

# THE BIRTH OF JESUS FORETOLD

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: LUKE 1



*God announced the coming of His Son in fulfillment of the prophets.*

## The STORY

Pray with children to start class.

### Teaching Points for Class Discussion:

**Two angels, two babies, one plan** – Luke begins his Gospel account by explaining to us the careful, orderly way he researched and retold the story of Jesus. After a short introduction, Luke tells of us of the angel Gabriel who announced the coming of John the Baptist and Jesus Christ the Messiah. Two women, Elizabeth and Mary, are to miraculously conceive. Elizabeth was barren, much like Sarah (Abraham's wife) was barren. Once again God promised to fill a barren womb with life, demonstrating His magnificent power to accomplish His plan. Mary's pregnancy was to be even more amazing. God Himself would cause Mary, a virgin, to conceive a child by the Holy Spirit, before she was even married! Her son, Jesus, would fulfill the Old Testament prophecy of an everlasting king on David's throne. The angel further announced that the child would be called "holy – the Son of God."

**Mary's Song of Praise** – After the angel told Mary about God's plan, Mary went with haste to see Elizabeth. Upon Mary's arrival, Elizabeth's baby jumped inside her. Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and then said some amazing things. She said that Mary's baby would be her Lord! She knew that Mary had believed the angel Gabriel's words and had faith that what he said would come to pass.

**The birth of John the Baptist** – Just as the angel of the Lord prophesied, Elizabeth gave birth to a son. The people were surprised when Elizabeth decided to call him John, because there was no one with that name in their family. When Zechariah confirmed that the baby should be called John, he demonstrated faith in God's plan and he immediately regained his speech. The Holy Spirit filled Zechariah, and he prophesied that God had raised up a "horn of salvation." This was a reference to Jesus.

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### WHERE IS THE GOSPEL?

*Please use the following comments connecting today's lesson to the Gospel to help inform your understanding and serve you by aiding your preparation for class. Remember, we want to do more than present disconnected Bible stories and lessons to our young children. We want them to understand how each story in the Bible plays a part in God's greater plan of redemption.*

When Mary saw Elizabeth with child, she realized that what the angel Gabriel told her was true. Then she heard Elizabeth's prophetic blessing. Filled with wonder and joy, she worshipped God with a song.

Mary was a sinner just like us. She needed a Savior and she knew that with the birth of the baby inside of her, God's promise would be fulfilled. She knew that God's plan of salvation would somehow be about her son. Her words are a song of praise to God for His incredible mercy promised to Abraham and his descendants. The fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham was going to come through Jesus. But Mary could not have understood that her son would be sacrificed on the cross in order to fulfill that promise. It is through Jesus that people from every nation would be blessed.

The Gospel is also found in Zechariah's prophecy when he talks about God redeeming His people (Luke 2:68) and how Jesus will give knowledge of God's salvation (Luke 2:71-77).

### ON THE ROAD TO EMMAUS

**Read the following Bible passage from the Old Testament. Use the following questions to help the children understand how this passage points to Christ in the New Testament.**

**Bible Passage: Isaiah 4:2,3**

#### **Connecting the passage to Christ:**

Jesus is the righteous branch spoken of in Isaiah's prophecy. His death on the cross and His righteous life enable us to live in righteousness and holiness. When Jesus, the Branch of the Lord, returns again, He will defeat sin and death forever. Jeremiah 23:5,6 connects the Branch of the Lord with Jesus by using the name "the Lord our Righteousness".

#### **Questions for reflection:**

- What verse of Zechariah's prophecy in Luke 2 speaks of the holiness and righteousness we will demonstrate as a result of God's salvation? (Luke 2:75 speaks of us serving Jesus in righteousness and holiness all our days. This righteous living is not just a single act, but of a completely changed life.)
- Until Jesus comes again and sin is taken away, what can we do when we sin? (We can confess our sin to God and to others and ask Jesus to forgive us of our sin.)

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### SWORD BIBLE MEMORY

#### BE A DOER OF THE WORD

*Take time during the class to review the SWORD Bible Memory verses with the class. Provide the opportunity for each child to recite the verses to an adult worker.*

### ACTIVITIES & OBJECT LESSONS

*Use the following activities for practical application and discovery of this lesson. For the younger children, review the preschool questions and use them to help the children relate to the passage. For older children, ask them why they think this passage is in the Bible for us today. How is it supposed to affect our lives?*

#### ZECHARIAH'S PROPHECY

##### Supplies:

- paper and pencils
- whiteboard and markers

Have the children read Zechariah's prophecy in Luke 1:68-79. Have them make a list of all different things we learn about Jesus from this passage.

The God of Israel has visited His people (Jesus was God visiting us)

God has redeemed His People (Jesus was the redeemer)

Raised up a horn of salvation (Jesus was the one to bring salvation)

In the house of His servant David (Jesus was a descendant of David)

As spoken through the holy prophets (Jesus fulfilled the word of the prophets)

Saved from enemies (Jesus would save Israel from their enemies)

Israel would be able to serve God in righteousness (This is impossible without the cross)

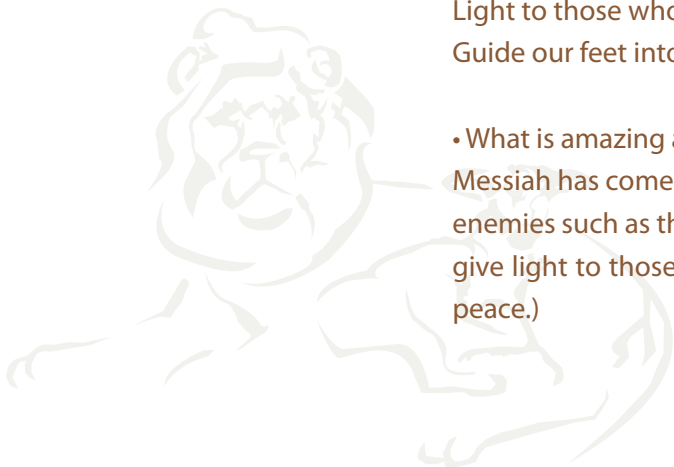
John will be a prophet to prepare the way for the Lord

John will announce that Jesus is the way to salvation and forgiveness of sins

Light to those who sit in darkness (Jesus will give light to those in darkness)

Guide our feet into the way of peace (Jesus was the prince of peace)

- What is amazing about this prophecy? (Zechariah's prophecy announces that the Messiah has come and that His salvation would be more than a saving from Israel's enemies such as the Romans. This salvation would bring forgiveness from sins and give light to those who sit in the shadow of death, and guide them to the way of peace.)



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### GOOD GIFTS FROM GOD

**Supplies:**

Cut poster board into pennant sized triangles big enough for each child to write a word on. Felt tip markers of various colors.

Have each child write one of the following words on their pennant and when you recite Zechariah's prayer have the child who has the corresponding word from that section stand up and raise their banner. Then, have the children one by one, in order, shout out their words. If you have more children than words below, have more than one child do each word.

- 68 – Redeemed
- 69 – Salvation
- 70 – Saved
- 71 – Mercy
- 72 – Promised
- 72 – Remember
- 73 – Oath
- 74 – Delivered
- 75 – Holiness
- 75 – Righteousness
- 76 – Prophet of the Most High
- 77 – Salvation
- 77 – Forgiveness
- 78 – Tender mercy
- 79 – Light
- 79 – Peace



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### LOST FOR WORDS

**Supplies:**

Zechariah costume

Have one of the teachers dress up as Zechariah and act out through sign language the message the angel gave to him. Remember, because of his unbelief, Zechariah was made dumb. This could be a humorous skit done ad-lib. A second teacher should try to guess the message of Zechariah. Think of this like a game of charades where the character Zechariah is trying to communicate his vision.

- Does God's promise to Zechariah remind you of another Bible story? (Zechariah and Elizabeth remind us of Abraham and Sarah. Just like Sarah, Elizabeth was barren, and was promised a son.)

- What part in God's plan of redemption is Zechariah's son going to play? (John will announce the coming of Jesus and His ministry.)

In class project: Children can decorate their banners from the "Good Gifts from God" activity.

## PRAYER

Pick several children to pray based on the day's scripture passages.

## IN CLASS PROJECT

### AN ACTIVITY

**Supplies:**

pencil and paper



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### FOR THE OLDER GRADES

#### WRITE YOUR OWN PRAISE SONG OR POEM

**Supplies:**

Pencil and Paper

Mary sang a spontaneous song that is recorded in Luke 1:46-55. Have the children each work on a song of God's faithfulness to them. Have them first make a list of all that God has done for them. Help them keep the list spiritually (God saved me) not materially (God gave me a new bike) focused. After their list is complete, have them poetically arrange it. Have them look at Mary's song and Zechariah's prophecy for some ideas.

Have several of the children read their work to the class. (As they are working walk around the class looking at their work to ensure you don't call on someone to share who is struggling with the assignment or just being silly with what they write.)

### A LITTLE BIT MORE

**"Your relative Elizabeth"** – Elizabeth and Mary were related (see Luke 2:36). We are told Elizabeth was a descendant of Aaron (Luke 2:5), and Mary was a descendant of Aaron as well. The angel tells us that her son Jesus is a descendant of David (Luke 2:32). This means that one of Mary's forebearers came from the kingly line of David and another from the priestly line of Aaron so Jesus would be both a priest and a king.

