

Luke 1:5-38

Promises Fulfilled

Study Summary and Learning Objective(s)

To see God's faithfulness by studying how God fulfills His promises to the people of Israel, Zechariah, Elizabeth, and Mary, through the birth and death of His Son Jesus Christ, and to let that truth encourage us to respond in trust and obedience in our own lives.

Objectives

- See clearly who John and Jesus are announced to be and how they will fulfill God's promises to His people.
- See more of God's character in studying His faithfulness to His people.
- Consider how we can wait well for God's promises and respond in obedience in our own lives.

Steps to Prepare For Leaders

- Read the first 38 verses of Luke.
- Think in particular about a time when fear prevented you from trusting the Lord or a time when you saw God fulfill His promises in your life. Be ready to lead with authenticity and share in these areas.

Icebreaker Question



What's something you've had to wait for in your life? Have you ever doubted that it would actually happen?

Possible Answers: Waiting for a package to arrive, waiting for a birthday or special event, waiting to graduate, find a job, get married, have kids, etc.

Section One: Luke 1:5-25 (NIV)

Read Out Loud

⁵ 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. ⁶ Both of them were righteous in the sight of God, observing all the Lord's commands and decrees blamelessly. ⁷ But they were childless because Elizabeth was not able to conceive, and they were both very old.

⁸ Once when Zechariah's division was on duty and he was serving as priest before God, ⁹ he was chosen by lot, according to the custom of the priesthood, to go into the temple of the Lord and burn incense. ¹⁰ And when the time for the burning of incense came, all the assembled worshipers were praying outside.

¹¹ Then an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing at the right side of the altar of incense. ¹² When Zechariah saw him, he was startled and was gripped with fear. ¹³ 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 call him John. ¹⁴ He will be a joy and delight to you, and many will rejoice because of his birth, ¹⁵ 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 before he is born. ¹⁶ He will bring back many of the people of Israel to the Lord their God. ¹⁷ And he will go on before the Lord, in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the parents to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous—to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.”

¹⁸ Zechariah asked the angel, “How can I be sure of this? I am an old man and my wife is well along in years.”

¹⁹ The angel said to him, “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. ²⁰ 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 appointed time.”

²¹ Meanwhile, the people were waiting for Zechariah and wondering why he stayed so long in the temple. ²² 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.

²³ When his time of service was completed, he returned home. ²⁴ After this his wife Elizabeth became pregnant and for five months remained in seclusion. ²⁵ “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.”

Questions

? How does the angel describe who John will be and what he will do?

Possible Answers: He will be great in the sight of the Lord. He will bring back many of the people of Israel to the Lord their God. He will go before the Lord, in the spirit and power of Elijah. He will prepare the people for the coming of the Lord.

? Why do the people of Israel need to be “prepared”? What are they being prepared for?

Possible Answers: The people of Israel have sinned against a Holy God and have been unfaithful to their covenant with Him. They have strayed far from serving Him and living as His people. John will prepare the people by calling them to repent and turn their hearts back to God, so that they can receive Jesus’ message and respond to God again.

? What would it look like for us to have hearts that are prepared to respond to God?

Possible Answers: Approach Scripture, prayer, and others with an attitude of humility and encourage each other to do the same - Hebrews 3:12-13 "See to it, brothers and sisters, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. ¹³ But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called "Today," so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness." Pray for the Holy Spirit to be working in our hearts.

Section Two: Luke 1:26-38

Read Out Loud

²⁶ In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, ²⁷ to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸ The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you."

²⁹ Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. ³⁰ But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. ³¹ You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. ³² He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, ³³ and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end."

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

³⁵ The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. ³⁶ Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be unable to conceive is in her sixth month. ³⁷ For no word from God will ever fail."

³⁸ "I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May your word to me be fulfilled." Then the angel left her.

Questions



How does the angel describe who Jesus will be and what He will do?

Possible Answer: He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. God will give Him the throne of David. He is a son of David. He will reign over Jacob's descendants. His reign will be eternal. He will reign as king. He will be called the Son of God.



How is the description of Jesus different from the description of John?

Possible Answer: The description of Jesus focuses more on His identity, while the description of John focuses on his task of preparing the people. John prepares the people for Jesus, but Jesus is God

incarnate. He is worthy of worship simply because of His identity. He is the “I AM,” the God of the people of Israel. It shows Jesus’ greatness and superiority over all.

? Mary and Zechariah’s responses were different from each other as well. How do their responses change the outcome of God’s promises? What does this say about God’s character?

Possible Answer: God still fulfills His promises regardless of the people’s responses. God’s response shows that He is faithful to his promises and that we can do nothing to change that.

Application

? How does knowing that God was faithful to His promises in the past change the way we think about waiting?

Possible Answers: We see that God is faithful. We can wait with assurance that He will fulfill His promises and hope for greater things to come. (Hebrews 6:19 “We have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul”).

? All of the characters are waiting for God’s promise to be fulfilled, and they all respond differently. Which characters do you identify with? What can we learn from their responses?

Possible Answers: Zechariah doubts, but God still fulfills his promises; Mary seems to question but responds in obedience. Doubt is not necessarily a bad thing if we still respond in obedience and trust.

? What promises are we still waiting for God to fulfill? How do we respond in obedience in the meantime?

Possible Answers: We are waiting for new creation. We listen to God with prepared hearts. We respond in repentance and encourage each other through community. We learn more about God and how to follow Him through reading the Bible. We remember that God is faithful and put our hope in Him.

For Discussion and Accountability

? In what areas of your life is God calling you to respond in trust and obedience right now?