

**Luke 1:1-25**  
**June 3, 2018**

**Open with Prayer**

**Intro to Luke:**

The gospel of Luke is filled with good news for everybody. Luke was probably a Gentile and was trained as a physician. He wrote with the mind of a careful historian and with the heart of a loving physician. He carefully researched his material, interviewed eyewitnesses, and listened to those who had ministered the Word. Most important, he had the guidance of the Holy Spirit. His key message is found in Luke 19:10, "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." He presents Jesus Christ as the compassionate Son of man, who came to live among sinners, love them, help them, and die for them.

In this Gospel we will read an accurate and orderly narrative of the life, ministry, and message of Jesus Christ. We will also meet individuals as well as crowds, women and children as well as men, poor people as well as rich people, and sinners along with saints. It's a book with a message for *everybody*, because Luke's emphasis is on the universality of Jesus Christ and His salvation: "good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people" (Luke 2:10).

As you will soon read, the Gospel of Luke was written for a man named Theophilus ("lover of God"), probably a Roman official who had trusted Christ and now needed to be established in the faith. But this gospel is just as much for us as it was for Theophilus.

**Transition:** In this first chapter, Luke tells us a wonderful story about a couple who is up in years who have been praying for years to have a child. As we read today's story, I want you to think about some dream or passion or heartfelt desire that you have been praying to God for years that hasn't been answered yet. How strong is your faith such that you believe He will still answer? Or has your faith waned? Let's struggle together with the causes of unbelief. Let's begin.

**BOOK (NIV 1984):**

V.1:

- Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us,

V.2:

- just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the word.

V.3:

- Therefore, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, it seemed good also to me to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus,

V.4:

- so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught.

**Process Questions**

Q: What is the purpose of Luke's writing? [To present Theophilus a carefully organized account of who Jesus is so that he can be certain of the teachings of Christianity.]

Q: What was Luke's methodology to put this writing together? [He researched by interviewing eyewitnesses and reading other people's writings regarding Christ from His time of birth until His death.]

V.5:

- In the time of Herod king of Judea there was a priest named Zechariah, who belonged to the priestly division of Abijah; his wife Elizabeth was also a descendant of Aaron.

V.6:

- Both of them were upright in the sight of God, observing all the Lord's commandments and regulations blamelessly.

V.7:

- But they had no children, because Elizabeth was barren; and they were both well along in years.

V.8:

- Once when Zechariah's division was on duty and he was serving as priest before God,

V.9:

- he was chosen by lot, according to the custom of the priesthood, to go into the temple of the Lord and burn incense.

V.10:

- And when the time for the burning of incense came, all the assembled worshipers were praying outside.

V.11:

- Then an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing at the right side of the altar of incense.

V.12:

- When Zechariah saw him, he was startled and was gripped with fear.

V.13:

- But the angel said to him: "Do not be afraid, Zechariah; your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you are to give him the name John.

V.14:

- He will be a joy and delight to you, and many will rejoice because of his birth,

V.15:

- for he will be great in the sight of the Lord. He is never to take wine or other fermented drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit even from birth.

V.16:

- Many of the people of Israel will he bring back to the Lord their God.

V.17:

- And he will go on before the Lord, in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous—to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."

V.18:

- Zechariah asked the angel, "How can I be sure of this? I am an old man and my wife is well along in years."

V.19:

- The angel answered, “I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to tell you this good news.

V.20:

- And now you will be silent and not able to speak until the day this happens, because you did not believe my words, which will come true at their proper time.”

V.21:

- Meanwhile, the people were waiting for Zechariah and wondering why he stayed so long in the temple.

V.22:

- When he came out, he could not speak to them. They realized he had seen a vision in the temple, for he kept making signs to them but remained unable to speak.

V.23:

- When his time of service was completed, he returned home.

V.24:

- After this his wife Elizabeth became pregnant and for five months remained in seclusion.

V.25:

- “The Lord has done this for me,” she said. “In these days he has shown his favor and taken away my disgrace among the people.”

### **Process Observations/Questions:**

Q V.5: We get introduced to a couple. Who are they? [Zechariah, a priest from the division of Abijah; Elizabeth, a descendant of Aaron]

Q: What is significant about their backgrounds? [They are both from a priestly line.]

Q V.6: How are they described by Luke? [They are upright in the sight of God and observed all the Lord’s commandments and regulations blamelessly.]

Q V.7: What is their situation? [They are well along in years with no children.]

Q: As a point of interest, when a woman’s womb was not opened, how was that often interpreted back in Elizabeth’s day? [She did not have favor with God. Yet we just read that she was upright in the sight of God and obeyed His commands. So let’s stay tuned...]

Q V.8-9: So life goes on, and Zechariah’s priestly division is on duty. How does he get chosen to perform his priestly duty to burn incense in the Temple? [Chosen by lot]

**Background:** We know from I Chron 24:7-18 that there are 24 divisions or groups of priests. And each priest served in the temple two weeks out of the year. The priests on duty drew lots to see which ministries they would perform, and Zechariah was chosen to offer incense in the holy place. This was a high honor that was permitted to a priest but once in a lifetime because of the large number of priests drawing lots.]

Q V.10: Zechariah must have felt humbled and honored to even be allowed to burn incense in the Temple. Based on this verse, what spiritual discipline is going on at this time. [Everyone who assembled to worship were praying outside, while Zechariah is praying in the temple.]

Q V.11-13: Zechariah has an encounter. What happens? [An angel of the Lord appeared, standing at the right side of the altar.]

Q: How did Zechariah react? [He was startled and gripped with fear.]

Q: How did the angel comfort him? [He told Zechariah to not be afraid because his prayer had been heard. Elizabeth will bear him a son, and they shall name him John.]

Q V.14-17: The angel shares six aspects of John's character in the next four verses. Let's tag them:

- He will be a joy and delight to Zechariah and Elizabeth.
- He will be great in the sight of the Lord.
- He will abstain from wine or any fermented drink.
- He will be filled with the Holy Spirit even from birth.
- He will bring many people of Israel back to God.
- He will go on before the Lord in the spirit and power of Elijah.

Observation: Luke here referred to two passages in Malachi which speak of messengers: a messenger was to be sent to clear the way before the Lord (Mal. 3:1), and Elijah's return was promised before the day of the Lord (Mal. 4:5-6) to restore **the hearts of the fathers to their children**.

Q: If you were Zechariah, how would you feel listening to all the wonderful attributes of his forthcoming son? [Let people engage. Wouldn't you be ecstatic that the Lord is answering your prayer?]

Q V.18: How did Zechariah react? [He questioned the angel by asking, "How can I be assured of this?" on the basis that he and Elizabeth were old.]

Q V.19-20: How did the angel respond? [He identifies himself as Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God. He stated he was sent by God to speak to Zechariah this good news. But then came a consequence. Zechariah was silenced and unable to speak until the day John is born because he "didn't believe" the message.]

Q: Can we pause here? Tell me what you're thinking and feeling at this point. [Let people engage.]

Q: What are some of the causes of unbelief? [so much time has passed that we give up on the idea that God will answer our prayer; humanistic thinking like "we're too old" to have a child when nothing is impossible for God; Unanswered prayer is interpreted as "I don't deserve this;" or unanswered prayer is interpreted as "it must not be God's will for me."]

Q: Is it wrong to have doubts? Is it wrong to ask for signs?

Q: So what's the difference in this situation? Why was Zechariah guilty of unbelief? [Because he questioned the integrity of God's Word through Gabriel. If God speaks it, believe it! He questioned God's ability to fulfill His own Word.]

Recap of V.21-23: As you can imagine, having an encounter with an angel on the job might delay you from coming out of the temple! The people who assembled for worship obviously knew the drill and knew that Zechariah had been in the temple way longer than usual. Naturally, they wondered "what's going on?" When Zechariah stepped out of the temple, all he could do was try to describe the encounter with Gabriel by making signs.

Q V.24-25: How did Elizabeth feel once she learned she was pregnant? [Overjoyed that the Lord had done this for her. She was delighted to have God's favor and for Him to remove her disgrace among the people.]

**LOOK:**

We learned today that God rewards faith and judges unbelief. How strong is our faith? Let's believe in God's ability to answer our prayers that have been uttered over the years.

**Close in Prayer**

### **Commentaries for Today's Lesson:**

**Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible Exposition Commentary* (Vol. 1, pp. 170–171). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.**

### *Luke 1*

If ever a man wrote a book filled with good news for everybody, Dr. Luke is that man. His key message is, “For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10). He presents Jesus Christ as the compassionate Son of man, who came to live among sinners, love them, help them, and die for them.

In this Gospel you meet individuals as well as crowds, women and children as well as men, poor people as well as rich people, and sinners along with saints. It's a book with a message for *everybody*, because Luke's emphasis is on the universality of Jesus Christ and His salvation: “good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people” (Luke 2:10).

Dr. Luke is named only three times in the New Testament: in Colossians 4:14; 2 Timothy 4:11; and Philemon 24. He wrote Acts (compare Luke 1:1–4 with Acts 1:1) and traveled with Paul (note the “we” sections in Acts 16:10–17; 20:4–15; 21:1–18, and 27:1–28:16). He was probably a Gentile (compare Colossians 4:11 and 14) and was trained as a physician. No wonder he began his book with detailed accounts of the births of two important babies! No wonder he emphasized Christ's sympathy for hurting people! He wrote with the mind of a careful historian and with the heart of a loving physician.

The Gospel of Luke was written for Theophilus (“lover of God”), probably a Roman official who had trusted Christ and now needed to be established in the faith. It's also possible that Theophilus was a seeker after truth who was being taught the Christian message, because the word translated *instructed* in Luke 1:4 gives us our English word *catechumen*, “someone who is being taught the basics of Christianity.”

The life and message of Christ were so important that many books had already been written about Him, but not everything in them could be trusted. Luke wrote his Gospel so that his readers might have an accurate and orderly narrative of the life, ministry, and message of Jesus Christ. Luke had carefully researched his material, interviewed eyewitnesses, and listened to those who had ministered the Word. Most important, he had the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The phrase *from the very first* (Gk. *anōthen*) can be translated “from above,” as it is in John 3:31 and 19:11. It speaks of the inspiration of the Spirit of God on the message that Luke wrote.

In this first chapter, Luke tells us how God's wonderful news came to different people and how they responded to it. You will discover four different responses.

### **Unbelief (Luke 1:5–25)**

It was indeed a dark day for the nation of Israel. The people had heard no prophetic Word from God for 400 years, not since Malachi had promised the coming of Elijah (Mal. 4:5–6). The spiritual leaders were shackled by tradition and, in some instances, corruption; and their king, Herod the Great, was a tyrant. He had nine (some say ten) wives, one of whom he had executed for no apparent reason. But no matter how dark the day, God always has His devoted and obedient people.

***A faithful priest (vv. 5–7).*** Zacharias (“Jehovah has remembered”) and Elizabeth (“God is my oath”) were a godly couple who both belonged to the priestly line. The priests were divided into twenty-four courses (1 Chron. 24), and each priest served in the temple two weeks out of the year.

In spite of the godlessness around them, Zacharias and Elizabeth were faithful to obey the Word of God and live blamelessly.

Their only sorrow was that they had no family, and they made this a matter of constant prayer. Little did they know that God would answer their prayers and give them, not a priest, but a prophet! And no ordinary prophet, for their son would be the herald of the coming King!

**A fearful priest (vv. 8–17).** The priests on duty drew lots to see which ministries they would perform, and Zacharias was chosen to offer incense in the holy place. This was a high honor that was permitted to a priest but once in a lifetime. The incense was offered daily before the morning sacrifice and after the evening sacrifice, about 3 o'clock in the afternoon. It was probably the evening offering that was assigned to Zacharias.

You have probably noticed that God often speaks to His people and calls them while they are busy doing their daily tasks. Both Moses and David were caring for sheep, and Gideon was threshing wheat. Peter and his partners were mending nets when Jesus called them. It is difficult to steer a car when the engine is not running. When we get busy, God starts to direct us.

Luke mentions angels twenty-three times in his Gospel. There are innumerable angels (Rev. 5:11), only two of which are actually named in Scripture: Michael (Dan. 10:13, 21; 12:1; Jude 9; Rev. 12:7) and Gabriel (Dan. 8:16; 9:21; Luke 1:19, 26). When Gabriel appeared by the altar, Zacharias was frightened, for the angel's appearance could have meant divine judgment.

"Fear not" is a repeated statement in the Gospel of Luke (1:13, 30; 2:10; 5:10; 8:50; 12:7, 32). Imagine how excited Zacharias must have been when he heard that he and Elizabeth were to have a son! "Rejoicing" is another key theme in Luke, mentioned at least nineteen times. Good news brings joy!

Gabriel instructed him to name his son John ("Jehovah is gracious") and to dedicate the boy to God to be a Nazarite all of his life (Num. 6:1–21). He would be filled with the Spirit before birth (Luke 1:41) and would be God's prophet to present His Son to the people of Israel (see John 1:15–34). God would use John's ministry to turn many people back to the Lord, just as Isaiah had promised (Isa. 40:1–5).

**A faithless priest (vv. 18–22).** You would think that the presence of an angel and the announcement of God's Word would encourage Zacharias' faith, but they did not. Instead of looking to God by faith, the priest looked at himself and his wife and decided that the birth of a son was impossible. He wanted some assurance beyond the plain word of Gabriel, God's messenger, perhaps a sign from God.

This, of course, was unbelief, and unbelief is something God does not accept. Zacharias was really questioning God's ability to fulfill His own Word! Had he forgotten what God did for Abraham and Sarah? (Gen. 18:9–15; Rom. 4:18–25) Did he think that his physical limitations would hinder Almighty God? But before we criticize Zacharias too much, we should examine ourselves and see how strong our own faith is.

Faith is blessed, but unbelief is judged; and Zacharias was struck dumb (and possibly deaf, Luke 1:62) until the Word was fulfilled. "I believed, and therefore have I spoken" (2 Cor. 4:13). Zacharias did not believe; therefore he could not speak. When he left the holy place, he was unable to give the priestly benediction to the people (Num. 6:22–27) or even tell them what he had seen. Indeed, God had given him a very personal "sign" that he would have to live with for the next nine months.

**A favored priest (vv. 23–25).** Zacharias must have had a difficult time completing his week of ministry, not only because of his handicap, but also because of his excitement. He could hardly wait to return "to the hill country" (Luke 1:39) where he lived, to tell his wife the good news.

God kept His promise and Elizabeth conceived a son in her old age. “There is nothing too hard for the Lord” (Jer. 32:17). Apparently the amazement and curiosity of the people forced her to hide herself even as she praised the Lord for His mercy. Not only was she to have a son, but the birth of her son was evidence that *the Messiah was coming!* These were exciting days indeed!

**Martin, J. A. (1985). Isaiah. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 202-205)**

## I. The Prologue and Purpose of the Gospel (1:1–4).

1:1–4. Luke is the only one of the four Gospel writers who stated his method and purpose at the beginning of his book. He was familiar with other writings about Jesus’ life and the message of the gospel (v. 1). His purpose was to allow **Theophilus to know the certainty of the things** he had **been taught** by writing out **an orderly account** (v. 3; cf. v. 1) of the events in Christ’s life.

Luke carefully identified himself with the believers (v. 1). Some have suggested that Luke may have been among the 72 Jesus sent out on the missionary journey (10:1–24) because of his notation that the things were **fulfilled among us**. However, the next statement that these “things” (i.e., accounts and teachings) **were handed down** orally by the **eyewitnesses** of Jesus would negate that possibility. Luke implied that he was not an eyewitness but a researcher. He was thorough and exact in his research, having **investigated** for his account **everything from the beginning**, that is, from the first of Christ’s life.

“Theophilus” (lit., “lover of God”) was a common name during the first century. Who this man was is open to conjecture. Though it has been suggested that Luke used the name for all who are “lovers of God” (i.e., the readers of his Gospel narrative), it is better to suppose that this was a real individual who was the first recipient of Luke’s Gospel and who then gave it wide circulation in the early church. Apparently he was an official of some kind, for he was called **most excellent** (cf. Acts 23:26; 24:3; 26:25, which use the same Gr. term, *kratiste*).

## II. The Births and Maturations of John and Jesus (1:5–2:52).

### A. *The announcements of the births (1:5–56)*

Luke arranged the material in this section and the following sections in a form which compared John’s birth and maturation with Jesus’ birth and maturation. In both cases the parents were introduced (vv. 5–7 and 26–27), an angel appeared (vv. 8–23 and 28–30), a sign was given (vv. 18–20 and 34–38), and a woman who had no children became pregnant (vv. 24–25 and 42).

### 1. THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE BIRTH OF JOHN (1:5–25).

#### a. *The introduction of John’s parents (1:5).*

1:5–7. John’s parents were **a priest named Zechariah** and **Elizabeth**, who **was also a descendant of Aaron**. John therefore was by lineage one who was to become a priest. His parents lived when **Herod the Great** ruled as **king of Judea**, from 37 to 4 B.C. (See chart on the Herods.) They were godly people, or **upright** (*dikaioi*, “righteous”), **observing all the Lord’s commandments**. They were **both well along in years** and thus had no prospect of children. This



fact was a constant embarrassment to Elizabeth as is evident from her statement later on (v. 25). God's allowing a barren woman to have children occurred several times in the Old Testament (e.g., the mothers of Isaac, Samson, and Samuel).

*b. The angel's announcement to Zechariah (1:8–23).*

1:8–9. Luke recorded that **Zechariah's division was on duty**. This division was one of 24 groups of priests, drawn up in David's time (1 Chron. 24:7–18). The priests in each division were on duty twice a year for a week at a time. Zechariah was of the division of Abijah (Luke 1:5; cf. 1 Chron. 24:10). Zechariah **was chosen by lot** (*elache*) to be the **priest** who offered the **incense**. Because of the large number of priests this would be the only time in Zechariah's life when he was allowed to perform this task. As elsewhere in Scripture (e.g., Es. 3:7), the sovereignty of God is stressed even in matters which seem like chance, as in the casting of a lot.

1:10–11. While Zechariah was inside at the altar of **incense**, a crowd gathered to pray. The incense for which Zechariah was responsible symbolized the prayers of the entire nation. At that particular moment Zechariah was thus the focal point of the entire Jewish nation.

At that unique moment in Zechariah's life **an angel of the Lord appeared ... standing** where Zechariah was praying beside **the altar of incense**.

1:12–13. The purpose of the appearance of the **angel** of the Lord was to announce the birth of **a son** to **Zechariah** and **Elizabeth**. Zechariah **was gripped with fear** (lit., "fear fell on him"). In Luke, many people responded with fear or awe (*phobos*) when confronted with mighty acts of God (cf. 1:30, 65; 2:9–10; 5:10, 26; 7:16; 8:25, 37, 50; 9:34, 45; 12:4–5, 32; 21:26; cf. 23:40). Because of the angel's response, **Do not be afraid, Zechariah; your prayer has been heard**, it may be inferred that Zechariah was praying for a son, or possibly even for the coming of the Messiah and that the birth of John would be a partial answer to his prayer. The angel told Zechariah what to name his son. This was also the case when the angel appeared to Mary (1:31).

1:14–17. The angel not only gave the name of the son, but also detailed six aspects of John's character.

1. **He will be a joy and delight to you** (v. 14). Luke frequently used the word "joy" in his accounts in Luke and Acts, often linking it closely with salvation. An illustration of this is in Luke 15, where three times joy and rejoicing came because something lost had been found, a picture of salvation. And John the Baptist's ministry brought joy to the Israelites who believed his message of repentance for the forgiveness of sins (3:3).

2. **He will be great in the sight of the Lord**. The expression "in the sight of" (*enōpion*) is characteristic of Luke. Though it appears 35 times in Luke and Acts, it is used only one other time in the other Gospels (John 20:30).

3. **He is never to take wine or other fermented drink**. Later John voluntarily took on himself a Nazirite vow, refusing to drink anything fermented (Num. 6:1–21). Luke did not specifically state that John would fulfill all aspects of the Nazirite vow. Instead, John would avoid taking any wine perhaps to support his contention that his message was urgent. Another way he emphasized the urgency of his message was to dress, act, and eat like Elijah the prophet (cf. Matt. 3:4; 2 Kings 1:8).

4. **He will be filled with the Holy Spirit even from birth**. "From birth" is literally "from his mother's womb." When Mary visited Elizabeth before John was born, the baby leaped in her womb. The ministry of the Holy Spirit was important to Luke, and he often went to great length

to show His empowering and enabling ministry. Both of John's parents were filled with the Spirit (Luke 1:41, 67).

5. **Many of the people of Israel would he bring back to ... God.** Crowds of Israelites did turn to the Lord through John's ministry (Matt. 3:5–6; Mark 1:4–5).

6. **He will go on before the Lord.** John the Baptist was the Lord's forerunner, announcing His coming **in the spirit and power of Elijah**. Luke here referred to two passages in Malachi which speak of messengers: a messenger was to be sent to clear the way before the Lord (Mal. 3:1), and Elijah's return was promised before the day of the Lord (Mal. 4:5–6) to restore **the hearts of the fathers to their children**. Zechariah apparently understood that the angel was identifying John the Baptist with the messenger in Malachi 3:1, for in his song of praise he noted that John would "go on before the Lord to prepare the way for Him" (Luke 1:76; cf. 3:4–6). Jesus affirmed that John was the fulfillment of Malachi 3:1 (Matt. 11:10) and stated that John *would have* fulfilled Malachi 4:5–6 if the people had accepted his message (Matt. 11:14).

1:18–20. **Zechariah** had doubts that such a thing could take place because both he and Elizabeth were **old**. But **the angel**, identifying himself as **Gabriel**, reassured Zechariah that this **good news** was from the Lord. When Gabriel appeared twice to Daniel (Dan. 8:16; 9:21), both times he gave Daniel instruction and understanding. He did the same here with Zechariah, as can be inferred from the song of praise and trust which Zechariah uttered later (Luke 1:67–79). Zechariah's inability **to speak** till the fulfillment of Gabriel's message was, to some degree, a punishment for his unbelief. But it was also a sign. A sign in the Old Testament was often associated with a confirming observable phenomenon which accompanied a word of prophecy. For the next nine months Zechariah's attempts to speak would prove the reality of Gabriel's message.

1:21–23. When **Zechariah** finally **came out of the temple**, he was able to make the waiting **people** realize that **he had seen a vision**. He then **returned home** in Judah's hill country after completing his temple duty.

c. *Elizabeth's pregnancy (1:24–25).*

1:24–25. **After ... Elizabeth became pregnant ... for five months she remained in seclusion** Most likely, this was because of the excitement of the surrounding **people** to her pregnancy (v. 25). Mary may have been the first person other than Zechariah and Elizabeth to know the news which the angel had delivered (v. 36).

Luke did not say in verse 25 if Elizabeth knew about the destiny of her son at this time. However, because she knew that his name was to be John (v. 60) even before Zechariah was able to speak, he probably communicated his entire vision in writing. Elizabeth was overjoyed that she was finally able to have a baby.

**Cabal, T., Brand, C. O., Clendenen, E. R., Copan, P., Moreland, J. P., & Powell, D. (2007). *The Apologetics Study Bible: Real Questions, Straight Answers, Stronger Faith* (pp. 1509-1510). Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers.**

**1:1–4** This prologue is typical of Greco-Roman literary works. Luke noted that other gospel narratives had been produced prior to his. These were based on the testimony of eyewitnesses. His account, the result of careful investigation, was intended to reassure his benefactor, Theophilus, of the historical accuracy of that received tradition. Luke did not contrast his Gospel to earlier ones; rather, he placed his alongside them (note "also" in v. 3). The account is

“orderly” (Gk *kathexes*), but the term does not tell us what the principle(s) of order is (are). Of the four canonical Gospels, Lk is most like a biography, beginning with detailed circumstances of Jesus’ birth and frequently tying notable events to secular history and personages.

**1:16–17** Luke alluded to Mal 4:1–6 with its prophecy that Elijah will come as a forerunner of the Day of the Lord (v. 76). John coming “in the spirit and power of Elijah” makes explicit the odd statements in Mt 11:14 and Mk 9:11–13 as compared with Jn 1:21.

© 2018 Lee Ann Penick