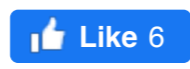




## Luke 1:5-2:52 The Savior Is Born and Believers Must Sing

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We provided a brief introduction to the Gospel of Luke that built on the prologue in 1:1-5 some time ago [here](#). And we will eventually try to walk briefly through all of Luke-Acts (I have in fact finished teaching through Acts a few months ago, but haven't yet spilled that content onto the blog here). We pick up the Gospel of Luke after the prologue, in what is still a sort of "introductory" section by which Luke sets the stage for Theophilus. And in this section he makes a profoundly important point about the Gospel and its effects. So pick up a Bible, read the infancy narrative in Luke 1:5-2:52, and let's hear together the Word of the Lord.

### Luke 1:5-2:52: The Savior is Born and the Believers Must Sing

We could certainly take each of the smaller subsections of 1:1-2:52 and treat them each in detail. They are worthy of such treatment! But the danger in such an approach is that one can lose the big picture of the larger section. Luke intends the infancy material to introduce the story, to set the scene for the rest of the book, by sharing again the marvelous story of the Christ coming into the world, and the marvelous activity of the Spirit that surrounded that incarnation. But he also intends to make a point about the Gospel itself, what we should do with it, and what it should do with us. We might note from the section four basic things that Luke makes clear about the Gospel.

#### The Good News Happens According To God's Plan

Luke-Acts is all about Jesus, and this beginning "overture" detailing the coming of Jesus into the world emphasizes, "the things accomplished among us" (1:1 - where the word "accomplished" means, "fulfilled according to plan"). Mention of this "fulfillment" of what is revealed in OT Scripture is woven throughout the section (1:32-33, 54-55, 68-75; 2:11, 22-24), and would clearly have been picked up by the original reader.

#### The Good News Must Be Announced

Announcement is dominant all throughout the passage. Luke is making an announcement even in how he shares the story. Gabriel makes an announcement to Zechariah (1:19), and announces to Mary Jesus' birth (1:30-33). News of the birth of John is spread to relatives (1:58) and then all the hill country of Judah (1:65). Zechariah prophesies that John will make the announcement (1:77), which he then does (3:3). An angel announces the Good News to shepherds (2:10), who spread that Good News to others (2:17-18). Anna speaks of Jesus to all who will listen (2:38). And Theophilus is meant to continue to spread this Good News. Luke wants the reader to understand something about this Good News that he will expand at length - it is news that, once heard and believed, must be shared.

#### The Announced One Is Greater Than The Announcer

Luke draws a back-and-forth comparison between the birth of John the Baptist and the birth of Jesus. Jesus in comparison even to John is still far greater: the same angel (Gabriel) announces both births; both Zechariah and Mary are troubled by the visit; both are told not to fear; both are told of a future birth; both births are associated with the Spirit; the angel names both children; the future roles of both sons is announced; in both we watch the birth, circumcision, and naming of the sons. The scenes of the narrative move back and forth between the two, meet a little in the middle, and then the camera zooms in on Jesus in particular, the true star of the story (note the profession; John - 1:5-25; Jesus - 1:26-38; both - 1:39-45; both - 1:46-56; John - 1:57-66; both - 1:67-80; Jesus - 2:1-7; Jesus - 2:8-21; Jesus - 2:22-40; Teen Jesus - 2:41-52). John was the forerunner who announced a coming fulfillment; but Jesus *is* the fulfillment. John was the prophet of the Most High; but Jesus is the *Son* of the Most High. John was born miraculously of a barren womb; but Jesus is born even more miraculously of a *virgin* womb. John paved the way; but Jesus *is* the Way. John made the announcement; but Jesus *is* the One Announced. The whole section serves to both compare and contrast John and Jesus, and their respective ministries. And Jesus is far greater.

#### Those Who Believe The Good News Will Sing In Joy

Perhaps the most immediately noticeable element of the section is the way that it is repeatedly punctuated with Spirit-Inspired speech, and shows an emphasis upon such speech, both in a positive and negative way, throughout the section. Reading a Greek NT like the NA 28 that sets prose apart from poetry, one will see that 1:13b-17; 1:30b-33; 1:35b; 1:42b; 1:46-55; 1:67-79; 2:14; and 2:29-32 are all set out in poetic verse. These sections are not the straightforward prose of narrative - they are the beauty of song. Mostly, they are sections of praise to the Lord bursting out of the hearts of those who believe. Luke makes the point through several of the characters. Zechariah doesn't believe when the announcement is made, and so is made mute for nine months (1:20). See, those who refuse to believe lose the honor of announcing, and miss the joy of celebration. Later, when his naming of the child confirms his belief, his mouth is reopened, and he immediately praises and prophesies in the Spirit (1:67-79). By contrast, when Mary hears, she immediately believes, and so she sings (1:46-55). Mary is blessed (in contrast to Zechariah!) because she "believed that there would be a fulfillment..." (1:45). The angels in heaven sing in praise as they announce (2:13-14). The shepherds praise and share when they see it (1:17-20). Simeon praises in song when he sees it (2:28-32). Anna proclaims when she learns it (2:38). Elizabeth exclaims when she hears it (1:42). Even the unborn John leaps in the womb in celebration when he encounters it (1:41)! Luke has used the structure of the section to make the point abundantly clear. The Gospel is not a story that one can hear without a response. It must be believed, or disbelieved. And the heart that believes it will inexorably soar in Spirit-prompted praise and worship to God. Believers must the Gospel.

#### Luke's Point To Theophilus (And The Spirit's Point To Us)

Luke seeks to bolster our faith in the message, by sharing the announcement once again. But he does more than just tell the story again. He shows these brief snippets of how characters responded when the announcement was first made. They celebrated it, and they shared it. God wants us to realize the joy that is found in believing and sharing and celebrating the Good News.

So believe it.

*And sing!*

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