

Icebreaker

Have you ever won or received something amazing by chance or unexpectedly? (raffle, lottery, random blessing, etc.) Explain.

Read Luke 1:1-4

Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the word. Therefore, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, it seemed good also to me to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught.

Luke 1:1-4 (NIV84)

1. Who was Luke? (Colossians 4:14, 2 Tim 4:11, Philemon 24)

Our dear friend Luke, the doctor, and Demas send greetings.

Colossians 4:14 (NIV84)

Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, because he is helpful to me in my ministry.

2 Timothy 4:11 (NIV84)

And so do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas and Luke, my fellow workers.

Philemon 24 (NIV84)

Note: The Gospel of Luke and the book of Acts clearly were written by the same individual (cf. 1:1-4; Ac 1:1). Although he never identified himself by name, it is clear from his use of “we” in many sections of Acts that he was a close companion of the Apostle Paul (Act 16:10-17; 20:5-15; 21:1-18; 27:1-28:16). Luke is the only person, among the colleagues Paul mentions in his own epistles, who fits the profile of the author of these books. That accords perfectly with the earliest tradition of the church which unanimously attributed this gospel to Luke. (MacArthur, John F., Jr. The MacArthur Study Bible: New American Standard Bible. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2006. Print.)

2. To whom did he write?
3. From whom did he gather the information?
4. Why does the passage say he wrote this manuscript?
5. How does reading about the historical account of Jesus and the Church beginnings help us know the “certainty of the things you have been taught”?

Sermon Note: The goal of Sun Grove Church is that over the next year our entire church will read the books of Luke and Acts together.

6. Why do you think it would benefit Sun Grove to read through Luke and Acts together over the coming year?

Read Luke 1: 5-10

In the time of Herod king of Judea there was a priest named Zechariah, who belonged to the priestly division of Abijah; his wife Elizabeth was also a descendant of Aaron. Both of them were upright in the sight of God, observing all the Lord’s commandments and regulations blamelessly. But they had no children, because Elizabeth was barren; and they were both well along in years.

Luke 1:5-7 (NIV84)

7. What do these passages tell us about Zechariah and Elizabeth?

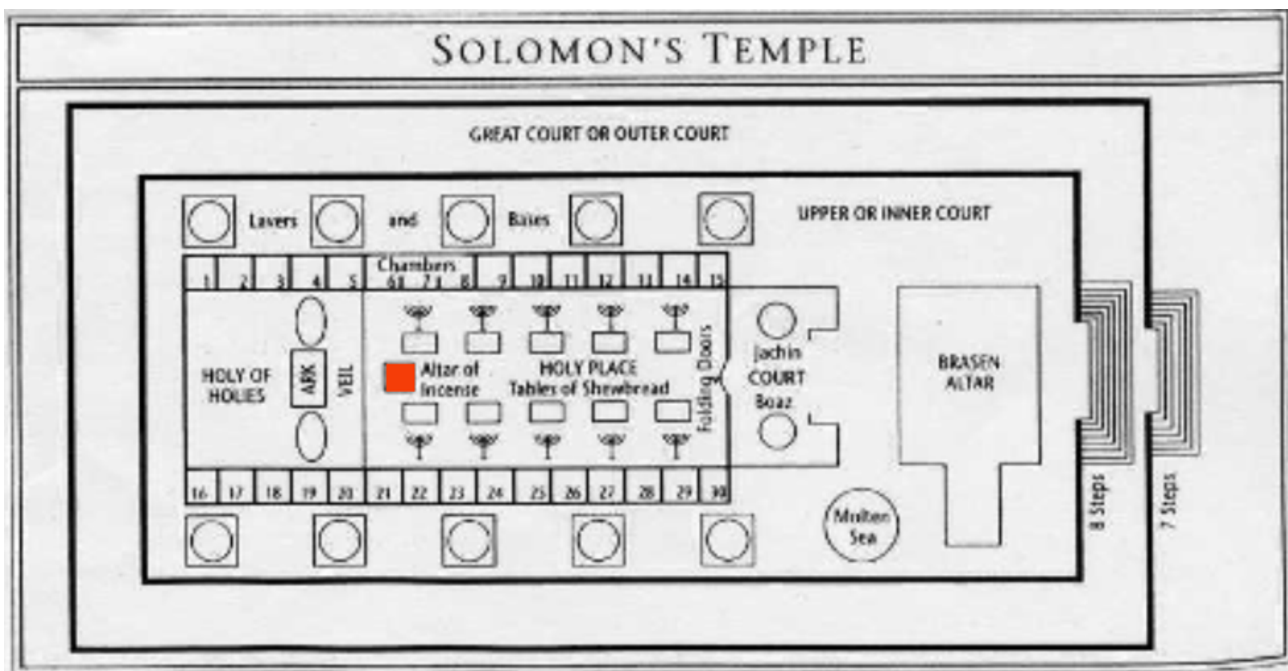
Once when Zechariah’s division was on duty and he was serving as priest

before God, he was chosen by lot, according to the custom of the priesthood, to go into the temple of the Lord and burn incense. And when the time for the burning of incense came, all the assembled worshipers were praying outside.

Luke 1:8-10 (NIV84)

Background: The priests, the descendants of Aaron, ministered in the Temple by family divisions. Each of 24 divisions served one week, twice a year.

8. How was Zechariah chosen to serve in the Temple?
9. What was he chosen to do in the temple? Using the diagram where was the Incense Altar located?



From the Ryrie Study Bible

Read Luke 1:11-17

Then an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing at the right side of the altar of incense. When Zechariah saw him, he was startled and was gripped with fear. But the angel said to him: "Do not be afraid, Zechariah; your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you are to give him the name John. He will be a joy and delight to you, and many will rejoice because of his birth, for he will be great in the sight of the Lord. He is never to take wine or other fermented drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit even from birth. Many of the people of Israel will he bring back to the Lord their God. And he will go on before the Lord, in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous—to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."

Zechariah asked the angel, "How can I be sure of this? I am an old man and my wife is well along in years."

Luke 1:11-18 (NIV84)

10. What was Zechariah's reaction to the sudden appearance of the angel?
11. What prayer did God hear? Do you think Zechariah prayed that prayer at that moment, or was it a prayer from the past? Explain your view.
12. Why do we sometimes give up praying? Are there any prayers you have stopped praying that God may still want to answer? How does knowing that God is listening to our prayers encourage you? How does knowing, even though we may have given up on an answer, that God has not forgotten our prayers encourage you?
13. What did the angel prophesy? How does this prophecy compare to Old Testament prophecy made hundreds of years earlier? (Isaiah 40:3-5, Malachi 3:1; Malachi 4:5-6)

A voice of one calling: "In the desert prepare the way for the Lord; make straight in the wilderness a highway for our God. Every valley shall be raised up, every mountain and hill made low; the rough ground shall become level, the rugged places a plain. And the glory of the Lord will be

revealed, and all mankind together will see it. For the mouth of the Lord has spoken."

Isaiah 40:3-5 (NIV84)

"See, I will send my messenger, who will prepare the way before me. Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come," says the Lord Almighty.

Malachi 3:1 (NIV84)

"See, I will send you the prophet Elijah before that great and dreadful day of the Lord comes. He will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers; or else I will come and strike the land with a curse."

Malachi 4:5-6 (NIV84)

Sermon Note: God paves the way for the deepest longings of the human soul to be restored.

14. How does this prophecy from God meet the longings of Zechariah and Elizabeth ? (John 1:13-14, 24-25)
15. How does this prophecy from God address the longing of the people of Israel?
16. What does this prophecy reveal about the heart of God? How does this prophecy address the deepest longings of the human soul and how does this prophesy pave the way to be restored?
17. What about the prophecies of John resonate with us today?

The purpose of John the Baptist was foretold long before his birth. Sermon Note: Before you were born, God assigned your purpose in his story. (See also, Psalm 71:5-6, Galatians 1:15-16, Romans 8:29, 2 Thessalonians 1:11)

Read Luke 1:18-25

Zechariah asked the angel, "How can I be sure of this? I am an old man and my wife is well along in years."

The angel answered, "I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to tell you this good news. And now you will be silent and not able to speak until the day this happens, because you did not believe my words, which will come true at their proper time."

Meanwhile, the people were waiting for Zechariah and wondering why he stayed so long in the temple. When he came out, he could not speak to them. They realized he had seen a vision in the temple, for he kept making signs to them but remained unable to speak.

When his time of service was completed, he returned home. After this his wife Elizabeth became pregnant and for five months remained in seclusion. "The Lord has done this for me," she said. "In these days he has shown his favor and taken away my disgrace among the people."

Luke 1:18-25 (NIV84)

18. What was Zechariah's response to the angel's prophecy?
19. What was the Gabriel's response to Zechariah?

Sermon Note: When you want to know how will this happen? God wants you to know who will do it.

20. What was the consequence of not believing the Gabriel's words?
21. Was there a time in your life that you did not trust God's Word or you doubted that God could work in an impossible situation even though you were a believer? What was the consequence of that unbelief?

In the next year we will be studying from the Books of Luke and Acts. In this lesson we learned that God is working His plan and responding to our prayers. In spite of your impossible situation, God is working in the waiting.