

10 Things We Know About Jesus Thanks to the Angel Gabriel

Then Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I do not know a man?"

The angel answered her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you. Therefore the Holy One who will be born will be called the Son of God. Listen, your cousin Elizabeth has also conceived a son in her old age. And this is the sixth month with her who was declared barren. For with God nothing will be impossible."

Mary said, "I am the servant of the Lord. May it be unto me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her (Luke 1:34-38).

The Scriptures are all about Jesus, and we learn 10 things about Jesus from the angel Gabriel's announcement of His birth.

1. We learn that Jesus is the fulfillment of the Scripture. Isaiah 7:14 tells us that the virgin will give birth to a child. Who is he? Jesus, Immanuel, God with us. All of Scripture and history is about Jesus, who comes as the fulfillment of Scripture.

2. We learn that Jesus is fully man. He really is human. He has a mother who birthed him, held him, fed him, changed his diaper, wiped his nose, bathed him and taught him how to walk and talk. Sometimes the picture of Jesus is wrongly cast that he entered the world speaking syllogisms, combing his hair, reciting Leviticus from memory and walking around with a halo on his head.

3. Not only was Jesus fully man, He was fully God. When the

angel says He is “the Son of God,” that’s a divine title.

4. Jesus is fully sovereign. We’re told that His Father is “the most High God” and that He is “Son of the most High.” This places Him alongside God the Father as co-ruler of creation. This reveals Jesus’ pre-eminence, prominence and power.

5. Jesus is the King. The angel said that He would be “great.” In that day, there was a king named Herod whose nickname was Herod the Great. But the angel says that Jesus is the real great one, who will rule from David’s throne. The promise was made that David would be a king (2 Sam. 7:8-16), but that through his family line would come the King of kings who would rule and reign over all kings and kingdoms forever. Since Joseph was from the family line of David, when he adopted Jesus, he adopted Jesus into the family line of David in fulfillment of the prophecy of Samuel.

6. We learn that Jesus is eternal. The angel says He will rule and reign forever, and He will have a kingdom with no end. The Son of God lived before His birth, and He lives after his resurrection and ascension. His kingdom has no end.

7. We hear from the angel that Jesus is powerful because nothing is impossible with God. Jesus is the God who can do anything, including entering history as a man.

8. Jesus is sinless. The angel declares that Jesus would be “holy”; that as Adam had no earthly father and was to be the head of all humanity, when he sinned, we all inherited his corruption and sin nature. Then comes Jesus, the second Adam. He likewise has no earthly father, and where Adam fails, Jesus succeeds. When He died, it was not for His sins, because He had none, but for our sins so that we might be forgiven. He is, in fact, holy and sinless without any sin in nature or action.

9. Jesus is our Savior. We are all sinners by nature and

choice. We are all guilty, and Jesus is the one who is our Savior. He forgives us, He embraces us and He loves us. That's what He alone does.

10. Jesus is humble. This announcement wasn't made to the multitudes, but just to one woman. It wasn't made in a big town; it was made in Nazareth. It wasn't made to a rich woman; it was made to a poor woman. Jesus didn't grow up in a large house; he grew up in a small house. He didn't have access to the best education; He was in a small town with many illiterate people. Jesus didn't grow up wearing the finest clothes; he dressed simply. His father wasn't a king; His daddy was a carpenter, and He helped His dad put food on the table for his family. Jesus didn't get to travel the world and have amazing experiences. He stayed pretty close to his hometown of Nazareth. Jesus was humble. Jesus came in humility to the humble peasant teenager Mary.

Grace is all it takes. If Jesus is humble enough to be with Mary, isn't it wonderful that to this day, He is humble enough to come and be with us?

Jesus wants to be with you, not because you are amazing, but because *He* is. He is the God of grace. That's amazing.

Out of these 10 things about Jesus, which one do you find most surprising? Why? {eoa}

Mark Driscoll is a Jesus-following, mission-leading, church-serving, people-loving, Bible-preaching pastor and the author of many books, including *Spirit-Filled Jesus*, which you can order here. He currently pastors *The Trinity Church* in Scottsdale, Arizona, with his family. For all of pastor Mark Driscoll's Bible teaching, please visit or download the app. You can download a free devotional e-book from pastor Mark here.

Why God Favored Mary

“You [Mary] have found favor with God” (Luke 1:30b).

Gabriel appears to this young girl, Mary, and Scripture says that she was startled. Gabriel likely appeared as a man, and men would not have customarily approached and engaged in private with a young woman like that. Additionally, he says that she has found “favor with God.” Gabriel shows up and gives this great announcement ringing in her ears; something like, “God has favored you, He’s elected you; He’s chosen you; He’s looked over the earth and He’s favored you, Mary. Do you remember hearing in the reading in synagogue that a virgin would give birth to a child? That’s you, Mary!”

Do you know what that word “favor” literally means? It’s the word for grace, undeserved favor and unmerited love. This word describes the essence of how we are saved, loved and embraced by God. Mary was saved by grace and chosen by God to be a recipient of grace.

The same is true for all who become Christians; we’re chosen by God to be recipients of grace, because God’s favor is upon us. If you are a Christian, God has given you grace—He’s favored you. We don’t deserve it. Every true Christian stands alongside Mary as one who has been favored by God.

If the first question is, “God, why would you favor her?” the answer is, because He’s good. There’s no reason beyond that. God could have looked down and said, “I’ll pick a wealthy young woman,” or “I’ll pick a successful, significant woman” or “I’ll pick a beautiful town, a palace, so that the Son of God can grow up in affluence, wealth, prominence and significance.” Instead, God chooses Mary. God sees us all as

valuable, which isn't dependent on where we live, how much we have, what we do or how "significant" the world sees us. Our value comes from being created in God's image, period.

That's amazing. This is better than religion. Religion is all about what you do to earn God's favor, but Christianity is all about God favoring you by grace, taking somebody from nowhere and giving them love. That's what He does. That's why we can't stop singing of how wonderful this God is and why Mary bursts in to song.

Gabriel proceeds to tell Mary the amazing news: Your son will be named Jesus, which means, "God saves from sins." Her son will be God's Son and her Savior.

Mary hears the plan, and her response is legendary: "I am the servant of the Lord; may it be unto me according to your word" (Luke 1:38). Here is a woman from a simple town with a simple faith, but it's a sincere faith. She possibly knows very little. She doesn't have the New Testament; she has bits and pieces of Scripture that she treasures in her heart. But here's what she does have: faith. She believes what God says. Knowing what God says is of little value apart from believing what God says. Mary believes God.

Many of us have far more information than Mary, and far less faith in it. Mary knows little, but trusts much. Friend, this is amazing. Many of us have a life charted out for ourselves, and we want God to bless it and make it happen. But if God rewrites our script, we usually contend with God, or at least complain to God. Mary was going to marry Joseph, have a wedding, have children and live a respectable, quiet life. The angel Gabriel shows up and says, "New script."

Culturally, we may not fully appreciate what Mary is willing to sacrifice. She could have lost her fiance. She did lose her reputation. For the rest of her life, accusations and suspicions will hound her from those who believe the virgin

birth story was fabricated to conceal an illegitimate pregnancy.

Mary's faithful response shows she does not idolize marriage, her identity, her comfort or her security above her God. This courageous resolve will one day be emulated by her son. In the Garden of Gethsemane, when God asks the grown man Jesus to atone for the sins of the world through the shedding of his blood, He says, "Your will be done" (Matt. 26:42c). There are moments in his life when Jesus echoes His godly mother.

Take a moment today and simply thank God that he has chosen to favor you with his grace and love. {eoa}

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What Was Nazareth Like?

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, ²⁷ to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary. The angel came to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored. The Lord is with you. Blessed are you among women."

When she saw him, she was troubled by his words, and considered in her mind what kind of greeting this might be.

But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. Listen, you will conceive in your womb and bear a Son and shall call His name JESUS. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest. And the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David, and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever. And of His kingdom there will be no end."

Then Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I do not know a man?" (Luke 1:26-34).

In Genesis 3:15, God preaches against Satan and offers the first hope of salvation: "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he will bruise your head, and you will bruise his heel."

God's answer to human sin, rebellion and folly is a Son who will come through the daughter of Eve. There will be a battle between this Son and Satan, and although the Savior Son will be wounded, the deceiving dragon will be defeated. That was the promise. Ever since that terrible day when sin entered the world, God's people eagerly anticipated the birth of the chosen Son, the one who would conquer Satan, sin, death, hell and the wrath of God to be our Savior, be our forgiver, be our deliverer.

Throughout history, God reminded his people of this great promise, providing additional details along the way. Regarding when, Malachi said the Messiah would come to the temple before it was destroyed in A.D. 70 (Mal. 3:1). Regarding where, Micah said he would be born in Bethlehem (Mic. 5:2). Regarding how, Isaiah said, "the virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel" (Isa. 7:14b). And from Luke we learn that the virgin's name was Mary.

Based on how Luke tells her story and describes his research, it is likely that he actually sat down with Mary, an older

woman by that time, to ask her questions about her miraculous life. She is a relative of Elizabeth, but when Luke picks up the narrative Mary does not yet know that her elderly cousin is pregnant. Mary is simply a young woman, living a quiet life in a rural village called Nazareth.

Nazareth is not mentioned in the Old Testament. It's not mentioned in other significant historical texts because historically it was an insignificant town. Nathanael summed up the reputation of this town when asking in John 1:46a, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" I have been to Nazareth, and according to the archaeologists and historians who led our tour, it was home to somewhere between a few dozen to a few hundred people. It seems to have had only one well, which means it could not sustain a large population base. Mary and Jesus would have drawn water from that well while chatting with relatives and neighbors, as everyone in that small town would have known one another and depended upon one another.

Have you ever been on a long road trip and stopped in the middle of nowhere to get gas, grab a snack, use the bathroom, clean the bugs off your windshield, and get out as fast as you can, thankful you don't have to live there? That's Nazareth.

After his visit with Zechariah within the sacred walls of the temple in Jerusalem, where does God send the angel Gabriel to next? Nazareth. To meet with a girl nobody had ever heard of.

Mary was very young at the time—as young as age 12—but she was betrothed to be married to a man named Joseph. A lot has been said about this couple, especially every year at Christmastime. There is so much lacquer on the story that it's hardly recognizable, so we have to sand it down a bit to get to the truth.

Joseph was also probably fairly young and poor, working as a carpenter in Nazareth. Joseph and Mary likely grew up together, their families would have known each other, and

maybe Joseph had a little crush on her since they were little kids. He's working hard, trying to save up enough money to marry the girl of his dreams. Think poor teens in a small rural town, and you are probably close to reality.

That girl, Mary, was possibly illiterate, since very few rural young women were formally educated in that day. Her connection to God included singing, praying and remembering the Scripture she had heard in synagogue. Unlike the matronly depictions common in medieval artwork portraying Mary as a pampered princess, she was actually a peasant girl with a simple well-worn dress and dirty hands and feet from manual chores.

Almost all of the theologians I've read believe Mary was somewhere between 12 and 14 years old. Let that sink in. How many parents don't trust their teenagers with a phone—let alone raising the Lord of the universe? Even with a seatbelt and an airbag, we still don't feel 13-year-olds are capable of handling a car. But God is likely born to a junior high-aged girl.

The fact that the couple was "betrothed" meant that Joseph and Mary had pledged to marry each other, an arrangement far more serious and binding than what we understand as engagement today. Terminating a betrothal required divorce proceedings, though a betrothed couple would not live together or consummate until after marriage. Together with their families, Joseph and Mary would have been anticipating a humble, joyful wedding ceremony.

What young woman in your life do you need to encourage to follow in the example of Mary by pursuing purity and godliness? {eoa}

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Meet the Most Significant Woman in the History of the World

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Listen, your cousin Elizabeth has also conceived a son in her old age. And this is the sixth month with her who was declared barren. For with God nothing will be impossible."

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As the mother of God, Mary is the most significant woman in the history of the world. Mary's story begins with the mother of us all, Eve, the first woman in the history of the world.

At the dawn of creation, God made Adam and Eve in his image and likeness and gave them great freedom to enjoy their life. Sadly, our first parents succumbed to Satan and disobeyed the one restriction God placed on their life, by eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The consequence of this sinful separation from God was death. And God would have been perfectly just to end the story of the Bible right there. But He instead speaks to our first parents, revealing a gracious rescue plan to turn his lost enemies into his loving family.

Who is the godliest woman you know? What can you do to encourage her today for her example? {eoa}

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God Has a Purpose—Both for History and for You

Zechariah said to the angel, “How shall I know this? For I am an old man and my wife well advanced in years.”

The angel answered him, “I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God. And I was sent to speak to you and to bring you this good news. And now you will be silent and unable to speak until the day that these things happen, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their season.”

The people waited for Zechariah, and wondered why he waited so long in the temple. When he came out, he could not speak to them. They perceived that he had seen a vision in the temple, for he made signs to them and remained speechless.

As soon as the days of his service were fulfilled, he departed to his own home. After those days his wife Elizabeth conceived, and for five months she hid herself, saying, “Thus the Lord has dealt with me in the days when He looked on me, to take away my reproach among men” (Luke 1:18-25).

God is a sovereign God. He rules over all times, nations, languages, cultures, races, classes and genders of people. He is working out everything in history according to His plan.

In the New Testament, we learn that God “made from one blood every nation of men to live on the entire face of the earth, having appointed fixed times and the boundaries of their habitation” (Acts 17:26). Like Elizabeth and Zechariah, you are alive right now at this particular moment because God has

something specific for you to accomplish as part of His infinite wisdom and plan. We can start by faithfully worshipping and patiently trusting him as Zechariah and Elizabeth did, while never giving up praying for the desires of our heart.

The angel tells Zechariah, "Your prayer has been heard" (Luke 1:13b). For decades, Zechariah and Elizabeth have been asking God for a child. What have you stopped praying about? God always answers prayer with one of three responses: yes, no or later. Perhaps some people believed God was ignoring Zechariah, but the man kept praying, loving, serving, worshipping God and adoring his wife. God hadn't answered "yes" just yet. God hadn't answered "no" yet, either. God kept answering "later" until finally the day arrived when the answer was "yes." We learn from their example that we should keep praying even when it seems like it's not working.

Elizabeth's words of praise close out this first scene: "Thus the Lord has dealt with me in the days when He looked on me, to take away my reproach among people" (Luke 1:25). This is a beautiful summary of the doctrine of expiation, one of the most precious doctrines for Christians. We all have things in our lives that we feel dirtied, disgraced, defiled and discouraged by.

The word "reproach" refers to the public shame or disgrace and even reviling that Elizabeth tragically endured because of her barrenness. Practically, this meant she suffered emotional, verbal and spiritual abuse for decades as the other religious, smug, ungracious women would have considered her cursed by God because she was childless. Had Elizabeth sinned? No. Had she done anything wrong? No. She wasn't perfect, but we are told that she loved and served the Lord and was by all accounts a very godly person. Was God cursing her? No. He was just working out His providential plan in His preferred time. His answer to her prayers was "later," and later finally came.

Like Elizabeth, victims who have been sexually, emotionally, mentally, physically or verbally abused can come to God, who takes away our reproach, shame and disgrace. He takes all of that from us and places it on Himself. When Jesus went to the cross, He endured the cross, scorning its shame for us (Heb. 12:2).

Dear friend, Jesus wants to lift from you today all of your shame and cleanse you completely. He wants to take away your reproach so you can worship, celebrate and enjoy him like Elizabeth, knowing of God's love. He wants to lift that burden so you can lift your voice to worship Him with gladness and freedom.

Have you truly given your shame to Jesus so He could remove that burden of condemnation from you forever? Why not do that right now in prayer by raising your hands and releasing that shame to Him? {eoa}

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How God Broke His 400-Year Prophetic Silence

Now while he was serving as priest before God when his division was on duty, according to the custom of the

priesthood, he was chosen by lot to enter the temple of the Lord and burn incense. And the whole multitude of the people were praying outside at the hour of incense. And there appeared to him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense. And Zechariah was troubled when he saw him, and fear fell upon him. But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John. And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth, for he will be great before the Lord. And he must not drink wine or strong drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb. And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God, and he will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready for the Lord a people prepared."
(Luke 1:8-17)

The old priest enters the temple, carrying his incense. Alone. In the next moment, God breaks his 400 years of silence when the angel Gabriel—a messenger from the LORD—appears to Zechariah right there in the temple. "Zechariah was troubled when he saw him, and fear fell upon him," the Bible tells us, which means we're lucky the old guy didn't die of a heart attack (Luke 1:12). The angel delivers the good news: Zechariah and Elizabeth are going to have a baby boy. His name is to be John ("God is gracious"), and he will have a special calling on his life: "And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God, and he will go before him in the spirit and the power of Elijah . . . To make ready for the Lord a people prepared" (Luke 1:16–17).

This is an amazing day. Not only is Zechariah going to have a son, he is going to have a son who will fulfill Malachi's prophecy, one of the most significant prophecies in the history of the world. He will lead the prophetic welcoming

committee for God's entrance into human history as the boy who is Lord. Zechariah's response? "How shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife is advanced in years" (Luke 1:18).

Let's review. This is mind-boggling, history altering, and soul encouraging. Zechariah has been praying for a child for decades. The presence of God is right there in the temple, a few yards away. An angel is speaking to him. What else does he need?

Angels are worshippers of God who are ministers and messengers on his behalf. There are only two angels named in the Bible: Gabriel and Michael. Their credentials are unparalleled—"I stand in the presence of God," Gabriel tells Zechariah (Luke 1:19). And yet the old man doubts the news, which means he gets to learn a lesson. Gabriel basically tells him to go home, be patient, and keep quiet. Zechariah has just had this incredible experience and he won't be able to tell anyone about it because God renders him mute until John's birth. Not long after Zechariah's service at the temple, Elizabeth conceived and enjoyed a few months of worship, reflection, and preparation (with a silent husband as a consequence for him and perhaps a nice break for her) as she praised the Lord for his incredible, unexpected gift.

Where have you grown weary in prayer? Can you think of examples from your own life when God granted a request after years of answering "later"? {eoa}

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God Loves Using Nobodies From Nowhere

There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judea, a certain priest named Zechariah, of the division of Abijah. And his wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. They were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blamelessly. But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and they both were now well advanced in years (Luke 1:5-7).

Flash forward from the time of Malachi to the days of Herod the Great. History reports he was a brilliant but evil ruler, best known for reconstructing the Jewish temple in Jerusalem. The temple was a landmark of monumental significance for the people of God and the setting scene for Luke's narrative.

We meet two very ordinary people named Zechariah and Elizabeth. Elizabeth is from the priestly line of Aaron, so she comes from generations of ministers. Zechariah is a priest, the equivalent in those days of a rural pastor.

What else do we know about this couple? One, they're old, which in that day meant anything beyond age 50. Two, they are barren—they can't have any children, and they depended on their children to look after them in their old age. Three, they are grieved. In their day, to be old and childless was not only emotionally devastating, but also financially dangerous. Without hospice care or government aid, they depended on their children to look after them in their old age. Four, Zechariah and Elizabeth are also poor. Zechariah is a simple priest out in the middle of nowhere—according to the world's wrong view, he was a nobody who lived nowhere with

nothing. Furthermore, many people who were childless wondered if God had cursed them with barrenness rather than blessing them with a baby. As a great example to us, this old couple was simple and sad but still steadfast.

There were reportedly 18,000 priests assigned to one of 24 divisions, with 750 men in each division. Each division would travel to Jerusalem for one week, two times a year, to minister at the temple.

All 750 priests would convene and then roll dice to see who got to do the big job: Enter the temple, throw some incense on the coals and say a prayer. That was it. Once you got to do it, you were done for life. They declared you holy and blessed, and you never got to do it again.

Proverbs says, "We may throw the dice, but the Lord determines how they fall" (Prov. 16:33, NLT). For years—even decades—Zechariah would travel all the way to Jerusalem but was never chosen because the dice never fell in his favor. Even the meaning of Zechariah and Elizabeth's names gives us a hint that God is up to something. Elizabeth means "God's oath," and Zechariah means "the Lord remembers." Sure enough, Zechariah's big day finally arrived, and it is much bigger than he could have ever imagined.

Looking back at your life, can you name three ways God has miraculously provided for you? {eoa}

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400 Years of Divine Silence Followed This Prophetic Word

I will send My messenger, and he will prepare the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple, even the messenger of the covenant, in whom you delight. He is coming, says the Lord of Hosts (Mal. 3:1).

The final book of the Old Testament was written roughly 400 years before Jesus' birth by a prophet named Malachi. Chapter 3 speaks of the coming of John the Baptizer. Malachi 4:5–6 provides more details about this messenger John: "See, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreaded day of the Lord. He will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the earth with a curse."

God makes the incredible promise to enter human history, following a messenger who has a preaching ministry like Elijah's who will herald the Lord's arrival much like a parade that gets everyone fired up for the honored guest at its end. He will come to the temple, and one of the effects of his ministry will be to bring sinners to repentance.

Following this prophecy, there are 400 years of divine silence as the Old Testament concludes and awaits the fulfillment of this prophecy. No book of the Bible is written, and no prophet speaks. Some begin to wonder if God's provision has left God's people. With exceptions, each generation becomes a little more stiff-necked, hard-hearted and cold. Many people aren't walking with God as they ought.

But a remnant remains devoted to the Lord, including a man

named Zechariah and his wife, Elizabeth. Luke tells us, “they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blamelessly” (1:6). It is their son John who will fulfill Malachi’s prophecy and prepare the way for the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Who do you know who has remained faithful to the Lord amidst trials like Zechariah and Elizabeth? How can you encourage them today (for example, with a call or text)? {eoa}

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The Miraculous Pregnancy No One Could Have Predicted

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Now while he served as priest before God, when his division was on duty, according to the custom of the priest’s office, his lot was to burn incense when he went into the temple of

the Lord. And the whole crowd of people were praying outside at the hour of incense.

Then an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing on the right side of the altar of incense. When Zechariah saw him, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him. But the angel said to him, "Do not fear, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John. You will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth. For he will be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb. He will turn many of the sons of Israel to the Lord their God. And he will go before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, 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."

Zechariah said to the angel, "How shall I know this? For I am an old man and my wife well advanced in years."

The angel answered him, "I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God. And I was sent to speak to you and to bring you this good news. And now you will be silent and unable to speak until the day that these things happen, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their season."

The people waited for Zechariah, and wondered why he waited so long in the temple. When he came out, he could not speak to them. They perceived that he had seen a vision in the temple, for he made signs to them and remained speechless.

As soon as the days of his service were fulfilled, he departed to his own home. After those days his wife Elizabeth conceived, and for five months she hid herself, saying, "Thus the Lord has dealt with me in the days when He looked on me, to take away my reproach among men" (Luke 1:5-25).

Investors, news reporters, sports bettors, political pollsters, weather forecasters, marketing gurus and nearly everyone else wishes they could predict the future. Yet, no matter how hard we try, we never really know what tomorrow holds.

What things in the future are you trying to predict and prepare for?

You cannot know the future, but you can know the God who does. The one true God knows tomorrow and every day after that. The same God who knows the future also rules over the future, and when He reveals it to us, it is called prophecy. This makes the Bible unlike any other religious text because it alone is the book that God wrote revealing the future that only God knows.

All of human history is ultimately about Jesus. And the story of Jesus' life on earth begins with a prophecy.

How can truly believing that God knows your future help you live a more emotionally healthy and less fearful life? {eoa}

Mark Driscoll is a Jesus-following, mission-leading, church-serving, people-loving, Bible-preaching pastor and the author of many books, including *Spirit-Filled Jesus*, which you can order [here](#). He currently pastors *The Trinity Church in Scottsdale, Arizona*, with his family. For all of pastor Mark Driscoll's Bible teaching, please visit or download the app. You can download a free devotional e-book from pastor Mark [here](#).

Use Your Money for the Kingdom of God

The former treatise [Luke] have I made, O Theophilus, concerning all that Jesus began both to do and teach, until the day when He was taken up, after He had given commandments through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom He had chosen (Acts 1:1-2).

Since Theophilus has a lot at stake, he hired Luke, a fellow Gentile—not a Jew who was looking for the Messiah, predisposed to some biased conclusion, but an educated and articulate man who has access to the apostles and other eyewitnesses. Theophilus commissioned Luke to go find the truth and provide a full report about Jesus.

This would have been a very expensive project; Theophilus funded two books of the Bible. Two thousand years later, had it not been for Theophilus' generosity, we would be lacking the largest contribution to the entire New Testament.

It's very simple. Theophilus was a man who gave generously, thereby enabling Luke to do his ministry. Rich people can love Jesus, and they're supposed to give generously, and poor people can love Jesus, and they're supposed to give generously. It's not about how much you make; it's about what you do with it. Theophilus decided to pay for Luke's ministry. And we got two books of the Bible out of it.

And I can assure you of this: Theophilus today, standing before the Lord Jesus, doesn't regret helping get the news of Jesus out to the world. What else are you planning on doing with your money? What else are you going to do with your intellect? I love that Luke gave his intellect and time and energy and Theophilus gave his money, and together, to this

very day, we are still served by both of these exemplary men.

Luke set out to find the facts. This is important because Christianity is not a philosophical system, but a historical reality. Christianity is about one man—Jesus Christ, and one event—his resurrection from death. We can dismiss opinions, conjecture and hearsay, but facts point to truth that cannot be denied. And if you follow the truth wherever it leads, you end up at Jesus.

Luke conducts his research during a historically significant moment when a window of opportunity is closing, about 30 years after Jesus returned to heaven. The eyewitnesses are dying, and if someone doesn't capture the information soon, like a morning dew, it vanishes forever.

As an aside, it's incredible how Christianity is so often cast aside as a religion for the naive. Luke was intelligent and highly educated, conducting painstaking research for Theophilus who was also almost certainly intelligent and highly educated. No one can honestly dismiss Jesus without doing some homework, as Luke did. And his book is a great place to begin investigating the boy who is Lord.

How can you best use your talents (like Luke) and your money (like Theophilus) to honor Jesus and help others meet him?
{eoa}

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