SMITH FOR CHRIST PUBLISHING · BEREAN DASHBOARD STUDY

Luke 1

Nothing Will Be Impossible with God — O·I·A, integrated with the Deep Dive

OBSERVATION · INTERPRETATION · APPLICATION · 2026-11-10 · NASB 1995

"Seeking God diligently — examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so." — Acts 17:11

CHAPTER THEME

God breaks four hundred years of silence by keeping promises nobody could keep for themselves — a son for a barren couple, a Son for a virgin, a Savior for Israel. The only right answer to His word is mine: "may it be done to me according to your word."

00 The Text

LUKE 1 (NASB95), MARKED

HOW THIS STUDY IS MARKED — God — His character & actions · Command / instruction · Key repeated word · Sin / warning · Promise / blessing · Time / place / contrast

1 Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile an account of the things accomplished among us,

2 just as they were handed down to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word,

3 it seemed fitting for me as well, having investigated everything carefully from the beginning, to write it out for you in consecutive order, most excellent Theophilus;

4 so that you may know the exact truth about the things you have been taught.

5 In the days of Herod, king of Judea, there was a priest named Zacharias, of the division of Abijah; and he had a wife from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth.

6 They were both righteous in the sight of God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and requirements of the Lord.

7 But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and they were both advanced in years.

8 Now it happened that while he was performing his priestly service before God in the appointed order of his division,

9 according to the custom of the priestly office, he was chosen by lot to enter the temple of the Lord and burn incense.

10 And the whole multitude of the people were in prayer outside at the hour of the incense offering.

11 And an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing to the right of the altar of incense.

12 Zacharias was troubled when he saw the angel, and fear gripped him.

13 But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your petition has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will give him the name John.

14 "You will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth.

15 "For he will be great in the sight of the Lord; and he will drink no wine or liquor, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit while yet in his mother's womb.

16 "And he will turn many of the sons of Israel back to the Lord their God.

17 "It is he who will go as a forerunner before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, TO TURN THE HEARTS OF

THE FATHERS BACK TO THE CHILDREN, and the disobedient to the attitude of the righteous, so as to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."

18 Zacharias said to the angel, "How will I know this for certain? For I am an old man and my wife is advanced in years."

19 The angel answered and said to him, "I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to bring you this good news.

20 "And behold, you shall be silent and unable to speak until the day when these things take place, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their proper time."

21 The people were waiting for Zacharias, and were wondering at his delay in the temple.

22 But when he came out, he was unable to speak to them; and they realized that he had seen a vision in the temple; and he kept making signs to them, and remained mute.

23 When the days of his priestly service were ended, he went back home.

24 After these days Elizabeth his wife became pregnant, and she kept herself in seclusion for five months, saying,

25 "This is the way the Lord has dealt with me in the days when He looked with favor upon me, to take away my disgrace among men."

26 Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city in Galilee called Nazareth,

27 to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the descendants of David; and the virgin's name was Mary.

28 And coming in, he said to her, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you."

29 But she was very perplexed at this statement, and kept pondering what kind of salutation this was.

30 The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; for you have found favor with God.

31 "And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus.

32 "He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David;

33 and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end."

34 Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?"

35 The angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy Child shall be called the Son of God.

36 "And behold, even your relative Elizabeth has also conceived a son in her old age; and she who was called barren is now in her sixth month.

37 "For nothing will be impossible with God."

38 And Mary said, "Behold, the bondslave of the Lord; may it be done to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.

39 Now at this time Mary arose and went in a hurry to the hill country, to a city of Judah,

40 and entered the house of Zacharias and greeted Elizabeth.

41 When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.

42 And she cried out with a loud voice and said, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb!

43 "And how has it happened to me, that the mother of my Lord would come to me?

44 "For behold, when the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby leaped in my womb for joy.

45 "And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what had been spoken to her by the Lord."

46 And Mary said: "My soul exalts the Lord,

47 And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior.

48 "For He has had regard for the humble state of His bondslave; For behold, from this time on all generations will count me blessed.

49 "For the Mighty One has done great things for me; And holy is His name.

50 "AND HIS MERCY IS UPON GENERATION AFTER GENERATION TOWARD THOSE WHO FEAR HIM.

51 "He has done mighty deeds with His arm; He has scattered those who were proud in the thoughts of their heart.

52 "He has brought down rulers from their thrones, And has exalted those who were humble.

53 "HE HAS FILLED THE HUNGRY WITH GOOD THINGS; And sent away the rich empty-handed.

54 "He has given help to Israel His servant, In remembrance of His mercy,

55 As He spoke to our fathers, To Abraham and his descendants forever."

56 And Mary stayed with her about three months, and then returned to her home.

57 Now the time had come for Elizabeth to give birth, and she gave birth to a son.

58 Her neighbors and her relatives heard that the Lord had displayed His great mercy toward her; and they were rejoicing with her.

59 And it happened that on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child, and they were going to call him Zacharias, after his father.

60 But his mother answered and said, "No indeed; but he shall be called John."

61 And they said to her, "There is no one among your relatives who is called by that name."

62 And they made signs to his father, as to what he wanted him called.

63 And he asked for a tablet and wrote as follows, "His name is John." And they were all astonished.

64 And at once his mouth was opened and his tongue loosed, and he began to speak in praise of God.

65 Fear came on all those living around them; and all these matters were being talked about in all the hill country of Judea.

66 All who heard them kept them in mind, saying, "What then will this child turn out to be?" For the hand of the Lord was certainly with him.

67 And his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Spirit, and prophesied, saying:

68 "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, For He has visited us and accomplished redemption for His people,

69 And has raised up a horn of salvation for us In the house of David His servant—

70 As He spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from of old—

71 Salvation FROM OUR ENEMIES, And FROM THE HAND OF ALL WHO HATE US;

72 To show mercy toward our fathers, And to remember His holy covenant,

73 The oath which He swore to Abraham our father,

74 To grant us that we, being rescued from the hand of our enemies, Might serve Him without fear,

75 In holiness and righteousness before Him all our days.

76 "And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; For you will go on BEFORE THE LORD TO PREPARE HIS WAYS;

77 To give to His people the knowledge of salvation By the forgiveness of their sins,

78 Because of the tender mercy of our God, With which the Sunrise from on high will visit us,

79 TO SHINE UPON THOSE WHO SIT IN DARKNESS AND THE SHADOW OF DEATH, To guide our feet into the way of peace."

80 And the child continued to grow and to become strong in spirit, and he lived in the deserts until the day of his public appearance to Israel.

Marked in the text

- **v4** "the exact truth" — Promise / blessing
- **v6** "walking blamelessly in all the commandments" — Command / instruction
- **v7** "Elizabeth was barren" — Time / place / contrast
- **v13** "your petition has been heard" — God — His character & actions

- **v15** “filled with the Holy Spirit while yet in his mother’s womb” — Promise / blessing
- **v17** “in the spirit and power of Elijah” — Time / place / contrast
- **v17** “to make ready a people prepared for the Lord” — Command / instruction
- **v20** “because you did not believe my words” — Sin / warning
- **v25** “to take away my disgrace among men” — Promise / blessing
- **v28** “The Lord is with you” — God — His character & actions
- **v31** “you shall name Him Jesus” — God — His character & actions
- **v33** “His kingdom will have no end” — Promise / blessing
- **v35** “The Holy Spirit will come upon you” — God — His character & actions
- **v37** “nothing will be impossible with God” — God — His character & actions
- **v38** “may it be done to me according to your word” — Command / instruction
- **v41** “the baby leaped in her womb” — Time / place / contrast
- **v45** “blessed is she who believed” — Promise / blessing
- **v47** “God my Savior” — God — His character & actions
- **v51** “He has scattered those who were proud” — Sin / warning
- **v52** “has exalted those who were humble” — Promise / blessing
- **v63** “His name is John” — Time / place / contrast
- **v64** “his mouth was opened” — Promise / blessing
- **v68** “He has visited us and accomplished redemption for His people” — God — His character & actions
- **v69** “horn of salvation” — God — His character & actions
- **v74** “serve Him without fear” — Command / instruction
- **v77** “the forgiveness of their sins” — Promise / blessing
- **v78** “the Sunrise from on high” — God — His character & actions
- **v79** “To guide our feet into the way of peace” — Promise / blessing
- **v80** “until the day of his public appearance to Israel” — Time / place / contrast
- **v50** “mercy” — Key repeated word (every occurrence)
- **v32** “Most High” — Key repeated word (every occurrence)

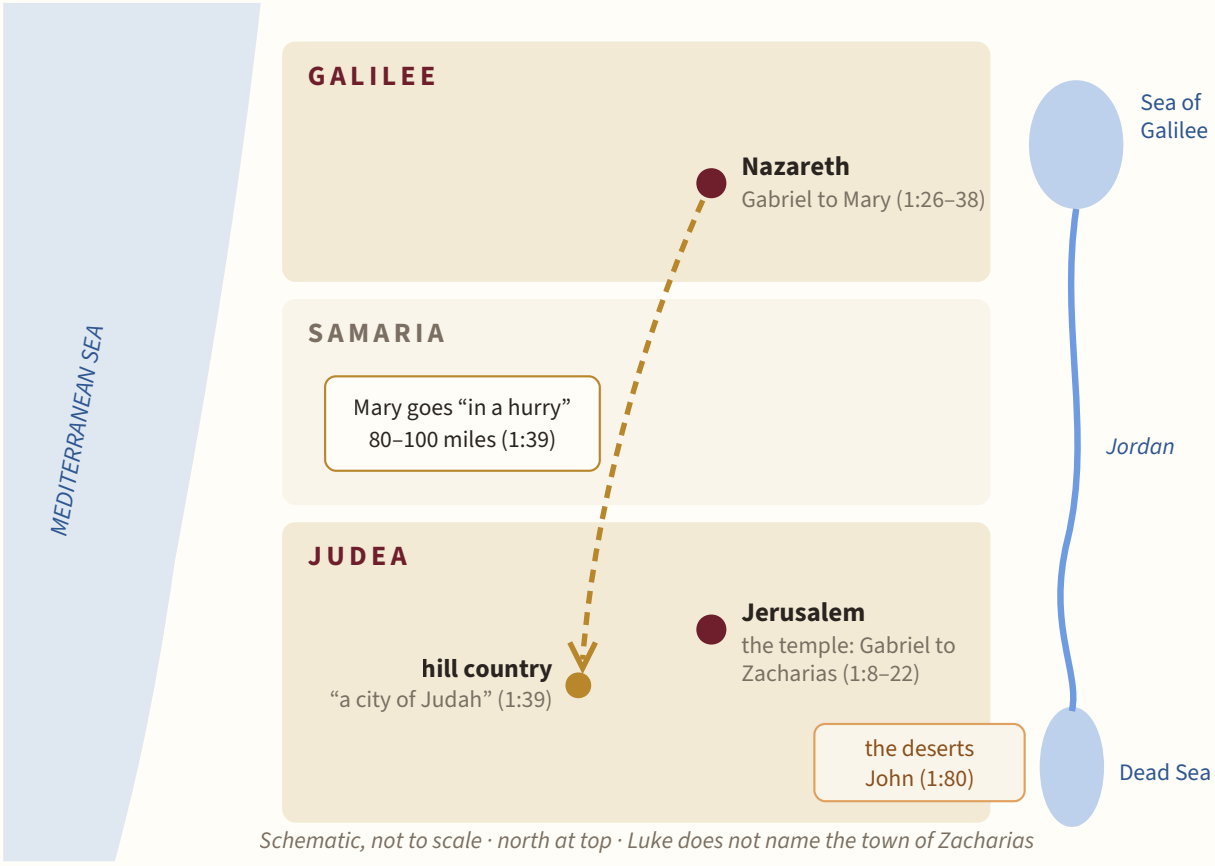
01 Observation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

KEY VERSE · LUKE 1:13

"But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your petition has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will give him the name John."

FIGURE · NAZARETH, JERUSALEM AND THE HILL COUNTRY



Schematic, not to scale · north at top · Luke does not name the town of Zacharias

Gabriel visits the temple in Jerusalem and then a home in Nazareth; Mary hurries south to the hill country of Judah, and John grows up in the deserts.

Setting. Luke writes an orderly account for Theophilus (vv1–4). In the days of Herod, the priest Zacharias is chosen by lot to burn incense in the temple, and Gabriel promises him a son (vv5–25). Six months later Gabriel is sent to Nazareth, to a virgin named Mary (vv26–38). Mary hurries to Elizabeth in the hill country of Judah and stays about three months (vv39–56). John is born, named and circumcised, and Zacharias prophesies (vv57–79); the child grows up in the deserts (v80).

Structure:

- vv1–4 — **the preface:** many accounts; eyewitnesses and servants of the word; "investigated everything carefully"; "so that you may know the exact truth."
- vv5–25 — **the angel and Zacharias:** righteous, blameless, barren, old (vv5–7); chosen by lot to burn incense (vv8–10); the angel at the altar — "your petition has been heard" (vv11–13); John: great, no wine, filled with the Spirit, the spirit and power of Elijah (vv14–17); "How will I know this for certain?" — silent until it happens (vv18–20); the waiting people, the mute priest (vv21–23); Elizabeth conceives — "to take away my disgrace" (vv24–25).
- vv26–38 — **the annunciation:** the sixth month, Nazareth, a virgin engaged to Joseph (vv26–27); "Greetings, favored one!" (vv28–30); Jesus — Son of the Most High, David's throne, a kingdom with no end (vv31–33); "How can this be?" — the Holy Spirit will overshadow you (vv34–35); Elizabeth as a sign; nothing impossible with God (vv36–37); "Behold, the bondslave of the Lord" (v38).
- vv39–56 — **the visit and the Magnificat:** Mary hurries to Judah (vv39–40); the baby leaps; Elizabeth filled with the Spirit; "Blessed are you among women … blessed is she who believed" (vv41–45); "My soul exalts the Lord" — God my Savior, His mercy, the great reversal, help to Israel, the promise to Abraham (vv46–55); three months (v56).
- vv57–80 — **John's birth and the Benedictus:** birth and rejoicing (vv57–58); the naming — "His name is John" (vv59–63); the tongue loosed, fear and wonder (vv64–66); Zacharias' song: God has visited and redeemed; a horn of salvation; the holy covenant and the oath to Abraham (vv67–75); "And you, child" — prophet of the Most High; forgiveness; the Sunrise from on high (vv76–79); the child in the deserts (v80).

Repeated words, with counts:

- "Lord" ×17 — vv6, 9, 11, 15, 16, 17, 25, 28, 32, 38, 43, 45, 46, 58, 66, 68, 76.
- "God" ×13 — vv6, 8, 16, 19, 26, 30, 32, 35, 37, 47, 64, 68, 78.
- "child / baby / son" ×14 — vv7, 13, 31, 32, 35 (×2), 36, 41, 44, 57, 59, 66, 76, 80.
- "angel" ×10 — vv11, 12, 13, 18, 19, 26, 30, 34, 35, 38.
- "speak / spoke(n) / mouth / tongue" ×10 — vv19, 20, 22, 45, 55, 64 (×3), 70 (×2).
- "name / named" ×9 — vv5 (×2), 13, 27 (×2), 31, 49, 61, 63; "call / called" ×9 — vv26, 32, 35, 36, 59, 60, 61, 62, 76.
- "Elizabeth" ×9; "Zacharias" ×8; "Mary" ×7.
- "holy" ×8 — vv15, 35 (×2), 41, 49, 67, 70, 72; "Holy Spirit" ×4 — vv15, 35, 41, 67.
- "father(s)" ×8 — vv17, 32, 55, 59, 62, 67, 72, 73.
- "fear / afraid" ×6 — vv12, 13, 30, 50, 65, 74.
- "joy / gladness / rejoice" ×6 — vv14 (×3), 44, 47, 58.
- "behold" ×6 — vv20, 31, 36, 38, 44, 48.
- "mercy" ×5 — vv50, 54, 58, 72, 78; "blessed" ×5 — vv42 (×2), 45, 48, 68.
- "womb" ×5 — vv15, 31, 41, 42, 44.
- "salvation / Savior" ×4 — vv47, 69, 71, 77; "Most High" ×3 — vv32, 35, 76; "visit(ed)" ×2 — vv68, 78.

Contrasts: Many accounts ⟷ the exact truth (vv1–4). Righteous ⟷ barren (vv6–7). Zacharias' unbelief ⟷ Mary's faith (vv18–20, 34–38, 45). The temple in Jerusalem ⟷ a home in Nazareth (vv9, 26). Silence ⟷ praise (vv20, 64).

Proud, rulers, rich ⟷ humble, hungry (vv51–53). Custom (“Zacharias, after his father”) ⟷ God’s word (“His name is John,” vv59–63). Darkness and the shadow of death ⟷ the Sunrise from on high (vv78–79).

Shape of the chapter: two announcements side by side (5–25, 26–38), the two mothers meeting (39–45), and two songs (46–55, 67–79). Each half moves from a promise to its keeping, and both songs end at Abraham (vv55, 73).

Chapter theme (my words): God remembers. After centuries of silence He answers an old couple’s prayer, sends the forerunner, and announces His Son to a humble virgin who believes. Mary and Zacharias both sing the same thing: God has visited His people in mercy, exactly as He promised Abraham.

02 Interpretation

WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?

KEY VERSE · LUKE 1:35

"The angel answered and said to her, "△The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and △the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy Child shall be called △the Son of God."

FIGURE · TWO ANNOUNCEMENTS

ONE ANGEL, TWO ANNOUNCEMENTS · LUKE 1:5–38

	GABRIEL TO ZACHARIAS	GABRIEL TO MARY
WHO	an old priest, "advanced in years" (v18)	a virgin, engaged to Joseph (v27)
WHERE	the temple, by the altar of incense (v11)	a city in Galilee called Nazareth (v26)
THE NEWS	a son, John, the forerunner (vv13–17)	a Son, Jesus, Son of the Most High (vv31–33)
THE QUESTION	"How will I know this for certain?" (v18)	"How can this be, since I am a virgin?" (v34)
THE HEART	"you did not believe my words" (v20)	"blessed is she who believed" (v45)
THE OUTCOME	silent until the day it happens (v20)	"may it be done to me according to your word"

Guzik: "his question was asked in skeptical unbelief, and her question was asked in wonder-filled faith."

Read across each row: the same angel, two questions that sound alike, and two very different hearts behind them.

Why does Luke begin with a preface? Because the faith is history. Sproul: "Luke is saying, "I am not an eyewitness, but I am a historian, and as a historian, I check the sources."" Guzik: his "account was based on diligent research." The goal is *asphaleia* — solid ground for a man already taught (v4).

Was Zacharias' barrenness a punishment? No. They were "righteous in the sight of God, walking blamelessly" (v6). Sproul: "There was no hidden sin." Guzik: they were righteous "yet also stigmatized by their barrenness." Elizabeth felt it as "disgrace among men" (v25); God saw it as the setting for a miracle.

Which petition was heard? Guzik thinks both — the private prayer for a son and the priestly prayer for Israel's redemption: "Zacharias didn't know that God would answer both prayers at once." Henry: "Prayers made when we were young … may be answered when we are old."

Why was Zacharias struck silent when Mary was not? Their questions look alike (vv18, 34). Guzik: his was "skeptical unbelief," hers "wonder-filled faith." Sproul is blunt: "Abraham got mercy. Zacharias got justice," because "When I don't believe what God says, I am assaulting the very integrity of the Almighty." Henry: his question "was not a humble petition for the confirming of his faith." Yet the silence was also mercy — a sign he carried in his own body until the promise came true.

How is John "Elijah"? Not Elijah reincarnated, but "in the spirit and power of Elijah" (v17), fulfilling Malachi 4:5–6. Guzik notes that Jesus later said this was fulfilled in John (Matt 11:14; 17:12). I hold, with many futurists, that Malachi's "great and terrible day of the LORD" still has a future fulfillment as well, but Luke's point is plain: John prepares the way for the Lord.

A virgin conception. Sproul: "At no time in the history of the world, however, had any woman ever had a child while she remained a virgin." The Holy Spirit "will overshadow you" (*episkiazō*) — the cloud of God's presence, not anything crude (Morris, quoted by Guzik). The holy Child is called the Son of God (v35). Isaiah 7:14 had promised a virgin's son named Immanuel.

What about Mary? "Favored one" (*kecharitōmenē*) means graced — she received grace, she does not dispense it (Guzik). She calls God "my Savior" (v47); Liefeld (in Guzik): "Only sinners need a Savior." Sproul honors her as "humble, … willing, and … obedient," and warns: "Mary is not divine. She is a sinner saved by grace, just as we are." All generations call her blessed (v48) — blessed because "she … believed" (v45).

David's throne and the house of Jacob (vv32–33). Gabriel promises Jesus "the throne of His father David" and a reign "over the house of Jacob forever." That is 2 Samuel 7:16 kept to the letter. I read it literally: the Son of David will reign over a restored Israel in the kingdom to come, and His kingdom will have no end. Henry notes the irony: "His people will not give him that throne" — at first.

The unborn baby. John is filled with the Spirit "while yet in his mother's womb" (v15) and leaps for joy (v44). Luke calls him a *brephos*, a baby — the same word for Jesus in the manger (2:12). Sproul: "the child in her womb was alive, was human, and was a person."

The Magnificat. Guzik counts Hannah's song and "at least 12 other allusions to the Old Testament." Sproul: Mary memorized Scripture. The song moves from what God did for her (vv46–49) to what He does for all who fear Him (vv50–53) to what He promised Israel and Abraham (vv54–55).

The Benedictus. Sproul: God "has visited" (*episkeptomai*) — and His visits bring either redemption or judgment, so no one can be neutral about Christ. The song centers on the Messiah first (vv68–75), then turns to John ("And you, child," vv76–77), and ends with the Sunrise (*anatolē*) shining on those in darkness (vv78–79).

Word study (Greek):

- **eyewitnesses — *autoptai* (G845):** those who saw for themselves; only Luke 1:2.
- **exact truth — *asphaleia* (G803):** certainty, firmness, safety (v4; Acts 5:23).
- **petition — *deēsis* (G1162):** a specific request from need (v13).
- **bring good news — *euangelizō* (G2097):** Luke's gospel verb, first on Gabriel's lips (v19; 2:10).
- **disgrace — *oneidos* (G3681):** reproach, shame (v25).
- **favored one — *charitoō* (G5487):** graced; only Luke 1:28; Eph 1:6.
- **overshadow — *episkiazō* (G1982):** to envelop with a cloud (v35; 9:34).
- **bondslave — *doulē* (G1399):** a female slave (vv38, 48; Acts 2:18).

- **leaped — *skirtaō* (G4640):** leaped for joy (vv41, 44; 6:23).
- **exalts — *megalynō* (G3170):** to make great, magnify (v46).
- **humble state — *tapeinōsis* (G5014):** low estate (v48).
- **visited — *episkeptomai* (G1980):** to look upon with care (vv68, 78; 7:16).
- **horn — *keras* (G2768):** a horn, strength (v69).
- **Sunrise — *anatolē* (G395):** dawn, the rising; the Branch (v78).

Key insights to carry (from the Deep Dive):

1. **Faith stands on history** — Luke checked his sources (Sproul).
2. **Godly people still suffer** — no hidden sin (vv6–7).
3. **Old prayers are not forgotten prayers** (Henry).
4. **Unbelief is a moral problem** — it robs us of the joy (Sproul, Guzik).
5. **Same question, different heart** — vv18 and 34 (Guzik).
6. **Grace received, not grace to give** — *kecharitōmenē* (v28).
7. **The right answer to every promise** — "may it be done to me according to your word" (v38).
8. **The unborn are persons** — *brephos* (v41).
9. **God turns the world upside down** (vv51–53).
10. **The silence ends in praise** (vv63–64).

Cross-references: Gen 18:14; 25:22; 1 Sam 1–2; 2 Sam 7:12–16; 1 Chron 24:10; Ps 103:17; 132:17; Isa 7:14; 9:2, 6–7; 40:3; Jer 23:5; Mal 3:1; 4:2, 5–6; Matt 11:14; Luke 7:16; Acts 1:1; Gal 4:4–5; Eph 1:6; 1 Tim 2:5; Jas 4:6.

03 Application

HOW DOES IT CHANGE ME?

KEY VERSE · LUKE 1:38

"And Mary said, "Behold, the bondslave of the Lord; may it be done to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her."

FIGURE · THE GREAT REVERSAL

THE GREAT REVERSAL IN MARY'S SONG · LUKE 1:48–53

BROUGHT DOWN	LIFTED UP
"those who were proud" — scattered (v51)	"His bondslave" — He "had regard" (v48)
"rulers" — brought down from thrones (v52)	"those who were humble" — exalted (v52)
"the rich" — sent away empty-handed (v53)	"the hungry" — filled with good things (v53)

THE REASON: "HIS MERCY IS UPON GENERATION AFTER GENERATION …" (v50)

Henry: "they come full of self, and are sent away empty of Christ"

Mary's song turns the world upside down — the proud, the powerful and the full go down; the humble and the hungry are lifted up.

Example to follow — Zacharias and Elizabeth. They kept walking blamelessly through years of disappointment and kept showing up to serve (vv6–9). Some of the men I serve have waited years for a prodigal, a marriage, a release date. Faithfulness in the waiting is not wasted. This week I will keep serving where God has put me, even while the prayer I care about most is still unanswered.

Sin to confess — unbelief dressed up as realism. "How will I know this for certain? For I am an old man" (v18). I have done exactly that: looked at the circumstances first and what God can do last. Sproul is right — that is not an intellectual problem but a moral one; it calls God a liar. I confess it, and I ask Him to open my mouth in praise instead of doubt.

Command to obey — say yes to God's word. Mary did not understand everything, and it would cost her reputation. She still said, "Behold, the bondslave of the Lord; may it be done to me according to your word" (v38). There is something in God's Word I have been negotiating with. Today I stop negotiating and say yes.

Promise to trust — "nothing will be impossible with God." That word was spoken over a barren woman and a virgin (vv36–37). It does not mean God will do whatever I want; it means no word of His will fail. The men I sit with in recovery and behind the walls need to hear that the God who opened Elizabeth's womb can open a hardened heart — including mine.

Example to follow — Mary's song. She knew her Bible so well that when joy came, Scripture came out (vv46–55). I want my mouth so full of God's Word that it is what comes out under pressure. This week I will memorize part of the Magnificat or the Benedictus.

Questions for the table (from the Deep Dive):

1. Luke wrote so Theophilus could know "the exact truth" about what he had been taught. What do I believe about Jesus only because someone told me, and what have I checked for myself? (1:1–4; 2 Pet 1:16) *Faith stands on things that actually happened (Sproul).*
2. Zacharias and Elizabeth were righteous and still carried a deep disappointment for years. What long-standing prayer have I stopped praying — and why? (1:6–7, 13) *Your petition has been heard.*
3. When God's promise came, Zacharias "looked at the circumstances first, and what God can do last" (Guzik). Where am I doing the same right now? (1:18–20) *Unbelief did not cancel the promise; it cost him the joy.*
4. Mary called herself the Lord's bondslave and said, "may it be done to me according to your word," knowing what it might cost her reputation. What is God's word asking me to say yes to that will cost me something? (1:34–38) *She was humble, she was willing, and she was obedient (Sproul).*
5. Mary's song says God scatters the proud and fills the hungry. Am I coming to God full of myself or hungry for Him? (1:51–53; James 4:6) *They come full of self, and are sent away empty of Christ (Henry).*
6. Zacharias' first words after nine months of silence were praise. What would my first words be if God gave me a second chance at faith today? (1:63–68) *God gave Zacharias a second chance at faith (Guzik).*

Worship. The Lord God of Israel remembers. He heard a priest's prayer at the altar, sent His angel to a nobody town, overshadowed a virgin by His Spirit, and gave His Son the throne of David forever. He is the Mighty One whose name is holy, whose mercy is on those who fear Him, who visited His people and raised up a horn of salvation — the Sunrise from on high.

Prayer. Lord God, You have never forgotten a promise. Forgive me for looking at my circumstances first and at You last. I am Your bondslave; may it be done to me according to Your word. Fill me with Your Spirit, humble my pride, feed my hunger, and open my mouth to praise You. Shine on the men who sit in darkness and the shadow of death, and guide our feet into the way of peace. Amen.

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