

THE GOSPEL OF

# LUKE

JESUS: THE SAVIOR OF THE WORLD

PART I: THE COMING OF THE SAVIOR

STUDY GUIDE

THE GOSPEL OF  
**LUKE**

JESUS: THE SAVIOR OF THE WORLD

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# INTRODUCTION

## AUTHOR

The Gospel of Luke does not provide the name of its author but there is strong evidence that points to Luke. Luke was a physician and a companion of Paul. He was also the author of the book of Acts. Luke was likely a Gentile convert as we can see from his Greek name and his emphasis on the Gentiles receiving access to the promises of God. He writes from the perspective of a historian and theologian, collecting eyewitness testimonies in order to provide an “orderly account” (Luke 1:4) of the life of Jesus.<sup>1</sup>

## AUDIENCE

The Gospel is addressed to Theophilus (Luke 1:4). From what we can gather he is a person of high social standing who served as a patron, or supporter, of Luke’s desire to put together an orderly account of Jesus’ life. We do not know where he lived or his nationality, but it is likely that he has had some exposure to the faith. The fact that he needs reassurance points to him being a believer. It is also clear by the way Luke wrote that he knew Theophilus would not be the only reader of this Gospel.<sup>2</sup>

## GENRE

A Gospel is a unique genre because it is both a theology and a history. Its purpose is to instruct and to exhort. It’s not an exhaustive account of an individual’s life, but it is an account that is ordered and presented with a particular purpose. In Luke’s Gospel account, he is focused on how Jesus came to be understood as the risen, exalted King and how the Jewish rejection of Jesus takes place and gives way to Gentile inclusion.<sup>3</sup>

## DATE

There is strong evidence that Luke and Acts were both written in the early 60s of the 1st century.<sup>4</sup>

## PURPOSE

There seems to be a few purposes behind Luke’s desire to write this Gospel<sup>5</sup>:

- 1. To Provide Certainty:** Luke sets out to compile a trustworthy and orderly account of Jesus’ life in order to assure his readers of the certainty of what they have been taught. (Luke 1:1-4)

# INTRODUCTION *(continued)*

- 2. To Explain the Jewish Rejection of Jesus and the Gentile Inclusion into the Kingdom of God:** Luke seeks to explain that the inclusion of Gentiles into God's covenant promises are in line with God's plan from the beginning, and that Christianity is not a new religion but rather it is the fulfillment of the religion of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. This emphasis on Gentile inclusion is what makes this Gospel account unique from the others. Luke's overarching purpose is to help his readers understand that the Gospel is for all, both Jews and Gentiles.
- 3. To Provide Clarity on the End Times:** Luke seeks to clarify that Jesus did not teach that his return would come immediately but that there would be a time between his resurrection and his return. As a result, much of Luke's gospel deals with the reality of suffering and rejection that his followers would experience as they await the return of Jesus.

## STRUCTURE<sup>6</sup>

### **Part I: *The Coming of the Savior (Luke 1-4:13)***

In this section Luke presents us with the unique births of Jesus and John the Baptist and their maturity into adults. John the Baptist serves as the forerunner to the ministry of Jesus, and he preaches a message of repentance. Repentance involves recognizing your sin and then turning to God and serving others. His ministry of repentance sets the stage and points to Jesus as the one whom humanity must look to in repentance.

### **Part 2: *The Ministry of the Savior (Luke 4:14-9:50)***

In this section Luke seeks to answer the question: "Who is Jesus?" by highlighting the activity and power that Jesus displays while ministering in Galilee. Jesus' ministry reveals that he has power over nature, demons, diseases, and even death. The authority Jesus displays and the claims Jesus makes during this movement within Luke begin to provide the backdrop for the Jewish opposition to him.

### **Part 3: *The Rejection of the Savior (Luke 9:51-19:27)***

In this third movement within the Gospel, Luke gives a lot of time to Jesus' teaching on discipleship and the increased opposition that Jesus receives from the Jewish leadership. Jesus, knowing that his journey ends in crucifixion, is focused on training his disciples for life after his death. In the face of Jewish persecution and opposition, Jesus trains his disciples to

persevere in the midst of suffering and rejection. The rejection and suffering that Jesus experiences by the hands of the Jewish leaders is all part of God's divine plan.

**Part 4: *The Vindication of the Savior (Luke 19:28-24:53)***

This last section details Jesus' last days in Jerusalem. It includes his triumphal entry into Jerusalem, his sacrificial death, and his victorious resurrection. Jesus' death as an innocent man and his resurrection all point to the realization that he is the promised Messiah.







# LUKE 1:5-25

## PASSAGE

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. 6 And they were both righteous before God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and statutes of the Lord. 7 But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and both were advanced in years.

8 Now while he was serving as priest before God when his division was on duty, 9 according to the custom of the priesthood, he was chosen by lot to enter the temple of the Lord and burn incense. 10 And the whole multitude of the people were praying outside at the hour of incense. 11 And there appeared to him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense. 12 And Zechariah was troubled when he saw him, and fear fell upon him. 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. 14 And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth, 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. 16 And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God, 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."

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." 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. 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." 21 And the people were waiting for Zechariah, and they were wondering at his delay in the temple. 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. 23 And when his time of service was ended, he went to his home.

24 After these days his wife Elizabeth conceived, and for five months she kept herself hidden, saying, 25 "Thus the Lord has done for me in the days when he looked on me, to take away my reproach among people." (ESV)

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Is there an area in your life where you are experiencing disappointment? What role does prayer play?
2. What do you think living righteously and walking blamelessly looks like in seasons of disappointment? Who have you seen model this well?
3. What promises from God do you struggle to believe? Have you found a way to combat unbelief?
4. What prayers are you trusting God to answer in his own timing?

# NOTES

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# LUKE 1:26-38

## PASSAGE

26 In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, 27 to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary. 28 And he came to her and said, "Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!" 29 But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. 30 And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. 31 And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. 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, 33 and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."

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

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. 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. 37 For nothing will be impossible with God." 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. (ESV)

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How do you typically respond when God leads you into something unexpected?
2. Have you ever been tempted to not obey God because of how you might be perceived by others? How do we fight back against this inner conflict?
3. How does the promise of God's presence empower us to surrender to God when it doesn't make sense?
4. In light of Mary's response, what are some steps that you need to take in order to walk in obedience and surrender?

## NOTES

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# ADVENT INTRODUCTION

## WHAT IS ADVENT?

Advent is what we call the season leading up to Christmas. The word “advent” derives from the latin word “adventus,” which means “coming.” It is the period of time, normally four weeks, where the church turns her attention to the birth of Jesus and His promise to come again in the future. This season of celebration is marked by anticipation and preparation. We wait with anticipation as we prepare for the coming of Christ. For centuries God prepared His people for the coming of His Son, who alone would bring salvation and hope to His people. During the Advent season we celebrate the fulfillment of this promise and look forward to his future promise to come again.

Advent reveals a universal truth for all of mankind — we all need a savior. The fact that Jesus came into the world shows us our inability to save ourselves. During this season we celebrate and remember the glorious truth that “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners” (1 Timothy 1:15).

Over the next four weeks you will notice a few intentional changes to our worship gathering. All of these changes are designed to help direct your heart and your mind to the past, present, and future hope of the Gospel. On Sundays you will notice:

1. **A Change in Worship Songs** — During the Advent season our church will begin to sing Advent hymns that have been used in church services for centuries. These songs beautifully capture both the joy and longing of Advent.
2. **Lighting Advent Candles** — During the service we will take a few minutes to reflect on the meaning of Advent by lighting Advent candles. The candles and the light that they produce reflect the light that came into the world with the arrival of Jesus Christ. Each candle represents a different aspect of Advent: hope, peace, joy and love. On Christmas Eve, the center white candle, known as the “Christ Candle,” is lit. It represents the purity of Jesus Christ, who is our sinless and spotless Savior.

The Christmas season can be fast-paced and distracting at times. It is often filled with excitement about buying and receiving gifts and spending treasured time with family and friends. In an attempt to help you slow down during this busy season and focus on the reason for Advent, we invite you

to meditate on the coming of Jesus throughout the week. These meditations focus on the titles that the prophet Isaiah ascribed to the coming Savior.

“For to us a child is born,  
to us a son is given;  
and the government shall be upon his shoulder,  
and his name shall be called  
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,  
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”  
Isaiah 9:6 (ESV)

Each week you will have a devotional to read, a Scripture to meditate on, an Advent hymn to reflect on, and a prayer guide to use that are all connected to one of the four titles of the promised Savior in Isaiah 9:6.

We hope and pray that your faith and love for Jesus will be deepened during this Advent season as we await the coming of our Savior!



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# ADVENT WEEK 1: WONDERFUL COUNSELOR

## **DEVOTIONAL:** Wonderful Counselor

By Kassidy Reynolds

In a season of grief and loneliness brought about by change and transition, I sat across from my counselor, desperate for hope, ready to cling to any word of wisdom she could offer me. I was so broken, so confused. I was a soul in need of some words that could give me life.

If you have ever sat in a similar place across from a friend, mentor, or counselor, then you know of the vulnerability that is required of you and the longing that envelops you. Our hearts long for hope. Even in seasons of plenty, we continue to hope for things to come. Hope is real. Hope is not simply wishful thinking. Hope can be defined as “the confident expectation of good.” The reality of hope is evident in the name that is listed first in Isaiah 9:6 — Wonderful Counselor.

The word Wonderful is used to describe something that is a wonder, a miracle. It points to something unusual or extraordinary, and it is almost always used in the context of God’s words or deeds. His words are wonderful, and His deeds are wonderful. Because of this, He gives wonderful counsel. The word Counselor is translated as one who advises or counsels. It also refers to one who decides or makes plans. If we have the promise of a Wonderful Counselor, then we have hope of this miracle: God, whose character is altogether wonderful, gives us His wonderful words of life. Even more so, He is the one who decides and makes the plans for us, and God’s plans never fail.

But humanity has a problem. Sin separates us from the holiness of God, from the wonder of God. On our own we are without hope of this wonderful counsel and excellent wisdom.

That is exactly why Jesus came. The birth, sinless life, death, and resurrection of Jesus are all miracles, and this Gospel shows how wonderful the Father is to provide us with salvation. Jesus himself is the Wonderful Counselor. He is your Wonderful Counselor. You can go to Him, and He listens and responds with words filled with more hope than you could imagine. He is the Word and the very fulfillment of God’s ultimate plan. Jesus alone has the words of life. Jesus alone decides the course of our life. And Jesus alone is the one who fills our longing hearts with hope.

## **SCRIPTURE REFLECTION:** 1 Peter 1:3–9

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

## **ADVENT HYMN:** “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”

*O come, Thou Dayspring, come and cheer  
Our spirits by Thine advent here  
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night  
And death's dark shadows put to flight*

Take a few minutes and listen to the song “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel.” Which lyrics stood out to you as you listened and why?

## **PRAYER**

- Take a few moments to praise Jesus for being your Wonderful Counselor. Call to mind some of His promises that are words of life to you. Praise Him for these promises, and praise Him for giving you eternal hope.
- Are there any areas in your life where you are feeling hopeless? Are you tempted to run to other “counselors” before listening to Him? Take some time to confess this.
- What are some hard circumstances around you? What are some difficult decisions ahead of you? Ask God to give you wisdom for these situations. Ask Him to align your desires with His. Ask Him to help you trust the plans He has for you, and thank Him for your hope in Jesus.

# LUKE 1:46-56

## PASSAGE

46 And Mary said,  
“My soul magnifies the Lord,  
47 and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,  
48 for he has looked on the humble estate of his servant.  
For behold, from now on all generations will call me blessed;  
49 for he who is mighty has done great things for me,  
and holy is his name.  
50 And his mercy is for those who fear him  
from generation to generation.  
51 He has shown strength with his arm;  
he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts;  
52 he has brought down the mighty from their thrones  
and exalted those of humble estate;  
53 he has filled the hungry with good things,  
and the rich he has sent away empty.  
54 He has helped his servant Israel,  
in remembrance of his mercy,  
55 as he spoke to our fathers,  
to Abraham and to his offspring forever.”

56 And Mary remained with her about three months and returned to her home. (ESV)

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Mary begins by saying her soul magnifies the Lord. How can you magnify the Lord in your own life? Spend some time praising God for how He is working in your life.
2. Why is God worthy of our praise?
3. How have you seen God use humble people in mighty ways, both in Scripture and in your life experiences?
4. Mary shows us how God has been faithful to fulfill the promises given to Abraham. How can you look to God's promises and trust in them today?

## NOTES

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## ADVENT WEEK 2: MIGHTY GOD

### **DEVOTIONAL:** Mighty God

By Addison Hamrick

When I was younger I slept with a stuffed animal named Flipper because I was scared of the dark. However, there were some nights where I would have a bad dream or become overwhelmed with fear that even having Flipper wouldn't help. In these moments I would go look for my dad. My dad could offer me something that a stuffed animal couldn't — strength. I felt weak and scared in those moments, and what I needed was someone who was strong and powerful. You see, we don't just need the presence of someone or something when we are scared and weak. We need the presence of someone who is strong. This is why there is so much comfort in the truth that Jesus is Immanuel, "God with us." It's not the mere presence of someone to go through life with, it's the presence of someone who is strong and powerful that provides real comfort.

And it is this very characteristic, the characteristic of power, or might, that provides Christians with a deep peace. In Isaiah 9:6 the future Messiah is given the title "Mighty God." During this time, the nation of Israel was fearful of the rising power of the Assyrians. They felt weak in comparison to their enemy on the horizon. But the words of Isaiah proved to be a great source of peace to them, and it can be for us as well. What the nation of Israel needed to know and what we need to know is that our God is mighty. He is powerful. He has no rival! If God were with us but not powerful, then what good would that be? He might be able to provide us with some temporary comfort like that of a friend, but He would be just as helpless as we are to make any real meaningful change. This is not so with our God. Our God is mighty, and this is amazing news for us who are weak.

Do you feel weak? Is there an area in your life where you feel unable to generate real and lasting change? Are you fearful about the future? Is there something happening in your life that feels out of your control? All of these questions point to a deeper reality about ourselves: we need rescuing. We need someone who is stronger than we are to rescue us from our failings, our shortcomings, and our sin. The good news of the gospel is that Jesus demonstrated his power over sin, death, and Satan when he rose from the grave. This resurrection power is now available to you, but only if you recognize your inability to save yourself. When we look to Christ alone for our rescue, this Mighty God becomes our strength when we are weak and our peace when we are scared, and He "is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us." (Ephesians 3:20)

## **SCRIPTURE REFLECTION:** Mark 4:35–41

On that day, when evening had come, he said to them, “Let us go across to the other side.” And leaving the crowd, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. And other boats were with him. And a great windstorm arose, and the waves were breaking into the boat, so that the boat was already filling. But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion. And they woke him and said to him, “Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?” And he awoke and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, “Peace! Be still!” And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. He said to them, “Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith?” And they were filled with great fear and said to one another, “Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?”

## **ADVENT HYMN:** “Joy To the World”

*He rules the world with truth and grace  
And makes the nations prove  
The glories of His righteousness  
And wonders of His love*

Take a few minutes and listen to the song “Joy to the World.” Which lyrics stood out to you as you listened and why?

## **PRAYER**

- Take a minute and call to mind moments in your life where you saw the power of God on display. Spend some time giving thanks for God and how He has worked in your life and in the lives of others.
- What is an area in your life where you feel defeated or weak? Spend some time praying that God would be your strength and your peace.
- Who is someone in your life that needs rescuing? Spend time praying for him or her. While you pray, remember the words of Jesus, “With man it is impossible, but not with God. For all things are possible with God.” (Mark 10:27)



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## ADVENT WEEK 3: EVERLASTING FATHER

### **DEVOTIONAL:** Everlasting Father

By Kassidy Buttram

A father who is characterized by love is a beautiful gift to his family and children. But for many of us, love is not the word that comes to mind when we hear the word father. The wounds of many hearts have been dealt by fathers. Because of these unloving personal experiences and unfair childhoods, seeing God as a good Father comes with many barriers for many hurting children who grow up to be hurting adults. Maybe this rings all too true for you.

When Isaiah prophesied that a Son would be given who would be called Everlasting Father, he painted a word picture of love. It is Jesus Christ, the Son of God, that reflects the Father's love for us. The heart of God the Father was on full display when he sent his Son into the world as a gift to us. He loves us with a perfect love unlike any love we have ever known. We know what the Father is like by looking at Jesus, and Jesus set the standard for love by laying His life down. There is no greater love than this.

But perhaps for you, this still does not solve the father issue. If you lived with an angry father, maybe you're wondering if God is on the verge of unleashing His rage. If you did not live with a father at all because he abandoned you, maybe you believe God is absent, too. Let me draw your attention to the word that precedes Father in Isaiah 9:6:

#### Everlasting Father

The Hebrew word for everlasting here is translated as continual. Here Jesus is characterized by duration. He will never leave. He will never abandon. He is not surprised by your sin. He received all of God's anger toward sin at the cross so that you could live and be loved eternally. He is love, and this holy love bears all things. This love endures all things. This love never ends, and it never fails.

Whether you have a good father, a bad father, or an absent father, you can have hope because in Jesus, we have the one who opens the Father's heart towards us.

## **SCRIPTURE REFLECTION:** Romans 8:35-39

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? As it is written,

“For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.”

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

## **ADVENT HYMN:** “O Come All Ye Faithful”

*Yea, Lord, we greet thee  
Born this happy morning  
Jesus, to thee be all glory giv'n  
Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing*

Take a few minutes and listen to the song “O Come All Ye Faithful.” Which lyrics stood out to you as you listened and why?

## **PRAYER**

- During this prayer time, try continually addressing God as Father, and give thanks to Jesus for making a way for you to experience God as Father.
- If you have wounds from your earthly father or if you have lost your father, ask your heavenly Father to heal those wounds and to comfort you with His own presence.
- Confess to God the difficulties or barriers you have to calling Him Father.
- Thank the Father for displaying His love by sending Jesus. Thank God for being an Everlasting Father with everlasting love.

# LUKE 1:67-80

## PASSAGE

67 And his father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied, saying,  
68 “Blessed be the Lord God of Israel,  
for he has visited and redeemed his people  
69 and has raised up a horn of salvation for us  
in the house of his servant David,  
70 as he spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets from of old,  
71 that we should be saved from our enemies  
and from the hand of all who hate us;  
72 to show the mercy promised to our fathers  
and to remember his holy covenant,  
73 the oath that he swore to our father Abraham, to grant us  
74 that we, being delivered from the hand of our enemies,  
might serve him without fear,  
75 in holiness and righteousness before him all our days.  
76 And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High;  
for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways,  
77 to give knowledge of salvation to his people  
in the forgiveness of their sins,  
78 because of the tender mercy of our God,  
whereby the sunrise shall visit us from on high  
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.”  
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. (ESV)

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Spend time sharing your own story of salvation and rejoicing in the fact that God is merciful towards sinners.
2. Zechariah looked forward to a time when he and his people would be delivered from the hands of their enemies. Is there an area in your life where you need deliverance?
3. What goal or purpose does God have in mind for man's salvation?
4. How might we model John's ministry in our own life?

## NOTES

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## ADVENT WEEK 4: PRINCE OF PEACE

### **DEVOTIONAL:** Prince of Peace

By Addison Hamrick

Deep down, all of us want one thing: to be loved unconditionally. Most of our deepest hurts or regrets in life come from the reality that the love we receive from others and extend to others is flawed. It is hard for us to accept a category of love that isn't conditional. When you receive love from someone else, there may be a thought in the back of your mind: "Do they really mean it? Are they trying to get something from me? Or they are only saying this because they don't know who I really am. If they truly knew me, then they would take back their love in a heartbeat." And on the flip side, when you give love to others, it may be hard to separate some of your selfish intentions from that love. Does our love demand things from others? Do we expect something in return for our love?

If you feel this conflict of love, then there is hope for you: this hope is found in Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace. Jesus came to bring peace to people who live in this constant state of conflict. Our fundamental problem is not that we do not know how to love rightly, but that we are incapable of loving rightly. Our sin has separated us from the fount of all love — God. In order for us to love rightly, we must first receive a love that is altogether different from the conditional love that we are accustomed to.

This is why the Advent season is so glorious. It marks the decisive moment in history when this unconditional love arrived. This love arrived in the person of Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace, the one who would restore our peace with God. Jesus made us capable of loving others with the same love that we have received. But how was this peace accomplished? Through sacrifice (Col. 1:20). This love came at a cost. And it is this cost that proves the depth of God's love for us. This Advent season, spend time reflecting on the greatness of this love. It was this love that moved Jesus to the cross, and it was this love that preoccupied His thoughts on the cross (Hebrews 12:2). And it was this love that accomplished peace.

## **SCRIPTURE REFLECTION:** Romans 5:1-8

Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us. For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die—but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

## **ADVENT HYMN:** “Hark! The Herald Angels Sing”

*Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace!  
Hail the Sun of Righteousness!  
Light and life to all He brings  
Risen with healing in His wings*

Take a few minutes and listen to the song “Hark the Herald Angels Sing.” Which lyrics stood out to you as you listened and why?

## **PRAYER**

- Spend a few minutes reflecting on God's love for you. Give thanks to God for all the ways his love is different from ours.
- Who is one person in your life that you find it hard to love? Pray for this person and pray that God would move you to love him or her unconditionally.
- Jesus' love was sacrificial. Pray that God would bring to mind one person or family that you can love sacrificially this Advent season.

# LUKE 2:1-20

## PASSAGE

1 In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. 2 This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. 3 And all went to be registered, each to his own town. 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, 5 to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. 6 And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. 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.

8 And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. 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. 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. 11 For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. 12 And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger." 13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying,

14 "Glory to God in the highest,

and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!"

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." 16 And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. 17 And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. 18 And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. 19 But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. 20 And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them. (ESV)

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How have you seen God's sovereign hand position you in order to fulfill his purposes for your life?
2. Why does the news of Jesus' birth come to the shepherds first? What does this teach us about who the gospel is for?
3. How did the shepherds model a proper response to Jesus?
4. Who is someone in your life who needs to hear this "good news of great joy"? What intentional steps can you take to share with him or her this Advent season?

# NOTES

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# LUKE 2:25-40

## PASSAGE

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. 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. 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, 28 he took him up in his arms and blessed God and said,

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

30 for my eyes have seen your salvation

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

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

33 And his father and his mother marveled at what was said about him. 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 35 (and a sword will pierce through your own soul also), so that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed."

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, 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. 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.

39 And when they had performed everything according to the Law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. 40 And the child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom. And the favor of God was upon him. (ESV)

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is one thing you would like to see or experience before you die?
2. What role does the Spirit play in us recognizing Jesus as the Christ? How does this reality shape our ministry and evangelism?
3. What can we learn from Simeon and Anna about a life of faithfulness to the Lord and about trusting His promises whether or not we physically see them fulfilled?
4. How can we live in a way that looks forward to the second coming of Jesus? How can we remain faithful, trusting that He is coming again, even if He doesn't come in our lifetime?

# NOTES

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# LUKE 3:1-20

## PASSAGE

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, 2 during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John the son of Zechariah in the wilderness. 3 And he went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. 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.

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,  
6 and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.”

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? 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. 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.”

10 And the crowds asked him, “What then shall we do?” 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.” 12 Tax collectors also came to be baptized and said to him, “Teacher, what shall we do?” 13 And he said to them, “Collect no more than you are authorized to do.” 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.”

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

18 So with many other exhortations he preached good news to the people. 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, 20 added this to them all, that he locked up John in prison. (ESV)

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What are some false assurances people have that God will accept them?
2. What does it mean to repent? What does a life of repentance look like?
3. How would you respond if someone were to ask you, “What must I do to be saved?”
4. How does the reality that judgment day is coming give you urgency in your relationship with God and others?

# NOTES

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# LUKE 3:21-38

## PASSAGE

21 Now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heavens were opened, 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."

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, 24 the son of Matthat, the son of Levi, the son of Melchi, the son of Jannai, the son of Joseph, 25 the son of Mattathias, the son of Amos, the son of Nahum, the son of Esli, the son of Naggai, 26 the son of Maath, the son of Mattathias, the son of Semein, the son of Josech, the son of Joda, 27 the son of Joanan, the son of Rhesa, the son of Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, the son of Neri, 28 the son of Melchi, the son of Addi, the son of Cosam, the son of Elmadam, the son of Er, 29 the son of Joshua, the son of Eliezer, the son of Jorim, the son of Matthat, the son of Levi, 30 the son of Simeon, the son of Judah, the son of Joseph, the son of Jonam, the son of Eliakim, 31 the son of Melea, the son of Menna, the son of Mattatha, the son of Nathan, the son of David, 32 the son of Jesse, the son of Obed, the son of Boaz, the son of Sala, the son of Nahshon, 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, 34 the son of Jacob, the son of Isaac, the son of Abraham, the son of Terah, the son of Nahor, 35 the son of Serug, the son of Reu, the son of Peleg, the son of Eber, the son of Shelah, 36 the son of Cainan, the son of Arphaxad, the son of Shem, the son of Noah, the son of Lamech, 37 the son of Methuselah, the son of Enoch, the son of Jared, the son of Mahalaleel, the son of Cainan, 38 the son of Enos, the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God. (ESV)

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Luke mentions Jesus praying more than any of the other gospels. Who is someone in your life that is a great example of prayer? What are ways that you would like to emulate their prayer life?
2. What does the Father say about you if you are in Christ? Why is this important to dwell on? What happens when we lose sight of what God says about us?
3. Jesus began his public ministry at the age of 30. What does this teach us about God's timing and our preparation?
4. How does Jesus' genealogy affirm who He claims to be, and why is this important?

## NOTES

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# LUKE 4:1-13

## PASSAGE

1 And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness 2 for forty days, being tempted by the devil. And he ate nothing during those days. And when they were ended, he was hungry. 3 The devil said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread." 4 And Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone.'" 5 And the devil took him up and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time, 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. 7 If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours." 8 And Jesus answered him, "It is written,

"You shall worship the Lord your God, and him only shall you serve."

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, 10 for it is written,

"He will command his angels concerning you, to guard you,'

11 and

"On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone."

12 And Jesus answered him, "It is said, 'You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.'" 13 And when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from him until an opportune time. (ESV)

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why is it significant that the Holy Spirit descended on Jesus (Luke 3:21-22) before he was led into the desert to be tempted? How can you rely on the Holy Spirit in times of temptation?
2. What were the three main things Jesus was tempted with? How are they similar to the temptations we face? Which one of these temptations do you experience the most strongly?
3. What was Jesus' response to each temptation? How does this instruct us on how we ought to fight temptation?
4. How does Jesus' victory over temptation help us as we battle our own temptations? (see also Hebrews 4:15-16)

# NOTES

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# REFERENCES

## INTRODUCTION

<sup>1</sup>Darrell Bock, *NIV Application Commentary: Luke*, pg.19

<sup>2</sup>R.T France, *Teach the Text: Luke*, pg.1

<sup>3</sup>Darrell Bock, *NIV Application Commentary: Luke*, pg.20

<sup>4</sup>Michael Wilcock, *The Message of Luke*, pg.1

<sup>5</sup>*ESV Study Bible*, pg.1937

<sup>6</sup>Darrell Bock, *NIV Application Commentary: Luke*, pg.23-25



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