

Walking Through the Word

Jesus, Paul and the Church (Week 18)

Story: **A Special Announcement**; (E: An Angel Visits the Temple, The Angel Visits Mary, and A Baby Named John, p 355-358)
Location: **Luke 1:1-80, Matthew 1:18-25**

Bios & definitions

Zacharias: also known as Zechariah in many texts. He was a priest that was chosen to enter the Holy Place to offer incense to God for the people. He and his wife were well along in years and had not had any children even though they were known for their personal holiness. An angel of the Lord, Gabriel, appeared to him in the Holy Place and told him about the future birth of their son and the coming Messiah. Due to his disbelief, he was rendered speechless until the birth of their son.

Elizabeth: Even though she was old in years and barren (sound familiar?) was chosen by God through the angel Gabriel to give birth to a son and call him “John”. Children were a sign of God’s blessing and, in that time, some Jews did not believe in a bodily resurrection so their hope of immortality was in their children. Children cared for the parents in their old age and added to the family’s financial security and social status. Naming a child after family was important to the Jews, so family was surprised by the name “John” because there were no family members with that name.

Gabriel: an angel of the Lord that appeared to Zacharias concerning the birth of his and Elizabeth’s son, John. This very same angel appeared to Mary and to Joseph regarding the birth of the Lord. Gabriel is only one of two angels mentioned by name in scripture, the other is Michael.

Mary: a virgin pledged to be married to Joseph. Gabriel appears to her and tells her that she will give birth to a son and name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever. Mary was unsure how this could be seeing she was a virgin. Gabriel reassured her that the child she births was conceived of the Holy Spirit. Mary was faithful and believed.

Joseph: pledged to be married to Mary – similar to engaged in our day, only more serious. If you were pledged, the only way it could be broken was through death or divorce. Mary becoming pregnant while yet pledged was a sign of apparent unfaithfulness that carried a severe social stigma that allowed Joseph to divorce her (she could have even been stoned to death, Deut 22:23-24)

John: meaning “the Lord is gracious”; John was set apart for special service to God; forbidden to drink wine or other fermented drink (likely part of a Nazirite vow – an ancient vow of consecration to God); sent and filled with the Holy Spirit to bring many people of Israel back to the Lord; he was making ready a people prepared for the Lord (Luke 1:17). He was also known as John the Baptist who would one day baptize Jesus in the Jordan

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Story: **God's Messiah** (E: A Wonderful Baby's Birth, The Wise Men Follow a Star, and When Jesus Was a Boy, p 358-368)

Location: **Luke 2:1-52, Matthew 2**

Bios & definitions

Jesus: Born of the virgin Mary to be free from the sin nature passed to all human beings by Adam. He was conceived of the Holy Spirit, thus being both God and human (born of Mary). His name means "the Lord saves" among a multitude of other meanings. Also call Emmanuel – "God with us".

Simeon: an old man in Jerusalem who was righteous and devout. The Holy Spirit was on Simeon and Simeon heard from the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Christ (Luke 2:26). Simeon told Mary and Joseph three things about Jesus – 1. Jesus was a gift from God, 2. Jesus was the Messiah and 3. Jesus would be a light to the entire world.

Anna: a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel. She was very old and never left the temple – she worshipped there night and day, fasting and praying (Luke 2:37). She went to Mary and Joseph and gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem.

Herod: Remembered as a builder of cities and the lavish rebuilder of the temple of Jerusalem. His title of "King of the Jews" was granted by Rome but not accepted by the Jewish people. He was not from the line of David. Because of this fact and that he was only partly Jewish, his title was not genuine and he was constantly worried about losing his position. Herod was jealous of Jesus and wanted him killed, and when the Magi did not return to report his location so Herod ordered all boys 2 and under in Jerusalem to be killed.

Magi: also known in stories as Wise Men. The Magi were likely watching the skies, maybe astronomers, for the star out of Jacob promised in Num 24:17. They saw the star and knew the Messiah had been born. It was a long journey and was likely a while after Jesus birth when they presented their gifts. Knew Herod was jealous of Jesus and the gifts they were bringing to him, so they left by another route.

Shepherds: They were the first to hear the good news of the birth of Christ; also first to see him in the stable

Story: **Inauguration Days** (E: John Preaches in the Wilderness, John Baptizes Jesus, and Jesus Is Tempted, p 368-372)

Location: **Matthew 3:1-17, 4:1-11; Mark 1:3-13; Luke 3:1-22, 4:1-14; John 1:15-34**

Bios & definitions

John the Baptist: John received the name because he baptized believers in the Jordan River with water; Christ would baptize with the Spirit. John would baptize Jesus in the Jordan as an example for all to follow.

Spirit of God: known in Scripture for leading; the Spirit leads beside still waters (Ps 23:2); the Spirit led Jesus into the desert

The tempter: the devil. He always waits for an opportune time. He started with an opportune temptation of food at the end of Jesus going 40 days without food. He ended with the promise of return at an opportune time. He tempted Jesus with other temptations in between. All temptations were refuted with scripture. This is a great example of how we might be able to resist temptations of our own.