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Luke 1

(2019)

Bible House of Grace contains an easy to read New and Old Testament commentary full of spiritual treasures and pearls, complete with an insightful resource guide illuminating God's love and grace.



Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man, as to such I neither claim perfect knowledge or perfect understanding.

Luke 1.

Topics.

- Gabriel an angel of the Lord comes to Zechariah.
- John will go before the Lord in the spirit and power of Elijah.
- The spirit and power of Elijah.
- Zechariah is made mute.
- Gabriel goes to Mary.
- Mary questions Gabriel.
- Mary visits Elizabeth and returns home.
- Elizabeth gives birth to John.
- Zechariah is filled with the Holy Spirit and prophecies.

INTRODUCTION: The Gospel of Luke is in the form of a letter to a man named Theophilus. Luke wrote after having carefully investigated all the facts about Christ (1:1-4) he documents Christ's life from before his birth through his ministry, death, and resurrection. Jesus carried out his ministry in the power of the Holy Spirit, announcing the Good News of salvation, he showed numerous times his compassion for the poor and the outcast and fulfilled prophecy and carried out his purpose: to seek and save the lost. Luke gives the fullest account of Christ's birth and only Luke records the parables of the Good Samaritan and the Prodigal Son. He was a physician and a colleague of Paul, Luke probably wrote this letter in the early 60s A.D, He also wrote Acts.

NOTE: for information concerning people, places and the meaning of words see Map Locations and People of the Bible, and Bible Dictionary on Website Menu.

LUKE 1:1-4

Luke letter is directed to Theophilus.

- **Luke 1:1-4:** Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile a narrative of the things that have been accomplished among us, ²just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word have delivered them to us, ³it seemed good to me also, having followed all things closely for some time past, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, ⁴that you (Theophilus) may have certainty concerning the things you have been taught.

Those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word refers to the apostles and those that saw Christ.

Theophilus: comes from theos and philos meaning, a friend of God. Theos means a deity (especially the supreme divinity) or exceedingly godly and Godward, figuratively theos means a magistrate. Philos means, dear and friend or friendly, it embraces being fond of an associate or neighbour. Theophilus was a Christian to whom Luke addressed the books of Luke and Acts (Luke 1:3) (Acts 1:1). Luke's purpose for writing this letter was to give Theophilus absolute confidence in the things he had been taught about Christ.

Zechariah and Elizabeth.

- **Luke 1:5-9:** 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. ⁶And they were both righteous before God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and statutes of the Lord. ⁷But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and both were advanced in years. ⁸Now while he was serving as priest before God when his division was on duty, ⁹according to the custom of the priesthood, he was chosen by lot to enter the temple of the Lord and burn incense.

Both Zechariah and Elizabeth were counted as blameless, the LORD also called Noah a righteous man (Gen. 7:1), Abraham blameless (Gen. 17:1), David a man of integrity and uprightness (1 Kings 9:4) and Job blameless (Job 1:1), but this does not mean that they were without sin, but that according to the Levitical law they kept all the holy days, the feasts and the Sabbaths etc. They kept the commandments of God meaning they loved the LORD with all their heart, soul and mind fulfilling the first four commandments regarding God and treated people with justice, decency and respect fulfilling the last six commandments regarding mankind. We know it does not mean that they were without sin because there has only ever been one man who lived without sin and he is called the Lamb without blemish, the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ.

NOTICE: Elizabeth was from the line of Aaron (the priesthood).

Divisions of the Priesthood: under the law and within the Levitical priesthood there were different divisions of ministry for the various duties and services of the priests in the temple of the LORD (1 Chron. 24:19) (2 Chron. 31:2).

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Lot (lagchano) means chosen, to determine and by implication to receive.

Incense (thumiao) carries the idea of smoking, it means to fumigate and is an offering of aromatic fumes by burning incense. Figuratively incense can apply to any of the following:

- Prayer (Psalm 141:2).
- Praise (Malachi 1:11).
- An acceptable sacrifice (Ephes. 5:2).
- The prayers of saints (Rev. 5:8) (Rev. 8:3-4).

Throughout every generation the priests of Israel were to burn fragrant incense every morning at twilight (Exodus 30:7-8).

LUKE 1:10

The multitude prayed at the hour of incense.

- **Luke 1:10:** and the whole multitude of the people were praying outside at the hour of incense.

The hour of incense refers to the time the priest went into the temple to make atonement for the people of Israel. During this time no-one was allowed inside the temple until he had made atonement for them and had come out of the temple thus the reason all the people are outside praying while Zechariah was inside the temple making atonement for them (Lev. 16:17).

Gabriel an Angel of the LORD comes to Zechariah.

- **Luke 1:11-15:** And there appeared to him (Zechariah) an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense. ¹²And Zechariah was troubled when he saw him and fear fell upon him. ¹³But 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. ¹⁴And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth (See verse 58) ¹⁵for 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.

The altar of incense was for burning incense on it was in the Holy Place of the temple (Exod. 30:1). Verse nineteen shows us that this angel of the LORD is Gabriel. He tells Zechariah that Elizabeth will have a child and he is to name him John.

He must not Drink Wine or Strong Drink: (v15) John must not drink strong drink is alluding to a special vow a woman or a man make when they separate themselves to the LORD. It refers to the promise that they will not drink any strong alcoholic drink during the days of their separation (it is called the vow of the Nazirite) (Num. 6:1-4).

LUKE 1:16-17

John will go before the Lord in the Spirit and Power of Elijah.

- **Luke 1:16-17:** And he (John) will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God, ¹⁷and he will go before him (the Lord their God) 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."

Some in Christian circles today use the term, "John will turn the hearts of the people to the Lord their God" to support the theory that Jesus is God, but Gabriel is not implying that Jesus is God, but simply means that John will turn the hearts of the people to God through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. For further information see the title:

- Trinity (the Doctrine of the Trinity).
- In, Various Topics (ON WEBSITE MENU).

The Spirit and power of Elijah: Gabriel tells Zechariah that John will go in the spirit and power of Elijah. Elijah destroyed the false religious leaders of Baal who had greatly influenced the people of Israel and led them away from God (1 Kings 18:17-40). He through his passion for the LORD'S name and God's people turned the hearts of the people back to the LORD their God. This is exactly what John did, his mission was to make a people ready for the Lord by turning the hearts of the disobedient to wisdom of justice and fairness and the hearts of the fathers to the children, meaning he was to turn the hearts and ears of the older generation who were indoctrinated with the Old Covenant to accept and listen to the younger and newer generation (especially Christ) who came with the New Covenant and the Good News of the Gospel of grace.

LUKE 1:18-23

Zechariah is made Mute.

- **Luke 1:18-23:** And Zechariah said to the angel "How shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife is advanced in years." ¹⁹And the angel answered him, "I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God, and I was sent to speak to you and to bring you this

good news. ²⁰And 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." ²¹And the people were waiting for Zechariah, and they were wondering at his delay in the temple. ²²And when he came out, he was unable to speak to them, and they realised that he had seen a vision in the temple. And he kept making signs to them and remained mute. ²³And when his (Zechariah) time of service was ended, he went to his home.

Because Zechariah and Elizabeth were not young people Zechariah found it hard to believe Gabriel's words, so the angel tells him he will not be able to talk again until John is born. A similar thing happened to Ezekiel, during a time when Israel was rebellious the LORD made the prophet mute so that when he did speak he would be a sign to the people of Israel and they would know the LORD had been speaking with him and that he was speaking the word of the LORD (Ezek. 3:26-27). This is exactly the effect Zechariah's muteness had on the people waiting in prayer outside the Temple, they realised the LORD had given him a vision.

LUKE 1:24-25

Elizabeth Hides Herself.

- **Luke 1:24-25:** 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."

It was considered a shame for a Jewish woman not to have children perhaps Elizabeth because of her old age hid herself for five months to make sure she was pregnant before saying anything or maybe to stay safe and protected from harm.

LUKE 1:26-31

Gabriel goes to Mary.

- **Luke 1:26-31:** In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, ²⁷to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸And he came to her and said, "Greetings, O favoured one, the Lord is with you!" ²⁹But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. ³⁰And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. ³¹And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus.

In the sixth months refers to the sixth month of Mary's cousin Elizabeth being pregnant with John (Luke 1:36). Galilee was the place where Jesus lived and many of the disciples came from it was on the west side of the Sea of Galilee. Much of Jesus public ministry took place along its north shore (it is also called the Sea of Tiberias, the Lake of Gennesaret, the Sea of Chinnereth and the Sea of Cinneroth).

Nazareth: in lower Galilee was a small insignificant town in Palestine where Joseph and Mary lived. Mary and Joseph travelled from Nazareth to Bethlehem where Jesus was born, then after fleeing into Egypt they returned to Nazareth to live. Jesus eventually left Nazareth for a wider ministry thus he was called a prophet from Nazareth in Galilee. Jesus enemies used the name Nazarene as a title of scorn but used by His friends it had a friendly meaning.

The meaning of virgin: some believe the word virgin in this context simply means a young maiden (i.e. unmarried young woman), but in nearly all Scriptures that the word virgin is used it implies a chaste woman, in only one verse it could be taken to simply mean a young unmarried woman. The word virgin means chaste and chaste means, a

pure woman, one that is restrained, modest, celibate, unused, unspoilt, stainless and spotless. Added to this Scripture teaches that single people should not be having a sexual relationship until they are married therefore when God uses the word virgin in relationship to an unmarried woman it carries the idea of a woman that is chaste and not just a young maiden.

The figurative use of the word virgin: from God's viewpoint there appears to be two groups of people, the entire nation of Israel is the wider view and from them the faithful and those who return to Him in repentance. The faithful or repentant are called the remnant or the virgin daughter of Israel carrying the idea that they are the only people of God it implies a people with only one God in contrast to people with many gods showing that even when used figuratively the word virgin carries the picture of God's people being chaste with one God contrasted to Satan's people fornicating with many god's.

Jewish betrothal and marriage: is the betrothal (erusin) which is the reading of the marriage contract (ketubba) and the giving of the ring with a declaration, "Behold you are consecrated to me by this ring according to the Law of Moses and Israel." This is later followed by the marriage ceremony (nissu'in) consisting of the reciting of the seven marriage benedictions which is performed under a huppa (a canopy, that symbolizes the bridal bower). Since Jewish religious law permits a man to divorce his wife at any time for any reason, the Jewish marriage contract (the Ketubba) guaranteed a bride certain future rights before her marriage. It was introduced in ancient times to protect a woman's rights and to make divorce a costly matter for the husband. A Jewish wife carefully preserves the ketubba, not as evidence of marriage but for its future value. (Encyclopaedia Britannica). Mary and Joseph were betrothed to marry meaning they had contracted together according to Jewish law and custom to marry. We in the West would say they are engaged to marry.

LUKE 1:32-33

Jesus will be called the Son of the Most High.

- **Luke 1:32-33:** 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."

David the Father of Jesus: Gabriel tells Mary the Lord God will give her child the throne of his father David (v32), David is the father of Jesus in the sense that Mary his mother descended from David's son Nathan. (Many Bible Scholars suspect Joseph descended from David's son Solomon).

Christ is the promised seed of David.

- In the book of Samuel, the LORD promises David after he dies God will raise up offspring (seed in KJV) after him who will come from his body and the LORD will establish his Kingdom (2 Sam. 7:11-12).
- In the book of Jeremiah, the LORD says, he will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land (Jer. 23:5).
- In the book of Psalms, the LORD swore to David that one of the sons of his body will sit on his throne (Psalm 132:11).
- In the book of Isaiah, the LORD said, "There shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse and a Branch shall grow out of his roots" (Isaiah 11:1). (David was the son of Jesse) (1 Samuel 16:11).

Paul wrote:

- Concerning God's Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead (Rom. 1:3-4).
- Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel (2 Tim. 2:8).

These verses shine a spotlight on the following truths, Jesus was God's son at his birth by being made of the seed of David according to the flesh, this could only be through Mary because if Joseph was the paternal father how could Scripture call David Jesus' father. Jesus was also declared or called God's son because of the power of the resurrection that proved his holiness. If Jesus had sinned, God could not have resurrected him since the law would then have had every legal right to hold Jesus in the grave.

There will be no end to his Kingdom: Gabriel's words to Mary, "Of his Kingdom there will be no end." (v33) Refers to the Kingdom spoken of in the book of Daniel, in which the LORD tells Daniel that God will set up a Kingdom that will break in pieces all other kingdoms and bring them to an end. It is a Kingdom that will never be destroyed never left to another people and will stand forever (Dan. 2:44). All peoples, nations, and languages will serve God's King the Lord Jesus Christ, his dominion will be an everlasting dominion, which will never pass away or be destroyed (Dan. 7:14). The greatness, authority and power of all kingdoms under the whole heaven will be given to the people of the saints of the Most High it will be an everlasting Kingdom and all dominions and nations will serve and obey them (Dan. 7:27).

The fulfilment of Gabriel's promise to Mary: Gabriel's words to Mary, "Of his Kingdom there will be no end." Will be fulfilled when the Lord Jesus Christ returns as, King of kings and Lord of lords (Revelation 19:11-16) to rule and reign from God's Holy City Jerusalem (on Mount Zion God's Holy Mountain) to establish God's Kingdom on earth during his millennial reign. In the first resurrection (Rev. 20:4-5) the dead in Christ and the faithful, who are alive, will be gathered together to rule and reign as kings and priests with the Lord over those nations who are left outside the Holy City of God. Christ the King united with his people will not only bring peace to the Middle East, but establish God's Kingdom of steadfast love, faithfulness, righteousness, joy and peace throughout the world and the glory of God will cover the earth.

Jesus will do justice to the poor and oppressed, he will be a faithful and compassionate King forever. He will not allow anyone to strike terror in the earth or use lies and deception to enlarge their own wealth and power. The land will abundantly produce and even the deserts will flourish. The animals will not feed on each other and even the lamb will be able to lie down with the wolf and everyone will eat of their own hands because all that they plant will produce. All nations the LORD has made will come and worship before the Lord Jesus Christ. They will glorify God's Name, proclaiming the LORD is great and does wondrous things and that He alone is God. The book of Revelation states:

- Jesus Christ, the faithful witness who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood has made us kings and priests unto God and his Father is coming in glory and every eye shall see him, and they also who pierced him and all kindreds of the earth (Revelation 1:5-7).

And in Revelation chapter five we are told that:

- Christ was slain, and by his blood he redeemed a people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation and made them a kingdom and priests to God and they shall reign on the earth (Revelation 5:9-10).

At the end of this glorious Kingdom age God descends to earth on a Great White Throne the sea, death and hades (the grave) give up the dead. They stand before God and are judged according to what is written in certain heavenly books according to what they have done. Death and

those counted unworthy are cast into the Lake of Fire a symbol of eternal destruction (i.e., total extinction) (also called the, Second Death) (Rev 20:11-15). Christ hands the Kingdom over to his heavenly Father and God is ALL in ALL and ETERNITY begins in all its fullness and majestic royal glory. For further information see titles:

- Kingdom of God (ON WEBSITE MENU).
- The Second or Great White Throne Judgment.

In, Resurrection (ON WEBSITE MENU).

LUKE 1:34-38

Mary Questions Gabriel.

- **Luke 1:34-38:** And Mary said to the angel (Gabriel) (v26), "How will this be, since I am a virgin?" ³⁵And 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. ³⁶And 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. ³⁷For nothing will be impossible with God." ³⁸And 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.

Gabriel had told Mary that she will conceive and bear a son (v30); Mary knowing she had not lain with Joseph asked how will she conceive when she has not been with any man? Gabriel basically answers her by telling Mary she does not need to lay with a man to fall pregnant because the Holy Spirit will come upon her and she will conceive a child by the creative power of God. To give Mary even more confidence Gabriel reminds Mary that Elizabeth's baby is a miracle child and that nothing is impossible for God. It is interesting to remember that the birth of Isaac was also a miracle; Sarah Abrahams' wife was also a barren woman and ninety-years old when she gave birth to Isaac. To confirm their faith that LORD would do what he had promised God said to Sarah and Abraham, "Is anything too hard for the LORD?" (Gen. 18:14). Mary accepts the word of Gabriel and the angel leaves her.

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LUKE 1:39-45

Mary visits Elizabeth.

- **Luke 1:39-45:** In those days Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country, to a town in Judah, ⁴⁰and she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the baby (John) leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit, ⁴²and she exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! ⁴³And why is this granted to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me? ⁴⁴For behold, when the sound of your greeting came to my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. ⁴⁵And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord."

The words, "Mary arose in those days" does not necessarily mean that she immediately left to go and visit Elisabeth. It is more likely that just as Manoah's barren wife (the mother of Samson) after the angel of the LORD had appeared to her went and told her husband Manoah (Judges 13) that Mary likewise would have gone to find Joseph and tell him all that the Gabriel had said, who could have an experience like that and not go and tell the person they love and intend to marry? The Scripture says that Mary was found with child, meaning she believed Gabriel and had the knowledge of the child and it is certain with this knowledge Mary went

and told Joseph that she was going to have a child, but Joseph did not believe the story and while thinking about putting her away the angel came and told him the child is of the Holy Spirit, all of this could have happened the same day.

REMEMBER: there is no mention that Gabriel went to visit Elisabeth and tell her that she was going to have a child, nor is there any mentioned of Zachariah her husband telling his wife that an angel of God had told him she will have a child. Luke leaves it up to the common sense of the reader to suppose that Zachariah would naturally tell his wife all that Gabriel had said. Luke applies this same principle with his account of Mary, he takes it for granted that the reader will suppose that Mary would go and tell Joseph just as Manoah's wife went and told her husband.

Ponder for a moment: Gabriel in his visit to Mary told her he had also visited Elizabeth (Mary's relative) (v36) so naturally Mary goes to visit her, imagine the enormous excitement Mary would have had on her journey to visit Elizabeth, and the thrill for Elizabeth knowing they were both to be an amazing part of the eternal plan of God. Both women would have known the Scriptures no-doubt they were up day and night reading everything again that the Old Testament spoke of concerning Christ and jumping for joy that they were favoured and honoured in such a way by the LORD.

NOTE: some in Christianity mistakenly teach that Jesus is actually God, but if that is a true statement then God has a mother, because Elizabeth calls Mary the mother of Jesus (v43). Obviously when Elizabeth refers to Mary as the mother of the Lord, she does not have in mind that he is God, but that he is the Messiah and Saviour of Israel, she does not for a moment think that Mary is pregnant with God or going to give birth to God. Added to this Gabriel told Mary that her child is the Son of God, he did not say Mary was going conceive in her womb and give birth to God. The teaching that Jesus is God is a false teaching it is read into certain Scriptures by those who approach them with the preconceived mindset that Jesus is God.

Words of comfort and encouragement: since the teaching that Jesus is God has such a strong hold on much of traditional Christianity the following will encourage and comfort faithful brothers and sisters in Christ who maybe in some doubt and unsure of what to believe concerning the Father and the Son. The Bible very clearly shows that even if Jesus was God no one has to know this to be saved to eternal life since there is not one verse in the entire Bible that states: -

- We must believe that Jesus is God to be saved.

Nor is there one verse from Genesis to Revelations that says:

- Whoever believes that Jesus is God the Son will be saved.

In total contrast to this silence there are literally multitudes of Scriptures throughout the pages of the New Testament that very clearly proclaim:

- We must believe that Jesus is the Son of God to be saved.

And that say:

- Whoever believes that Jesus is the Son of God will be saved.

Surely if it was important to believe that Jesus was actually God to be saved to eternal life Jesus, the apostles and Paul would have told us at least once in all their teaching concerning salvation, but all we hear from Paul, the apostles and Jesus himself is them saying that we must believe that Jesus is the Son of God to be saved to eternal life. Jesus himself said:

- This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God 'and' Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent (John 17:3).

LUKE 1:46-55

Mary Praises God.

- **Luke 1:46-55:** And Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord, ⁴⁷and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour, ⁴⁸for he has looked on the humble estate of his servant. For behold, from now on all generations will call me blessed; ⁴⁹for he who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name. ⁵⁰And his mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. ⁵¹He has shown strength with his arm (Christ) he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts; ⁵²he has brought down the mighty from their thrones and exalted those of humble estate; ⁵³he has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent empty away. ⁵⁴He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, ⁵⁵as he spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his offspring (seed in the KJV) forever."

Mary's words, "His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation" (v50) is alluding to the LORD'S promise that He will establish His covenant with Abraham and his offspring (seed in the KJV) after him throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant and will show steadfast love to thousands of those who love Him and keep His commandments, and to the following words of David, "The steadfast love of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear him, and his righteousness to children's children (Genesis 17:7) (Exodus. 20:6) (Psalm 103:17-18).

The poor and the rich: (v53) God has filled the hungry with good things and the rich he has sent empty away means, God saves those who are humble and poor, but He casts away those who are rich, prideful and selfish with their wealth. The poor should never envy the rich because it is far easier for a poor person to accept Christ since they have nothing to give up or loose, whereas a rich person has all the pleasures of this world to fulfil their life and worldly treasures and a lifestyle that they maybe called to let go. Mary's words:

- As God spoke to Abraham and his offspring (seed in the KJV) (v55).

Refer to the LORD'S promise to Abraham that Sarah will bear a son who they will name Isaac and who God will establish His covenant with as an everlasting covenant for his offspring (seed in KJV) after him. (Gen. 17:19) and to the LORD'S promise to David, that one of his sons from his body (meaning one of his descendants) will sit on David's throne (notice the LORD does not name the son) (Psalm 132:11). The child that Mary is about to give birth to is the fulfilment of the LORD'S promise to Abraham and David, Christ is the promised seed of Abraham and the promised seed of David. Matthew fully aware of this glorious truth begins his writings with the words, "The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham (Matt. 1:1)

LUKE 1:56

Mary returns Home.

- **Luke 1:56:** And Mary remained with her (Elizabeth) about three months and returned to her home.

When Gabriel visited Mary Elizabeth was six months pregnant (v36) and Mary spent three months with her so it is most likely Mary was with Elizabeth at the birth of John and the reason she stayed with her so long before returning home.

Elizabeth gives Birth to John.

- **Luke 1:57-66:** Now the time came for Elizabeth to give birth, and she bore a son. ⁵⁸And her neighbours and relatives heard that the Lord had shown great mercy to her and they rejoiced with her. ⁵⁹And on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child. And they would have called him Zechariah after his father, ⁶⁰but his mother answered, "No; he shall be called John." ⁶¹And they said to her, "None of your relatives is called by this name." ⁶²And they made signs to his father inquiring what he wanted him to be called. ⁶³And he asked for a writing tablet and wrote, "His name is John." And they all wondered. ⁶⁴And immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue loosed, and he spoke, blessing God. ⁶⁵And fear came on all their neighbours. And all these things were talked about through all the hill country of Judea, ⁶⁶and 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.

It was the Jewish custom to circumcise a child when they were eight days old because circumcision was a sign of the everlasting covenant between God and Abraham. Whoever was not circumcised broke God's covenant and was to be cut off from God's people. The ceremony also included naming the baby boy being circumcised. Many Jewish names are the same because it was Jewish culture to name the child after the father or a relative (Gen. 17:9-15) (Lev. 12:3). Female babies are named in the synagogue, on the Sabbath following their birth when the father is called to recite the benedictions over the reading of Torah

NOTE: though the previous verses have told us Mary has gone home that does not necessarily mean she was not at the birth of John as these verses may not be in chronological order and Luke could easily be recapping the events of the birth of John it seems hardly likely Mary would leave Elizabeth her relative (v36) when she was nine months pregnant and ready to give birth. It is also possible that Luke has deliberately left Mary out because the focus is Elizabeth, the birth of John and the miracle of Zechariah speaking again all of which Mary has nothing to do with.

Zechariah speaks: it was the custom in ancient times to name a male child after their father; Zechariah must have been writing notes to Elizabeth because she stood against her friends and said the child will be called John. During the history of the Bible there was no global internet or mobile phones so God throughout the Bible often did things to shock the mind in such a manner that it would start people talking. Making Zechariah mute during Elizabeth pregnancy and then giving him his voice back is one of those moments. The crowds are stunned when Zechariah speaks and praises the LORD and everyone is struck with awe and wonder and news about Elizabeth's new-born child rapidly spreads. A similar thing happened to Ezekiel, the Lord made him mute so that when he did speak, he would be a sign to the people of Israel and they would know the LORD had been speaking with him and that he was speaking the word of the LORD (Ezek. 3:26-27). This is exactly the effect Zechariah's muteness had on the people waiting in prayer outside the temple, they realised the LORD had been with him and the entire events concerning the birth of John were spoken of not only in the city of Jerusalem but even up in the hills of Judah.

Zechariah is filled with the Holy Spirit and Prophecies.

- **Luke 1:67-79:** And his (John's) 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 ⁶⁹and has raised up a horn (Christ) of salvation for us in the house of his

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

Mary had been staying with Elizabeth and Zechariah for the past three months, obviously Mary would have told Zechariah all about Gabriel's visit and that she is pregnant with the Christ the promised horn of Salvation (v69) spoken of by the LORD'S holy prophets of old. This is why Jesus said, "Among those born of women there has arisen no one greater than John the Baptist." John even though he did no miracles was the greatest of all because he prepared the way for the promised seed of Abraham and David the Messiah of Israel, the Son of God. (Matt. 11:11) (Luke 7:28). Zechariah's words:

- As the LORD God spoke by the Prophets from of Old (v70).

Refer to the LORD'S eternal promise that He would raise up for David a righteous Branch, who will reign as King and deal wisely and execute justice and righteousness in the land and in his days Judah will be saved and Israel will dwell securely and the name by which he will be called will be: "The Lord is our righteousness" (Jer. 23:5-6).

The oath the LORD swore to Abraham: (v73) God promised Abraham that he would make him the father of a multitude of nations (Gen. 17:4), bless and multiply his offspring as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore and that his offspring would possess the stronghold of their enemies. To convince the heirs of the promise of the unchangeable character of his purpose, God guaranteed the promise with an oath. (Genesis 22:16-17) (Hebrews 6:13-17).

CONCLUSION OF THE VIRGIN BIRTH: David is presented as the father of Jesus and Mary the mother there is no mention of Joseph in Gabriel's entire salutation. Obviously, it could not read David was the father of Jesus and Joseph was the father, many Scriptures throughout the Bible only work with a virgin birth. Joseph is never seen as Jesus paternal father in Scripture. Jesus was God's son at his birth by being made of the seed of David through Mary according to the flesh. If Joseph was the paternal father, how could Scripture call David Jesus' father? David was Jesus father by descent, Joseph was Jesus father by law, and God was his Father by His creative power and the Holy Spirit.

Mary asks Gabriel the question:

- How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?

Gabriel has not made any mention of Joseph in his salutation to Mary, this would be strange to Mary since she is betrothed (but not married) to a future husband. Even more confusing to Mary would be the fact Gabriel told her that the child's father, will be David and will be called the Son of the Highest, Mary would have known what the term the Son of the Most High meant, making Gabriel's message even more mysterious, is it any surprise she wonders how can this be? If this were to be a normal birth Gabriel would have said the same as he did with Zacharias and Elizabeth. Gabriel came to Zacharias (a married man) and told him "Your wife Elisabeth shall bear you a son and you shall call his name John," but in talking to Mary Gabriel deliberately leaves Joseph out in his salutation to Mary, and Mary questions this. If Joseph was to be the father why would Gabriel give such a strange answer to Mary's question? "How shall this

be?" Surely, he would have simply said, "You and Joseph will have a child," but Gabriel does not include Joseph, this may be another reason why Mary asks the question "How can this be, since I do not know a man?" Both the mother of Isaac and Jacob were barren and unable to bare children, Sarah's birth of Isaac and Rebekah's birth of Jacob were both amazing miracles as both these women were unable to even have a child, whereas Mary was young and well able to give birth. Believing in the Virgin Birth of Mary should not be so difficult considering modern scientists today have in theory the knowledge to clone a child from DNA. It should not be so amazing to anyone that man has the ability to create mortal life since God has put in the seed of all things the ability to create another of its own kind, thus man is only creating from what God has already given him, without the DNA man can do nothing, but God can. Man, maybe able to create mortal life, but only God can create immortal and eternal life. Since God created the DNA, how simple for Him to use His creative power to alter Mary's DNA or alter some genetic information so that Mary would conceive. If anyone still doubts the Virgin Birth, they should consider the following words the angel of the LORD spoke to Sarah concerning the birth of Isaac:

- Is anything too hard for the LORD? (Gen 18:14)

And the following words Gabriel spoke to Mary concerning the birth of Jesus:

- Nothing will be impossible with God (37).

The birth of Adam, Eve, Sarah, Rachael, Manoah's wife, Elizabeth and Mary are all full of mysteries, angels, miracles and the miraculous creative hand of God. Since God is the source of all life and created all things no one should have any difficulty in believing in the Virgin Birth especially since so many Scriptures have to be forced, twisted and distorted to deny the Virgin Birth and so many others lose their majestic prophetic glory.

LUKE 1:80

John the Baptist Grows.

- **Luke 1:80:** And the child (John) grew and became strong in spirit, and he was in the wilderness until the day of his public appearance to Israel.

John's mother and father (a faithful priest) would have told John of his miraculous birth, Gabriel's visit, of Mary and the birth of Christ, of the Scriptures and his calling, John had no interest in city life or the things of this world, no-doubt he spent his time in the wilderness with God and reading the words of the prophets concerning the Christ.

THE COMMONWEALTH OF ISRAEL

It is important to understand that the promised seed of Abraham and David is Christ, all the promises to Israel are now fulfilled in Christ therefore they are not limited to Israel only but extend and embrace all those who belong to Christ because God is now creating one new nation in Christ made up of both Jew and Gentiles. (Gentiles are everyone who is not a Hebrew or Jew).

Jews and Gentiles become One New Nation in Christ: the apostle Paul said:

- **Ephesians 2:11-22:** Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called "the uncircumcision" by what is called the circumcision (Jews), which is made in the flesh by hands— ¹²remember that you (Gentiles) were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the *COMMONWEALTH OF ISRAEL* and *STRANGERS* to the *COVENANTS* of *PROMISE*, having no hope and without God in the world. ¹³But now in Christ Jesus you (Gentiles) who once were far off (from God) have been brought near

by the blood of Christ. ¹⁴For he himself is our (Jews and Gentiles) peace, who has made us both *ONE* and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility ¹⁵by abolishing the law of commandments and ordinances, that he (Jesus) might create in himself *ONE NEW MAN* (or Nation) in place of the two (Jews and Gentiles), so making peace, ¹⁶and might reconcile us (Jews and Gentiles) both to God in *ONE BODY* through the cross, thereby killing the hostility (between the Jews and Gentiles). ¹⁷And he (Jesus) came and preached peace to you (Gentiles) who were far off (from God) and peace to those who were near (Jews). ¹⁸For through him (Jesus) we both (Jews and Gentiles) have access in *ONE SPIRIT* to the Father. ¹⁹So then you (Gentiles) are *NO LONGER* strangers and aliens, but you are *FELLOW CITIZENS* with the *SAINTS* (the Jews) and members of the *HOUSEHOLD* of God, ²⁰built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone ²¹in whom the *WHOLE STRUCTURE* being joined together (Jews and Gentiles) grows into a holy temple in the Lord. ²²In him you (Jews and Gentiles) also are being built together into a *DWELLING PLACE* for *GOD* by the Spirit.

Gentiles were separated from Christ, alienated from the, Commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus they have been brought to God by the blood of Christ. Jesus has made Jews and Gentiles both one by abolishing the law of commandments and ordinances so that Jesus might create in himself one new man (Nation) in place of the two (Jews and Gentiles). In Jesus both Jews and Gentiles are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit. Christ is the head of this new nation and its Jewish and Gentile citizens are now equal in status before God because in Christ we are all brothers and sisters in the same eternal family that God is now establishing in the Lord Jesus Christ throughout all nations of the world.

The practical application of what this means to you: if you belong to Christ, all the future and eternal promises God made to Israel also apply to you. The book of Revelation states:

- When Christ returns in glory every eye will see him, even those who pierced him and all the tribes of the earth (Rev. 1:7).

And in Revelation chapter five we are told that:

- Christ was slain, and by his blood he ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation (i.e., Jews and Gentiles) and he has made them a kingdom and priests to God and they shall reign on the earth (Rev. 5:9-10).

For further information see the titles:

- Virgin (The biblical meaning of Virgin).
- Virgin Birth and the Promised Seed of Abraham and David.
- Both titles are in Various Topics (ON WEBSITE MENU).

As the founder of Bible House of Grace, I would like to thank the many Christian scholars, commentators and theologians who have gone before me, and the many today, who have freely made available their works to enhance the knowledge of the Bible to all people worldwide. It is only with the help of these faithful writers that much of Bible House of Grace exists as it does today.
