

A PERSONAL

VERSE-BY-VERSE COMMENTARY

LUKE

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Luke 1:1 ¶ Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us,
Luke 1:2 Even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eyewitnesses, and ministers of the word;
Luke 1:3 It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus,
Luke 1:4 That thou mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed.

This record of the life of Jesus and that of the early church as recorded in Acts were written by Luke for the benefit of a man identified as Theophilus. Some commentaries indicate that Theophilus could have been the man who sponsored or commissioned this writing project. The name Theophilus means “friend of God,” and it seems that this record was intended to strengthen his faith in Jesus, the Son of God—that he could “know the certainty” of those things he had been taught.

I have often heard it debated whether Luke was a Jew or Gentile; my study of Colossians seemed to support the latter. As he closed that letter, Paul did not include Luke as one of those “of the circumcision.” Again, this is one of those issues that really doesn’t matter since we know that the Holy Spirit is the real author of all scripture.

I think it is interesting to note that Luke references the fact that “many” were making personal records of the events being addressed by the gospels. These records were focused on sharing things about which they were fully persuaded or completely convinced (from the Greek). As with Luke, these writings consisted of the testimonies of eyewitnesses to the events being recorded and became those to first proclaim the gospel in obedience to the commission given them by the Lord.

Matthew 28:19–20 “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.”

Luke declares that he has gained a “perfect understanding” which could only be due to “careful investigation” as translated in other versions. Analyses of Luke’s record by the experts prove him to be an excellent detailed historian.

Luke 1:5 ¶ There 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.

Luke 1:6 And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.

Luke begins his record with the birth of John the Baptist. He identifies the time as that in which Herod was king of Judea. Most commentators identify his rule

to have been from 37-4 BC. He was an Idumean that had been appointed by Rome and is probably most recognized for massive building projects, one of which was the magnificent temple in Jerusalem.

Focus is turned to a priest named Zacharias and his wife Elisabeth, identified as a daughter of the priestly tribe of Aaron. Both are described as being “righteous before God,” obedient to the law and without reproach before men.

Luke 1:7 And they had no child, because that Elisabeth was barren, and they both were *now* well stricken in years.

In bible times it was a mark of shame to have no children. The psalmist had clearly recorded that children were evidence of God’s blessing; therefore, it was inferred that to have no children was indicative of His displeasure.

Psalms 127:3 “Lo, children are an heritage of the LORD: and the fruit of the womb is his reward.”

Luke is careful to note that like Abraham and Sarah, they were old and considered past the age for producing children.

Luke 1:8 And it came to pass, that while he executed the priest’s office before God in the order of his course,

Luke 1:9 According to the custom of the priest’s office, his lot was to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord.

Luke 1:10 And the whole multitude of the people were praying without at the time of incense.

Showing great attention to detail, Luke tells us that it was Zacharias’ turn to be serving in the temple. The priesthood was divided into 24 courses that were assigned specific times to serve in the temple—one week, twice a year; Zacharias was of the course of Abia (see v5 above). It is significant to me that he was burning incense, the very act that is identified with our prayers, in light of v13.

Psalms 141:2 “Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense....”

Revelation 8:4 “And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel’s hand.”

JFB describes his service as follows: “...to remove the ashes of the former service; to bring in and place on the golden altar the pan filled with hot burning coals taken from the altar of burnt offering; and to sprinkle the incense on the hot coals; and, while the smoke of it ascended, to make intercession for the people.”

It is also significant to note that there was a “whole multitude” of people at the temple who were able to testify to the truth of these events.

Luke 1:11 And there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense.

Luke 1:12 And when Zacharias saw *him*, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him.

Luke 1:13 But 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 1:14 And thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth.

Luke 1:15 For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb.

Luke 1:16 And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God.

Luke 1:17 And 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.

Suddenly an angel appears to Zacharias while he was serving. Not only does Luke tell us that Zacharias is frightened, he tells us that angel was on the right side of the altar of incense (a detail giving evidence of his careful research). The "right" is consistently used in scripture as denoting a position of favor or honor.

The Angel speaks comforting words to Zacharias and tells him that his prayer for a son has been heard. Elisabeth is going to bear him a son that he is to name John—meaning, "Jehovah's gracious gift."

The angel goes on to declare that the birth of John would not only bring joy to Zacharias and Elisabeth, many others would rejoice at his birth when it becomes obvious that God has once again sent a prophet among His people. Not only would the people honor him, so would God. Jesus would use the words of the prophet Isaiah in reference to John.

Isaiah 40:3 "The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God."

Matthew 11:10–11 "For this is he, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee. Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist...."

Luke affirmed this connection to Isaiah in chapter 3.

Luke 3:2–4 "Annas and Caiaphas being the high priests, the word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness. And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins; As it is written in the book of the words of Esaias the prophet, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight."

Verse 15 records the instruction that John is to avoid drinking wine or strong drink of any kind for his whole lifetime. He would be filled with the Holy Ghost before he was even born.

John was to have a special ministry. He was to minister in the spirit and power of Elijah—with bold confidence and obedience before the Lord. He would cause many to have a change of heart and repent of their sin in preparation for the coming of the Messiah.

The wording of verse 17 is very similar to the closing words of the prophet Malachi.

Malachi 4:5–6 “Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD: And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.”

That the Spirit inspired Luke to describe John as coming in the spirit and power of Elijah is a statement of prophecy affirming that the Messiah would be rejected, and I think Jesus intimated the same.

*Matthew 17:10–13 “And his disciples asked him, saying, Why then say the scribes that Elias must first come? And Jesus answered and said unto them, Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things. **But I say unto you, That Elias is come already, and they knew him not**, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them. Then the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist.”*

Luke 1:18 And Zacharias said unto the angel, Whereby shall I know this? for I am an old man, and my wife well stricken in years.

Luke 1:19 And the angel answering said unto him, I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God; and am sent to speak unto thee, and to shew thee these glad tidings.

Luke 1:20 And, behold, thou shalt be dumb, and not able to speak, until the day that these things shall be performed, because thou believest not my words, which shall be fulfilled in their season.

Naturally, considering the circumstances, Zacharias can't believe what he is hearing. It seems too good to be true. The angel identifies himself as Gabriel, one who stands in the very presence of God Almighty and (implied) Who sent him to Zacharias to deliver this message.

Somehow, I feel like I am missing something in the translation. Sarah laughed when she first heard that she was to give birth to Isaac. Mary questioned the angel regarding her lack of a husband. Gideon asked for proof from God by putting out his fleece not once, but twice. I think that as a priest and one with knowledge of the miracles of God as recorded in the scripture, Zacharias was held to a higher level of accountability. I liked the following quote from David Guzik: “Zacharias looked at the circumstances first, and what God can do last; we are tempted to think this is logical; but if God is real, there is nothing logical about putting circumstances before God.”

It is also important to note that God knows what is in our hearts, and inspired Luke through His Spirit to specify that Zacharias did not believe the angel. Zacharias asked for a sign, and he was given one—but certainly not what he expected. He was to be unable to speak until his son was born.

When I pray, I am careful to articulate my belief in God’s power and authority vs. my ability to know best how to pray except “according to Thy will.”

Luke 1:21 And the people waited for Zacharias, and marvelled that he tarried so long in the temple.

Luke 1:22 And when he came out, he could not speak unto them: and they perceived that he had seen a vision in the temple: for he beckoned unto them, and remained speechless.

Luke 1:23 And it came to pass, that, as soon as the days of his ministration were accomplished, he departed to his own house.

Luke 1:24 And after those days his wife Elisabeth conceived, and hid herself five months, saying,

Luke 1:25 Thus hath the Lord dealt with me in the days wherein he looked on me, to take away my reproach among men.

The people waiting outside the temple began to wonder what was taking Zacharias so long. When he finally emerged, it became obvious that he could not speak. He evidently pantomimed in some way to convey that he had seen a vision. When his service at the temple ended, he returned home; and Elisabeth became pregnant and went into seclusion. I think she was overwhelmed at God’s grace in giving her a child and removing her shame before the people.

Luke 1:26 ¶ And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth,

Luke 1:27 To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin’s name *was* Mary.

Luke 1:28 And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, *thou that art* highly favoured, the Lord *is* with thee: blessed *art* thou among women.

Luke 1:29 And when she saw *him*, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be.

“In the sixth month” – In context, would have to be Elisabeth’s sixth month of pregnancy.

The angel Gabriel is sent by God to deliver another message to a young woman named Mary in the city of Nazareth in Galilee. The girl is identified as a virgin, one who has never had a sexual relationship with a man. One commentary indicated that the word virgin was usually used in reference to a girl who was 14 or younger. She is engaged to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David; and in Jewish culture this was as binding as marriage. The fact that Joseph is of the house of David is important since the Messiah was to be a descendant of David; and from an earthly perspective, this would be determined by his paternal heritage.

Gabriel announces to Mary that she is highly favored (being given special honor) and blessed among women. Why? “The Lord is with thee,” he declares. This seems to be a statement reflecting her character. Mary, however, is alarmed and is troubled because she doesn’t understand why she is being singled out. To me, that response is indicative of her humility; she doesn’t consider herself “special.”

Luke 1:30 And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God.

Luke 1:31 And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS.

Luke 1:32 He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David:

Luke 1:33 And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

Gabriel comforts Mary and then tells her the wonderful news that she will give birth to the Messiah—the dream of every Jewish girl. Gabriel tells her that she is to name the child JESUS (savior, deliverer). He goes on to explain that this is not just another deliverer (e.g. Moses); He will be called or known as “the Son of the Highest,” a reference to the Supreme God. It is emphasized that the Lord God will give (place) Him on the throne of His father David (His earthly ancestor). The angel goes on to declare that once He is placed on the throne, He will rule the house of Jacob (Israel) forever! His kingdom will endure and His throne never usurped.

Gabriel’s words have a direct connection to the words of the prophet Isaiah.

Isaiah 9:6–7 “For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.”

Luke 1:34 Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?

Luke 1:35 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.

I think there is a difference in Mary’s question since Gabriel readily answers her. She believes what Gabriel is telling her, she just doesn’t understand how it can happen. She understood the facts of life, and she had never had sexual relations with a man.

Gabriel explains that the Holy Ghost will work a miracle in her. Her Son will be the Son of God in the flesh.

Luke 1:36 And, behold, thy cousin Elisabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age: and this is the sixth month with her, who was called barren.

Luke 1:37 For with God nothing shall be impossible.

Luke 1:38 And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her.

Before leaving Gabriel told Mary that her cousin Elisabeth, who had been considered barren, had become pregnant in her old age; and, in fact, was six months along. I am sure that this was meant to be an encouragement to Mary. In light of events concerning both women the angel declared that “with God nothing is impossible.” Mary humbly yielded herself to the will of the Lord and declared her faith in Him and her belief in the message delivered by Gabriel. He then left her.

Mary’s declaration of faith says a lot about the young woman chosen to give birth to the Savior. According to Jewish law, it was life-threatening to be found with child by what would be perceived as an adulterous relationship.

John 8:4–5 “They say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou?”

I think that Mary’s faith led her to believe implicitly that God would ensure her safety and the birth of this child, but she could not have been so sure that Joseph or even her parents would believe her. It was certain that her character would be questioned and that she faced becoming an outcast.

Luke 1:39 ¶ And Mary arose in those days, and went into the hill country with haste, into a city of Juda;

Luke 1:40 And entered into the house of Zacharias, and saluted Elisabeth.

It is quite understandable that Mary chose to go and spend some time with Elisabeth. I think she knew that in Elisabeth she would find support and encouragement.

Luke 1:41 And 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:

Luke 1:42 And she spake out with a loud voice, and said, Blessed *art* thou among women, and blessed *is* the fruit of thy womb.

Luke 1:43 And whence *is* this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?

Luke 1:44 For, lo, as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in mine ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy.

Luke 1:45 And blessed *is* she that believed: for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord.

Mary’s greeting resulted in a physical reaction from the baby John that was yet in Elisabeth’s womb and a wondrous declaration from Elisabeth through the

influence of the Holy Spirit. She declared Mary blessed among women and the baby in her womb blessed as well; the wording seems to indicate that Mary was already pregnant. She then posed a question that acknowledged Mary's baby to be her "Lord." She recognized her own baby's response from the womb to be a leap for joy. She then declared a special blessing on Mary for her faith in believing the angel's message from God and closed with a prophetic affirmation of the truth of that message.

I think it is significant to note that there was no jealousy in Elisabeth's response. She was secure in God's love and purpose for her and her child without regard to how it "measured up" so to speak against Mary's blessing and her child.

Luke 1:46 And Mary said, My soul doth magnify the Lord,

Luke 1:47 And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.

Luke 1:48 For he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden: for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.

At this point Luke records Mary's response to Elisabeth. It's beautiful expression provides further testimony as to the character of the one chosen to give birth to the Savior. This section of scripture (through verse 55) is often identified as "The Magnificat" and has been beautifully set to music by many composers.

One cannot read these words from Mary without making a connection to the words of Hannah upon leaving Samuel with Eli to serve God according to her promise. Both women expressed hearts of great reverence and faith before God in light of the gift of their firstborn sons.

Mary's first words are praise for the Lord God Whom she goes on to identify as her Savior. I think this is an insightful quote from David Guzik attributed to Liefeld: "Mary answered the Roman Catholic dogma of the immaculate conception, which holds that from the moment of her conception Mary was by God's grace 'kept free from all taint of Original Sin.' Only sinners need a Savior."

Mary shows humility, while at the same time recognizing that she has been uniquely honored among women. She also understands that the honor bestowed upon her will be recognized by future generations.

Luke 1:49 For he that is mighty hath done to me great things; and holy is his name.

Luke 1:50 And his mercy is on them that fear him from generation to generation.

The wording of these two verses is a direct reference to Almighty God. The pronouncement of mercy upon those that fear or reverence Him is a truth that resonates from the Old Testament scriptures.

Psalms 33:18 "Behold, the eye of the LORD is upon them that fear him, upon them that hope in his mercy...."

Psalms 103:11 "For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him."

Psalms 103:17 "But the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him...."

Psalms 147:11 "The LORD taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy."

Deuteronomy 7:9 "Know therefore that the LORD thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations...."

Only those that fear God will obey Him.

Deuteronomy 13:4 "Ye shall walk after the LORD your God, and fear him, and keep his commandments, and obey his voice, and ye shall serve him, and cleave unto him."

Luke 1:51 He hath shewed strength with his arm; he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.

Luke 1:52 He hath put down the mighty from *their* seats, and exalted them of low degree.

These verses go on to declare God's great power and authority in dealing with those who are full of pride. Scripture records how He has humbled the proud and exalted those considered of low degree. Scripture also records how He will take One considered of low degree and will exalt Him on the throne of David. Isaiah tells us that the coming Messiah will be despised and rejected of men on the one hand, yet will reign forever on the throne of David.

Isaiah 53:2 "For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him."

Isaiah 9:6-7 "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this."

Luke 1:53 He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich he hath sent empty away.

Scripture resonates with God's provision for the hungry and how riches interfere with attaining spiritual treasure.

Psalms 107:9 "For he satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness."

Isaiah 55:1–2 “Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness.”

Matthew 5:6 “Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.”

Proverbs 13:7 “There is that maketh himself rich, yet hath nothing: there is that maketh himself poor, yet hath great riches.”

Matthew 19:24 “And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.”

1 Timothy 6:9 “But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.”

**Luke 1:54 He hath holpen his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy;
Luke 1:55 As he spake to our fathers, to Abraham, and to his seed for ever.**

I think verse 54 tells us that Mary understood that her Son was the promised Messiah. She also recognized that this provision for Israel was an act of God’s mercy, His compassion. She was well aware of the covenant God had made with Abraham and his descendants through Isaac and Jacob.

Genesis 17:4–8 “As for me, behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations. Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee. And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee. And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.”

Luke 1:56 And Mary abode with her about three months, and returned to her own house.

Luke records that Mary stayed with Elisabeth about three months and returned home. It would seem that Mary returned home before John was born.

Luke 1:57 ¶ Now Elisabeth’s full time came that she should be delivered; and she brought forth a son.

Luke 1:58 And her neighbours and her cousins heard how the Lord had shewed great mercy upon her; and they rejoiced with her.

The time had come for Elisabeth to give birth, and she gave birth to a son just as Gabriel had told Zacharias she would. When the birth was announced all her friends and relatives rejoiced with her over God's mercy in giving her a son.

Luke 1:59 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.

Luke 1:60 And his mother answered and said, Not so; but he shall be called John.

Luke 1:61 And they said unto her, There is none of thy kindred that is called by this name.

Luke 1:62 And they made signs to his father, how he would have him called.

Luke 1:63 And he asked for a writing table, and wrote, saying, His name is John. And they marvelled all.

Luke 1:64 And his mouth was opened immediately, and his tongue loosed, and he spake, and praised God.

According to the law, Elisabeth and Zacharias took the baby to be circumcised when he was eight days old. The powers that be incorrectly assumed that he was to be named Zacharias after his father. Elisabeth quickly told them that his name was to be John. The priests performing the circumcision knew that they had no kin by that name and turned to question the father with signs; this would seem to indicate that Zacharias had been deaf as well. Zacharias asked for a writing table and affirmed, much to their surprise, that his name was to be John. Immediately, Zacharias was able to speak, and he began praising God.

Luke 1:65 And fear came on all that dwelt round about them: and all these sayings were noised abroad throughout all the hill country of Judaea.

Luke 1:66 And all they that heard *them* laid *them* up in their hearts, saying, What manner of child shall this be! And the hand of the Lord was with him.

As Zacharias praised God, his neighbors were alarmed at this display of God's power; and it wasn't long before the news of the miraculous events surrounding the birth of John traveled throughout the surrounding country. This caused great speculation regarding what special plans God had for this child, because it seemed obvious that God was with him.

Luke 1:67 ¶ And his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Ghost, and prophesied, saying,

Luke 1:68 Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people,

Luke 1:69 And hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David;

The chapter closes with a great song of prophecy by Zacharias under the influence of the Holy Spirit. He declared honor to the "Lord God of Israel" for visiting and redeeming His people and raising up a deliverer from the house of David.

As is often the case with the prophets, God's plan is declared as done, though from the human perspective it is yet to be accomplished. It reminds me of the words of the prophet Isaiah.

Isaiah 14:24 "The LORD of hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand:"

I think it is interesting to note that it is a great statement of how Zacharias' unbelief had been turned to great faith. Gabriel had told him that his son would prepare the way for the coming of the Lord, and he was praising God for his coming.

Though I am sure he didn't really understand how events would unfold, he knew that the Lord was coming to redeem Israel and provide deliverance for them as their King.

Luke 1:70 As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began:

Luke 1:71 That we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us;

Especially as a priest, Zacharias was aware of all the prophecies in scripture that foretold the Messiah—beginning in Genesis, "since the world began."

Genesis 3:14–15 "And the LORD God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life: And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."

Though Zacharias was speaking as a Jew specifically, as a prophet he was also speaking on behalf of all men who had/have faith in God.

Luke 1:72 To perform the mercy *promised* to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant;

Luke 1:73 The oath which he sware to our father Abraham,

Luke 1:74 That he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear,

Luke 1:75 In holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life.

Zacharias was fully expecting the coming of the Lord to fulfill the covenant made to Abraham—and it did, but not in its entirety. As I am now, Zacharias was looking forward to serving God in holiness and righteousness in His presence. I think Zacharias was only thinking of his physical lifetime since Luke added the qualifying phrase "of our life." We are privileged to understand that this is a reference to eternal service.

Considering his recent experience, Zacharias was also focused on serving without fear.

Luke 1:76 And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways;

Luke 1:77 To give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins,

Luke 1:78 Through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us,

Luke 1:79 To give light to them that sit in darkness and *in* the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.

Zacharias declares his understanding that his child is to be a prophet of Almighty God and that his purpose is to prepare the way for the coming of the Lord by preparing the hearts of the people to receive Him. He is to declare that the Messiah is coming to provide salvation by forgiving their sins. The coming of the Messiah is due to God's heart of compassion for his people.

The "dayspring" is a reference to the rising of light; that it is described as "from on high" I think declares it to be divine light. It is not insignificant that Jesus declared Himself to be the light of the world. In fact, verse 79 is directly tied to Jesus' declaration as recorded by John.

John 8:12 "Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."

I think it is clear that the emphasis is on spiritual life and death that directly impacts how we live our life. "Peace" is a reference to being set "at one again" in relationship to God. Only those living with faith in God can enjoy such peace.

Isaiah 26:3 "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee."

Isaiah 32:17 "And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever."

Luke 1:80 And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his shewing unto Israel.

The chapter ends with an observation that John grew strong in spirit, the true essence of his being, his character; and just as with Jesus, we are not told about his childhood. It seems obvious that God must have provided special instruction for Him through the ministry of the Holy Spirit, and that final preparation for His ministry was made during a time set apart in the deserts for personal instruction without distraction.