



Part 3

The Unveiling of God's Upside Down and Backwards Kingdom

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 and said,**

Luke 1:25

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

Luke 1:26

In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a village in Galilee, to a virgin named Mary.

Luke 1:27

She was engaged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of King David.

Luke 1:28

**Gabriel appeared to her and said,
“Greetings, favored woman!
The Lord is with you!”**

Luke 1:29

**Confused and disturbed,
Mary tried to think what
the angel could mean.**

Luke 1:30

**“Don’t be afraid, Mary, for you
have found favor with God!”**

Luke 1:31

You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus.

Luke 1:32

He will be very great and will be called the Son of the Most High.

The Lord God will give him the throne of his ancestor David.

Luke 1:33

**And he will reign over Israel
forever; his Kingdom will
never end!”**

Luke 1:34

Mary asked the angel, “But how can this happen? I am a virgin.”

Luke 1:35

The angel replied, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the baby to be born will be holy, and he will be called the Son of God.

Luke 1:36

What's more, your relative Elizabeth has become pregnant in her old age! People used to say she was barren, but she has conceived a son and is now in her sixth month.

Luke 1:37

For the word of God will never fail.”

Luke 1:38

Mary responded, "I am the Lord's servant. May everything you have said about me come true." And then the angel left her.

Luke 1:39-40

A few days later Mary hurried to the hill country of Judea, to the town where Zechariah lived. She entered the house and greeted Elizabeth.

Luke 1:41

**At the sound of Mary's greeting,
Elizabeth's child leaped within her,
and Elizabeth was filled with the
Holy Spirit.**

Luke 1:42

Elizabeth gave a glad cry and exclaimed to Mary, “God has blessed you above all women, and your child is blessed.

Luke 1:43

Why am I so honored, that the
mother of my Lord should visit me?

Luke 1:44

**When I heard your greeting, the
baby in my womb jumped for joy.**

Luke 1:45

You are blessed because you believed that the Lord would do what he said.”

Luke 1:46

**Mary responded, “Oh, how my
soul praises the Lord.**

Luke 1:47

**How my spirit rejoices
in God my Savior!**

Luke 1:48

For he took notice of his lowly servant girl, and from now on all generations will call me blessed.

Luke 1:49

For the Mighty One is holy, and he
has done great things for me.

Luke 1:50

He shows mercy from generation to generation to all who fear him.

Luke 1:51

**His mighty arm has done
tremendous things! He has
scattered the proud
and haughty ones.**

Luke 1:52

**He has brought down princes
from their thrones and exalted
the humble.**

Luke 1:53

He has filled the hungry with good things and sent the rich away with empty hands.

Luke 1:54

**He has helped his servant Israel
and remembered to be merciful.**

Luke 1:55

**For he made this promise to our
ancestors, to Abraham and his
children forever.”**

Luke 1:56

Mary stayed with Elizabeth about three months and then went back to her own home.



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Principle #1

The coming of Christ into the world was designed to destroy and then correct our understanding of God and His Kingdom, which is upside down and backwards in comparison to what we normally think.

God's Redemption

- **Nothing on this world or in this life will provide you with endless joy or eternal fulfillment.**
- **Even God's perfect Son had to endure pain, suffering, and brokenness; and He was sinless!**

God's Redemption

- Fulfilling God's perfect will does not always mean that you will have a happy ending or that you will even be happy with the results.
- God's blessings often come into our lives disguised as something else.
- This world is not our home!

Principle #1

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Principle #2

In God's upside down and backwards Kingdom, His plan for your life will never come to fruition without hard work, sacrifice, pain, suffering, and obedience.

Zechariah and Elisabeth

- **Zechariah was a priest who served God throughout his entire life v5,v8**
- **Both were raised in homes that loved the Lord for more than 1,000 years because they were blood line descendants of the priests of Israel.**

Zechariah and Elisabeth

- **They were both righteous and blameless before God and obeyed all His commandments and precepts. v6**
- **Zechariah met an angel face to face who gave him a personal message from God. v11**

Zechariah and Elisabeth

- **They were childless and very old. v7**
- **Unanswered prayer for decades. v13**
- **Ridiculed and shamed for not being able to have a child. v25**
- **Zechariah was disciplined for 9 plus months for his unbelief. v20**

Zechariah and Elisabeth

- **They were both chosen to love and raise up God's special messenger, John the Baptist. v13-v17**
- **They received a miracle and played an integral role in the story of God that we are still talking about today.**

Principle #2

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John the Baptist

- His life was preplanned for him.
- Never allowed to consume alcohol or wine, ever.
- Grew up in the wilderness living as a radical itinerant preacher who lived off of a diet of locusts and honey.

John the Baptist

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

John the Baptist

- **Would be used by God to reconcile many Israelites back to God. v15**
- **Would help turn the hearts of the fathers to their children. v16**
- **Would cause those who are rebellious to accept the wisdom of the godly. v17**

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Principle #3

Whatever you focus on grows, and it is also what you will gravitate towards.

The Chosen

- **Abram**
- **Joseph**
- **Moses**
- **David**
- **Daniel**
- **Hosea**

Principle #3

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Principle #4

Genuine encounters with the Christ are designed to intentionally disrupt your life, your comfort, what you believe, what you value, and what you trust.

Why the Disruption?

- **Your life is not about you.**
- **Refocus your attention on God.**
- **Faith without sacrifice and obedience is not real.**
- **Surrender is key to being a faithful and committed disciple.**

**Faithfulness and obedience to the Lord
requires that the Word of God prevail
over your preferences, comfort,
feelings, emotions, desires, and will.**

Principle #4

Genuine encounters with the Christ are designed to intentionally disrupt your life, your comfort, what you believe, what you value, and what you trust.

Principle #5

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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Who God Favors

- **His humble servants (v48-49)**
 - **Generations will call them blessed.**
 - **He has done great things for them.**
- **To those who fear/revere Him (v50)**
 - **He shows them mercy.**
 - **He has done tremendous things for them. (v51)**

Who God Favors

- **The humble (v.52b)**
 - **He exalts them**
- **The hungry (v.53)**
 - **Have been filled with good things**
- **His servant Israel (v.54)**
 - **He has not forgotten to be merciful.**

Who God Does Not Favor

- Those who do not fear him (v.50)
- The proud and the haughty (v.51)
 - He scatters them
- The princes (v.52)
 - He has brought down their thrones
- The rich (v.53)
 - He sends them away empty-handed

Principle #5

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.

Principle #6

How we celebrate the Christmas season often reveals what we truly know or do not know and what we truly believe or do not believe about the nature of God's upside down and backwards kingdom.

Celebrating Christmas by participating in all the decorations, festivities, gift-giving, carols, etc. without making Christ our King and Savior, without focusing on following and obeying Him is comparable to straightening the chairs on the Titanic.

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