a bit awkwardly in the traditional patrilineal style. Not only that, but Luke's Gospel often focuses on Mary's perspective... (thejesusquestion.org).
- I would also encourage you to look into the "levirate solution" (sometimes called the Africanus solution) to explain the differences between Matthew and Luke.
  - Its possible Joseph had two fathers.
  - There was a command in the Old Testament (Deuteronomy 25:5-10) where, if a man's brother died, and that brother didn't have any kids, the living brother was supposed to marry his dead brothers widow (his sister-in-law) and have children with her so those children could carry on the family lineage of their father.
  - It is possible Joseph's mother was married, her husband died before they were able to have kids, she married her brother-in-law and Joseph was born to that union.
  - This would leave Joseph with a legal father (his mom's first husband) and a blood father (his mom's second husband).
  - A bit confusing... I know... but a plausible explanation when you get your head wrapped around the details.
- Whether Mary's family tree or Joseph's family tree through 2 fathers, the genealogy is significant to establish Jesus' legitimate claim as the Messiah.
  - God promised king David his throne would endure forever (2 Samuel 7:12-16).
  - How was God going to make that happen?
  - The Messiah was going to claim David's throne and reign forever (Luke 1:32-33).
  - In order to claim the throne, the Messiah needed to be a legitimate son of David, an heir to the throne.
  - Luke 3:31 shows Jesus was a direct descendent of King David.
- Matthew's genealogy shows Jesus' direct connection to the royal line.
  - Solomon, Rehoboam, Josiah, and Hezekiah are all mentioned in Matthew's list of names and they were all kings of the Jewish nation.
  - Jesus was from the royal line of kings, but there was a problem with that royal line, it was cursed.
  - King Jechoniah/Jeconiah (also known as Jehoiachin, or Coniah) was cursed by God.
    - God cursed Jechoniah through the prophet Jeremiah and told him none of his offspring would succeed him in sitting on the throne.

- Jeremiah 22:30 Thus says the LORD: “Write this man down as childless, a man who shall not succeed in his days, for none of his offspring shall succeed in sitting on the throne of David and ruling again in Judah.”
- Luke’s genealogy is significant in showing us Jesus had a connection back to King David that didn’t run through the cursed line of Jechoniah.
  - The genealogy in Luke 3 runs through David’s son Nathan, not Solomon, who was the descendent of Jechoniah.
  - So, Matthew’s gospel establishes the royalty of Jesus ancestry and Luke’s gospel makes it clear His blood was free of the curse and fit to claim the throne.





# LUKE 4



In 5 minutes...

## WHEN:

- Chapter 4 begins where chapter 3 left off.
- Jesus was baptized in chapter 3.
- Chapter 4 opens with Him entering the wilderness to face temptation.
- These events took place approximately 30 A.D..

## CHARACTERS:

- Jesus - The Savior, son of Mary.
- Satan (the Devil) - The enemy of God who tempts people to sin.
- Citizens of Nazareth - The people of Jesus' hometown.
- Man with an Unclean Spirit - Jesus meets this man in the synagogue in Capernaum on the Sabbath day.
- Simon (Peter) - One of Jesus' 12 Apostles.
- Simon's Mother-in-Law - Jesus heals her of a fever.

## WHERE:

- The events in chapter 4 take place in 2 regions:
  1. Galilee
  2. Judea
- 3 specific locations are mentioned.
  1. The wilderness of Judea
  2. Nazareth
  3. Capernaum

# LUKE 4



## OVERVIEW:

- JESUS IS TEMPTED IN THE WILDERNESS (4:1-4:15):
  - + After His baptism, Jesus went into the wilderness to face a period of temptation.
  - + He was in the wilderness “for forty days, being tempted by the devil.”
  - + Luke records 3 specific temptations:
    1. He tempted Jesus to turn stones to bread.
    2. He told Jesus he would give Him all the kingdoms of the earth if He worshipped him.
    3. He tempted Jesus to throw Himself off the top of the Temple.
  - + Jesus refused to give in to any of Satan’s temptations.
  - + Following the temptation, Jesus went to Galilee and started teaching in the synagogues of the Jews.
- JESUS’ TEACHING IS REJECTED IN NAZARETH (4:16-4:30):
  - + Jesus returned to His hometown, Nazareth, and was teaching in the synagogue on the Sabbath.
  - + He told the people He was the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies about the Messiah.
  - + Because of their familiarity with Jesus and His family, the people rejected Jesus’ claim.
  - + Jesus condemned them for their unbelief.
  - + They tried to kill Jesus by throwing Him off a tower but He made a miraculous escape.
- JESUS HEALS A MAN WITH AN UNCLEAN SPIRIT (4:31-4:37):
  - + Jesus went to Capernaum and began teaching in their synagogue.
  - + A man possessed by an unclean spirit was in the synagogue.
  - + The spirit knew Jesus but Jesus forbid it from speaking.
  - + Jesus rebuked the spirit and cast it out of the man, healing him.
  - + The people of Capernaum were amazed at His power and words and spoke of Him throughout the region.
- JESUS HEALS MANY BEFORE DEPARTING TO PREACH IN GALILEE (4:38-4:44):
  - + Leaving the synagogue, Jesus went to Simon Peter’s house and healed his mother-in-law of a fever.
  - + The sick gathered outside Simon’s house and Jesus healed them all.
  - + In the morning, the people didn’t want Jesus to leave town.
  - + Jesus told them He had to depart to preach the “good news of the kingdom of God” in other towns.

## BIG PICTURE:

- Jesus faced temptations just like us and He is able to sympathize with our struggles.
- Sometimes we are tempted to think God is very distant, very disconnected from our lives and the human experience.
- This is not the case... God knows what it’s like to be human.

## TAKE AWAYS:

- The people who knew Jesus best refused to accept the truth when He presented it to them. Sometimes the people we know best are the hardest to reach with the “good news of the kingdom of God.”
- Sometimes the greatest truths come from the most common/unlikely places. We should be willing to accept truth no matter its source.





## LUKE 4

Luk 4:1 And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness

Luk 4:2 for forty days, being tempted by the devil. And he ate nothing during those days. And when they were ended, he was hungry.

- Take a moment and reflect on the significant work of the Holy Spirit highlighted in the opening chapters of Luke's gospel.
  - o John was filled with the Holy Spirit (1:15).
  - o The Holy Spirit created Jesus inside Mary miraculously (1:35).
  - o Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit when blessing Mary (1:41).
  - o Although not stated specifically, I believe it is implied the Holy Spirit filled Mary as she spoke of the future work of John and Jesus (1:46-55).
  - o Zechariah prophesied when filled with the Holy Spirit (1:67).
  - o Simeon was filled with the Holy Spirit (2:25).
  - o Jesus would baptize with the Holy Spirit (3:16).
  - o The Holy Spirit descended on Jesus in the form of a dove (3:22).
  - o Jesus was filled with the Holy Spirit after His baptism (4:1).
  - o In a lot of our discussions, the Holy Spirit seems to take a back seat to the other two members of the Trinity (God the Father and Jesus), but Luke places Him right up front as a key figure in the opening of His gospel.
- After His baptism, Jesus went out into the wilderness to be tempted by the Devil.
  - o Jesus was God, but He was also a man.
  - o As far as we know, He had passions and desires and cravings like any man.
  - o He was tempted in the same ways we are tempted (Hebrews 4:15).
  - o Satan wanted Jesus to give into temptation so He couldn't give Himself as the perfect sinless sacrifice for the world.

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### - APPLICATION:

- o In other religions, it might be possible to believe your god/gods don't understand what it's like to be human.
- o A person could accuse their god/gods of being unreasonable in their demands and

asking too much from their human subjects.

- You can imagine someone saying, “It’s easy for you to sit up in heaven and demand things not knowing what its like to be human!”
- But no one can make that accusation about Jesus.
- He came to the earth, lived among the people He created, and experienced their difficulties and sufferings.

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▪ APPLICATION:

- Some religions consider the idea of God coming down to earth and becoming a man equivalent to blasphemy.
- But when one understands it as God coming into our world to relate to us and to love us, it becomes something beautiful.
- Don’t you want to serve a God who knows what it’s like to be you?
- Consider your boss at work.
- You don’t want a boss who sits far away in a corner office, never talks to you or gets your input, yet makes rules that directly relate to your work.
- You want a boss who knows what it’s like to be in your position, knows the challenges you face, and knows how to help you.
- Jesus wasn’t a distant deity; He was a relatable Savior.

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- Jesus fasted for 40 days in the wilderness, seemingly in preparation for His temptation.

- The New Testament doesn’t give us any specific commands to fast, but it does imply there are benefits to fasting.
- Fasting and prayer are often coupled together in scripture.
- Notice how verse 2 specifically says that Jesus was hungry (as if we couldn’t have guessed).

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▪ APPLICATION:

- Physical strength is not equivalent to spiritual strength.
- You see how Jesus’ sacrificed physical health to prepare Himself spiritually for what was coming.
- While I don’t think the Bible is calling us to fast 40 days, I wonder how many of us have even once made that trade?

- We are all busy, and that busyness often leaves us with little time in our days for spiritual study, application, and prayer.
  - We would be wise to skip a meal to feed ourselves spiritually. We would be wise to skip the gym to make time for prayer.
  - How often do our lives acknowledge what Jesus' life acknowledged here? That provision for spiritual battle should take priority over provision for the physical.
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Luk 4:3 The devil said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread."

Luk 4:4 And Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone.'"

- The very first things Satan did was question God's authority.
    - At Jesus' baptism in Luke 3:22, God made it very clear Jesus was His "beloved Son."
    - A voice had come from heaven and announced it.
    - The Holy Spirit confirmed it with His presence.
    - But here, Satan wanted to call it into question.
      - It is interesting that Satan doesn't directly contradict God by saying, "You aren't the Son of God."
      - He used this approach with Adam and Eve.
      - He asked questions in hope the one being tempted would begin to doubt God.
      - The serpent in the Garden of Eden succeeded in getting Adam and Eve to doubt God's integrity.
- 

- APPLICATION:
  - Satan's tactics haven't changed.
  - He spends all his time trying to get people to doubt God's words.
  - "God's word can't be trusted."
  - "It isn't historically accurate."
  - "It isn't scientifically accurate."

- “It isn’t rational.”
  - “God keeps you from having fun and having what satisfies you.”
  - “He is trying to hold you back.”
  - “The world is all you need.”
  - “Satisfy your desires here on earth.”
  - “This is the only life you are going to get.”
  - “Live for now.”
  - “Don’t listen to the fairy tales about life after death.”
  - “Real life is experienced in this world.”
- 

- APPLICATION:
  - It is also important to identify this as a question attacking Jesus’ identity.
  - Temptation is always a question of identity.
  - Who do we serve?
  - Ourselves? Like Satan convinced Adam and Eve.
  - Or God? We are His children and serve Him.
  - Satan attacks identity effectively in our culture.
  - If he can get a university professor to convince a student of the truth of evolutionary biology, he doesn’t even need to bother with the authority of the words of God.
  - That student has lost their true identity.
  - They’ve gone from being a designed marvel made in the image of God to a wildly improbable chemistry accident.
  - Your identity makes a huge difference when it comes to the way you see the world.
- 

- Interestingly, Jesus didn’t feel the need to prove God’s word, instead He reaffirmed His belief in its validity by quoting it in His rebuttal to Satan.
  - The verse referenced by Jesus is Deuteronomy 8:3.
  - Deu 8:3 - And he humbled you and let you hunger and fed you with manna, which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that he might make you

know that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD.

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- APPLICATION:
  - Satan would not have confessed Jesus, even if He had turned the stones to bread.
  - Jesus did far more marvelous works during His ministry than turning stones to bread, yet the devil didn't believe.
  - Some questions aren't worth answering.
  - Some questioners have no interest in proof and evidence.
  - Their hearts aren't open to accepting anything other than what they already believe.
- 

Luk 4:5 And the devil took him up and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time,

Luk 4:6 and said to him, "To you I will give all this authority and their glory, for it has been delivered to me, and I give it to whom I will.

Luk 4:7 If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours."

Luk 4:8 And Jesus answered him, "It is written, "“You shall worship the Lord your God, and him only shall you serve.”"

- Satan's second temptation was not a challenge but an offer.
    - Christ was going to be glorified in heaven with His Father, but that wasn't going to happen until after a three-year ministry and significant suffering.
    - Satan offered Jesus something immediate.
    - All of the kingdoms of the world could be His if He bowed to Satan.
- 

- APPLICATION:
  - For many years, I looked at this temptation almost as if it wasn't a temptation at all.
  - Jesus was literally the king of the universe. Why would He ever be tempted with such a lousy offer from Satan?

- All the kingdoms of the earth were only a small portion of what He already possessed as universal King.
- How was Satan’s offer enticing?
- But I was wrong about the effectiveness of Satan’s tactic.
  - I know I was wrong because this is the temptation I fall prey to on a daily basis.
  - I know who God says I am (my identity).
    - A child of His...
    - Justified through Christ to spend eternity with Him...
    - To be an heir with the universal King...
    - 2 Tim 2:12 - if we endure, we will also reign with Him
    - It is an astounding reality!
    - But Satan comes to me with a small pleasure.
    - He whispers in my ear, “You aren’t glorified in Heaven YET!”
    - “There is still a lifetime of difficulty ahead!”
    - “I’ve got a pleasure you can have RIGHT NOW!”
    - Human beings are big fans of having what they want RIGHT NOW!
  - What is astounding is that Satan can win us over with a much weaker offer than what He offered the Lord.
    - Have you ever been offered the throne of the world?
    - Me neither! It’s usually something a lot smaller.
  - If Satan can’t convince us the word of God is false, he may attempt to win us over with immediate pleasure.
  - He makes an offer to our eyes for the ownership of our heart.

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- Luckily for us, Satan’s offer failed to shake Jesus’ conviction.
  - He once again denied Satan and affirmed His contentment in the promise of God by quoting the Scriptures.

Luk 4:9 And he took him to Jerusalem and set him on the pinnacle of the temple and said to

him, “If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here,

Luk 4:10 for it is written, ““He will command his angels concerning you, to guard you,’

Luk 4:11 and ““On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.””

Luk 4:12 And Jesus answered him, “It is said, ‘You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.’”

Luk 4:13 And when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from him until an opportune time.

- Again, Satan questioned the word of God by asking for proof of Jesus’ identity.
  - o He asked Him to throw Himself off the pinnacle of the temple.
  - o He even quoted a scripture.
  - o Psalm 91:11-12 - For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways. On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.

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- o APPLICATION:

- We shouldn’t take someone’s advice just because they quote a scripture to go along with it.
- There are many people who misuse Bible passages to support things God would never support.
- Too often, passages are stripped from their context and used in ways they were never intended.

- 
- Jesus responded to Satan by quoting God’s word back to him.
    - o He quoted from Deuteronomy 6:16.
    - o Deu 6:16 - “You shall not put the LORD your God to the test, as you tested him at Massah.”
      - Jesus’ quotation showed the complete hypocrisy and ridiculousness of Satan’s request.
      - Satan was asking Jesus to put God to the test, while he was putting God (Jesus) to the test.
  - These three temptations are mentioned by Luke and Matthew.
    - o We don’t know if there were other temptations that aren’t recorded.

- What is important to see is that Jesus went through this process and came out the victor on the other side.
- He retained His sinlessness.
- We know these weren't the only temptations Jesus faced in His life.
  - Verse 13 tells us Satan departed until an “opportune time” in the future.

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○ APPLICATION:

- This tells us something of the craftiness of Satan.
- He stalks his pray waiting for “opportune moments.”
- This is why we need to always be on guard.
  - Personally, I know there are times in my life when I let my guard down.
  - For example, when I haven't fallen to a particular temptation in a while, I won't be as vigilant at avoiding it and killing it when I feel the temptation rise in my heart.
  - I won't wake up with my eyes peeled watching for its appearing on the horizon.
  - And then I'll find it snuck up on me and I'm in danger.
- We need to train our hearts to be on guard all the time (which isn't easy).
- Because Satan is stalking in anticipation of the “opportune time.”

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Luk 4:14 And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee, and a report about him went out through all the surrounding country.

Luk 4:15 And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified by all.

- Following His temptation, Jesus returned to Galilee where He taught in the synagogues and was well received by the people.
- What is a synagogue?
  - The synagogue was the center of Jewish community life.
  - Whenever a community had a significant number of Jews they sometimes built a synagogue as a place for them to stay connect to their faith and as a place for communal events and discussions.



- In some ways, the synagogue was similar to modern Christian church buildings.
- The Jews met in the synagogues on the Sabbath (Saturday) to hear a reading from the Old Testament Law and have it explained by their religious leaders.
- They may have also met there for communal meals and political meetings.
- The Greek word translated “synagogue” means “an assembly of people.”
- The synagogue was a place of ritual cleansing. Many included a Mikveh (ceremonial washing pool).
- The origins of the synagogue are obscure, but many believe they got their start when the Jews were taken into Babylonian captivity and needed a place of cultural gathering and worship.
- The Pharisees and scribes had a significant number of rules for how Jews were supposed to behave within the synagogue and when it was/wasn’t appropriate for someone to enter the synagogue.
- Josephus, a Jewish historian, mentions at least 18 cities in the Roman Empire with a synagogue.

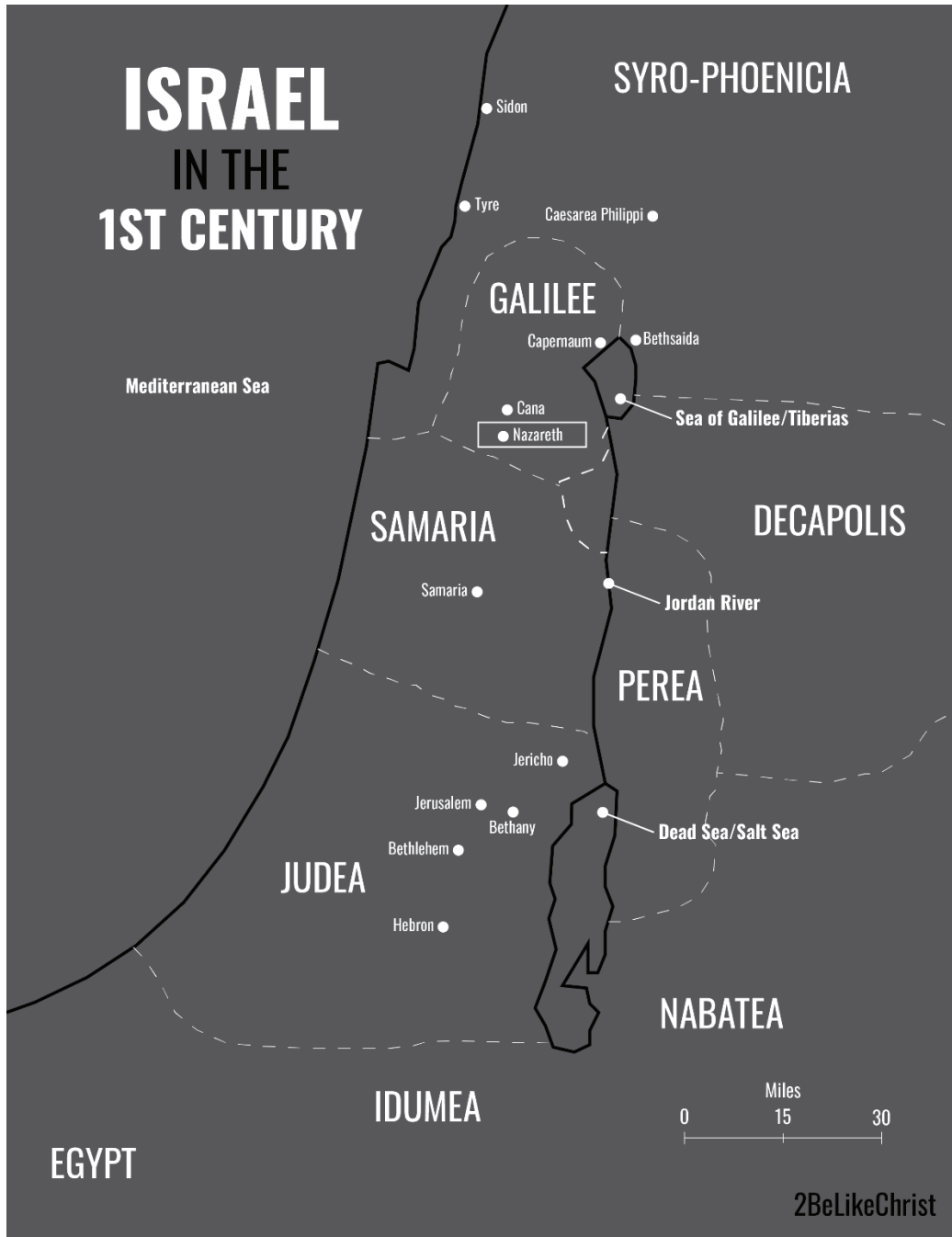
Luk 4:16 And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up. And as was his custom, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and he stood up to read.

Luk 4:17 And the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written,

Luk 4:18 “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed,

Luk 4:19 to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.”

- After spending some time teaching in the synagogues of Galilee, Jesus went to His hometown.



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- On the Sabbath day, He went to the synagogue and stood up to read a passage of scripture from the Old Testament prophet Isaiah.
- The text came from Isaiah 61:1-2.
  - “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor.”
    - The Holy Spirit was empowering Jesus.

- In ancient days, new kings and priests were anointed with oil as a sign they had been chosen to fill a special role.
- The Holy Spirit had symbolically anointed Jesus as the Messiah when He descended at Jesus' baptism.
  - Acts 10:37-38 – You yourselves know what happened throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee after the baptism that John proclaimed: how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him.
  - God didn't pour oil down from heaven on Jesus' head, instead He spoke from heaven announcing Jesus and sent the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove to testify to Jesus' identity as King and "Christ."
  - Christ means "anointed."
    - Most kings and priests in the Old Testament were anointed with oil by a prophet or representative of God.
    - God personally anointed Jesus.
    - Jesus Christ = Jesus the anointed of God.
- Jesus was the anointed One who was sent to "proclaim good news to the poor."
  - Jesus was definitely an ally of the monetarily poor.
  - But more than that, He came to proclaim good news to those spiritually poor, poor in spirit.
    - Mat 5:3 "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
    - The Kingdom of Heaven is for those who realized their spiritual poverty.
    - Those who had no hope of lifting themselves out of their current spiritual condition.
    - Those who put their trust in God to pay the redeeming price for their soul because they didn't have any way of doing it.
    - Jesus was the Redeemer who could pay the price and that was "good news."
- "He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed."
  - In 2 Timothy, Paul described those in sin as having been taken captive by the devil.

- He's tricked them.
- He's fooled them into doing his work.
- Paul said they must "come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, after being captured by him to do his will."
- Paul said those in sin needed to "come to their senses."
  - Isaiah's prophecy speaks of one who will recover the sense of sight for those who have gone blind.
  - This is a big theme in John's gospel.
  - Jesus is light in the darkness to give sight to the blind.
- Jesus will give liberty to the oppressed.

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- APPLICATION:

- Satan does a good job at getting us to think religion and God are the oppressors.
    - He tells people, "A life without God and all of His rules is freedom."
    - "God is holding you back from real living"
    - Isn't that what the serpent told Eve?
  - In contrast, God tells us sin and Satan are the oppressors and true freedom is found in Him.
  - How do we know who to believe, God or Satan?
    - One of those two was willing to put their money where their mouth was.
    - There is love in one of the two narratives.
    - One of those two was willing to make a big self-sacrifice to show He really cared about human freedom, while the other one wasn't.
    - Jesus went to the cross to set men free.
    - Satan just spews lies from the sideline at no personal expense to himself.
    - Anyone can have a narrative until it requires self-sacrifice.
    - Self-sacrifice will sift the genuine from the liars.
-

- “to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”
  - A year or a time was coming when God would bless the Jews.
  - It would be the year of His favor.
  - That year began when the Messiah arrived.
  - God had favor on His people and sent them the solution to their previously inescapable problem.
  - This “year” may be alluding to the year of jubilee.
    - The year of jubilee was a special year for the Jews and occurred every 50 years.
    - It was part of God’s Old Testament Law (Leviticus 25-8-13).
    - On the year of jubilee debts were forgiven, slaves were set free, and lands were restored to their original tribal owners.
    - It was a year of celebration and was eagerly awaited by many.
  - With similar happy anticipation, the Jews had been waiting for the Messiah to liberate them from oppression.
  - The time had finally come.

Luk 4:20 And he rolled up the scroll and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him.

Luk 4:21 And he began to say to them, “Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.”

- When Jesus had finished His reading, He rolled up the scroll and sat down.
  - When I first read this, I thought Jesus was taking His seat in the audience after finishing His scripture reading.
  - But that was not the case.
  - It was customary for the teacher to sit before expounding on the words of scripture.
  - This explains why the people’s attention was still fixed on Him even after He sat down. They wanted to know what Jesus had to say about Isaiah’s prophetic words.

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- APPLICATION:

- This is a good example of why we need to be careful before we interpret the action of an ancient person based on modern customs.
  - In our culture, a person sits down when they've finished teaching.
  - In 1<sup>st</sup> Century Jewish culture, a person sat down when they were about to start teaching.
  - Customs, traditions, and practices vary across cultures and a wise Bible interpreter will be careful not to interpret the ancient world through modern customs.
- 

- The people's attention was fixed on the sitting Jesus.
- They were waiting on Him to expand on the concept of the scripture He just read.
  - Jesus told them Isaiah's words were being fulfilled that same day.
  - There may have been more to Jesus' lesson than Luke records.

Luk 4:22 And all spoke well of him and marveled at the gracious words that were coming from his mouth. And they said, "Is not this Joseph's son?"

Luk 4:23 And he said to them, "Doubtless you will quote to me this proverb, "Physician, heal yourself." What we have heard you did at Capernaum, do here in your hometown as well."

Luk 4:24 And he said, "Truly, I say to you, no prophet is acceptable in his hometown.

- Jesus' message was well received.
  - All of the Jews looked forward to the restoration of their nation by the Messiah and to hear the time had arrived would have come as a welcome surprise.
  - Matthew and Mark use the word "astonished" to capture the people's response.
  - They acknowledged the "wisdom" (Mat 13:54) in Jesus' words, but they had doubts about the messenger who brought them.
- They began saying amongst themselves, "Is not this Joseph's son?"
  - They thought they knew Jesus.
  - They knew His mother and His brothers.
  - This assumption, that they knew who Jesus was and where He came from, was a problem.
  - In truth, Jesus was not Joseph's son.

- If they believed He was, they would never come to understand His true identity, the one proclaimed at His baptism by His real Father.
  - He was not the son of a carpenter, He was the Son of God.
- 

- APPLICATION:

- Be careful what you assume.
  - Be careful about what you think you know without thorough investigation.
  - I can't help but believe Mary would have told people her story if they had asked.
  - I can't imagine she would lie and tell people Jesus had been naturally conceived by Joseph.
  - But how many people believed her?
  - How many assumed she was lying?
  - How many didn't take time to inquire?
  - What they thought they knew was about to misguide them.
  - They allowed their assumptions about Jesus to rule Him out as the Messiah before they ever investigated His claim.
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- Jesus said to them, "Doubtless you will quote to me this proverb, "Physician, heal yourself." What we have heard you did at Capernaum, do here in your hometown as well."
  - This proverb must have been in circulation in Jesus' day.
  - It isn't difficult to take a guess at the meaning:
    - A physician (doctor) is someone who claims to have training and skill to assist in the healing of certain illnesses or injuries.
    - If a doctor claims to be able to heal someone of a certain ailment but can't heal themselves of that same ailment, are you going to take them seriously?
    - Probably not, right?
    - You would want proof and you would assume if they had the skill to heal they would have healed themselves first.
- This was what the people of Nazareth wanted to see.
  - Jesus had reportedly performed miracles in other towns, miracles that were meant to prove He was the Son of God.

- So, why had He not performed many in His own hometown?
- They wanted some evidence.
- You may be able to pull the wool over the eyes of strangers, but fooling the people who know you best isn't so easy.
- Was the request of the Nazarenes unreasonable?
  - I don't think so...
  - But Jesus knew something about their hearts.
  - Mat 13:58 And he did not do many mighty works there, because of their unbelief.
  - Even if He performed miracles, He knew they would not believe.
  - This, at least in part, was due to the fact that they already believed they knew Him.
  - They weren't ready to accept Him as anything more than Joseph's son.
- This is what prompted Jesus to say, "Truly, I say to you, no prophet is acceptable in his hometown."
  - The phenomenon leading to their unbelief is not an uncommon one.
  - When you grow up around someone and you watch them mature from being a child to an adult, you view them differently than people you are less familiar with.
  - Even when the world views them as an adult, maybe even an adult who is worthy of some respect or honor, you still view them as the kid who grew up down the street.
  - It is difficult to grow up in the eyes of those who are most intimately acquainted with us.
  - I am 29 years old at the time of writing this (almost the age of Jesus when teaching in the synagogue).
    - People who meet me for the first time usually treat me like a grown adult.
    - But I'm still a young kid in the eyes of some older people who watched me grow up.
  - Familiarity changes your perception.
  - Jesus knew the people in His hometown wouldn't accept Him as the Messiah even if He performed great miracles because they thought they already knew everything about Him.

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- APPLICATION:



- The Nazarenes rejected Jesus because their familiarity blinded them to His true identity.
  - The ideas/teachings/doctrines most familiar to us from our upbringing must be critically examined so we can embrace the true Christ, not just the familiar Christ.
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Luk 4:25 But in truth, I tell you, there were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the heavens were shut up three years and six months, and a great famine came over all the land,

Luk 4:26 and Elijah was sent to none of them but only to Zarephath, in the land of Sidon, to a woman who was a widow.

Luk 4:27 And there were many lepers in Israel in the time of the prophet Elisha, and none of them was cleansed, but only Naaman the Syrian.”

Luk 4:28 When they heard these things, all in the synagogue were filled with wrath.

Luk 4:29 And they rose up and drove him out of the town and brought him to the brow of the hill on which their town was built, so that they could throw him down the cliff.

Luk 4:30 But passing through their midst, he went away.

- Jesus’ fellow countrymen had doubts about Him, a hometown boy, being the prophesied Messiah.
- In response, He reminded them of their nations history.
- In times past, recorded in the scriptures the people of Nazareth held sacred, God’s blessings had been given to those who were not among God’s people (Jews).
- Jesus gave two examples:
  - 1. During a time of famine in Israel, God sent the prophet Elijah to Zarephath to care for a Gentile widow woman (1 Kings 17).
    - For 3+ years God stopped the rain from falling on Israel because of their wickedness.
    - There were plenty of Jewish widows who could have used assistance during that 3 year period.
    - But God chose the woman from Zarephath to be the recipient of His blessing.
  - 2. In 2 Kings 5, God used His prophet Elisha to heal a man with leprosy.
    - There were many Jews with leprosy at the time.

- But God selected Naaman, the commander of the Syrian army, to receive the blessing.
- When God’s people were not faithful, God had no problem sharing His mercies with others.
- In parallel, when Jesus’ people, those of His hometown, were unwilling to believe (Mat 13:58), Jesus decided to share His mercies and wonderful works with others.
  - Jesus didn’t perform miracles just to show off His power.
  - He performed miracles so people would believe that He came from heaven and would know there was truth in His message.
  - If a group of people had already closed their minds to the possibility of Jesus being anything more than a hometown boy, there was little point in a miraculous display.
- When the Nazarenes heard and understood Jesus’ rebuke, they were furious at Him.
- He was telling them the condition of their hearts didn’t merit Him showing them the signs He had shown other towns.
- You can imagine how that would be received.
- Imagine how your hometown friends and acquaintances would respond if you came home and told them they weren’t worthy of the privilege of witnessing your ability.
  - “Who does this kid think he is?!”
  - “We raised this kid.”
  - “He went off and got a big head and forgot his roots!”
  - “Who does he think he is snubbing us?!”
  - “Are we going to let this arrogant brat condemn us and act like he knows what’s in our hearts.”
- There was such an outrage, the people of the city “drove Him out of the town” to a tower on a hill.
- Their intention was to take Him up the tower and throw Him off.
- But Jesus escaped miraculously by “passing through their midst.”

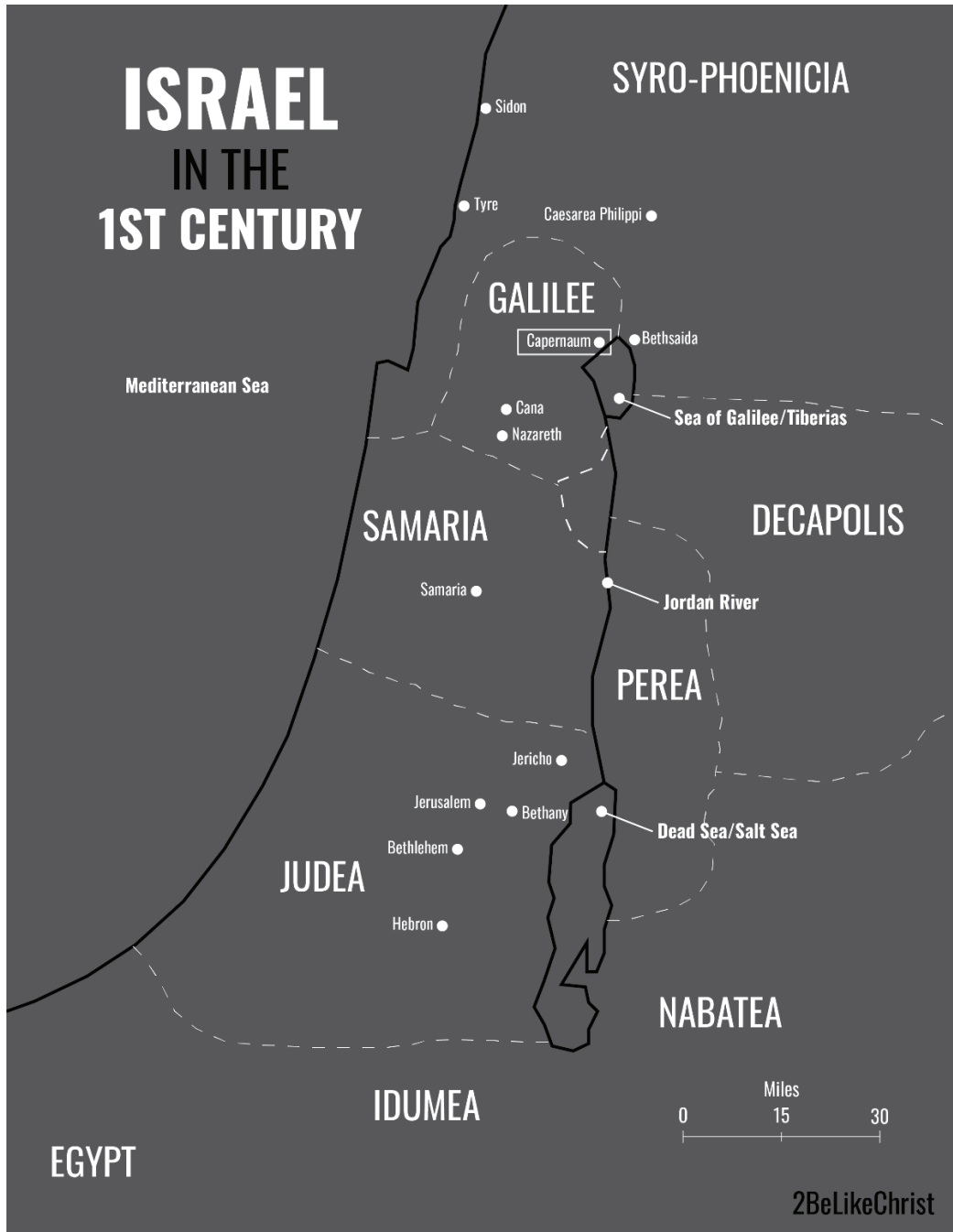
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- APPLICATION:
    - It’s hard to speak hard truths to people.
    - Sometimes the hardest people to talk to about spiritual truths are those we know the best.

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Luk 4:31 And he went down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee. And he was teaching them on the Sabbath,

Luk 4:32 and they were astonished at his teaching, for his word possessed authority.

- After escaping down the hill, Jesus went to Capernaum.



- Matthew 4:13 tells us Jesus lived in Capernaum. He left Nazareth after hearing Herod had arrested John.
- On the Sabbath day, Jesus was teaching the people and they too were “astonished at his teaching.”
- Luke says His words possessed authority.
  - Unfortunately, we won’t ever get to hear Jesus explain the Old Testament Law in person to us in a synagogue.
  - But the people of Capernaum did.
  - Jesus could give supernatural commentary on the Law and its origins flowing out of the heart of God.
  - It would have been a special privilege to hear Jesus expound on scripture.
  - Even though we can’t listen to Jesus speak on the Law, we can all recognize someone who teaches with a sense of authority.
  - There is a big difference between a teacher with a shallow grasp of their subject matter and one with a command and mastery of the subject.
    - No doubt, in synagogues of the 1<sup>st</sup> Century, as in churches in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, there were those who filled the role of “teacher” but weren’t particularly skilled at handling the scriptures.
    - There have been several times during this study I’ve used phrases like, “I think”, “I suppose”, “I imagine”, “I believe the text implies”, “possibly”, etc...
    - Hearing a teacher who never had to speak in uncertain terms, who had an ocean’s depth of knowledge on every Old Testament passage, who was certain of the accuracy of His interpretation of every statement of God, who knew with perfect clarity the hearts of each Old Testament character, and who intimately knew the God He came from and each person He had created throughout history... you wouldn’t be able to walk away from that teacher without being “astonished at His teaching.”
  - Jesus, as God, could speak about the Law as the Law Giver.
    - He didn’t need the interpretations of the rabbis to speak about the heart of the Law.
    - He articulated it to the people as its Author.

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- APPLICATION:

- Evaluation of age is not an evaluation of truth.

- Jesus was around 30 years old when He stood up to teach in the synagogue.
  - In the world of religious scholarship, 30 was and is considered pretty young.
  - Many probably dismissed Jesus without even evaluating His teaching, saying to themselves, “Why would I listen to this young man when Rabbi Shemiel has been studying the Law for 50 years and teaches something different.”
  - We have a tendency to judge the truth of someone’s message based on their age.
    - The old dismiss the young.
    - The young dismiss the old.
  - We should avoid both biases.
  - Truth is truth no matter where it comes from and ideas should be evaluated on their claims, not on the age of the presenter.
- 

Luk 4:33 And in the synagogue there was a man who had the spirit of an unclean demon, and he cried out with a loud voice,

Luk 4:34 “Ha! What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God.”

Luk 4:35 But Jesus rebuked him, saying, “Be silent and come out of him!” And when the demon had thrown him down in their midst, he came out of him, having done him no harm.

Luk 4:36 And they were all amazed and said to one another, “What is this word? For with authority and power he commands the unclean spirits, and they come out!”

Luk 4:37 And reports about him went out into every place in the surrounding region.

- Many of the Jews may have questioned Jesus’ authority to speak with such boldness about the Law.
  - He was not a trained scribe or rabbi.
  - What made Him think He had insights into the Law their respected scholarly leaders didn’t?
- The proof of Jesus’ authenticity was about to be provided!
- A man with an unclean spirit was in the synagogue.
  - The spirit cried out, announcing Jesus’ identity to the attendants, “The Holy One of God.”
  - He told the demon to “be silent.”

- Jesus' evidence of authority was to be made known through power, not the word of a demon.
- Jesus then commanded the spirit to come out of the man, which it obediently did.
- Jesus' words had authority in the spiritual world.
- The Jews had exorcists, but none had the power to command demons with a word. This was clear to the Jews (verse 36).
- The scribes had religious training and they knew about the Law, but they didn't have power like Jesus.
- This occurrence should have been a lesson to the Jewish religious leaders that it was their turn to be students instead of teachers.
  - The rest of the gospels reveal they failed to learn that lesson.
  - Their pride wouldn't let them relinquish the teaching position.

Luk 4:38 And he arose and left the synagogue and entered Simon's house. Now Simon's mother-in-law was ill with a high fever, and they appealed to him on her behalf.

Luk 4:39 And he stood over her and rebuked the fever, and it left her, and immediately she rose and began to serve them.

Luk 4:40 Now when the sun was setting, all those who had any who were sick with various diseases brought them to him, and he laid his hands on every one of them and healed them.

Luk 4:41 And demons also came out of many, crying, "You are the Son of God!" But he rebuked them and would not allow them to speak, because they knew that he was the Christ.

- Jesus left the synagogue and went to Simon's house (Simon = Apostle Peter).
  - Simon's mother-in-law was sick with a fever and Jesus healed her.
  - It is interesting to me that Jesus "rebuked" the fever just like He "rebuked" the unclean spirit. I'm not sure if there is anything to the use of the same word (English and Greek).
- When the sun started to go down, all the people started bringing their sick friends and family to Jesus to be healed.
  - They brought those with demons.
  - They brought those with "various diseases."
  - Jesus laid His hands on them and healed all of them.
  - Just as He had in the synagogue, He silenced the evil spirits, prohibiting them from revealing Him as the "Son of God."

- We will discuss “demons” and “evil spirits” more in Luke 8.
- Why did the people wait until sundown to bring their sick to Jesus?
  - o Probably because the Sabbath day ended at sundown.
  - o The Jewish day ran from sundown to sundown.
  - o Sabbath law restricted them from walking more than a short distance or carrying burdens.
  - o When the sun went down, those restrictions were lifted and they came out with their sick friends to find Jesus.
- The Bible says the whole city was at the door (Mark 1:33).
- Jesus was running a world changing operation out of a fisherman’s house. Probably the most normal and unremarkable house ever.
- That is weird! Who on earth would have expected it to be that way?
- Imagine if someone came up to you and said, “The Messiah is staying two blocks down in your neighborhood!” (Think about how ridiculous that would sound).
  - o Deity could be found in a normal home accessible to everyone, not an exclusive palace sealed off to all but a few.
  - o I think this is one of the most beautiful things about God’s plan.
  - o God’s truth can be found in the most ordinary places and it is sometimes encountered unintentionally in places one would never expect.
  - o On the most ordinary day, a person with open ears can encounter life changing truth.
  - o God’s good news moves through the ordinary in an extraordinary way.

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- APPLICATION:

- o This ought to be a lesson to us not to discard truth because we deem its origin too ordinary.
  - One might think, “This person doesn’t have anything to teach me!”
  - “This person isn’t as educated as me! They have nothing to tell me.”
  - Either of those attitudes would have pushed Christ aside as “too common.”
  - How many people do you think thought the most important news in the history of the world, the news that would affect the souls of all men, past, present, and future, would show up first in a fisherman’s house in average old Capernaum?

- The delivery of the gospel has to be one of its most shocking attributes.
- 

Luk 4:42 And when it was day, he departed and went into a desolate place. And the people sought him and came to him, and would have kept him from leaving them,

Luk 4:43 but he said to them, “I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns as well; for I was sent for this purpose.”

Luk 4:44 And he was preaching in the synagogues of Judea.

- Here we find Jesus, after a long night of helping needy people, rising early in the morning to be with His Father (Mark 1:35-39 is a parallel passage).
  - He was probably tired, but He made prayer a priority.
- 

- APPLICATION:

- There are times when we need to sacrifice physically to make sure our souls are healthy.
  - I don't think that is a very widely practiced spiritual discipline.
  - What does this precedent do to our excuses for not praying, studying, attending worship, or being present to help our brothers and sisters?
    - “I was too tired.”
    - “I was too busy.”
    - “I did a lot of good work already today.”
  - Jesus didn't neglect His time with God or His time helping those who needed Him.
  - Obviously, this can be taken to extremes, but I think Jesus example here is something we could all do a little bit better at.
- 

- According to Mark, when Jesus' disciples found Him they wanted Him to return to the crowd of people waiting for Him.
- “Everyone is looking for you”, they said (Mark 1:37).
- Luke tells us the people “came to Him, and would have kept Him from leaving them” (Luke 4:42).



- The Apostles were probably thinking, “What are you doing!? You’ve got a whole crowd of people down there anxiously waiting to see you.”
- A thought:
  - Why do so many well-known preachers fall into sin?
  - Because they spend too much time with the crowds of people and too little time alone with God.
  - The same is true for any Christian.
  - We can get so busy, even busy with “good works,” that we unknowingly drift away from God because we aren’t being intentional about drawing near to Him.
- Jesus’ response is curious and worth considering.
  - When His Apostles told Him the crowds were waiting for Him, He told them they weren’t going back down to the adoring crowds.
  - Why?
    - Because the gospel needed preaching in other places.
    - Question: Weren’t there more sick people that needed healed down in Capernaum?
    - Yes!
    - Wasn’t that a good work?
    - Yes!
    - But Jesus had priorities.
    - Healing sick people was a good thing, but preaching was a better thing.
    - The message of salvation needed to be preached.

- 
- APPLICATION:
  - I think this is an important lesson for the modern Church and modern Christians.
    - There is a difference between good and better.
    - It is a good thing to go to the lake with your family and appreciate the creation of God.
    - It is a good thing to devote time to learn to play an instrument.
    - It is a good thing to go to the gym and lift weights and be healthy.
    - It is a good thing to put your kids in sports and help them develop as players.

- It is a good thing to have a hobby.
- All of those things are good and there is nothing inherently sinful about any of them.
- But maybe the Church is struggling because Christians are spending a lot of time doing those good things and not enough time pursuing the BETTER things.
- In this text, we see Jesus turning down a good thing to accomplish His better and ultimate purpose.
  - As followers of Christ we have been given a similar better and ultimate purpose.
  - Many of the decisions we face are between good and better!
  - How often do you choose the “good” option over the “better” option?
- Just because we aren’t choosing to sin, doesn’t mean we are being everything God has called us to be.
- The Christian life is not always a choice between black and white, good and bad, right and wrong, it is often a choice between good and better.

- 
- Jesus then took His disciples and began a short preaching tour in the cities and synagogues of Judea.
  - Chapter 4 highlights Jesus’ practice of entering synagogues to teach.
    - Jesus knew where to find people who were interested in spiritual things and He sought them out.
    - We should think about places we can find spiritually minded people or people whose hearts may be ready to start thinking spiritually.
    - Then we should make an effort to reach them.
    - No doubt, we will encounter our own Nazareths and Capernaums.
      - Places the message is rejected.
      - Places the message is received.







# LUKE 5



In 5 minutes...

## WHEN:

- These events took place approximately 30-33 A.D..

## CHARACTERS:

- Jesus - The Savior, son of Mary.
- Simon (Peter) - A fisherman and one of Jesus' 12 Apostles.
- James - Brother of John, fishing companion of Simon, and one of Jesus' 12 Apostles.
- John - Brother of James, fishing companion of Simon, and one of Jesus' 12 Apostles.
- Leper - An unnamed man afflicted by the disease of leprosy who Jesus healed.
- Paralytic - An unnamed paralyzed man who Jesus healed after he was lowered through the roof of a house.
- Levi (Matthew) - A tax collector who Jesus called as one of His 12 Apostles.
- Disciples of John - A group of people who were obedient to John the Baptist's preaching.

## WHERE:

- The events of chapter 5 all take place around the Sea of Galilee and the city of Capernaum.
- The only possible exception is the healing of the leper in verses 12-16, which occurred in "one of the cities."

# LUKE 5



## OVERVIEW:

- THE MIRACLE OF THE FISH (5:1-5:11):
  - + While at the Sea of Gennesaret (Galilee), Jesus used Simon's boat to teach the people gathered on the shore.
  - + When He had finished teaching, He told Simon to cast his fishing net into the sea.
  - + Simon and his companions had fished all night and caught nothing but, at Jesus' word, they threw out the net.
  - + Their nets were filled with so many fish they started to break.
  - + When the fish were brought to land, Jesus called Simon, James, and John to become "fishers of men."
- JESUS HEALS A MAN WITH LEPROSY (5:12-5:16):
  - + A man who was "full of leprosy" confidently approached Jesus and asked Him to heal him.
  - + Jesus healed the man, told him not to say anything about his healing, but to show himself to the priests.
- JESUS HEALS A PARALYZED MAN (5:17-5:26):
  - + Jesus was in a house teaching a huge crowd of people from Galilee, Judea, and Jerusalem.
  - + 4 men approached the house carrying a paralyzed man on a bed.
  - + They wanted Jesus to heal the man but were unable to reach Him because of the press of the crowd.
  - + The 4 men decided to take the paralyzed man up on the roof of the house, tear the roof apart, and lower the paralyzed man down to Jesus.
  - + After descending through the roof, Jesus forgave the paralyzed man's sins.
  - + The scribes and Pharisees were angry that Jesus suggested He had the power to forgive sins.
  - + As evidence of His power, Jesus healed the paralyzed man and he got up, took his bed, and walked home.
- JESUS CALLS LEVI TO BE HIS DISCIPLE (5:27-5:32):
  - + Levi, also known as Matthew, was a tax collector in the Capernaum area.
  - + Jesus called Him to follow Him.
  - + Levi immediately left his tax booth and followed Jesus.
  - + The Pharisees and scribes accused Jesus questioned Jesus about associating with tax collectors and sinners.
- JOHN'S DISCIPLES ASK JESUS ABOUT FASTING (5:33-5:39):
  - + Some of John's followers came to Jesus and asked why He didn't teach His followers to fast.
  - + Jesus told them that His disciples would fast but not while He, the bridegroom, was with them.
  - + He then told them the parable of the garment and wineskin.

## BIG PICTURE:

- In this chapter, Jesus started calling His 12 Apostles. These men were going to be integral in the early church and would take the gospel message to the world. They will appear throughout the rest of the New Testament.
- In this chapter, Jesus heals two men of physical diseases and one man of spiritual disease (sin). These miracles are our confidence He can do the same for us.

## TAKEAWAYS:

- Jesus has sovereign control over nature. Before we go out into nature and try to accomplish anything, we should pray to God for success and safety.
- Jesus wants all men to be His followers. No matter how low you are in public opinion, Jesus wants and welcomes you to follow Him.





## LUKE 5

Luk 5:1 On one occasion, while the crowd was pressing in on him to hear the word of God, he was standing by the lake of Gennesaret,

Luk 5:2 and he saw two boats by the lake, but the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets.

Luk 5:3 Getting into one of the boats, which was Simon's, he asked him to put out a little from the land. And he sat down and taught the people from the boat.

Luk 5:4 And when he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch."

Luk 5:5 And Simon answered, "Master, we toiled all night and took nothing! But at your word I will let down the nets."

Luk 5:6 And when they had done this, they enclosed a large number of fish, and their nets were breaking.

Luk 5:7 They signaled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink.

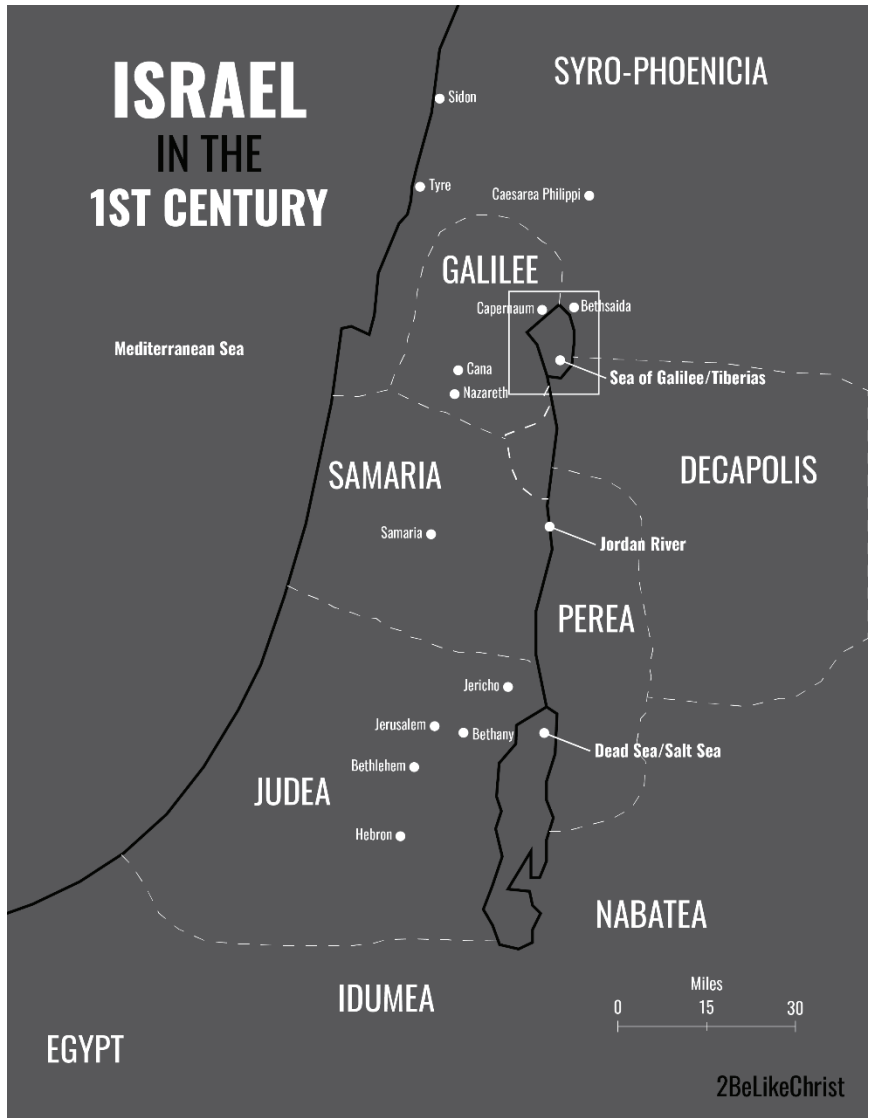
Luk 5:8 But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord."

Luk 5:9 For he and all who were with him were astonished at the catch of fish that they had taken,

Luk 5:10 and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching men."

Luk 5:11 And when they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed him.

- We don't usually look at this many verses at once, but in this case I think it may be helpful.
- In the last chapter, Jesus was healing sick people and teaching in the synagogues of Galilee.
- Chapter 5 opens with the crowds surrounding Him as He walks by the lake of Gennesaret.
  - o This body of water is more popularly known as the Sea of Galilee.



- If you haven't already discovered, the Sea of Galilee goes by many names:
  - Sea of Galilee
  - Sea of Tiberius
  - Lake of Gennesaret
  - Sea of Chinnereth (Kinneret)
  - Sea of Ginosar
  - Sea of Minya
- A few facts:
  - Galilee is the lowest freshwater lake on earth.
  - It has a circumference of 33 miles.
  - It is 13 miles long.
  - It is 8.1 miles wide.
  - It has a maximum depth of 141 ft.
- Jesus was walking by the sea, surrounded by crowds of people, when He came upon two fishing boats either on the shore or anchored in the shallows.
- The fishermen were outside the boats cleaning their fishing nets.
  - Whenever you drag a net through the water you inevitably catch things you never intended to catch: sticks, rocks, seaweed, stuff other fishermen left in the sea, etc...
  - It would have been very common to see fishermen cleaning up their nets after a fishing trip.
- Jesus got into Simon's (Peter's) boat and asked him to take the boat into the water just offshore.
- When Simon did, Jesus taught the crowds on the shore while sitting in the boat.
- When He finished teaching, Jesus told Simon to take the boat out into deeper water and let the nets out.
- Simon told Jesus he and his fishing companions had been fishing all night and caught nothing, but he would do it because Jesus told him to.
- When they dropped the nets, "they enclosed a large number of fish," so many their boat and their partner's boat began to sink under the weight.
- Upon seeing the miracle, Simon Peter fell at Jesus' feet and expressed his unworthiness to be in the company of the Lord.
  - "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord."

- We don't know the backstory of many of the Apostles, but it could have been that Peter was living a life full of sin before following Jesus.
  - It's also possible he was just a very humble man, aware of his own imperfections.
- 

- APPLICATION:

- If you can't imagine yourself making the same statement Peter made here, you might think too much of yourself!
  - Peter thought a sinner's boat wasn't a place Jesus would want to be.
  - But Peter wasn't telling Jesus anything He didn't already know.
  - Jesus was exactly where He wanted to be!
  - You can't surprise Jesus with how sinful you are... He already knows... and He wants to be in your boat 😊.
- 

- Jesus then called Simon to a higher purpose than fishing the waters of Galilee, He was going to make him into a fisherman for men.
- Instead of a physical net, the good news of Jesus would be Simon's tool to draw men to God.
- The crowd of people standing on the shore were astonished at the miracle and the multitude of fish.
- When Simon, James, and John brought their boats to shore, they "left everything and followed" Jesus.
- I want to know what they did with the fish.
  - Did they leave all the fish on the boat?
  - It sounds like it!
  - How does a fisherman leave the catch of his life behind?
  - Answer: He finds a greater treasure!
  - The actions of Simon, James, and John in Luke 5 exemplify the lessons taught in Jesus' parables (parable of the treasure in the field and the parable of the pearl, Matthew 13:44-46).
- Does Luke 5 contradict Matthew 4 and Mark 1?
  - It is easy to get this incident confused with Jesus' meeting with Peter and Andrew at the Sea of Galilee in Matthew 4 and Mark 1.

- I do not believe the account in Luke 5 is a parallel to the events at the sea in Matthew 4 and Mark 1.
- The details are similar enough to confuse some people, but also different in significant ways.
  - Jesus met the men at the sea, told them He would make them fishers of men, and then they followed Him.
  - But Matthew and Mark don't mention the miracle of the fish.
  - Matthew and Mark don't mention Peter's exclamation of his sinfulness.
  - In addition, Matthew and Mark place Jesus' first meeting with the men before the healing of Simon's mother-in-law.
  - Luke places Jesus meeting of the men and the miracle of the fish after the healing of Simon's mother-in-law (Luke 4:38-39).
- My understanding is that this is a different occurrence.
  - Jesus returned to the sea around Capernaum.
  - He found the partners fishing (which they probably did every day because it was their profession).
  - Knowing Simon and having stayed at his house, Jesus got into his boat and started preaching.
  - He then blessed the fishermen and the onlooking crowd with the miracle of fish.
  - Following the catch, He reaffirmed His call on Peter's life to make him a fisher of men.
    - Some people suggest its unreasonable to think Jesus would tell Peter to follow Him a second time after already mentioning it to him in Matthew 4 and Mark 1.
    - But I don't believe it is unreasonable at all.
      - Jesus was asking them to turn their lives upside down.
      - To leave their careers, follow Him, and to never live the lives they dreamed out for themselves.
      - If you were asking someone to make that kind of change, it is unreasonable to think you wouldn't have to reaffirm a few things to them.
    - In addition, Jesus had just given them additional proof that He was someone worth following.

- Having witnessed the miracle, Simon, James, and John would have had more reason than ever before to believe Jesus and follow Him. So it makes sense he would reaffirm His call on their lives.
  - Imagine that I came to you and said, “Follow me and I can make you rich.”
  - A few days later, I came back and performed a miracle.
  - I made \$10,000 appear in my hand out of nothing.
  - Then I repeated my invitation, “Follow me and I can make you rich.”
  - It makes sense I would repeat the offer after giving you proof of my ability to keep my word.

Luk 5:12 While he was in one of the cities, there came a man full of leprosy. And when he saw Jesus, he fell on his face and begged him, “Lord, if you will, you can make me clean.”

Luk 5:13 And Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him, saying, “I will; be clean.” And immediately the leprosy left him.

Luk 5:14 And he charged him to tell no one, but “go and show yourself to the priest, and make an offering for your cleansing, as Moses commanded, for a proof to them.”

Luk 5:15 But now even more the report about him went abroad, and great crowds gathered to hear him and to be healed of their infirmities.

Luk 5:16 But he would withdraw to desolate places and pray.

- This appears to be the same account recorded in Matthew 8 and Mark 1.
- When Jesus came down from the mountain where He preached the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7) He was surrounded by crowds and approached by a man with leprosy.
  - Luke tells us the man was “full of leprosy.”
  - Leprosy usually starts in one spot in the skins and spreads slowly through the body.
  - So, this man’s case was very advanced.
- What is Leprosy?
  - Leprosy is also known as Hansen’s Disease.
  - It is caused by a bacterial attack on the nerves.
  - The bacteria is slow acting and some people can be infected for years without the telltale symptoms.

- The bacteria causes skin deformity and nerve damage.
- If untreated, leprosy will cause hand and/or foot paralysis.
- Other injuries often occur due to lack of feeling in the extremities.
- Fingers and toes are commonly lost.
- Loss of vision and nasal deformity are also common with advanced Hansen's.
- Treatment for leprosy was developed in the 1940s (antibiotics).
- According to the Law of Moses, a person diagnosed with leprosy was considered unclean and was not allowed to associate with their "clean" countrymen.
  - Lev 13:3 - and the priest shall examine the diseased area on the skin of his body. And if the hair in the diseased area has turned white and the disease appears to be deeper than the skin of his body, it is a case of leprous disease. When the priest has examined him, he shall pronounce him unclean.
- We don't know what knowledge the leprose man had of Jesus, all we know is his faith in Jesus' ability to heal him was pure and untainted by any doubts.
  - He approached Jesus with full confidence in His ability to heal.
  - "Lord, if you will, you can make me clean."
- Jesus was pleased to give him the healing he requested.
  - Throughout His ministry, Jesus showed a willingness to bless those who showed faith in Him and who asked.
  - This man's request wasn't small, but he knew he wasn't asking a small God.

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- APPLICATION:

- We may have faith in Jesus' power.
- We may verbally acknowledge and believe in our hearts that Jesus has power to do anything He wants.
- And maybe we have a big need, or maybe we have a dream of being used by God in a big way,
- Have you ever had a big need or a big dream but you only pray about the little things?
- You have big goals, but you have little prayers?
- You want God to use you in big ways, but you dial back your prayers to things you think are "reasonably achievable"?
- Do you take your dream of accomplishing big things in God's kingdom, water it down, and then ask God for something less than what you hope to

accomplish?

- Why do we do that?
  - We should pray like the man with leprosy.
  - If you have big requests, bring them boldly to a big God!
- 

○ APPLICATION:

- Mark 1:41 tells us Jesus healed the man being “moved with pity.”
  - It is sometimes hard to have pity on someone far removed from our reality.
  - Sometimes, to have pity on someone we have to have some knowledge of their pain.
  - Isn't it beautiful to think God isn't so far removed from us as to be unable to sympathize with our suffering?
  - There would be no Jesus if the God in heaven was pitiless.
  - Jesus didn't walk the earth in rigid stoicism.
  - God doesn't watch over the universe in unfeeling sovereignty.
  - Psalm 145:8 The Lord is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.
- 

- Upon healing the leprous man, Jesus told him to go present himself to the priests and make an offering for his healing.
  - Interestingly, even though there were no known cures for leprosy at the time, the Old Testament law gave instruction about what to do if someone was cured.
  - You can read these instructions in Leviticus 14.
- The miracle brought Jesus a lot of attention and “great crowds” started gathering to listen to Him teach and heal the sick.
- It is interesting that Luke takes the time to mention Jesus' tendency to withdraw from the crowds to pray.
  - This detail is included in almost all (if not all) gospels.
  - It must be an important detail and an example worth following.
  - You can't help other people spiritually if your personal relationship with God isn't in good shape.
- The Parallels between Leprosy and Sin in the Old Testament:



- There are a lot of similarities between the way leprosy and sin are presented in the Bible.
  - I want to highlight a few to give you an idea:
    - Those with leprosy in the Old Testament were considered unclean and removed from the camp.
      - Sin defiles us and separates us from the presence of God.
    - Leprosy was contagious and a leper risked infecting others.
      - Our sin and the consequences of our sins can infect the lives of others.
      - Many suffer as a result of sin infected hearts around them.
    - If a person was found to have even one spot of leprosy on their body, they were pronounced unclean and removed from the uninfected.
      - Just one sin is enough to render a person unclean and unfit for the presence of a pure and holy God.
    - Leprosy starts small, but eventually infects the whole body.
      - Sin began in the heart of one man and woman and has spread across the human race.
      - Sin may start small in an individual's life but has the destructive power to destroy the body and soul.
    - There was no medication or man-made remedy for leprosy during the Bible times.
      - There was no medication or man-made remedy for sin during the Bible times or modern times.
    - The Old Testament priests were given instructions in the Law how to identify leprosy, but not how to cure it.
      - The Old Testament Law made it possible to identify sin but did not give a solution to fix it once it occurred.
    - If a leper was healed by God, he/she was to be sprinkled with blood (Leviticus 14:6-7).
      - Healing from sin comes by the sprinkling of Jesus' blood (1 Peter 1:2; Hebrews 12:24).
- 

- APPLICATION:

- You'll notice from the text that Jesus' healing power was immediate!

- We don't know how long this man had suffered, but leprosy was a disease that would have caused the inflicted pain every day.
- Not to mention the newly infected would have to face the horrors of their future every time they returned to the leper colony and saw those with more advanced cases.
- Imagine this man, perhaps enduring years of pain and anxiety.
- He came to Jesus and was healed in an instant.
- I am not yet old, but I have begun to notice the slight signals of aging.
  - I have pain after going to gym.
  - I have a bit less hair.
  - Certain things just don't work as well as they once did.
  - I can't imagine what it will be like in 60 years.
  - I wish my body would grow younger instead of older.
  - Physically speaking, I'm not looking forward to what is ahead.
- But it is a sweet thought and hope to me that when I've gotten old and tired of my confinement in a broken-down body, after I've endured years of pain and frustration and handicap... In an instant, Jesus will make me new again.

---

Luk 5:17 On one of those days, as he was teaching, Pharisees and teachers of the law were sitting there, who had come from every village of Galilee and Judea and from Jerusalem. And the power of the Lord was with him to heal.

Luk 5:18 And behold, some men were bringing on a bed a man who was paralyzed, and they were seeking to bring him in and lay him before Jesus,

Luk 5:19 but finding no way to bring him in, because of the crowd, they went up on the roof and let him down with his bed through the tiles into the midst before Jesus.

- We aren't told the location of this miracle in Luke's gospel, but from Matthew's writing it appears to have been in Capernaum.
  - Mat 9:1 And getting into a boat he crossed over and came to **his own city**.
  - Capernaum was considered home (Mark 2:1).
  - Mar 2:1 And when he returned to Capernaum after some days, it was reported that he was at home.

- On this particular day, many of the Jewish religious leaders from the region had gathered to hear Jesus.
- A paralyzed, bed-bound man was brought to the home where Jesus was staying.
  - But the four men carrying the bed were unable to get to Jesus because of the crowd surrounding the house.
  - Mark tells us “there was no more room, not even at the door” (Mark 2:2).
  - Being unwavering in their determination to get healing for their bedbound friend, the 4 men took the man, bed and all, up on the roof.
  - They proceeded to take the roof apart and then lower their friend’s bed down through the hole they made.
- This may be hard for a modern reader to picture.
  - If you were going to send someone down through the roof of a modern house you would need to scale the side of the structure, tear off the shingles, cut through the wood frame with your hacksaw, and then destroy the drywall ceiling while navigating electrical dangers.
  - But 1<sup>st</sup> century homes were a little different.
  - They were usually made of a combination of stone, mortar, and earth and had flat roofs with a stairway on the side of the house allowing easy access (no shaky ladder required).
  - Their roofs were used for all kinds of things:
    - Drying fruits
    - Hanging Laundry
    - Sleeping
    - Relaxing
    - Praying
    - When the Lord called Peter to go to Cornelius’ house he was up on the housetop (Acts 10:9).
  - The ancient roof was a functional part of the home.
  - You can imagine the commotion they must have made as they “made an opening” in the roof, not to mention the ridiculing eyes of those who thought they were rude for interrupting Jesus.

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- APPLICATION:

- I imagine there were some people in the crowd who were annoyed with these guys.
  - Perhaps the homeowners were mad at them.
  - But they didn't care, they needed to get to Jesus.
  - We should have the same determination to get to Jesus and to help others get to Jesus.
  - We need to do whatever it takes, no matter who looks down on us, or who is annoyed with us, to get to the Savior who can help us.
- 

○ APPLICATION:

- Do you think Jesus was interrupted by this man? Do you think He was caught mid-sentence when He was trying to articulate an important point? Do you think He found it inconvenient?
  - Probably not!
  - Jesus knew ahead of time the man was coming through the roof and He knew exactly when the dust from the ceiling was going to start falling on His head.
  - I'm certain, Jesus had said all He intended to say by the time the paralytic descended to see Him.
  - Jesus had taught them with His words and was about to teach them with His actions.
- Sometimes, when things don't turn out as we expect, we have a tendency to think we are experiencing an interruption in God's plan for our lives.
  - But I don't think we should think that way.
  - God is never interrupted.
  - Our plan may be interrupted, but God's plan is most definitely still on schedule.
  - We need to realize God's timing may not align with ours.
  - Why?
    - Perhaps we need to stay in a particular set of circumstances longer than we anticipated because God still has something to teach us.

- Perhaps we won't get to stay in a particular set of circumstances as long as we hope because God has something new to teach us elsewhere.
  - What appear as interruptions to us may be important parts of God's providential plan.
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Luk 5:20 And when he saw their faith, he said, "Man, your sins are forgiven you."

Luk 5:21 And the scribes and the Pharisees began to question, saying, "Who is this who speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God alone?"

Luk 5:22 When Jesus perceived their thoughts, he answered them, "Why do you question in your hearts?"

Luk 5:23 Which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven you,' or to say, 'Rise and walk'?

Luk 5:24 But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins"—he said to the man who was paralyzed—"I say to you, rise, pick up your bed and go home."

Luk 5:25 And immediately he rose up before them and picked up what he had been lying on and went home, glorifying God.

Luk 5:26 And amazement seized them all, and they glorified God and were filled with awe, saying, "We have seen extraordinary things today."

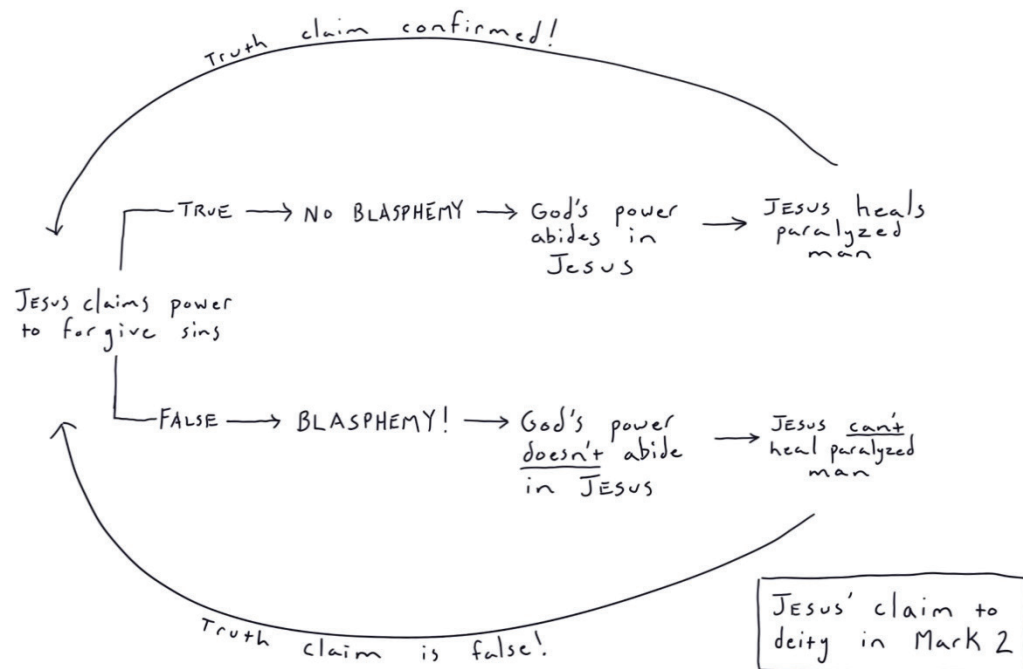
- If the crowd was annoyed, Jesus wasn't.
  - He welcomed the man descending through the sunlit hole and said to him, "Man, your sins are forgiven you."
    - As we discussed in the Matthew 9 and Mark 2 studies, that probably wasn't what the man really came to hear.
      - He came for a physical healing.
      - Jesus spoke of a spiritual healing.
    - Jesus took this opportunity to teach the people a lesson.
      - We see Jesus' priorities being communicated here.
      - He didn't come to earth just to heal oppressive diseases and physical maladies, He came to save men from their ultimate oppressor, Satan and sin.
      - Which is why He spoke to the man about forgiven sin.
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- APPLICATION:

- We should mimic this example.
- We may have the ability to help someone with a physical need.
- While doing that, we should use it as an opportunity to speak about spiritual needs.
- Here, Jesus was giving out a temporal blessing to lead into conversation about the eternal.
- When churches and Christians think about charity/benevolence they should be thinking the same way.

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- When the scribes and Pharisees heard Jesus announce this man's sins forgiven, they were offended and accused Jesus of blasphemy (disrespecting God) in their hearts.
    - They thought Jesus had spoken out of line because only God could forgive sins.
    - They were partially right and partially wrong.
      - What they got right was that God was the only one who could forgive sins.
      - Sin is an offense to God and only the offended party can extend forgiveness for the offense.
      - But they were wrong about Jesus' committing blasphemy.
      - Why? Jesus was about to show them, and in the process, unmistakably claim to be God.
  - Jesus asked the scribes, "which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven you,' or to say, 'Rise and walk'?"
    - Technically, anyone could walk around claiming to forgive sins (forgiveness of sins is an unobservable spiritual reality).
    - Anyone can say anything they want, but it doesn't make it true.
    - What proof did Jesus have?
    - In order to prove His ability to forgive sins, He was prepared to present miraculous evidence.
    - He proceeded to heal the legs of the paralytic man in front of the crowd and they all observe as the man picked up his bed and walked out of the house.

- Jesus' miracles proved two things, (1) He had not blasphemed God, (2) He had the power to forgive sins because He was God.
  - o The Pharisees acknowledged a man would be unable to perform miraculous signs without the power of God.
  - o John 3:2 – Rabbi we know that you are a teacher come from God, for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with him.
  - o Jesus would not have been able to heal a man with the power of God if He had just blasphemed God.
  - o If God's power still rested on Jesus after claiming He could forgive sins, He must really have had the power to forgive sins.
  - o And the Pharisees had already mentally acknowledged that only God could forgive sins.



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- o Can you imagine having Jesus read your mind, create an argument against what you were thinking, and then present it directly to your face?
- o That would be hard to forget!
- o Why didn't the Pharisees and scribes accept this argument?
  - 1. They were biased against it.
  - 2. They attempted to find a way around it by attributing Jesus' power to the devil (we will discuss this more in Luke 11:14-23).

- The crowd was stunned when they saw the man get up and walk away.
- Many of them may have known the man (Capernaum wasn't a huge place; most historians suggest a population between 1,000-2,000 people).

Luk 5:27 After this he went out and saw a tax collector named Levi, sitting at the tax booth. And he said to him, "Follow me."

Luk 5:28 And leaving everything, he rose and followed him.

- Jesus continued on His way through Capernaum and there found Matthew (also called Levi, Mark 2:14) sitting at a tax booth.
- Matthew was a tax collector who worked for the Roman government to collect tax money from his fellow Jews.
- Jewish Tax Collectors in the 1st Century:
  - o The Jews hated many of the tax collectors.
  - o This was true for the obvious reason (nobody likes giving their money to the government or seeing the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) show up at their door).
  - o But it was also true because many of these tax collectors were Jewish sell-outs. They were Jews who worked for the ruling Romans.
  - o In a way, they were turning their back on their people and their people's dream of independence and working for the enemy.
  - o In addition to these reasons, tax collectors were notorious for being thieves.
    - To illustrate, the Romans might issue a tax of 5 dollars.
    - The tax collector would tell his fellow Jews the Romans wanted 7 dollars.
    - He would collect the money, give 5 dollars to Rome, and keep the extra 2 dollars for himself.
    - Many became wealthy through dishonesty.
- Imagine the response of the other Apostles when the Lord stopped at this tax booth and asked Matthew to follow Him.
  - o Many of Jesus' followers probably couldn't believe He would go up to someone like this and ask him to follow Him.
  - o It was likely an ego check for some of them!
  - o Initially, the Apostles probably thought they were pretty special because the Messiah had selected them to join Him, but now Jesus had selecting Matthew who everyone considered despicable.



- Have you ever been chosen for a team thinking it was an exclusive privilege, only to find out after the rest of the team members were recruited that the team wasn't that exclusive after all?
    - The Apostles may have felt that way.
  - Jesus was putting all of these men on the same level, which may have been hard for some of them to swallow.
    - They could have quit following Jesus in offense.
    - "If you are going to pair me up with this guy, I'm out of here!"
    - But to their credit they didn't.
  - What was important for them to realize was that they all needed Jesus just as badly as the sinful tax collector.
- After calling Matthew to follow Him, Jesus was invited to a feast in Matthew's house (Luke 5:29)
  - The text says the other guests were a combination of "tax collectors and sinners" (Mat 9:10).
  - While they were eating, the Pharisees peered their heads through the door or window and judged Jesus.
  - They asked His disciples, "If this man is really the Messiah of Israel, why is He spending time with the rabble of this town" (paraphrase).
  - They probably thought the Messiah would spend His time with them because they were the religious "elite."
  - Jesus told them He allotted time to the sinners because those who are healthy don't need the doctor.
    - Sick people need the doctor.
    - The "sinners" in Levi's house were certainly sin-sick.
  - That wasn't to say the Pharisees were spiritually healthy. The Pharisees' problem was that they were too arrogant to recognize their ailment and seek help. Their pride blinded them to the fact that they needed Jesus as badly as all the other sinners.
    - If a medical patient refuses to accept they are sick, a doctor can't do much for them.
    - If a patient is willing to accept their condition, the doctor can help.
    - The Pharisees couldn't open their mind to the possibility they were sin-sick.

- Jesus planned to spend His time with those who would accept His help.
  - Later on, in His ministry, Jesus told a parable that illustrated this point very well.
    - Two men went into the Temple to pray, one was a tax collector and the other a Pharisee.
    - The Pharisee prayed:
      - “Lord, thank you for not making me like this tax collector over here!”
      - “I don’t commit adultery.”
      - “I don’t steal.”
      - “I’m not an extortioner.”
      - “Thank you for making me such a good person!”
    - The tax collector prayed:
      - “Lord, have mercy on me because I am a sinner”
      - He wouldn’t even lift his eyes up to heaven because he was ashamed of his sin.
    - Two men, but with very different perceptions about how badly they needed God’s help.
    - Jesus said, it was the tax collector who went away justified.
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- APPLICATION:
  - I think it is human nature to play the comparison game with sin.
  - “Well, I’m not perfect, but I don’t sin as bad as that guy.”
  - Morally elevating ourselves compared to others causes us to forget the most important thing we all need to remember... We’ve all sinned, and we all need the Doctor.
  - No one, no matter how morally upright they think they’ve been, can escape the consequences of sin without Jesus.
  - A repented murderer/pedophile/drug dealer/(insert the worst sin you can think of here) covered by the blood of Christ will be better off on Judgement Day than a “good person” who saw no need for Jesus in their life.
  - That is how inadequate we are to save ourselves and how adequate Christ is to save the broken.

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Luk 5:33 And they said to him, “The disciples of John fast often and offer prayers, and so do the disciples of the Pharisees, but yours eat and drink.”

Luk 5:34 And Jesus said to them, “Can you make wedding guests fast while the bridegroom is with them?”

Luk 5:35 The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast in those days.”

Luk 5:36 He also told them a parable: “No one tears a piece from a new garment and puts it on an old garment. If he does, he will tear the new, and the piece from the new will not match the old.

Luk 5:37 And no one puts new wine into old wineskins. If he does, the new wine will burst the skins and it will be spilled, and the skins will be destroyed.

Luk 5:38 But new wine must be put into fresh wineskins.

Luk 5:39 And no one after drinking old wine desires new, for he says, ‘The old is good.’”

- At this point, John, Zechariah and Elizabeth’s son, had been arrested and thrown in prison by Herod.
- Although absent from Luke’s account, Matthew tells us this question about fasting was posed to Jesus by some of John’s disciples (Mat 9:14).
- In the Old Testament, fasting was commanded on the Day of Atonement, but many of the Jews practiced additional religious fasting.
- According to these disciples, both the followers of John and the Pharisees participated in voluntary fasting.
- These men wanted to know why Jesus didn’t teach His disciples to fast.
- To understand Jesus’ response, it is important to understand a little bit about fasting. Why was it done? When was it done?
  - o Fasting and prayer were often coupled together (as seen in verse 33).
  - o Fasting was often done when a big decision was to be made, a person was seeking the guidance of God, or during times of trial and sorrow.
- Jesus used an illustration that appears several times in the Scriptures, Him as a bridegroom and His followers as a bride.
  - o Jesus appears to be saying, “This is not a time for My followers to fast and be sorrowful, God, the Messiah is here to bring salvation to the world (a time of

rejoicing).

- “And if My disciples need guidance of any kind, they can come directly to Me and ask.”
- “There is no need to seek blessing or direction through fasting at present.”
- A day would come when Jesus would return to heaven and then there would be times when Jesus’ followers would fast (see Acts 13:2; 14:23).
- Jesus then presented two illustrations:
  - (1) You don’t put a new piece of cloth on an old garment.
    - Why?
    - Have you ever bought a new sweater at the store, it fits great, you wear it one time and love it, but then you put it in the washer, and it shrinks 3 sizes?
    - In contrast, your old sweater, the one you’ve had for 7.5 years, it doesn’t shrink anymore, it completed that process a long time ago.
    - This shrinking phenomenon is the reason you don’t use a new piece of cloth to patch up an old garment
      - Let’s say you use a new piece of cloth to patch up an old piece of clothing.
      - What will happen when the garment is washed for the first time?
      - Answer: the patch of new cloth will shrink, the old garment will not shrink, and the threads will tear and make the original hole even bigger.
  - (2) You don’t put new wine in old wineskins.
    - This is a bit more difficult for modern readers to understand (unless you work at a vineyard).
    - This illustration involves the principles of fermentation.
    - In the 1st Century, grape farmers took their fresh grape juice and put it into a wineskin (usually made of animal hides).



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- You don't put new wine (new grape juice) into an old wineskin.
  - Why?
  - The answer is similar to Jesus' first illustration.
  - New grape juice expands as it ferments.
  - But an old wineskin is no longer flexible and pliable, and it will not expand with the juice.
  - So, if you put new juice into an old wineskin, the new wine will expand so much it will burst the old skin and all your juice will leak out.
- But if you put new juice into a new wineskin, that new skin is flexible enough to expand as the fermentation process takes place.
- Now that we understand the pictures Jesus was describing, we can begin to understand what He was trying to communicate.
  - Before we take a shot at the interpretation, I should say, I find the interpretation of these parables a bit challenging.
  - I think what Jesus was trying to communicate here was that His teaching, the new covenant He was delivering, was not going to be just a patched-up version of the Old Law of the Jews.
  - If they tried to interpret it as nothing more than the old traditions patched up with some new principles, they were going to miss the point.
  - This was a really important point because many of the Jews tried very hard to hold on to the Old Law even as they adopted the message of Christ.
- These two contrary elements couldn't work together.

- Under the Old Law (Law of Moses) a person was justified by their works.
  - But everyone was a sinner.
  - So, no one was justified.
- Under the New Law (Law of Christ) a person is justified based on the righteousness of Jesus and His sacrifice for them.
- Justification in the Old Law and the New Law don't mix and by using these illustrations Jesus was trying to communicate that fact to them.
- The New Covenant cannot be contained in the same rituals and practices of the Old.
- Jesus' statement in verse 39 is not in Matthew's account.
  - "And no one after drinking old wine desires new, for he says, 'The old is good.'"
    - Typically, older wine is considered better.
    - People prefer the taste.
  - But why did Jesus bring this up?
  - I think He was making a statement about preference.
  - Once you've tasted the better option, you won't choose the lesser of the two.
  - I believe the idea here is that, in listening to Jesus' message about the Kingdom of God, the disciples had tasted something better than the Old Testament Law and the rigid practices of its practitioners.
  - Having tasted the better of the two systems, they would not want to return to the system of their ancestors.
  - Jesus' new way was better in every way (which is the message of the book of Hebrews).
- Even though their initial question was only about fasting, it seems Jesus was giving them a broader principle with which to evaluate all of the questions they had about His ministry and teaching.









# LUKE 6



In 5 minutes...

## WHEN:

- The events of chapter 6 were part of Jesus' ministry on earth.
- These events took place approximately 30-33 A.D..

## CHARACTERS:

- Jesus - The Savior, son of Mary.
- Pharisees - Religious leaders who kept the Law of Moses with strict rigor.
- Scribes - Religious "experts" who interpreted the Law of Moses and could draft legal documents.
- Man with Withered Hand - A handicapped man who Jesus healed on the Sabbath day.
- The 12 Apostles - All 12 are named in this chapter.

## WHERE:

- The specific locations of the events of chapter 6 are not mentioned, but it is almost certain they occurred in Galilee, perhaps around Capernaum.
- In verse 12, Jesus ascends an unnamed mountain to pray.
- In verse 17, He descends the mountain to teach a crowd of people.

# LUKE 6



## OVERVIEW:

- JESUS ACCUSED OF BREAKING THE SABBATH (6:1-6:5):
  - + One particular Sabbath, Jesus' disciples were picking and eating heads of grain from a grainfield.
  - + The Pharisees accused them of breaking Sabbath day law.
  - + Jesus corrected the way the Pharisees interpreted the law and told them He was the lord of the Sabbath.
- JESUS HEALS A WITHERED HAND (6:6-6:11):
  - + While in the synagogue on the Sabbath day, Jesus saw a man with a withered right hand.
  - + The scribes and Pharisees watched to see if Jesus would heal the man so they could accuse Him of "working" and breaking Sabbath law.
  - + Jesus rebuked the scribes and Pharisees for hypocrisy and healed the man's withered hand.
- JESUS SELECTS HIS APOSTLES (6:12-6:16):
  - + Jesus went up a mountain and prayed all night.
  - + In the morning, He descended the mountain and selected 12 Apostles: Simon (Peter), Andrew, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew (Levi), Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus, Simon the Zealot, Judas the son of James, and Judas Iscariot.
- JESUS TEACHES THE PEOPLE (6:17-6:49):
  - + Jesus descended the mountain and began teaching the people.
  - + Jesus taught the poor in spirit, those hungry for righteousness, and the persecuted would be blessed.
  - + He spoke "woes" against those who trusted in their riches and courted the favor of men.
  - + He taught the people to love their enemies and not retaliate when someone did evil to them.
  - + Jesus told them not to judge others unjustly or in hypocrisy.
  - + He compared them to fruit trees, a good person producing good fruit, a bad person producing bad fruit.
  - + His teaching concluded with another comparison, this time to the builder of a house.
  - + A person who heard Jesus' teaching and applied it was like a man who built his house on a deep foundation.
  - + A person who heard Jesus' teaching and did not apply it was like a man who built his house without a foundation.
  - + When the flood came, the house on the foundation survived but the house with no foundation was destroyed.

## BIG PICTURE:

- This chapter reveals the Jew's deep misunderstanding of God and His Old Testament Law.
- The scribes and the Pharisees were supposed to be the teachers of the Law but Jesus exposes them as corrupt.
- Who knows how many honest Jews were misguided by these so-called "teachers."
- This was a serious underlying problem that would have impacted the way the Jews thought about the Messiah.
- Jesus came to clarify the nature and heart of God.

## TAKEAWAYS:

- The Pharisees accused Jesus of breaking the Sabbath based on man-made traditions. We need to be cautious we aren't judging others on the standard of our tradition. We don't have the right to judge where God has not judged.
- Have you prayed for an enemy lately? Try to think of someone whose actions you dislike and pray for them. Was it easy to pray for them? If not, why? What does it tell you about your heart?



## LUKE 6

Luk 6:1 On a Sabbath, while he was going through the grainfields, his disciples plucked and ate some heads of grain, rubbing them in their hands.

Luk 6:2 But some of the Pharisees said, “Why are you doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath?”

Luk 6:3 And Jesus answered them, “Have you not read what David did when he was hungry, he and those who were with him:

Luk 6:4 how he entered the house of God and took and ate the bread of the Presence, which is not lawful for any but the priests to eat, and also gave it to those with him?”

Luk 6:5 And he said to them, “The Son of Man is lord of the Sabbath.”

- This same incident is recorded in Matthew 12 and Mark 2.
- Matthew’s account records a few more details than Luke’s.
- It was the Sabbath Day (Saturday) and the Pharisees accused Jesus’ disciples of doing “work,” which was not allowed on Sabbath.
  - o Sabbath was meant to be a day of rest for the Jews.
  - o God had given specific commands about what should and shouldn’t be done on Sabbath in the Old Testament Law.
  - o Over the years, a lot of man-made rules had been added to God’s Sabbath instructions.
  - o Those additional man-made traditions weren’t always good things.
- According to the traditions, not God’s Law, picking a handful of grain on Sabbath fell under the “work” category.
- When the Pharisees saw Jesus’ disciples picking grain, they thought they had caught Jesus approving of their Law breaking.
  - o You can imagine how closely the Pharisees must have watched Jesus as they stalked Him every day just waiting for Him to give them some ammunition.



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○ APPLICATION:

- When religious commands are weaponized to condemn others, while being stripped of any God focused meaning, we've got a problem with our religion.
- The Pharisees observed the Sabbath, but not in devotion to God.
- They observed the Sabbath so they could look down their noses at other people who didn't do it as well as them.
- We can observe "religious commands" without worship in our hearts, but

instead so that we can claim to be the best “Bible followers” and look down our noses at others.

- Being a “Bible authoritarian” and a true worshipper of God are two different things.
  - Jesus was about to lay this out for the Pharisees.
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- In response to the Pharisees’ accusation, Jesus described a situation where King David ate the “holy bread.”
  - You can read this account in 1 Samuel 21:1-7.
  - The holy bread was a special bread made by the priests and it was only to be eaten by priests (Lev 24:5-9).
- 1 Samuel tells us about a time when David (before becoming king of Israel) ate this special bread, even though he wasn’t a priest.
- At the time, he was in desperate need of food because he was running for his life.
- Why did Jesus bring this up?
- Let me present two explanations for Jesus’ words and later I will tell you which I prefer.
  - (1) Some argue Jesus brought this example up because David’s actions were **condemnable**.
    - The Jewish elite held David in high respect and, while quick to condemn Jesus, they never condemned David for eating the holy bread.
    - In excusing David, they revealed their hypocrisy when they condemned Jesus’ disciples.
  - (2) Others argue Jesus brought this example up because David’s actions were **not condemnable**.
    - Although not found in Luke or Matthew’s record of this event, Mark records another statement of Jesus in this discourse.
    - Mar 2:27 And he said to them, “The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.
    - The Pharisees didn’t understand the Sabbath command.
      - To them, it was nothing more than a ritual that had to be observed no matter what the cost in human suffering and inconvenience.
      - Jesus appears to say otherwise.

- Men were not created to be servants of the Sabbath. The Sabbath was created as a day of rest for the benefit of men.
  - In condemning Jesus' disciples, the Pharisees revealed their ignorance about the true heart of the Law of God.
    - In my view, the second of the two interpretations is correct.
    - If verses 3-4 stood alone without context, I would favor the first interpretation.
    - But in light of Jesus' statements in all three gospels, I believe the second interpretation is more likely correct.
- The disciples had done nothing wrong.
- The traditions and man-made rules of the Pharisees did not originate with God, and were therefore not to be bound.
- The disciples only needed to be worried about violating God's commands.
- And Jesus, as the "Son of Man," and the Lord of the Sabbath, did not condemn them.
  - Jesus' claim here was bold and shouldn't be taken lightly.
  - He was claiming deity in front of the Pharisees.
  - He was claiming to have authority to speak on the interpretation of Sabbath law because He was the Lord of the Sabbath.
  - Only God had authority over the laws of God and Jesus was claiming that authority for Himself.
  - He was claiming to be equal with God.

Luk 6:6 On another Sabbath, he entered the synagogue and was teaching, and a man was there whose right hand was withered.

Luk 6:7 And the scribes and the Pharisees watched him, to see whether he would heal on the Sabbath, so that they might find a reason to accuse him.

Luk 6:8 But he knew their thoughts, and he said to the man with the withered hand, "Come and stand here." And he rose and stood there.

Luk 6:9 And Jesus said to them, "I ask you, is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do harm, to save life or to destroy it?"

Luk 6:10 And after looking around at them all he said to him, "Stretch out your hand." And he did so, and his hand was restored.

Luk 6:11 But they were filled with fury and discussed with one another what they might do to



Jesus.

- On another Sabbath day, Jesus went back to the synagogue.
- This time there was a man with a withered hand present.
  - o This was probably a type of paralysis or deformity of the hand.
- Notice where the attention of the Pharisees was directed in verse 7.
  - o Luke 6:7 And the scribes and the Pharisees watched him, to see whether he would heal on the Sabbath, so that they might find a reason to accuse Him.
  - o They weren't interested in helping a handicapped man.
  - o They just wanted to catch Jesus doing something wrong so they could accuse Him.

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- o APPLICATION:

- Christians and Non-Christians can fall into this same error.
- Sometimes we are zealous at catching and calling out "doctrine breakers," but unconcerned with helping those in need, whether physically or spiritually.
- Sometimes we spend all our time focused on what people are doing wrong instead of working to make things right.
- To many people are quick to call out bad doctrine, but slow to extend a helping hand to the needy.

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- On a previous Sabbath (verses 1-6), Jesus told the Jewish religious leaders the Sabbath was designed for the good of men and it was to be enforced accordingly.
    - o Here, they were trying to form an accusation against Jesus based on Him doing good to a man on the Sabbath day.
    - o What does that mean?
    - o It means they got a big fat F- on their comprehension test!
    - o Jesus was again highlighting the fact that these men didn't understand the Old Testament Law nearly as well as they thought they did.
    - o A lot of what they thought they knew was based on their traditions, not a comprehension of the intentions of God.
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- APPLICATION:

- We need to be very carefully we don't fall into the same trap!
- It is very easy to interpret God's words based on the traditions of men (denominational biases, secular influences, etc).
- We need to search out the heart and intention of God if we want to read and interpret God's words accurately.

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- Jesus knew the evil intentions residing in the hearts of the Pharisees and scribes and He challenged them.

- He called the man with the withered hand to Him.
- He then spoke to those assembled in the synagogue, "I ask you, is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do harm, to save life or to destroy it?"
- In Matthew's account of this dialog, Jesus spoke about the willingness of His challengers to pull an animal out of a ditch if it fell in on the Sabbath day.
  - They valued their animals enough to believe saving them was a valid exemption from the prohibition of "work."
  - But in the synagogue, their actions revealed they ascribed less value to this handicapped man than their own animals, because they weren't about to give Jesus an exemption for what He was about to do.
  - Humans vs. animals
  - Jesus was exposing their misaligned priorities in front of the whole Jewish community.
    - This is why, in verse 11, the text says they were "filled with fury and discussed with one another what they might do with Jesus."
    - Jesus put the ugliness of the Pharisees and scribes on display for all their parishioners to see.
    - He really made them look foolish.
    - And if there's anything that angers prideful people, its being embarrassed in front of the people whose respect they crave.

- Jesus proceeded to heal the man without a word from His enemies.

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- APPLICATION:

- When somebody reveals corruption in your heart, you can respond in a couple ways.

- 1. You can seek to destroy or harm the person who exposed you (which I think comes very naturally to people).
  - 2. Or, you can seek to destroy the corruption in yourself.
  - The religious leaders needed to take option 2, but they chose option 1.
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○ APPLICATION:

- Think about the setup of this miracle.
  - Truth #1 - Jesus created this man.
    - Jesus knew when He made this man, he would have a withered hand.
    - Jesus also knew the day would come when He would meet this man in this very synagogue and heal Him.
    - The miracle brought glory to God and was evidence of Jesus' identity to those who witnessed it.
  - Truth #2 - Jesus created you.
    - Jesus knew when He made you, what deficiencies, struggles, and handicaps you would have.
    - What if He intended you to exist with your weaknesses for a similar reason?
    - So that God will be seen in you as you overcome your weaknesses.
    - So that people will look at your life and praise God for His work THROUGH those weaknesses.
    - So that your life will be a witness to His presence.
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○ APPLICATION:

- Compare yourself to the Pharisees and scribes for a moment.
- The Pharisees had just witnessed the miraculous power of God.
- How did they respond? They went out and made plans to destroy Jesus!
- We ask, "How could they possibly have responded that way?"
  - They had just observed God's power!
  - But all they were concerned about was what that display of power was going to do to their power and influence.

- Jesus was stealing their influence and authority and they didn't like it.
  - Rather than accepting Jesus, they plotted to get rid of Him.
  - It is easy to be really harsh on the Pharisees.
  - But wasn't their dilemma the same dilemma we all struggle with?
    - The willingness to accept our unimportance in light of God's importance?
    - The willingness to give up our authority and realize there is Someone far greater than us running the show?
  - The Pharisees had verifiable evidence right in front of their faces and they still chose to run in the opposite direction.
  - Are we doing the same?
  - What is at the root of your refusal to come to Christ?
    - Perhaps you haven't seen enough evidence.
    - I assure you, if you take the time to study, you'll find evidence sufficient for faith in Christ.
    - Or, at the bottom, is it a hesitation to relinquish sovereignty over your own life?
  - At the end of the day, human sovereignty is an illusion. You either serve God willingly or you serve God without knowing it (Pharaoh, Pilate, Judas, Nebuchadnezzar, Cyrus, etc).
  - In the end, we will all confess the same thing... God is king!
    - The Bible tells us the time to accept that truth is while we are here on earth.
    - Give allegiance to Him now, so when the time comes, you can greet Him as an ally, not an adversary.
- 

Luk 6:12 In these days he went out to the mountain to pray, and all night he continued in prayer to God.

Luk 6:13 And when day came, he called his disciples and chose from them twelve, whom he named apostles:

Luk 6:14 Simon, whom he named Peter, and Andrew his brother, and James and John, and Philip, and Bartholomew,

Luk 6:15 and Matthew, and Thomas, and James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon who was called the Zealot,

Luk 6:16 and Judas the son of James, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor.

- One night, Jesus went up into a mountain to pray.
  - o The nighttime was probably the only time Jesus had to Himself.
  - o He made it a priority to pray.
  - o No doubt, part of Jesus' time in prayer was spent talking to God about the 12 men He would select as Apostles.
- Jesus had 12 men who were especially close to Him and would play a special role in God's work on earth.
- In the book of Acts, these 12 are entrusted with carrying on Jesus' work after His ascension back to heaven.
- They were called "Apostles."

**G652**

ἀπόστολος

apostolos

ap-os'-tol-os

From G649; a *delegate*; specifically an *ambassador* of the Gospel; officially a *commissioner* of Christ ("apostle"), (with miraculous powers): - apostle, messenger, he that is sent.

**Total KJV occurrences: 81**

Strong's Hebrew and Greek Dictionaries

- o A general definition of an "apostle" is a messenger or someone who is sent.
- o Jesus will later send the Apostles out as messengers to the nations, entrusting them to carry the good news of salvation to the world.
- We don't know many details about these men, but we know they played a huge role in

the foundation of the early Church.

- Secular history tells us the majority of these men were martyred for their faith.
- There are many traditions about the later lives and deaths of the 12 Apostles. Not all of them can be verified, but I thought I would include some of the theories below to spark some interest in early Church history:
  - Peter (Simon) – Martyred by being crucified upside down.
  - Andrew – Went to Russia to preach the gospel, eventually crucified.
  - Thomas – Preached as far as India, killed with a spear.
  - Philip – Taught the gospel in Carthage (North Africa), killed by a Roman official.
  - Matthew (Levi) – Went to Persia and Ethiopia, some say he was not martyred while others say he was stabbed to death.
  - Bartholomew – Travelled extensively to India, Armenia, and Arabia, no clear tradition on how he died.
  - James (son of Alpheus) – Preached in Syria, stoned or clubbed to death.
  - Simon the Zealot – Ministered in Persia, killed after refusing to offer sacrifices to a false god.
  - Matthias (replaced Judas) – Preached in Syria, burned to death.
  - John – Traveled to Ephesus, died of old age.
  - James (son of Zebedee) – Killed by Herod (verified by the Bible).
  - Judas Iscariot – Killed himself after betraying Jesus (verified by the Bible).
- If you read through the Bible, you won't find a lot of personal details about the Apostles.
  - We don't know their backstories.
  - We aren't told much about their individual service to the Church.

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- APPLICATION:

- It isn't important that the world knows you, your life, your accomplishments...
  - It is important that the world knows your God and the good news about Jesus coming and dying for their sins.
- 

Luk 6:17 And he came down with them and stood on a level place, with a great crowd of his disciples and a great multitude of people from all Judea and Jerusalem and the seacoast of Tyre and Sidon,

Luk 6:18 who came to hear him and to be healed of their diseases. And those who were troubled with unclean spirits were cured.

Luk 6:19 And all the crowd sought to touch him, for power came out from him and healed them all.

- When Jesus finished selecting the 12, He came down from the mountain with a large group of followers and people who had come from Judea, Jerusalem, and the region of Tyre and Sidon.
- They brought their sick and demon possessed friends to be healed.
- Jesus had so much power, just touching Him was enough to receive healing.

Luk 6:20 And he lifted up his eyes on his disciples, and said: “Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.

Luk 6:21 “Blessed are you who are hungry now, for you shall be satisfied. “Blessed are you who weep now, for you shall laugh.

Luk 6:22 “Blessed are you when people hate you and when they exclude you and revile you and spurn your name as evil, on account of the Son of Man!

Luk 6:23 Rejoice in that day, and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in heaven; for so their fathers did to the prophets.

- If you are familiar with Matthew 5 and the Sermon on the Mount will find very similar language in Luke 6:20-49.
  - o Some think this is Luke’s record of Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount.
  - o Others believe this is a record of a different but similar sermon.
  - o It wouldn’t be strange if Jesus preached similar messages more than once.
  - o His audience would have been somewhat different every day, so it is possible He taught similar things on different occasions to different audiences.
  - o Preachers do this all the time in modern churches.
- Jesus told the crowd, “Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the Kingdom of Heaven.
  - o Those who are poor can have difficulty acquiring certain things or joining certain groups.
  - o But being a member of God’s Kingdom is achievable for even the poorest of the world.

- In fact, the Bible teaches becoming a citizen of the Kingdom is more easily obtainable for the poor.
    - Isn't that interesting?
    - In this world, money makes almost everything more accessible.
    - But when it comes to spiritual things, money actually makes it more difficult to get to heaven.
- 

- APPLICATION:

- A text like this should make us rethink what it means to be "blessed."
  - We almost always equate blessing with money.
  - There is a sense in which that is true.
  - But if it is easier for a poor man to enter the Kingdom of Heaven (Matthew 19:23) who is really blessed?
- 

- APPLICATION:

- Consider this...
  - In the west, we see a comparatively rich (disadvantage) population with a lot of exposure to the gospel (advantage).
  - In the east, we see a comparatively poorer (advantage) population with a limited exposure to the gospel (disadvantage).
  - We have a tendency to look at one group or another and give them the spiritual advantage.
  - But maybe it all evens out in the end.
  - Perhaps everyone's chance to go to heaven is equal.
  - *\*I don't know...this is an oversimplified analysis... there are certainly more variables than these to consider... just something to think about.*
- 

- "Blessed are you who are hungry now, for you shall be satisfied. Blessed are you who weep now, for you shall laugh."

- The good news of salvation and an eternal home with God are a blessing to those who are struggling in the world.



- God will make right what a world tainted by sin got wrong.
- God promises to give us a new home, one without sin.
- Hunger from lack of food and weeping from sorrow are a part of this world and will always be a part of this world because sin will always be a part of this world.
- In Luke 6, Jesus was telling the people God had sent Him to the earth to initiate a plan to fix the problems.
- “Blessed are you when people hate you and when they exclude you and revile you and spurn your name as evil, on account of the Son of Man!”
  - Nobody likes to be hated by other people, but sometimes people hate you because you stand for what is right.
  - Those who are hated by the world for standing up for what is right will be blessed by God.

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- APPLICATION:

- Whose favor are we more interested in?
  - The people of the world?
  - Or the Creator of the world?
- 

- “When they exclude you”
  - There are definitely people who “hate” Christians and express their hatred openly, but others are more subtle.
  - Some will leave you out of a group or an activity because they know about your faith.
  - It can be hard to be left out.
  - Jesus reminded those who were sad due to exclusion that they had not been forgotten by God.
- “Rejoice in that day, and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in heaven; for so their fathers did to the prophets.”
  - God watches out for the destitute.
  - God watches out for those who are mistreated for the sake of His Son.
  - He tells them to rejoice because their reward is coming.
- Jews being persecuted by their own people for doing God’s will was not a new thing.
  - God’s prophets in the Old Testament were mistreated by their fellow Jews.

- Many Jews who became followers of Jesus would be persecuted.
- The same was true for Gentile believers.

Luk 6:24 “But woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation.

Luk 6:25 “Woe to you who are full now, for you shall be hungry. “Woe to you who laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep.

Luk 6:26 “Woe to you, when all people speak well of you, for so their fathers did to the false prophets.

- I don't think Jesus was condemning rich people, people who had plenty to eat, or people who were happy in verses 24 and 25.
  - It isn't a sin to have a full stomach.
  - It isn't a sin to be full of joy.
- I believe He was condemning those who put their trust in their riches.
- Those who search for fullness and joy on the earth without giving attention to what awaits them in eternity.
  - They are satisfied in the immediate moment.
  - They are happy and full of laughter in the immediate moment.
  - But woe to those who consider only the immediate moment.
  - Who find their comfort in the immediate and temporal, not the eternal.
  - Those who fail to consider eternity in the present will be sad they didn't when it arrives.

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○ APPLICATION:

- There are a lot of people like this!
- They devote all of their thoughts and attention to this world.
- They exhaust themselves seeking immediate fulfillment and happiness.
- They give no thought to eternal/spiritual things.
- Are you a person like that?

- 
- “Woe to you, when all people speak well of you, for so their fathers did to the false prophets.”

- It is human nature to want other people to speak well of us.
- And there is a sense in which Christians should want others to speak well of them.
  - A Christian shouldn't be a person who has a bad reputation.
  - Nobody should be able to bring a legitimate accusation of crime or bad behavior against a Christian.
- But there is another sense in which, if you stand for what is right and true, people will speak evil of you.
- There will be times in every Christian's life when they will have to stand against sin.
  - Those who love sin aren't going to be friendly to the people who oppose what they love.
  - Their anger and vitriol will be directed at the people who disapprove of their evil-doing.
- Jesus went so far as to say, "If that doesn't happen to you... something is wrong" (paraphrase).
  - If no one is ever mad at you...
  - If no one ever gets angry at the message you teach...
  - You aren't teaching Jesus' message faithfully.
- How did Jesus know that?
  - He knew the majority of people wouldn't come to God to have their sins forgiven because they loved their sins.
  - The majority of people would reject His call to repentance and transformation and wouldn't be interested in hearing Him or anyone else teach about the danger of their sins.

- 
- APPLICATION:
    - This is very relevant for modern Christians.
    - In our culture, offending someone is considered the ultimate "sin."
    - Even anti-religious people preach about how we shouldn't offend anyone.
    - Christians have bought into this message in a lot of ways.
    - Some Christians think being a follower of Jesus means you should never offend anyone.
    - In the last few weeks I've had conversations with several "Christians" who claimed Jesus' whole message was love and acceptance.

- Interestingly, Jesus didn't teach the same message our culture teaches.
- He guaranteed the gospel would be offensive, so much so the world would speak evil of its preachers.
- Jesus called His disciples to accept truth.
  - The only way to never offend anyone is to discard the concept of truth.
  - You must believe there is no right and wrong and everyone can live however they want and rejoice in whatever sin they find most appealing.
- Jesus called sin what it is... an abomination to God that will destroy the human soul.
- He told the people He could save them from their sins.
- To accept Jesus is to accept mankind's need for a Savior.
- You are destined to offend people when you tell them their sin places them in the crosshairs of God's wrath and their soul will be destroyed unless they repent and let Jesus save them.

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Luk 6:27 "But I say to you who hear, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you,

Luk 6:28 bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you.

Luk 6:29 To one who strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also, and from one who takes away your cloak do not withhold your tunic either.

Luk 6:30 Give to everyone who begs from you, and from one who takes away your goods do not demand them back.

- These commands aren't particularly difficult to understand but they are very hard to apply.
- Jesus instructed people to be about doing good even when others were doing evil to them.
- Jesus instructed His hearers to love their enemies.
- He wanted them to love the people who opposed them and their message.
- He told them to bless the people who cursed them.
- To pray for the people who abused them.
  - Consider, in those days, how much easier it would have been to get away with

abuse.

- Physical abuse, legal abuse, psychological abuse, sexual abuse, financial abuse, etc...
- There were no cell phone cameras, security cameras, email records, no DNA analysis, etc...
- Unpunished abuse was probably significantly higher than in our culture.
- That said, even today, there are many cases of abuse.
- You can probably think of someone who has abused or is currently abusing you.
- The most natural tendency for someone who has experienced injustice is to seek revenge against the one who wronged them.
- But these verses reshape the way we are to think about someone who has wronged us.
- Jesus told us to pray for those who mistreat us.
  - Pray that they will change.
  - Pray that they will get help.
  - Pray that they will repent and seek the Lord.
- The natural thing to do is to wish evil on them.
- Jesus wanted His disciples to respond differently.
- It is incredible that Jesus wanted His disciples to take time out of their day to go to God on behalf of people who were mean to them.
  - He was saying, “You take your time to petition God on behalf of a messed-up person.”
  - “Devote your mental energy to consider what that person might need and then pray about it.”
- Disciples are to turn the other cheek.
  - If someone hits you on the cheek, offer the other also.
  - I don’t think Jesus was encouraging disciples to get themselves beat up.
  - I believe the principle was, disciples were to turn the other cheek, as opposed to lashing out in retaliatory vengeance against someone who hit them.
  - They were to prefer an injustice done to them to a chance to get even with someone at the expense of losing their influence.
- The principle behind the cloak and tunic is similar.
  - If someone takes something that belongs to you, it is preferable to give them even

more than what they took, rather than resorting to extreme physical or legal measures to recover your property.

- Physical property and personal rights were not to be the disciple's priority.
- The same principle is taught in verse 30 along with a command to be generous, "Give to everyone who begs from you..."
- Why? Why should I live like this?
  - I think a lot of people who have been the target of grievous abuse may immediately convulse upon hearing these commands.
    - "I will not do that!"
    - "You don't know what its like to suffer at the hands of an evil person."
  - Why shouldn't I, as a Christian, take vengeance on another person?
  - Why should I be nice to someone who harms me?
  - Why should I bless them, pray for them, give to them, spend my time and energy being nice to them when they are terrible to me?
  - Why shouldn't I villainize them in my mind and wish for 1,000 horrible things to happen to them?
  - We will find out as we continue reading...
- I think a lot of people read these commands and they think, "Well if I follow these principles, I'm not going to have anything!"
  - "People are going to take advantage of me!"
  - "I could lose valuable things."
  - "What about my rights? I need to protect myself!"
- I think Jesus would say exactly what He said while teaching on the mountain in Matthew 6.
  - Mat 6:25 "Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life..."
  - Mat 6:33 But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.
  - God has always taken care of His disciples.
  - Be honest, do you know any Christians that are destitute because they apply this command too seriously?
  - I haven't met one.
  - There's a reason the Bible is filled with reassurances that God will care for His servants.

- It's so we will learn to trust God enough to live the life He called us to live!
- To trust He isn't throwing us out into the world to fend for ourselves.

Luk 6:31 And as you wish that others would do to you, do so to them.

Luk 6:32 "If you love those who love you, what benefit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them.

Luk 6:33 And if you do good to those who do good to you, what benefit is that to you? For even sinners do the same.

Luk 6:34 And if you lend to those from whom you expect to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to get back the same amount.

Luk 6:35 But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return, and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, for he is kind to the ungrateful and the evil.

Luk 6:36 Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful.

- Why should I love my enemies and do good to the people who mistreat me?
- Jesus' life is the reason His disciples ought to apply this principle.
- This principle will never hit home hard enough unless you understand what Jesus did for you.
  - Until you understand Jesus' sacrifice for you, you have no reason to apply these principles in your life.
  - When you understand Jesus' sacrifice for you, you have every reason to apply these principles in your life.
- Why should we love our enemies?
  - Because Jesus died for us even though our sins made us God's enemies.
  - Rom 5:10 For if while we were **enemies** we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life.
- Why should we take time out of our day to pray for someone who mistreats us?
  - Because Jesus prayed for those who mistreated Him.
  - He devoted 33 years to bless people who cursed Him.
- Why should we be willing to surrender our right to the things that belong to us?
  - Because Jesus, as a sinless man, deserved to be treated well.
  - He didn't deserve being murdered on a cross.

- He had the right and the power to stop the injustice against Him but chose not to exercise that His right.
- Why?
- For our benefit!
- To treat people better than they deserved.
- To bless His enemies.
- “But love you enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return, and your reward will be great...”
  - If you live in obedience to Jesus’ words, there will likely be times when you get the short end of the stick.
  - There are evil people and dishonest people who will mistreat you.
  - But God promises our losses will not go unaccounted.
  - We may suffer monetary or physical loss but we will be given a “great” reward.
- Jesus was calling His listeners to a lifestyle that was in a lot of ways contrary to human nature... He was calling them to God’s nature.
  - Anyone can be nice to someone who is nice to them.
  - Anyone can do good things for someone who does nice things for them.
  - That is human nature.
  - But Jesus came to earth to teach the world about God’s nature.
    - He raised the bar and called people to a higher standard.
    - To love like God and to be merciful like God.
- If God, who is perfect, can extend mercy to His enemies, how can we, who are imperfect do less?
  - How can we be outraged when Jesus told us to love our enemies?
  - How can we not treat others the way we want to be treated (verse 31)?
  - When we understand Jesus’ sacrifice and God’s goodness to us, these commands go from being an outrage to being a privilege.
  - It is a privilege that we would even be given the opportunity to participate in the nature of God.
- “for He is kind to the ungrateful and the evil.”
  - It is incredibly hard to be kind to ungrateful people.
  - But God has been kind to a largely ungrateful world.



- That is how good God is 😊.
- “and you will be sons of the Most High, for He is kind to the ungrateful and the evil. Be merciful, even as your father is merciful.
  - We become “sons of the Most High” when we embrace our Father and His offer of salvation.
  - As children, we mimic our Father, giving mercy freely in light of the mercy we’ve received.

Luk 6:37 “Judge not, and you will not be judged; condemn not, and you will not be condemned; forgive, and you will be forgiven;

Luk 6:38 give, and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For with the measure you use it will be measured back to you.”

- A significant portion of the gospels are devoted to dealing with hypocritical judges (Pharisees, Sadducees, scribes, Herodians, etc...).
  - Jesus constantly engaged with people who judged one way and lived another.
  - Hypocrites in Jesus’ day, like today, are often quick to judge others while being guilty of the very things for which they judge others.
  - In some cases, the religious leaders of the Jews were making up rules and laws in addition to God’s laws and then telling the people they needed to follow both.
  - Jesus sternly warned these types of people.
  - He told them if they judged others harshly and unjustly, they would receive harsh judgment in return.
  - Those who judged without mercy would receive no mercy.
  - In contrast, the generous would receive generosity.
- What does the first part of verse 38 mean?
  - “Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap.”
  - This is definitely a unique phrase but one I think we can understand.
  - “Good measure”
    - When people give to you, they will measure out a generous portion.
    - They aren’t going to short you or be stingy.

- “Pressed down”
  - In order to fit more in your suitcase, you sit or stand on the contents to compact them.
  - In order to fit more into a trash bag, you smash the contents to make additional room.
  - The generosity of the gift you receive will be such that the giver will compress the contents to fit as much as possible.
- “Shaken together”
  - Sometimes you shake the contents of a bag to remove empty space so you can fill it to its maximum volume.
  - In this case, the person doing the giving shakes the bag to make more room to give even more.
- “Running over”
  - The contents are overflowing.
  - After giving a good portion, compacting the contents, shaking the bag, the giver fills the bag to overflowing before placing it in your lap.
- If you are a generous person generosity will come back to you.
- In what sense?
  - In a spiritual sense?
    - Yes, God will reward those who were generous to others.
  - In a physical sense?
    - Yes, when a person who has been generous and caring for years finds themselves in a situation where they need generosity, those who have been recipients of their generosity will come to their aid.
      - There is a beautiful picture of this principle in a classic movie.
      - Perhaps you’ve seen the movie “*It’s a Wonderful Life.*”
      - The main character’s name is George Bailey.
      - Throughout his life George sacrifices a lot of the things he wants in order to care for others.
      - He cares about doing the right thing even at personal expense.
      - But one day there is an accident and George finds himself in financial trouble.
      - He becomes suicidal and he begins to think his life has been

meaningless.

- But when the people of the town find out George is in trouble they rally to fix the problem.
  - They give “good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over.”
  - Then George realizes his life hasn’t been wasted and he is surrounded by people who appreciate the sacrifices he made.
- In some ways these verses sound like the Golden Rule.
    - “Do unto others as you would have them do to unto you.”
    - Imagine if we only judged others with a standard we would like to be judged with.
    - Our judgement would probably be much less harsh, much less assuming, and much more merciful.
  - An important point here is to recognize humans have no authority to judge one another.
    - We can’t make up rules and hold other people accountable to those rules.
    - We don’t have that kind of moral authority.
    - I (personally) am not anyone’s moral judge.
    - I don’t have moral superiority over any other human being.
    - Humans, specifically Christians, only have authority to make statements about what is right and wrong based on the words of God.

Luk 6:39 He also told them a parable: “Can a blind man lead a blind man? Will they not both fall into a pit?”

Luk 6:40 A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone when he is fully trained will be like his teacher.

- Jesus used similar language to rebuke the Pharisees in Matthew 15.
  - Mat 15:14 Let them alone; they are blind guides. And if the blind lead the blind, both will fall into a pit.”
  - The Pharisees were blinded by their traditions and self-righteousness.
  - Jesus said they voided the word of God with their traditions, taught their traditions as if they were doctrines of God, and worshipped in vain (see Matthew 15:6-9).
- I suspect Jesus had them in mind when speaking these words in Luke 6.
- He was warning His disciples of the deception the Pharisees had fallen into.

- The Pharisees thought they were religious leaders.
- But a blind person can't lead another person.
- They were in no condition to guide anyone else spiritually.
- In regards to verse 40, A student/disciple can only learn as much as his teacher knows.
  - If the teacher is misguided, the student will end up misguided.
  - Generally speaking, a student's mind will be shaped by his/her teacher.
  - A rotten teacher can corrupt the thinking of a lot of people (just look at universities).
  - The Pharisees were rotten teachers.
    - Jesus spoke plainly about their incompetence.
    - Mat 23:15 Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel across sea and land to make a single proselyte, and when he becomes a proselyte, you make him twice as much a child of hell as yourselves.
  - The disciples needed to be careful they didn't fall into the same error and end up equally as blind.

- 
- APPLICATION:
    - We need to take teaching very seriously.
    - We need to be diligent in a constant assessment of ourselves and our motives if we are going to be teaching other people.
    - God takes this so seriously that He warned people through His disciple James that teachers will face a stricter judgement.
    - Jas 3:1 Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness.
- 

Luk 6:41 Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye?

Luk 6:42 How can you say to your brother, 'Brother, let me take out the speck that is in your eye,' when you yourself do not see the log that is in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take out the speck that is in your brother's eye.

- Jesus didn't want His followers to be the kinds of teachers that can identify a problem in

another but not in themselves.

- This is very common!
- It's easy to see the faults of others while completely missing our own.
- It's easy to try to fix other people before fixing ourselves.
- Jesus gave an illustration of a man who identified a speck in his brother's eye without paying any attention to the "log" in his own eye.
  - Like a man with an arrow protruding out of his eye insisting he be allowed to help another man remove a grain of sand from his eye.
  - The arrow is going to inhibit the person's ability to help anyone else.
- Jesus called people like this "hypocrites."
- The Pharisees fell into this category.
- They wanted to nit-pick and correct the common people for not keeping the finer details of the Law, while they completely ignored other more important points of the Law.
- If you can't see properly, get your own eyesight fixed before you try to work on others.

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- APPLICATION:

- We need to constantly be going to the eye doctor (God) and asking Him to help us check our eyes for logs and blind spots.
- The Pharisees would not go in for a checkup.
- They were sure they could see clearly, but God called them blind.
- Checkups are important and we shouldn't ever rule out the possibility our lenses may need adjusted.

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- APPLICATION:

- The godly way to approach correcting another person is to first look at yourself.
  - Do you struggle with a similar problem?
  - If so, correct it in your own life first.
  - Then, rather than passing unhelpful judgement on another, you will know how to help them escape the sin that ensnares them.
  - God doesn't pass judgement on us without offering help.
  - We shouldn't pass judgement on others without offering to help.
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Luk 6:43 “For no good tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit,

Luk 6:44 for each tree is known by its own fruit. For figs are not gathered from thornbushes, nor are grapes picked from a bramble bush.

Luk 6:45 The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil, for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.

- Jesus used almost this exact language in a discussion with the Pharisees in Matthew 12:33-37.
- He compared teachers to trees in an orchard.
  - o A good tree produces good fruit.
  - o A good teacher/guide can be identified by his good works (good fruit).
  - o A bad tree produces useless fruit (poor quality or rotten).
  - o A bad teacher/guide can be identified by his bad work (bad fruit).
  - o A good tree will not produce bad fruit year after year.
  - o A bad tree will not produce good fruit year after year.
  - o “You will recognize them by their fruits” (Matthew 7:16).
- Words are cheap and aren’t a good gauge of whether a person is genuine.
- But watching a person’s actions/work over time will reveal their heart.

Luk 6:46 “Why do you call me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and not do what I tell you?”

Luk 6:47 Everyone who comes to me and hears my words and does them, I will show you what he is like:

Luk 6:48 he is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. And when a flood arose, the stream broke against that house and could not shake it, because it had been well built.

Luk 6:49 But the one who hears and does not do them is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. When the stream broke against it, immediately it fell, and the ruin of that house was great.”

- In this last section of chapter 6, Jesus addressed His hearers and the way they responded to His words.

- There were many who called Him “Lord” but not all of them heeded His commands.
- Their words affirmed Jesus’ importance, but their lives and actions didn’t.
- Jesus gave a parable to illustrate the difference between a person who heard and applied His words vs. a person who heard but didn’t apply.
  - The man who hears and applies is like a man who builds a house on a deep foundation.
  - The man who hears and doesn’t apply is like a man who builds his house on top of the soil without a foundation.
    - Those who hear His words and DO THEM will have a solid foundation on which to build their lives.
      - If you have a sturdy foundation you can be confident about what you are building.
      - No tragedy or storm of life will be able to topple a life devoted to God.
      - Not even death can capsize what Jesus protects.
    - Those who hear His words and DO NOT DO THEM will have their foundation torn from under them.
      - You can’t have confidence in the lasting value of what you are building if you aren’t building it on the foundation of Jesus.
      - Those who choose to build their houses on something other than the doctrines of Christ can, in this life, have their sense of worth and purpose torn away from them.
      - Their hearts can topple from atop their earthly treasures.
      - Eternally speaking, all who refuse to heed Jesus’ words and build their lives on Christ will lose their lives in eternity.
  - Building your life on Christ is the only thing guaranteed to hold up through the storms of life and the storm of God’s judgement leading into eternity.

