

NOTES FOR FURTHER STUDY

Supplemental Texts

Gen. 17; 21:6; Mal. 4:5-6; Pss. 46; Luke 2:19, 51; 2:21; Luke 2:13, 20, 28; 5:25-26; 7:16-17; 13:13; 17:15-18; 18:43; 19:37; 23:47; 24:53; 1 Cor. 12:26; 2 Cor. 4:4-6

Study Summary

In this passage we see the fulfillment of God’s promise of a child for the elderly parent’s Elizabeth and Zechariah. The unexpected birth brings much excitement to the small Judean town, which is only heightened by the naming of the child and the miracle of Zechariah’s returning speech, resulting in his immediate praise to God. All who hear of these miraculous events take them to heart with great expectation, wondering what God might do through the boy John.

This story gives us insight into what it looks like to be people of hope. The God who has awoken us to the good news of his Son Jesus continues to spread this hope through us. By his work of grace, we become people of faith who speak words of hope to people in desperate need of the Light of the World.

Historical & Theological Background

History: November 28th is the first Sunday of Advent, a season in the church calendar that marks off the four Sunday’s leading up to Christmas. While it is difficult to know when this tradition began, there is evidence of its practice as early as the 4th Century. The word Advent comes from a Latin translation of the Greek word *parousia*, which means “arrival” and it was so named to commemorate Christ’s first coming in the Incarnation as well as look forward to his second coming when he will return to establish his Kingdom in its fullness.

Traditionally, Advent was a time of discipline and repentance in the expectant anticipation of Christ’s second coming. It is a season of waiting, when we look forward to the celebration of God becoming flesh, of Christ born in a manger, and also as we anticipate the day when he will come again to set all things right. The lighting of the five candles (one for each Sunday and one for Christmas) are meant to heighten the anticipation of the coming Light of the World.

Teaching Notes

The Discussion Primer will require prep-work before you meet. Be sure to give your MC plenty of time to work on it. Some of the Textual Intersection questions are related to the Primer, so a good time to discuss their experience with it would be after you discuss the passage together.

DISCUSSION PRIMER

Read Luke 1:57-66 slowly and prayerfully. After reading and mediating on the passage, take some time to write down the ways God has worked in your life or in the lives of those around you. Consider someone who might benefit from hearing this story. How might you share it with them?

TEXTUAL INVESTIGATION

LUKE 1:57-66

Big Idea: God's Work In The World Silences Unbelief So That Faith Can Speak And Spread Hope

Fallen Condition Focus: Unbelief

- To what do the neighbors attribute the birth of Elizabeth's child (v. 58)? What do they do in response to the good news (v. 58)?
- Why is Elizabeth so emphatic that the child should be named John (v. 60)? (See 1:13)
- What is the significance of Zechariah's response to his neighbors (v. 63)? How are God's promises fulfilled here? (See 1:13-20)
- Why are Zechariah's immediate words praise? This is typical in Luke. Refer to other passages and compare similarities (See 2:13, 20, 28; 5:25-26; 7:16-17 ect...)
- How do people respond to Zechariah's praise (v. 65-66)? What does it mean to take something "to heart?" (See 2:19, 51)

Gospel Connection: Read 2 Cor. 4:4-6. How has the God of hope made us people of hope?

TEXTUAL INTERSECTION: How does the text intersect with our lives?

- How should we as followers of Christ share in the joys of others? (See v. 58 & 1 Cor. 12:26) Do you suffer with those who suffer or rejoice with those who are honored? Why might this be difficult in our society?
- What things are you looking forward to? Do you find yourself excited by the things God is and will do within you? Your church? Your city? Why or why not?
- Why is hope difficult today? What obstacles do we face when striving to live as people of hope?
- God's miraculous work and Zechariah's faith-filled praise was infectious, causing awe and wonder in the people and a continual stream of conversation. What keeps us from sharing similar words of hope? What has God done in your life that you could share with someone who needs to hear it?

REPLICABLE QUESTIONS

Read **Luke 1:57-66** and explore together what the passage reveals about:

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| 1) The character and purposes of God? | 4) Our identity in Christ? |
| 2) The fallen human condition? | 5) Our obedience to Christ? |
| 3) The gospel of Jesus Christ? | 6) Our relationship to others |

TEXTUAL APPLICATION: "So, what now?"

Have each participant identify a personal take-away in light of this study. Is there . . .

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| • a command to obey? | • a beauty to behold? | • a mission to fulfill? |
| • a promise to claim? | • a truth to believe? | • an example to follow? |
| • a sin to repent of? | • a service to render? | • a person to tell? |