

Encountering Jesus: Studies in the Gospel of Luke (1-21-18)

PREPARING FOR A DIVINE VISITATION

(Luke 1:5-22; Luke 3:1-10)

I. THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

- A. Luke was a physician, a traveling companion of Paul who remained with him even when everyone else had left. Luke wrote the Gospel of Luke and the book of Acts. He was not an Apostle nor an eye-witness, but did extremely thorough research with eye-witnesses. He was not Jewish, but probably Greek.

II. FORERUNNER

- A. Luke starts with the announcement of John, a forerunner of Jesus. He would go before His face/presence.
- B. A Priest named Zacharias was a priest. His wife, Elizabeth, was a descendant of Aaron, the priest in Moses' day. She was barren and past child-bearing age. The lot fell for Zacharias to burn incense in the temple. An angel of the Lord appears to him by the altar of incense. Zacharias is troubled and starts to get fearful. He had been praying and the angel came to announce that his prayer had been heard. (Luke 1:13-17)

¹³But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your prayer is heard; and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John. ¹⁴And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth. ¹⁵For he will be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink. He will also be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb. ¹⁶And he will TURN many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God. ¹⁷He will also GO BEFORE Him in the spirit and power of ELIJAH, 'to TURN the hearts of the fathers to the children,' and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people PREPARED for the Lord." (Luke 1:13-17)

1. The hearts of the children of Israel were turning to the Lord their God. Children to their Father. Father to the children, salvation instead of wrath.
- C. Malachi prophesied (~400 years before) that the Messiah would be preceded by a forerunner who would prepare the way for the Messiah.

Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet Before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD. ⁶ And he will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, And the hearts of the children to their fathers, Lest I come and strike the earth with a curse." (Mal. 4:5-6)

III. SPIRIT OF ELIJAH

- A. Spirit of Elijah: The anointing to turn hearts. God brings conviction, resulting in true repentance that bears fruit unto life. Turn: to turn or change direction.
 - 1. Baptism of Repentance, as a preparatory step for the visitation of the Lord.
- B. We need to press in for a lifestyle more than a moment or an event. There will always be events that serve as markers, but the substance is the lifestyle of following Jesus.
 - a. e.g. Philip, and other deacons: full of the Holy Spirit. not just an event or evidence. People argue about the evidence. Look for the substance, it's Jesus Christ. What matters at the end is whether Jesus knows you and you know Him.
Acts 6:3 "Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business;
 - 2. Preaching of His word that turns hearts, calls people to repentance and faith. It's a season to turn, cry out for true spirit of repentance, to know the fear of the Lord, and to prepare for His visitation.
- C. The wilderness is where God sends all His choice servants. Moses, David, Jesus, the Son of God. The word of the Lord came to John in the wilderness. The pattern: God's people enter the wilderness and begin to cry out to God with a holy desperation that goes beyond themselves and their own needs. It's the wilderness that strips us of all the fancy, the comfortable, creating in us a hunger for the real. It causes us to go beyond our barrenness and look beyond ourselves to God.
- D. John was to be like a Nazirite (Num. 6:1). No wine or strong drink. He would be filled with the Holy Spirit in the womb.

IV. REPENTANCE ((LUKE 3:1-10))

- A. Motives: "Who warned you to turn from the wrath to come?"
- B. Humbly acknowledging our sin: Don't begin to say: "We have Abraham as our father"
- C. Bears fruit: it touches our money. our bank accounts, checking accounts. It goes to the core.
- D. Without repentance, there is no salvation. You can't turn to Jesus without turning away from yourself. It's the other side of the same coin.
- E. The first and primary role of HS is to convict. He convicts of sin, righteousness, and judgment. (John 16:8-14)