

Righteous Before God



Luke 1:5–7 · This week: Be It unto Me According to Thy Word, Matthew 1; Luke 1

In the manual: **Come, Follow Me lesson 01, “Be It unto Me According to Thy Word,” on Gospel Library**

START

Zacharias and Elisabeth kept the commandments for years while the blessing they wanted most stayed out of reach (Luke 1:6–7).

READ TOGETHER

Zacharias was a priest who served in the temple in Jerusalem. Elisabeth came from the family of Aaron, Israel's first high priest (Luke 1:5). They had no children, and by now they were both old.

LUKE 1:5–7

⁵There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judaea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the course of Abia: and his wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elisabeth. ⁶And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. ⁷And they had no child, because that Elisabeth was barren, and they both were now well stricken in years.

WHAT IT TEACHES

Luke calls them “both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless” (Luke 1:6). In the next verse he says they had no child. Luke sets those two facts side by side, and neither one cancels the other.

In their culture, having no children brought shame. Elisabeth called it her “reproach among men” (Luke 1:25). Her faithful life shows that a hard trial is no sign that God is displeased.

Elder Neil L. Andersen described how faithful people wait. *“We feel the Lord’s approval for our meek willingness, and we await the promised peace the Lord will send in His chosen timing.”*

Elder Neil L. Andersen, “The Triumph of Hope,” General conference, October 2024

Zacharias kept serving in the temple when his turn came, and the couple kept praying. When the answer finally came, the angel said, “thy prayer is heard” (Luke 1:13). The Lord had been listening all along.

TALK ABOUT IT

Zacharias and Elisabeth kept the commandments while they waited for years. What is something our family is waiting for, and what can we keep doing while we wait?

TAKE TO CHURCH

Luke calls Zacharias and Elisabeth righteous in one verse and childless in the next. A long wait for a blessing can sit right beside a faithful life, and God hears every prayer in it.

Thy Prayer Is Heard

Luke 1:8–17 · This week: Be It unto Me According to Thy Word, Matthew 1; Luke 1

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START

While Zacharias burned incense in the temple, a crowd of people prayed outside. Then an angel appeared at the right side of the altar (Luke 1:10–11).

READ TOGETHER

Priests took turns serving in the temple, and they cast lots to choose who would offer the incense (Luke 1:8–9). Incense was burned at the hour of prayer, and its smoke rising toward heaven was a picture of prayers going up to God (Revelation 8:4).

LUKE 1:11–13

¹¹And there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense. ¹²And when Zacharias saw him, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him. ¹³But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John.

LUKE 1:16–17

¹⁶And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God. ¹⁷And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, 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.

WHAT IT TEACHES

The angel's first words were “Fear not, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard” (Luke 1:13). The son they had prayed for would be named John. Zacharias would have “joy and gladness,” and many would rejoice at his birth (verse 14).

John's mission was “to make ready a people prepared for the Lord” (Luke 1:17). He would go “in the spirit and power of Elias” to “turn the hearts of the fathers to the children,” words that echo Malachi from about four hundred years earlier (Malachi 4:6).

Much of Luke 1 looks familiar to Latter-day Saints. Zacharias held the office of priest, part of the Aaronic Priesthood restored in 1829. He served in the temple, the people gathered to pray, and an angel came with a message from God. The priesthood Zacharias held is on the earth again, restored by his own son, John (Doctrine and Covenants 13:1).

The Lord answered one couple's private prayer in a way that blessed the whole world. Their son would prepare the way for the Savior.

TALK ABOUT IT

Zacharias received his answer while he was doing his assigned work in the temple.

When have you felt an answer to a prayer, and what were you doing at the time?

TAKE TO CHURCH

The first scene in Luke's Gospel has a priest, a temple, people at prayer, and an angel with a message. The restored Church of Jesus Christ has all of those again.

His Name Is John



Luke 1:18–25, 57–66 · This week: Be It unto Me According to Thy Word, Matthew 1; Luke 1

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START

Zacharias was unable to speak for months. When his son was eight days old, he asked for something to write on and wrote four words (Luke 1:63).

READ TOGETHER

When the angel promised a son, Zacharias asked, “Whereby shall I know this?” (Luke 1:18). The angel, Gabriel, told him he would be unable to speak until the promise was fulfilled (Luke 1:19–20).

LUKE 1:59–64

⁵⁹ And it came to pass, that on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child; and they called him Zacharias, after the name of his father. ⁶⁰ And his mother answered and said, Not so; but he shall be called John. ⁶¹ And they said unto her, There is none of thy kindred that is called by this name. ⁶² And they made signs to his father, how he would have him called. ⁶³ And he asked for a writing table, and wrote, saying, His name is John. And they marvelled all. ⁶⁴ And his mouth was opened immediately, and his tongue loosed, and he spake, and praised God.

WHAT IT TEACHES

Elisabeth stayed out of sight for five months and rejoiced that the Lord had “looked on me, to take away my reproach among men” (Luke 1:24–25). When the baby came, her neighbors and cousins rejoiced with her (Luke 1:58).

The relatives expected the boy to be named after his father. Elisabeth said he would be called John, and they turned to Zacharias (Luke 1:59–62). The angel had given that name months before (Luke 1:13).

Zacharias wrote, “His name is John.” Then “his mouth was opened immediately, and his tongue loosed, and he spake, and praised God” (Luke 1:63–64). After the long silence, his first act was to obey the angel, and his first words were praise.

People all through the hill country asked, “What manner of child shall this be!” (Luke 1:65–66). About thirty years later, this child would baptize Jesus.

TALK ABOUT IT

Zacharias had months of silence to think about the angel’s words. What helps you trust the Lord again after a time when you doubted?

TAKE TO CHURCH

After months of silence, Zacharias wrote “His name is John” and then praised God. The Lord gave him another chance to show his faith, and he took it.

Be It unto Me



Luke 1:26–38 · This week: Be It unto Me According to Thy Word, Matthew 1; Luke 1

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START

An angel came to a young woman in the small town of Nazareth. Her answer to him gave this week its title (Luke 1:38).

READ TOGETHER

Mary was engaged to Joseph, a man from King David’s family (Luke 1:26–27). In the sixth month of Elisabeth’s pregnancy, Gabriel, the angel who had visited Zacharias, was sent to Mary (Luke 1:26; 1:36).

LUKE 1:30

³⁰ And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God.

LUKE 1:34–35

³⁴ Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? ³⁵ And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.

LUKE 1:37–38

³⁷ For with God nothing shall be impossible.
³⁸ And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her.

WHAT IT TEACHES

Gabriel greeted Mary, “Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee” (Luke 1:28). Mary was troubled and wondered what kind of greeting this was (verse 29). Gabriel told her, “Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God” (verse 30).

Zacharias and Mary both asked the angel a question. Zacharias asked how he could know the promise was true (Luke 1:18). Mary asked, “How shall this be?” and then trusted the answer (Luke 1:34). A question asked in faith is welcome.

The angel said the Holy Ghost would come upon her, and her son would be called “the Son of God” (Luke 1:35). Jesus is the Son of Heavenly Father and of Mary. From Mary he received a mortal body that could feel pain and die, and from his Father he received power over death (John 10:17–18).

Mary said, “Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word” (Luke 1:38). A handmaid is a servant. Mary could see only a small part of what lay ahead, and she said yes to all of it.

TALK ABOUT IT

Mary said yes to the Lord before she knew how everything would work out. What is something the Lord has asked of our family that we could say yes to in the new year?

TAKE TO CHURCH

Mary asked the angel “How shall this be?” and then said “be it unto me according to thy word.” Honest questions and full trust came from the same faithful heart.

Mary Visits Elisabeth

Luke 1:36–45, 56 · This week: Be It unto Me According to Thy Word, Matthew 1; Luke 1

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Today is New Year's Day. This year's Come, Follow Me reading is the New Testament, and Luke's Gospel opens with these two women.

START

Mary hurried to the hill country to see her cousin Elisabeth, who was six months along with the baby the angel had promised (Luke 1:36; 1:39–40).

READ TOGETHER

The angel told Mary about Elisabeth as a sign that “with God nothing shall be impossible” (Luke 1:36–37). Mary went “with haste” to see her (Luke 1:39).

LUKE 1:41–45

⁴¹And it came to pass, that, when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost: ⁴²And she spake out with a loud voice, and said, Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. ⁴³And whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? ⁴⁴For, lo, as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in mine ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy. ⁴⁵And blessed is she that believed: for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord.

WHAT IT TEACHES

When Mary called out a greeting, the baby inside Elisabeth leaped, and Elisabeth was “filled with the Holy Ghost” (Luke 1:41). Before Mary shared her news, Elisabeth called her “the mother of my Lord” (Luke 1:43).

Elisabeth said, “blessed is she that believed” (Luke 1:45). She had watched her husband lose his voice for doubting. Now she praised her cousin for believing.

Each woman carried news that few people would understand. They could share it with each other, and Mary stayed with Elisabeth about three months (Luke 1:56).

God's plan for the world moved forward through two homes and two women who trusted him. Elisabeth's son would prepare the way, and Mary's son would be the way.

TALK ABOUT IT

Elisabeth was the first person to rejoice with Mary. Who in your life helps you believe, and who could you help this year?

TAKE TO CHURCH

Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost and told Mary, “blessed is she that believed.” In the first chapter of Luke, two women help each other trust God.

My Soul Doth Magnify



Luke 1:46–55, 67–79 · This week: Be It unto Me According to Thy Word, Matthew 1; Luke 1

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START

To magnify something is to make it look bigger. Mary sang that her soul magnified the Lord (Luke 1:46).

READ TOGETHER

After Elisabeth’s greeting, Mary praised God in words that echo Hannah’s song in the Old Testament (1 Samuel 2:1–10). When John was born, Zacharias also praised God, filled with the Holy Ghost (Luke 1:67).

LUKE 1:46–49

⁴⁶ And Mary said, My soul doth magnify the Lord, ⁴⁷ And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour. ⁴⁸ For he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden: for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. ⁴⁹ For he that is mighty hath done to me great things; and holy is his name.

LUKE 1:52–53

⁵² He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree. ⁵³ He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich he hath sent empty away.

WHAT IT TEACHES

Mary called God “my Saviour” and said he had noticed “the low estate of his handmaiden” (Luke 1:47–48). She came from a small town, with no fame or wealth, and God saw her.

“He that is mighty hath done to me great things,” she said (Luke 1:49). Then she described how God works. He brings down the proud and the mighty, lifts up the lowly, and fills the hungry with good things (Luke 1:51–53).

Zacharias’s song looks ahead to the Savior. He called him “the dayspring from on high,” the first light of morning, coming “to give light to them that sit in darkness” (Luke 1:78–79). His own son would “go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways” (Luke 1:76).

Both songs praise God for what he had promised and had begun to do. When we name what the Lord has done for us, we magnify him too.

TALK ABOUT IT

Mary said, “he that is mighty hath done to me great things.” What great things has the Lord done for our family this past year?

TAKE TO CHURCH

Mary’s song says God lifts up the lowly and fills the hungry with good things. Zacharias called the coming Savior the dayspring from on high, the first light of morning.

The Son of David



Matthew 1:1–17 · This week: Be It unto Me According to Thy Word, Matthew 1; Luke 1

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START

Matthew begins the New Testament with a list of names. It is Jesus's family tree, from Abraham down to Joseph (Matthew 1:1–16).

READ TOGETHER

Many readers skip long lists of names. For Matthew's first readers, this list showed that Jesus was the promised heir of King David and of Abraham (Matthew 1:1). Matthew traces the line through Joseph, Mary's husband (Matthew 1:16).

MATTHEW 1:1

¹The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.

MATTHEW 1:5–6

⁵And Salmon begat Booz of Rachab; and Booz begat Obed of Ruth; and Obed begat Jesse; ⁶And Jesse begat David the king; and David the king begat Solomon of her that had been the wife of Urias;

MATTHEW 1:16

¹⁶And Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ.

WHAT IT TEACHES

Matthew lists four women besides Mary. They are Tamar, Rachab, Ruth, and "her that had been the wife of Urias," who was Bathsheba (Matthew 1:3; 1:5–6). Ruth came from Moab, and Rachab is usually taken to be Rahab of Jericho, who hid Israel's spies (Ruth 1:4; Joshua 2:1–6).

Some of these women came from outside Israel, and some of their stories are hard ones. Matthew chose to name them. The Savior came through a real family with real troubles, and he came for every family.

The list is arranged in three groups of fourteen generations (Matthew 1:17). The first group ends with King David, the second with the captivity in Babylon from last fall's reading, and the third with Christ.

Families today gather the names of their ancestors and take them to the temple, as Malachi foresaw (Malachi 4:6). Our own family lines are full of real people too, and the Lord's sealing power can bind them together.

TALK ABOUT IT

Jesus's family line includes people with hard stories. What do you know about someone in our own family history, and what would you like to learn?

TAKE TO CHURCH

Matthew opens the New Testament with Jesus's family tree, hard stories included. The Savior came through a real family, and he can bless every family line, ours too.