



The Real Story of
C H R I S T ' S
Incarnational
M I S S I O N

Part 4

God's Upside Down and Backwards Kingdom is Revealed

Luke 1:1

Many people have set out to write accounts about the events that have been fulfilled among us.

Luke 1:2

**They used the eyewitness reports
circulating among us from the
early disciples.**

Luke 1:3

Having carefully investigated everything from the beginning, I also have decided to write an accurate account for you, most honorable Theophilus,

Luke 1:4

**so you can be certain of the truth
of everything you were taught.**

Luke 1:5

When Herod was king of Judea, there was a Jewish priest named Zechariah. He was a member of the priestly order of Abijah, and his wife, Elizabeth, was also from the priestly line of Aaron.

Luke 1:6

**Zechariah and Elizabeth were
righteous in God's eyes,
careful to obey all of the Lord's
commandments and regulations.**

Luke 1:7

They had no children because Elizabeth was unable to conceive, and they were both very old.

Luke 1:8

One day Zechariah was serving God in the Temple, for his order was on duty that week.

Luke 1:9

As was the custom of the priests,
he was chosen by lot to enter
the sanctuary of the Lord
and burn incense.

Luke 1:10

While the incense was being burned, a great crowd stood outside, praying.

Luke 1:11

While Zechariah was in the sanctuary, an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing to the right of the incense altar.

Luke 1:12

**Zechariah was shaken and
overwhelmed with fear when
he saw him.**

Luke 1:13

But the angel said, “Don’t be afraid, Zechariah! God has heard your prayer. Your wife, Elizabeth, will give you a son, and you are to name him John.

Luke 1:14

**You will have great joy and
gladness, and many will rejoice
at his birth,**

Luke 1:15

for he will be great in the eyes of the Lord. He must never touch wine or other alcoholic drinks.

He will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even before his birth.

Luke 1:16

And he will turn many Israelites to the Lord their God. He will be a man with the spirit and power of Elijah.

Luke 1:17

He will prepare the people for the coming of the Lord. He will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and he will cause those who are rebellious to accept the wisdom of the godly.”

Luke 1:18

Zechariah said to the angel, “How can I be sure this will happen? I’m an old man now, and my wife is also well along in years.”

Luke 1:19

Then the angel said, "I am Gabriel!

**I stand in the very presence
of God. It was he who sent me
to bring you this good news!**

Luke 1:20

But now, since you didn't believe what I said, you will be silent and unable to speak until the child is born. For my words will certainly be fulfilled at the proper time."

Luke 1:21

Meanwhile, the people were waiting for Zechariah to come out of the sanctuary, wondering why he was taking so long.

Luke 1:22

When he finally did come out, he couldn't speak to them. Then they realized from his gestures and his silence that he must have seen a vision in the sanctuary.

Luke 1:23

When Zechariah's week of service
in the Temple was over,
he returned home.

Luke 1:24

**Soon afterward his wife, Elizabeth,
became pregnant and went into
seclusion for five months.**

Luke 1:25

“How kind the Lord is!” she exclaimed. “He has taken away my disgrace of having no children.”

The background of the image is a dark night sky over a landscape. In the lower portion, there is a long, low building with several lit windows, and behind it, a range of dark mountains. A bright, vertical beam of light descends from the top center of the frame, passing through the text and illuminating the building below. The text is centered and reads:

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Principle #1

The reality of who God is and the reality of what He values, all of which can be found in His Word, is more often than not, upside down and backwards in comparison to what many of us value, pursue, or think.

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Principle #2

Since God's Kingdom is upside down and backwards in comparison to our world, the Word of God should cause us to re-examine our understanding of what life looks like for those who are blessed and highly favored.

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Blessed and Favored

Zechariah and Elizabeth

- **Barren and very old.**
- **Ridiculed and shamed as a result of not having a child.**
- **Unanswered prayer for decades.**
- **He was muted for unbelief.**

Blessed and Favored

John the Baptist

- **Life was preplanned for him.**
- **Not allowed to ever consume alcohol or wine.**
- **Grew up in the wilderness living as a monk, lived off of a diet of locusts and honey.**

Other Side of the Coin



Blessed and Favored

John the Baptist

- Filled with the Holy Spirit even before his birth.
- He was chosen to be the long awaited messenger that preceded Christ.
- The spirit and power of Elijah.

Blessed and Favored

- **Would turn many Israelites back to God.**
- **Would turn the hearts of the fathers to their children.**
- **Would cause those who are rebellious to accept the wisdom of the godly.**

Blessed and Favored

Zechariah and Elizabeth

- They were declared righteous in God's eyes.
- They were chosen to raise John
- He saw an angel.
- They received a miracle that we are still talking about today

Principle #2

Since God's Kingdom is upside down and backwards in comparison to our world, the Word of God should cause us to re-examine our understanding of what life looks like for those who are blessed and highly favored.

Principle #3

In God's Kingdom, everyone's life has great value, totally apart from what the world thinks of him or her. God loves us even if no one else does. God sees us and knows us, even if no one else does.

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Principle #4

In God's upside down and backwards Kingdom, every one of our lives is a part of a much bigger story, they are a part of His story.

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Because our lives are a part of the Messiah's Mission, the events of our lives that we thought were a total waste, forever lost, unspeakable, unforgiveable, and unhealable; when they are put under the redeeming work of Christ, are transformed into something new.

They go from being a wasteland of pain, suffering, loss, regret and shame to becoming a new creation that is transformed by the Lord's power to become very fertile ground where we have been given power and authority to minister to others.

Principle #4

In God's upside down and backwards Kingdom, every one of our lives is a part of a much bigger story, they are a part of His story.

Principle #5

We must learn to understand, recognize, and embrace the upside down and backward realities that God allows, so that we can partner with Him in all that He seeks to accomplish in redeeming this world for Christ.

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Principle #6

In God's upside down and backwards Kingdom, faith in Jesus Christ is real when it demonstrates repentance, growth, obedience, and praise.

Luke 1:57

**When it was time for Elizabeth's
baby to be born, she gave birth
to a son.**

Luke 1:58

And when her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had been very merciful to her, everyone rejoiced with her.

Luke 1:59

When the baby was eight days old, they all came for the circumcision ceremony. They wanted to name him Zechariah, after his father.

Luke 1:60

**But Elizabeth said, “No!
His name is John!”**

Luke 1:61

“What?” they exclaimed.

“There is no one in all your family
by that name.”

Luke 1:62

So they used gestures to ask
the baby's father what he wanted
to name him.

Luke 1:63

He motioned for a writing tablet,
and to everyone's surprise he
wrote, "His name is John."

Luke 1:64

Instantly Zechariah could speak again, and he began praising God.

Principle #6

In God's upside down and backwards Kingdom, faith in Jesus Christ is real when it demonstrates repentance, growth, obedience, and praise.

Principle #7

All of creation cries out in pain as it witnesses the differences between who we value, what we value, and how we do things versus who God values, what He values, and how He wants us to do things.



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