

# The Life and Ministry of Jesus

## (Bible Study, April 2020)

Hi everyone, Easter is quickly approaching, and what better way to spend our time during quarantine than to study the life and ministry of our savior, Jesus Christ? This Bible study is not just for students, and you might even find it enjoyable to do this Bible study with your whole family. Like with most things, you'll get as much as you give, so give your all to this study of scripture and please feel free to message me if you have any questions!

This study will be separated into chapters, but since each chapter is so different in length, you may want to go through multiple chapters a day. If something is labeled as **PT**, that stands for Pastor's Thoughts. This will be where I give some extra thoughts and commentary to the passage to hopefully enhance your bible study experience.

P.S. This study was written using a combination of the ESV (English Standard Version) and NASB (North American Standard Bible) bibles. Apologies if your bibles and mine don't perfectly line up word for word. If you are interested in reading along with the same, I would recommend either the bible app or [esv.org](http://esv.org).

Enjoy!

-Jonathan Barbour

## The Book of Luke

- **PT:** An interesting thing to note are the circumstances surrounding the writing of the book of Luke. Luke himself was not one of the 12 disciples, and he never actually met Jesus. So how and why did he create an account of Jesus' life and ministry?
  - Even though Luke never actually met Jesus, he did interact with several of his disciples. Luke was able to write his book through extensive interviews with people who had witnessed the events of Jesus' life.
- We find out in the first four verses of the book that Luke has compiled an account of Jesus' life for a man named Theophilus. We don't know who exactly Theophilus was, but most likely he was a man of significant wealth and social status.
- In addition, the book of Luke is primarily written with Gentile (Non-Jewish) readers in mind.

## Chapter 1

- In verse 13, the angel tells Zacharias to not be afraid. This is usually the standard greeting given by most angels that we see them throughout scripture. Why do you think an angel would need to begin their introduction with “do not be afraid”?
  - Angels are warriors of heaven, they most likely look very powerful and menacing (quite unlike how they’re depicted in most art and media).
  - If an angelic warrior suddenly popped up in front of you, most people would assume they were about to be attacked or killed, hence why the angels oftentimes attempt to calm the person they were visiting.
- In verse 17, the angel told Zacharias that his son will go before the people of Israel with the spirit and power of Elijah. What does that mean?
  - Most likely, the angel was saying that Zacharias’ son would be given the power of the holy spirit and have a similar impact and ministry as the old testament prophet Elijah.
- Zacharias did not initially believe that his wife would become pregnant. What happened to him as a result?
  - He was unable to speak until his son John was born.
- Mary is said to have found favor with God, what did she do to find favor with him?
  - We are not told.
- **PT:** Although Mary found favor with God, she was a human being just like you and me and therefore not perfect. Unfortunately, there are some sects of Christianity that make the claim that Mary was a perfect and sinless human being just like Jesus. This of course is impossible since every human born of Adam and Eve has sin inside of them. The apostle Paul affirms as much when he says in Romans 3:10, “There is no one righteous, not even one.”
- What was Jesus’ relationship to John the Baptist? How far apart in age were they?
  - They were cousins. About a six month difference in age.
- How did Mary respond to the angel Gabriel when she was told that she would give birth to the Messiah?
  - “I am the lord’s servant, be it done to me according to your word.”

## Chapter 2

- Jesus was born in Bethlehem, but Mary and Joseph lived in Galilee. Why was Jesus not born in Galilee?
  - A census was being held by the Roman Government, and Joseph had to travel to Bethlehem since he was from the house of David.
- During the time of Jesus’ birth, an angel appeared to a group of shepherds to inform them about the birth of Jesus. This message could have been shared with kings or nobles, but instead God chose for the very first people to ever hear about Jesus to be a bunch of common shepherds. Why do you think God chose to do that? Why was the birth of Christ so humble and simplistic?
  - Jesus came to shake up the status quo. What we consider to be important, God showed that it is unimportant. We see an example of this in Matthew 23:12 where

Jesus says, "For those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.

- Jesus' birth showed us that what we consider to be important and what God considers important to oftentimes be very different. We need to work to have a value system more in line with God's.
- While in Jerusalem, Mary and Joseph met a man named Simeon. God had made a promise to Simeon. What was that promise?
  - He would see the Christ (or Jesus) before he died.
- Simeon prophecies about Jesus. He says that Jesus is appointed for the rise and fall of many in Israel. He also says to Mary that a sword will pierce her soul. What does this mean?
  - Jesus will lift up many people (the weak, the poor, the faithful), and condemn many others (the pharisees and false teachers). When Simeon says that a sword will pierce Mary's soul, this is referring to the pain Mary will feel when she watches her son's future crucifixion.
- When Jesus was twelve, he went with his family to Jerusalem to celebrate the passover. Afterwards when they were returning to Galilee, Mary and Joseph lost Jesus. How was that able to happen?
  - Mary, Joseph and Jesus were traveling with a large group of people (also known as a caravan) going from Jerusalem to Galilee. It's not surprising that the family would not see each other for long periods of time since they were part of such a large group.
- When Mary and Joseph returned to Jerusalem, what did they find Jesus doing?
  - He was in the temple listening to the teachers and asking questions. Why do you think this is significant?
    - It shows us that Jesus needed to learn and grow just like we do. He did not magically gain all the knowledge of scripture the second he was born, he had to read, study, and question just like we do. This knowledge of scripture comes in handy later on when Jesus is being tempted by Satan and Jesus can quote scripture from memory.

### Chapter 3

- **PT:** The book of Luke makes reference to many different historical figures and locations. This obviously helps to give the book more credibility by grounding it in reality. Chapter three begins by mentioning that it takes place during the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar. Tiberius reigned from 14 A.D. to 37 A.D placing Luke Chapter 3 around 28-29 A.D.
- In verse 8, John the Baptist is rebuking the crowd of Jews that had come to listen to him preach. He tells them that God is able to raise up children of Abraham from the stones around them and that God will cut down any tree that does not bear good fruit. What do you think that means?
  - The Jews made an incorrect assumption that they would automatically go to heaven because they were descendants of Abraham. In other words, they

believed heaven was their birthright. John is warning these people that God does not care about where you are from, he is only concerned with what you do.

- This is great news for us gentiles, because this means that heaven is available to any and all people, not just to the Jews.
- The listeners in the crowd ask John what they needed to do in order to be saved. How did John respond?
  - Give to those in need, share your belongings and your food if you have extra. He also told tax collectors to take no more than they were supposed to and he told soldiers to not make false accusations and to be content with their wages.
  - These are all good things to do, but these things alone won't get you to heaven. We're told in Romans 10:9 that, "If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved."
- John the baptist is eventually imprisoned by a man named Herod. Herod had the position of Tetrarch which in modern terms is akin to a governor. Why did Herod imprison John?
  - John the baptist constantly spoke out about the evil things that Herod had done.

#### Chapter 4

- After Jesus is baptized, he travels into an area of wilderness and fasts (goes without food) for forty days. While there he is visited by the devil who tries to tempt him. Why do you think the devil chose this time in particular to tempt Jesus?
  - Jesus had gone over a month without food, he was very hungry and very fatigued. This was the perfect time to try and tempt him when he was at his weakest.
- What was the first way the devil tried to tempt Jesus? How did Jesus respond?
  - The devil told Jesus to take a rock and turn it into bread. Jesus said that man shall not live by bread alone.
- **PT:** Jesus responded to the devil by quoting Deuteronomy 8:3. Jesus only knew this verse because he had memorized it as a child. It is heavily recommended that we all try and memorize parts of scripture so that we can draw on them when times are difficult.
- What are the other two temptations that Jesus faced?
  - If Jesus worshipped the devil, he would be given authority over the earth.
  - If Jesus threw himself down from the top of a temple, he would be rescued by angels.
- **PT:** Everytime Jesus was tempted by the devil, he quoted scripture. The devil caught onto Jesus' strategy and in verses 10 and 11, he used scripture of his own to try and prove his point. If a person has ill intent, they can manipulate scripture to try and prove something that isn't actually true. Be wary of this. Just because someone quotes scripture that doesn't mean they're using it in the right context.
- After Jesus' time in the wilderness, he returns to his hometown of Nazareth. While there he reads a passage from the book of Isaiah which prophecies the coming of a messiah.

After reading the passage, Jesus says that he has fulfilled this prophecy. How do the people listening respond?

- They don't believe him. In fact, they try to kill him once Jesus begins to rebuke their unbelief.
- **PT:** In verse 30, we see what might be an example of Jesus' supernatural power. The people of Nazareth brought Jesus to a cliffside and were planning on throwing him down to his death. However, the Bible says that Jesus, "passed through their midst and went away." Unfortunately scripture does not elaborate on this, but it seems unlikely that Jesus could pass through a mob of people who were actively trying to kill him without some extraordinary means.
  - Jesus was not able to die, because his time had not yet come (John 7:30). This is because God's plan for Jesus was to fulfill various old testament prophecies and to ultimately die on the cross for our sins. Since that had not yet happened, God would not allow Jesus to die.
- In verse 40 and 41, Jesus begins to heal people of their various illnesses and demonic influences. The demons that Jesus exorcised knew that he was the son of God, but Jesus did not allow them to speak this aloud. Why do you think that is?
  - A specific reason is not given, however, some people believe this is because Jesus wanted his divine authority to be shown by his words and his actions, not by a bunch of screaming demons.
  - Also, the Pharisees, some of Jesus' primary antagonists already believed that he was working with Satan (Luke 11:15), so it most likely would not have helped Jesus' case if a bunch of demon-possessed people began screaming out that he was the son of God.
- **PT:** In verses 40 and 41, Luke makes a clear distinction between healing the sick and healing the demon-possessed. This shows us that not all diseases are due to demonic power, but that some diseases do have demonic origin.

## Chapter 5

- In chapter five, Jesus begins to gather his twelve disciples. Who were the first three disciples to join Jesus? What were these men's occupations before following Jesus?
  - Simon (Peter), James, and John. They were fishermen.
- In verses 12-16, we see that Jesus is beginning to become quite famous. Large crowds would frequently gather to hear Jesus teach and to also be healed of their sicknesses. What would Jesus do at the end of each of these encounters with these crowds (Verse 16)?
  - He would withdraw to desolate (quiet and empty) places to pray.
  - Jesus is our ultimate example of how to live a godly life. If Jesus himself needed to take time out of his day to be alone with God and pray, then we certainly need to do the same.
- In verse 20, a group of men bring their paralyzed friend to Jesus in hopes that he will be healed. Jesus sees the faith of the men and tells the one who is paralyzed that his sins are forgiven. In response, the scribes and pharisees become very upset. Why is that?

- Only God is able to forgive a person of their sins, and since the pharisees and scribes did not believe that Jesus was the son of God, they thought this was blasphemy (a great crime against God).
- Jesus perceives the thoughts of the scribes and Pharisees and asks them a question. “Which is easier to say, your sins are forgiven, or to say rise and walk”? What do you think this means?
  - Jesus is proving his authority as God’s son. He asks them which they think is easier to do; to say that a person’s sins are forgiven (something that cannot be disproved), or to heal a paralyzed man (something that can easily be disproved).
  - Jesus then performs a miracle by healing the man and showing that he has the authority of God and therefore can forgive sins.
- What is the name of Jesus’ next disciple? What was his former occupation?
  - Levi. A tax collector.
- Tax collectors in Jesus’ time were reviled and hated by most people. Why is that?
  - Tax collectors were notorious for overcharging a person on their taxes. No one actually knew how much money was owed to the government except for the tax collector. As a result they could charge you much more than was owed and pocket the rest of the money for themselves.
- After Levi became a disciple, he threw a party at his home and invited Jesus as well as many tax collectors and other people of ill reputation. The pharisees and scribes were very unhappy that Jesus was at this party, and they asked him why he chose to spend time with all of these sinners. How did Jesus respond?
  - Jesus said that he was with the sinners because those are the people that need to be saved. “The sick are in need of a doctor, not the healthy.”
  - Too often Christians only interact with other Christians. It’s fine to want to spend time with people like you, but we also need to remember that there are lots of people in the world who still need to hear the good news.