



The Gift of Jesus:
A Seeking Eden Devotional

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HOW OUR DEVO WORKS

FOCUS TEXT: LUKE 1:26-38

1) **Learn about the author of our focus text.**

2) **Read Luke 1:26-38.**

3) **Read what is happening right before and right after Luke 1:26-38.** The surrounding Scripture passages bring understanding and give us insight.

4) **Discover more details about Luke 1:26-38.** In this section, we give details that will bring more understanding to the focus passage.

5) **Put it all together.** After we learn about the author, read the focus text and the surrounding stories and discover more details, what are the lessons we learn?

6) **Answer application questions that are based on the themes of Scripture.** One of the most powerful things about the Bible is that despite the fact that it contains 66 books written over the course of thousands of years by 44 different authors, there are themes that run throughout the entire book. The themes show that despite the diversity in the Bible, there is unity. This unity could only be possible if one God inspired each different biblical author.

For the purposes of this devotional, we have highlighted 3 different themes that run throughout Scripture. To help you get familiar with them, we have chosen key words that reflect the “heart” of each theme. We will also be asking personal application questions around the themes at the end of the devo. Our hope is that reflection around thematic questions will trigger your mind to look for themes whenever you read the Bible and remind you of the cohesion of Scripture.

Covenant: "Commitment"

Kingdom: "Influence"

Redemption: "Value"

Keep these themes in mind as you read Luke 1.

WHO IS LUKE?



Personality tests are popular these days. Enneagram, Myers Briggs, Personality Plus, DISC - each one reveals nuances about a person's unique personality type. While none of the Gospel writers ever took a personality test, their Gospels reveal aspects of their personalities and give glimpses into who they were, what was important to them and how they viewed Jesus. When we arrive at Luke's Gospel, the first three sentences reveal details about his personality.

“Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us, 2 just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the word. 3 With this in mind, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, I too decided to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, 4 so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught.” Luke 1:1-4 (NIV)

From these four verses, we see that Luke was:

- **Independent:** Though others had written accounts, Luke says “*I myself have carefully investigated everything*”. He wants to share firsthand knowledge.

- **Thorough:** The phrase “carefully investigated” in the Greek means to trace, follow near. Luke wanted to gather as many details as possible to present a thorough account.
- **Orderly:** Luke appreciates an organized perspective.
- **Compassionate towards others:** Luke's account is for himself and SO THAT others may have certainty for things they have been taught.

These traits make sense about Luke since we know that he was a doctor (Colossians 4:14). Throughout his Gospel, he highlights the healing of many sick people- a man with leprosy, a paralytic, a demon possessed man, a crippled woman, and a blind beggar. It is apparent that Luke has compassion for people who suffer and is moved by Jesus' willingness to meet them in their sickness and offer hope. Luke is also the author of the book of Acts and from that book, we learn that Luke traveled with Paul and witnessed many miracles (Acts 28). Keeping these things in mind, let's look together at Luke 1.



READ THE FOCUS TEXT:

LUKE 1:26-38 "THE BIRTH OF JESUS FORETOLD"

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[b] 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. (NIV)

WHAT IS HAPPENING BEFORE AND AFTER LUKE 1:26-38?



When you come to a passage in Scripture, it's helpful to read what happens right before and after it. The surrounding passages give insight and helps us gain a greater understanding.

Consider reading the following:
Luke 1:1-25 and Luke 1:39-67

SURROUNDING STORY #1:

The Birth of John the Baptist Foretold
(Luke 1:1-25)

From these verses, we learn that Zechariah is a priest who is married to a woman named Elizabeth. Together, they had been faithful to God for many years, serving him fully. We also learn from these verses that they were childless. In that society, childlessness was viewed as a disgrace (v.25). Because there were no modern day advances to indicate what was causing infertility, people who were childless often harbored feelings of shame, wrongly thinking they had done something to cause their childlessness.

We can't know the exact emotions that Zechariah and Elizabeth dealt with but it is safe to assume that they wrestled with their circumstances and were aware that people formed opinions as to why they didn't have a child. While it was common in that day to assume that childlessness was because of sin or faithlessness to God, Luke's description of Zechariah and Elizabeth's devotion to God dispels that myth. There could not have been two more faithful people, and yet they still had no children.

During that time, there were many priests and they could not all offer incense. Lots were cast (comparable to us flipping a coin) to determine which priest would offer incense, and Zechariah "won" the chance to go into the temple. Although the process seemed determined by chance, it was God's design that placed Zechariah in the temple to burn incense.



During his worship, an angel appears to Zechariah and he is:

- Terrified
- Confused
- Disbelieving

Zechariah has faithfully served God and now falls victim to faithlessness, and his consequence is silence. Imagine that you have waited your whole life to have the honor of burning incense in the temple and upon completing it, you can't speak a word about your experience OR tell people about the wonderful news that you will have a child. **Faithlessness and doubt cause us to miss moments of great joy.** True to God's word, after Zechariah's service in the temple is completed, Elizabeth becomes pregnant. **What God says He will do, He will do.**

SURROUNDING STORY #2:

Mary visits Elizabeth (Luke 1:39-45)

An angel appears to Mary and tells her the news that she, like Elizabeth, will have a baby; she will give birth to Jesus, the Son of God. She doesn't quite understand since she's a virgin but doesn't require much convincing before **she trusts that this is the plan of God and that He will work out the details.**

When the angel left her, Mary went immediately to visit Elizabeth. Resources show that the distance was likely 80-100 miles and that it would take Mary three to four days of travel. Still, she was eager to leave and willing to do so hastily.

It is Mary's faith in God that would lead her to take on such a journey with such short notice. In her obedience, God reinforces that her faith was moving her in the right direction. As Mary arrives and greets Elizabeth, the baby leaps in her tummy and Elizabeth is filled with the Holy Spirit. These powerful moments lead to the next, when Elizabeth blesses Mary with the affirmative words that she is indeed pregnant with the Son of God.

Mary and Elizabeth are able to rejoice together, in a God who does impossible things and proves himself to be trustworthy.

SURROUNDING STORY #3:

Mary's Song (Luke 1:46-56)

God is wonderful and awesome! While we may use these adjectives to describe really good people, He is so much different from anyone we have ever known. He knows and loves us in ways that are unimaginable within our earthly relationships, even those that love us the most.

"I'm on the mind of God," Mary says. Though the world may think little of her, God thinks the most of her. She believes that those who witness what He does in and through her life will get a picture of just how impartial and faithful He is. They will know that He is set apart, one-of-a-kind, thorough in His love, and unbiased in His faithfulness. **They will ultimately know the truth of His love through the child that she bears — Jesus.**

SURROUNDING STORY #4:

The Birth of John the Baptist
(Luke 1:57-66)

What God says He will do, He will do. When John is born, it is a fulfillment of the promise given to Zechariah in the temple. Zechariah's silence ends when he obeys the command given by the angel to name the baby John.

The release from silence is a reminder that while disobedience brings consequences; obedience also brings consequences. One leads to pain; the other to life.

Following Zechariah's announcement about naming the baby John, Zechariah praised God so passionately that it impacted the community around him. Imagine the emotion that had surely been building in Zechariah during his months of silence. Though his last words before silence were words of doubt, the words after his silence were those of someone who was confident, moved, and free.

Zechariah's son, John, would have the unique responsibility of letting people know Jesus was coming. Jesus was going to usher in an era of freedom to a people who were broken and oppressed. Zechariah got a taste of that freedom when he was released from silence.

DISCOVER MORE DETAILS ABOUT THE FOCUS VERSES



Mary is pledged to be married to Joseph who is a descendent of David (Matthew 1). The fact that Joseph was a descendant of David is significant since prophets had proclaimed for thousands of years that the Messiah would come through David's lineage. This is repeated throughout Scriptures:

- **2 Samuel 7:8-16**

- **Isaiah 9:6-7 (NIV)**

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. ⁷ Of the greatness of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this.

- **Jeremiah 23:5-6 (NIV)**

"The days are coming," declares the Lord, "when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, a King who will reign wisely and do what is just and right in the land. ⁶ In his days Judah will be saved and Israel will live in safety. This is the name by which he will be called: The Lord Our Righteous Savior.

The child being born to a virgin woman was also a fulfillment of prophecy given.


- **Genesis 3:15 (NIV)**

And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel."

- **Isaiah 7:14 (NIV)**

Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.

In our focus passage, the angel told Mary that her child would be given the throne of King David. An angel telling a virgin that she was going to have a child from David's lineage may sound absurd, but it was evidence of God fulfilling what He had prophesied to his people for thousands of years.



PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER



Now that we have read the focus verses, looked at the surrounding stories, and discovered some new details, what truths can we embrace from Luke 1:26-38?

A young woman is told by an angel that she is going to bear God's child. Say that sentence out loud. Can you fathom what Mary must have been thinking or feeling? While we can't fully know, her reaction reveals that perhaps she knew the truths you and I have gleaned from the stories that surround Mary's story:

- **What God says He will do, He will do.** Though Mary didn't fully understand how she would become pregnant since she was a virgin, she believed that God would make it so.
- **God does impossible things and proves himself to be trustworthy.** What the angel told her came to be, and the impossible occurred.
- **Disobedience has consequences, but so does obedience!** Because of Mary's obedience, she had the most meaningful assignment perhaps in history — to be the mother of God. The fulfillment of that privilege came because Mary laid her "yes" on the table and simply trusted God.

If God is faithful to Mary, why wouldn't He be faithful to you? As we read stories in the Bible, it is important to remember that the people are just like us. While we may not be able to relate to an angel visiting us with a message, we can relate to being in a circumstance that seems impossible. We can relate to having questions and wanting answers. The overarching truths that allowed Mary to put faith in the impossible are the same truths that speak to us when we are facing the impossible or overwhelming. The Messiah who Mary held is the same Messiah who promises to walk beside you and lead you one step at a time, one day at a time in every circumstance of your life. Mary was valued by God and so are you.



WHAT NEXT?

The following questions are based around themes in Scripture and are intended to help you reflect and take next steps based on truths from Luke 1:26-38 and the surrounding stories:

Covenant (Commitment):

- What situation are you facing that seems impossible or causes you to doubt?
- How could you use God's help in that situation?
- What situations in the past overwhelmed you but worked out for the best?

Kingdom (Influence)

- What positive or negative resources are you utilizing right now?
- Who do you spend most of your time with?
- What do you need more of?
- Who could you ask to pray for you?

Redemption (Value):

- What is the evidence in your life that shows you are valuable to God?
- If you began to value yourself as much as God does, what changes would you make today?