

**OLDER THAN TIME**

John 1:1-5

*When is this beginning?  
See Hebrews 1:1-4*

*While men like to  
portray life as gray,  
the Bible sees only  
light and darkness.  
Who is the Word?  
(see p 6. John 1:6-18)*

*Theophilus was the  
recipient of Luke's Gospel  
letter. Luke was a doctor and  
his goal was to give an  
accurate, precise account  
of the facts concerning what  
was being reported by  
eyewitnesses about Jesus.*

*Zacharias was a Jew.  
The Jews were given the Word  
of God so that the world  
could find God.  
The Jews were chosen by God  
to display His power to the  
rest of the world. This  
selection was based upon  
God's gracious choice and  
not because Abraham was  
better than any  
other man.*

*Gabriel is one of  
three angels mentioned by  
name in the Bible along  
with Michael and  
Lucifer (Satan).  
They are powerful  
archangels.  
Do you believe in angels?*

*Zacharias was a priest. Most  
people recognize that Jewish  
worship of the Living God  
was sincere and that it has  
caused far-reaching  
effects into history.*

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being by Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.

**GOD COMES NEAR**

Luke 1:5-66

Many have undertaken to put together an account of the things accomplished among us, just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word have handed them down to us. It seemed appropriate for me as well, having investigated everything carefully from the beginning, to write it out for you in consecutive order, most excellent Theophilus; so that you might know the precise truth about the things you have been taught.

In the days of Herod, king of Judea, there was a certain priest named Zacharias, of the division of Abijah; and he had a wife from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. And they were both righteous in the sight of God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and requirements of the Lord. And they had no child, because Elizabeth was unable to have babies, and they were both advanced in years.

Now it came about, while he was performing his priestly service before God in the appointed order of his division, according to the custom of the priestly office, he was chosen by lot to enter the temple of the Lord and burn incense. And the whole multitude of the people were in prayer outside at the hour of the incense offering. And an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing to the right of the altar of incense. And Zacharias was troubled when he saw him, and fear gripped him. But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your request has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will give you a son, and you will name him John. And 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 he will drink no wine or liquor; and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit, while still in his mother's womb. And he will turn back many of the sons of Israel to the Lord their God. And it is he who will go as a forerunner before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, TO TURN THE HEARTS OF THE FATHERS BACK TO THE CHILDREN, and the disobedient to the attitude of the righteous; with the purpose of making ready a people prepared for the Lord."

And Zacharias said to the angel, "How shall I know this for certain? For I am an old man, and my wife is advanced in years." And the angel answered and said to him, "I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God; and I have been sent to speak to you, and to bring you this good news. And you shall be silent and unable to speak until the day when these things take place, because you did not believe my words, which shall be fulfilled in their proper time. And the people were waiting for Zacharias, and were wondering about his delay in the temple. But when he came out, he was unable to speak to them; and they realized that he had seen a vision in the temple; and he kept

*Coming to Jerusalem for his turn to perform priestly duties in the temple was a big deal to Zacharias' home town and family. To have a priest come out of the temple unable to speak would have caused quite a stir.*

*Mary was probably very young, what we would consider a teenager.*

*Elizabeth would encourage Mary by her "old age" pregnancy, inasmuch as it was miraculous as well.*

*Mary had never slept with a man, yet she was pregnant. This would be difficult for a teenaged Jewish girl!*

*Jesus was the cousin of John who will be called John the Baptist. He is spoken of in Isaiah the prophet in chapter 40.*

*A bond-slave is one who makes a decision to be someone's servant by personal choice.*

making signs to them, and remained unable to speak. And it came about when the days of his priestly service were ended, that he went back home.

And after these days Elizabeth his wife became pregnant; and she kept herself in seclusion for five months, saying, "This is the way the Lord has dealt with me in the days when He looked with favor upon me, to take away my disgrace among men."

#### MARY, THE SERVANT OF GOD

Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, a descendant of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. And coming in, he said to her, "Greetings, favored one. The Lord is with you."

But she was very perplexed at this statement, and kept pondering what kind of greeting this was. The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David, and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end."

Mary said, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?"

The angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you, and for that reason the holy Child shall be called the Son of God. And behold, even your relative Elizabeth has also conceived a son in her old age, and she who was called childless is now in her sixth month. For nothing will be impossible with God."

And Mary said, "Behold, the bondservant of the Lord, may it be done to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.

Now at this time Mary arose and went in a hurry to the hill country, to a city of Judah, and entered the house of Zacharias and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. And she cried out with a loud voice and said, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child in your womb! And how has it happened to me, that the mother of my Lord would come to me? For behold, when the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby leaped in my womb for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what had been spoken to her by the Lord."

And Mary said, "My soul exalts the Lord, and my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior. For He has had regard for the humble state of His bondservant; for behold, from this time on all generations will consider me blessed. For the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is His name. And His mercy is upon generation after generation toward those who fear Him. He has done mighty deeds with His arm; He has scattered those who were proud in the thoughts of their heart. He has brought down rulers from their thrones, and has exalted those who were humble.

He has filled the hungry with good things and sent away the rich empty-handed. He has given help to Israel His servant in remembrance of His mercy as He spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and his descendants forever."

And Mary stayed with Elizabeth about three months, and then returned to her home.

*Circumcision was the Jewish physical sign that set them apart as the people of God. It was done for physical and spiritual reasons, and was supposed to picture a calloused heart turned to God.*

*To call their son John was puzzling to everyone else. It evidenced their obedience and released Zacharias' tongue that had been stilled for many months. He was probably the talk of the town!*

*This child will turn out to be the "deliverer" of Israel and the rest of the world!*

*How is a man or woman "born of God?"*

*Jesus (the Son) is an exact representation of the eternal Living God.*

*The Ten Commandments (the basis of the "Law") were given to reveal the awesome character of God to the Jews and then to the world. The Law was never able to save any person from spiritual death. See Hebrews 10:4.*

Now the time had come for Elizabeth to give birth, and she gave birth to a son. Her neighbors and her relatives heard that the Lord had displayed His great mercy toward her and they were rejoicing with her.

And it happened that on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child, and they were going to call him Zacharias, after his father. But his mother answered and said, "No indeed, but he shall be called John."

And they said to her, "There is no one among your relatives who is called by that name." And they made signs to his father, as to what he wanted him called. He asked for a tablet and wrote as follows, "His name is John." And they were all astonished.

At once his mouth was opened and his tongue loosed, and he began to speak in praise of God. Fear came on all those living around them, and all these matters were being talked about in all the hill country of Judea. All who heard about it kept them in mind, saying, "What will this child turn out to be?" For the hand of the Lord was certainly with him.

### **THE LIGHT & THE LIFE**

John 1:6-18

There came a man sent from God whose name was John (the Baptist). He came as a witness, to testify about the Light, so that all might believe through him. He was not the Light, but he came to testify about the Light. This was the true Light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man. He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God; to those who believed in His name, who were born, not of blood lines or by human parentage or of the will of man, but of God.

And the Word became flesh, and lived among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth. John testified about Him and cried out, saying "This was He of whom I said, He who comes after me has a higher rank than I, for He existed before me."

For of His fullness we have all received, and grace upon grace. For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ. No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the heart of the Father, He has explained Him.

### **THE KING IS BORN**

Luke 2:1-40

It came about in those days that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus, that a census be taken of all the inhabited earth. This was the first census taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. Everyone was proceeding to their home towns to register for the census. Joseph went up as well from Galilee, from the city of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem. He belonged to the house and family of David, and He went home in to register, along with Mary, who was engaged to him and was pregnant.

It came about that while they were there, the days were

## **DAY TWO 2**