

Dr. Daniel K. Darko, Gospel of Luke, Session 3, Infancy Narratives, Part 1, Luke 1:1-2:52

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This is Dr. Dan Darko and his teaching on the Gospel of Luke. This is session 3, The Infancy Narratives, Part 1, Luke 1:1-2:52.

Welcome back to our studies on the Gospel of Luke.

In the previous two lectures, we looked at the basic introduction to the Gospel of Luke, and in the last second lecture, we looked at the literary artistry of the Gospel of Luke. Now, we actually go straight into the text, so if you have your Bible with you, you can open Luke chapter 1 and follow closely because this part of the lecture is called the Infancy Narrative, and this lecture covers the first two chapters of the Gospel of Luke. Let's begin by briefly refreshing our memory of the introduction of the Gospel of Luke.

Remember, I drew your attention to the fact that Luke, in the first four verses, explained that he is presenting a tradition that has been handed down to him by people who have eyewitness accounts, and he himself has endeavored to provide an orderly account of the material he is presenting here. As we get into this text, we will skip the first four verses, which are basically this introduction I have on the screen to begin to look at the Infancy Narrative of John and Jesus and how they work together in Luke's narrative framework. Luke is going to show this parallel to show us these two key figures who are helping to fulfill the messianic promises of the Jews and how the kingdom of God and the message of the kingdom of God comes to bear through the agency of the Holy Spirit as God works with these characters and others.

Let me first begin by drawing attention to the fact that if you like Christmas stories in the Bible, you may not have noticed that there are two Gospels from which you get most of your Christmas stories. They are mainly in Luke or in Matthew. In some cases, people like the stories in Matthew, and they like the hymns in Luke.

So, Mark does not devote any substantial space to discussing the birth of Jesus. Mark is not interested. Mark could accomplish his goal without giving an elaborate account of the birth of Jesus.

John is not interested at all. In fact, for John to talk about the coming of Jesus into our world, he frames it in a theological construct to talk about the Word and in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word coming into the world and verse 12 to them that receive him they that believe in him he gave them the power to be called the children of God. John is not interested at all about Jesus being born in a manger.

But Matthew is interested, and Luke is interested and coincidentally in the divisions we have in our Bible. Matthew devotes the first two chapters of his gospel to the infancy narrative, and Luke devotes the first two chapters of his Bible of his text to the infancy narrative. So let me use Raymond Brown's outline to highlight ten features that these two Gospels, Matthew, and Luke, bring out in the infancy narrative granted, as I mentioned in a previous lecture, the two did not know each other. The two depended on Mark, who did not have anything to say about the infancy narrative, and yet when they all devoted the first two chapters of their Gospels to the infancy narrative, they tend to have ten things in common that are very, very interesting.

So, let's follow that and I follow Raymond Brown's outline on this. The first thing one observes in the first two chapters of Matthew and Luke is that Mary and Joseph in both Gospels were engaged to be married. The word that is used there translates as betrothed as we know. They are legally ceremonially married, but the marriage cannot be consummated traditionally because of the age of the woman, and at some point, the age of the woman has to go to a certain level before the marriage can be consummated.

So, think about a couple being consummated. Matthew recalls that, and Luke recalls that. Two, both Matthew and Luke tell us that Joseph, the foster father of Jesus, was a descendant of David. The reason they want to tell us this is that according to the messianic prophecies, the Messiah should come as a descendant of David, and these two accounts are quick to nail that down to say everything is happening within the messianic prophecies of the Jewish tradition.

Three, in both accounts an angel announced the birth of Jesus as forthcoming. We know this angel is Gabriel, and we'll talk about him a bit more later on. So an angel announced that.

Now, if you were following these lectures from the very onset, I mentioned to you the world of Luke, and I drew your attention to the fact that if you live in a Western world, don't lose sight of this fact. In the world of Luke, angels speak to human beings. They provide divine messages, and the humans will be able to come to terms with the fact that, indeed, the spiritual being speaking to them is speaking from God, and yes, what they say will come to pass.

In both Matthew and Luke, an angel speaks about the coming of Jesus or his birth. Fourth, in both Matthew and Luke, Mary's conception will not come about by her having intercourse with Joseph. No, in both accounts, Mary's conception will come by miraculous means.

In other words, these two gospel accounts are going to tell us what has never happened in the world before. That a virgin is going to be conceived and she is going to be conceived by a spirit. What we know about that I'll tell you later on is ancient traditions from Greek, Roman, and other traditions that say that a spiritual being can help give birth to a child or can help a woman to get pregnant and give birth to a child.

But what we didn't know is the 100% conception of the child by the spiritual agent. Both gospel writers are going to record that. Five, in both Matthew and Luke Mary will be conceived by the Holy Spirit.

Now in a college, I have the privilege of teaching some fine young men and this is one of the places that I get them where I say just imagine a nice girl you are dating who is a Christian who always tells you she's a virgin comes to you one day and say hey Joe I have a great news for you. And you say, what news? He said well, it's so exciting, so unbelievable and he said what is exciting? She tells you I am actually pregnant and I'm pregnant by the Holy Spirit. Well, I wish I could have had you in my classroom any time we reconstruct a scenario like this.

I see the young man's face, I see those who are going no way, not me, and then I ask for volunteers to give feedback—conceived by the Holy Spirit. One young man reminded me in one class when the first time that happened was and why I was supposed to believe you. Well, in both gospel accounts, though, Joseph is going to have to hear that.

His betrothed wife's marriage is not consummated. She will be pregnant by the Holy Spirit. Six, both Matthew and Luke will record that an angel will direct that the child's name will be called Jesus Yahweh saves. Just pause and think about this.

The child will be conceived by the Holy Spirit. Who? Is Joseph supposed to accept pregnancy? Then, the child's name should be somebody who has come to save. Yes, both gospels record that.

Seven, both Matthew and Luke record that Jesus will be the savior of the world. If you took these things for granted because of the Christmas story, please think and think again. This couple was living, excuse me, in a village smaller than my African village in Nazareth.

They were not in the royal family. They didn't have social currency to be believed by everyone. All these things play out, and the child will be called the savior of the world.

Yes, yes, Matthew says so, and Luke says so. Well, eight, both Matthew and Luke record that the birth will take place before the parents will move in as a married couple. In other words, to consummate the marriage.

And nine, they both record that the child was born in Bethlehem. And ten, they both record that the child was raised in Nazareth. Now, this is remarkable.

This child was not born in Jerusalem, nor was he raised in Capernaum. You see, if you were a village boy like me, you would say, oh yes, Jesus understands us. He was a village champion.

But think about these ten similarities between Matthew and Luke, who are very interested in the infancy narrative, and somehow they tell us these ten key things we should be aware of. But let me also draw your attention to four things that are quite different in the way both of them tell the story before we get deeper in terms of Luke's account. First, we hear about angels speaking in both accounts.

But the angel speaks to Joseph in Matthew. In Luke, the angel speaks to Mary. So, in Matthew, we are told that Mary was pregnant and that she was conceived by the Holy Spirit.

In Luke, the angel speaks to Mary directly. In terms of the annunciation, we will see that in Matthew, the birth of Jesus will be announced to prominent figures from the East called the Magi. In Luke, the birth of Jesus is announced to some people who have careers that nobody would like. Nobody of particular good standing in society will like called shepherding.

The birth of Jesus will be announced to shepherds. The other thing that is different between the two is the genealogy. Matthew's genealogy begins with David and Abraham.

Matthew, being a Jew with a gospel emphasizing Jewish traditions, and David and Abraham were very important places to begin. In Luke, a gentile rising to a gentile talk about the message of the gospel in which the Messiah comes from the Jewish tradition and spreads to the rest of the world, tracing its origin to Adam, the father of all humankind. So that Luke can make the case that he is the savior of all humankind.

4. Only Luke reports of Elizabeth and Zechariah and the birth of John the Baptist. Even Jesus is lost at the temple; only Luke records that. Matthew leaves that out.

So now let's turn to Luke and begin to find some exciting stuff in Luke from chapter 1, verses 5 to 7 of chapter 1. In the days of Herod, the king of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah 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

before God, working blamelessly in all the commandments and statutes of the Lord. But they had no child because Elizabeth was barren, and both were advanced in years.

Now, I know that I don't spend a lot of time on verse 6, but please bear with me on what goes on in verse 6 before I give you the key outline here. They were both righteous before God. They were blameless, following all the commandments and the statutes.

In other words, Elizabeth was barren, not because they had sinned. Elizabeth was barren not because she was suffering punishment from Yahweh. Elizabeth's barrenness could not be explained in terms of some defect that has come upon her because she sinned.

But she was barren anyway. Now, let's take a look at what is going on with John's parents here. 1. Zechariah, who would be named as John's father, was a priest.

As a priest, he was expected to marry a wife, a virgin, who, in most cases, would also come from a priestly lineage. Luke is quick to tell us that, in fact, so was Elizabeth. Elizabeth was a daughter of Aaron, and so Zechariah was a priest.

But Luke wants to tell us that Zechariah actually married the natural cause. He married a virgin who comes from a family of priests. 2. They were righteous.

They were faithful followers of Yahweh within Second Temple Judaism. In fact, in terms of observance of the law, Luke tells us that they were blameless. But they had a challenge.

They were childless. If you remember the stories of Sarah, Rebecca, and Hannah in the Old Testament, they suffered reproach from society because though outstanding figures as they are, though prominent character figures like Zechariah, a priest, he did not have a child. There was a potential for them to be accused that they had done something wrong.

That is why Luke tells us, no, don't even go there. 3. They are righteous before God, and socially it is known they are blameless. Mark Strauss writes, in terms of the priestly lines of this couple, that the priesthood of Israel was divided into 24 courses, each providing temple service for one week twice a year.

Abijah is identified as the 8th division of the priesthood in 1 Chronicles 24, verse 10. And we are told that is where Zechariah came from. Here, Luke is doing something to tell us about this messianic mission and where it is playing out.

Luke is going to locate the origin in the temple. Something is going to begin in the temple, in the heart of Judaism. So, let me just refresh your memory about the significance of the temple in the first two chapters of Luke alone, and then we can continue from here.

One of the things you will see is that about 40% of the narrative in the first two chapters of Luke is situated in the temple. The temple is the scene where a lot of these events are going to take place. Two, the temple we are going to see in the first two chapters will be a place of God's abode.

That is where God dwells, and God would encounter people, and the spirit of God would be working through many people. Some will even be waiting in the temple expecting the Messiah to show up, and things will be playing out right there in the temple. The heart of Judaism.

People met God and God would meet people in the temple. There, characters like Anna are going to encounter baby Jesus. So many things are going to play out.

Simeon is going to encounter the baby Jesus in the temple. But you see the temple is also the place of instruction. And there we are going to see this temple theme figured out, and even later on in Luke, the baby Jesus is going to be found in a temple, and he is going to tell his parents Do you not know that I am supposed to be in my father's business in this place? The temple we will see in the infancy narrative is a place of prayer and purity.

Zechariah himself will be leading prayer and we will be told that there will be people in the court praying while he goes in there to perform his duty. The temple Luke shows us in the first two chapters is a place where the end time prophecies are unfolding. In other words, friends, the whole coming of Jesus Christ into our world and how this story is going to play out in our world is part and parcel of what God is doing with his covenant community called the Jews.

The difference is that Gentiles will become part of what God is doing in this world. From verse 8, Zechariah will be performing his duty in the temple. And while performing his duty, he will have some special encounters.

Luke tells us that Zechariah came there to perform his duty. As I mentioned earlier, his division had to serve in a temple for two weeks a year. So, he came to do what he was supposed to do.

But something happened spectacularly at that moment. The angel of the Lord appeared to him. This is remarkable stuff because one will find something here from verse 8. 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 the Lord to enter the temple of the Lord and burn incense.

And a whole multitude of the people were praying outside at the hour of incense. Verse 11: And there appeared to him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of the incense. And Zechariah was troubled when he saw him.

Fear fell upon him. Verse 13, The angel said to him, Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear a son, and he shall call his name John. Let me just pause to highlight something here that sparked something inside of me.

The whole idea is that when people encounter God, they begin to realize that they are nobody. They begin to have this fear and awe. We saw that with Isaiah, we saw that with Moses, we saw that with other characters of the Old Testament.

Here, we see in the temple, and as soon as he encounters the angel, fear comes upon him. Fear came upon him, and you will see that again and again. Mary is going to experience that when she encounters the angel.

We are going to see again when other people encounter the angel; they begin to have that sense of fear. And the language will always be, Fear not. Be courageous.

Friends, Zechariah experienced this unexpectedly. Imagine. He had been in that temple to perform his duty so many times.

Nothing like that has happened. There was no precedence to say it happened sometime in history, and this is a possibility, and when it happens, this is how you should go about it. No.

Zechariah encountered this angel who told him something that was remarkable. His prayers have been answered. His wife will be pregnant.

She will give birth to a child and the child will be called John. Please do not miss the words from the angel for the first few days. Do not be afraid.

In the infancy narrative, you will see that if God is going to bring extraordinary things to effect when people encounter him, people are going to come to terms with who they are, and they are going to panic in fear and awe and reverence, and God will speak through his angels because through other means, fear not and the breakthrough will unfold. While all this is going on, we are told there is a crowd praying, waiting outside, perhaps wondering what is going on with Zechariah inside. But when he came out, they realized he could not speak.

Imagine an unfolding event in Jerusalem. Imagine the thoughts of the people praying as they realize the priest came back alive. The priest does not have any particular physical defect, but the priest cannot speak.

What is going on? The child will be born, and his name will be called John. The angel gave specific information to Zechariah. I give you five components of this message.

1. Elizabeth Elizabeth, the woman who is barren at all age will bear a son. You should call that son John, and when that boy is born, make no mistake, please do not let him drink wine or any grape-based alcohol. 2. He should observe the Nazarene tradition according to Numbers 6:3 and Judges 13:2-5. But a weird thing in Second Temple Judaism is coming.

Oh, that boy, this is where the charismatic look comes in. He will be filled with the Holy Spirit. Run from the Holy Spirit idea.

Run through the Old Testament and look for the mention of the Holy Spirit. And you will be surprised to realize how Luke is bringing the Spirit in the forefront of events. The Spirit will be with John.

John will be filled with the Holy Spirit. He will also be in the Spirit and attitude of Elijah. Wow! Wow! Notice something here in Luke's narrative construction.

Luke does something very interesting when the angel appears for the first time about a great miracle about somebody who is supposed to be born, and later on, the Messiah himself will be born; he appears to a man. But an angel will appear to a woman too. It's a very, very interesting observation that one begins to realize that this same angel will appear to a woman.

Gabriel appears to Zechariah, and later, Gabriel appears to Mary. Let's talk a little bit about Mary. Mary will be about 12 years old, about to turn 13.

Custom is such that she could be betrothed at 12 and the marriage could be consummated at 13. Now if you are in the United States, then you are thinking about like my students, 13, that is too young! Thank God for civilization. Because if you are in the United States, let me remind you that until late 19th century, precisely until 1880, the age of consent in all states but one was 10.

The age of consent until 1880 in America was 10 years old. In the state of Delaware, it was 7. You see, you may be surprised like my students. So, then you should appreciate the fact that the ancient Jewish culture in which Joseph and Mary was in, there was a level of decency to say the woman can be given out to marriage at 12 but the marriage cannot be consummated until 13.

Today in America, the age of consent ranges from 16 to 18, depending upon the state. In most Central American countries, it's between 14 and 17. In my own research trying to find out the age of consent in different parts of the world, I came across this interesting observation that in a lot of African countries, there is no such thing as the age of consent.

So, when we have issues of child sex trafficking and all those things, this is digressing from my central issue here but look, they don't even have good structures for it. Mary was old for 19th century America, 12 years old to 13 years old. But just bear with me a minute.

So, when you are 12 years old, let's say 12 and a half years old, and you have an encounter with an angel, the angel is going to deliver this message to you. Verse 28, in six months, the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph of the house of David, and the virgin's name was Mary. He came to her and said, greetings, oh favored one, the Lord is with you.

But she was greatly troubled at the saying and tried to discern what sort of greetings this might be, and 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 call his name 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 there will be no end. And Mary said to the angel, how will this be since I'm a virgin? And the angel answered her, the Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the part of the Most High will overshadow you.

Therefore, the child will be born. The child to be born will be called holy, the son of God, and behold, your relative Elizabeth, in her old age, has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month with her, who was called barren. For nothing will be impossible with God, and Mary said behold I am the servant of the Lord, let it be to me according to your word and the angel departed from her. Wow! So, imagine that a 12-year-old hears this and observes another pattern. The angel appears to her, and suddenly, she is terrified; she hears the message, and she is terrified, and the angel says do not be afraid. Why? You will have a son and name him Jesus verse 31, this child will be called the son of God, and he will even assume the throne of David if you are concerned about how you will be pregnant, oh, you will be pregnant by the Holy Spirit and this is a sign of confirmation, the sign of confirmation is that if you want to cross-check your relative Elizabeth who was thought of not to be able to get pregnant has conceived of a child and she is already six months into her pregnancy Wow! Wow! You see, Mary will be called full of grace that especially full of grace will be part of constructing all kinds of doctrine in a few years, by the way, if you want to know which part of this annunciation between Luke and Matthew shapes the

Catholic prayer of Hail Mary, I am here to tell you it is this part of the annunciation where Mary will be called highly favored, full of grace.

If you are Catholic listening to this lecture series, let me remind you that anytime you say the prayer Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with you, blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners. Now is the hour of our death. Anytime you say this prayer, thank Luke for his recording of events.

Mary will give birth to this child, and the child will be called Jesus. This child is going to be the one who is going to bring remarkable changes in the world as we know it. As Luke Timothy Johnson writes, in contrast to Zechariah, we notice Mary holds no official position among the people. She is not described as righteous in terms of observing the Torah, and her experience does not take place in a cultic setting.

She is among the most powerless people in her society. And if I were to add, she was in a village called Nazareth. She is young in a world that values age.

She will only be between 12 and 13 if I may add. She was female in a world ruled by men. She was poor in a stratified economy.

Furthermore, she has neither a husband nor a child to validate her existence. That she should have found favor with God and be highly gifted shows Luke's understanding of God's activity as surprising and often paradoxical, almost always reversing human expectations. Mary is portrayed by Luke in five significant ways.

You see, Luke tells us that Mary was favored by God. He tells us that she was a very thoughtful woman. She was not erratic, and yet she was also obedient when the angel said with God, nothing is impossible.

And Luke tells us because of her actions she was blessed for believing. Luke's portrait of Mary is this young teenage girl who is a Torah observer whom God could count worthy to be the mother of the coming Messiah of the world. Wow.

Think about this. If the Messiah is coming into the world to rule the world, what are the precedents? What is the conventional mindset about how great people come to the scene? You see, if you look at the timing and the balance, Jesus comes to integrate the kingdom of God in a very, very humble way, and when he came the man who was king in Judea, Herod, he was half-Idumean and felt very, very insecure. He would bribe the people by refurbishing the temple, building a very massive port in Caesarea, and making it look like you see me, I am great.

You know what he had going for him is his wife. His wife was a Hasmonean. So, his wife comes from the most conservative background to be able to say yes, but the

man himself is insecurity; imagine that the king of the Jews was so insecure because of how he became a king through connections with Rome.

And now he is hearing the Messiah is born. The coming Messiah expected of the Jews, the Jews expected, is now coming into being. But think about it in terms of balance of power.

In the days of Herod the King, we are told it was when a decree from Caesar Augustus was issued. Powerful images within world history. But that is the context in which Mary will receive this message.

You will give birth to a son. His name will be called Jesus. You will be most high.

In effect, you are a favorite woman to carry the pregnancy with the Messiah into a world in need of a savior. Mary has this specific prophetic language in the message delivered. He shall be called.

He will be named. And he will reign. The Messiah shall be named, and he will be called, and he will reign.

I liked it when she had all these messages from verses 37 and 38. When the angel ended that line for nothing will be impossible with God, that teenage girl who was terrified she turned around and said behold, I am the servant of the Lord.

Let it be to me according to your word. Behold I am the servant of the Lord. Let it be to me according to your word.

And the angel departed from her. Luke reminds us that events are unfolding in a very remarkable way, and two women are going to be the remarkable vessels of two key figures that will fulfill the messianic prophecies in which one says a prophet in the spirit of Elijah will come and the other said the Messiah will come from the Davidic lineage. As I said earlier, the idea that the spirit will help a woman to be pregnant was known.

We know that Plato was explained to be a child of Apollo. But Plato had parents. We also know in the Roman tradition, in particular, whenever people become great people, they all claim that they are the sons of a particular god or goddess to add some kind of divine status to their political power so that they can influence people more.

Plutarch talks about some of this but he rejected the idea that a spirit could have intercourse with a woman. Plutarch, in writing about it, said that it's something that the Egyptians talk about, but he finds it very skeptical. In fact, in the words of Plutarch, Egyptians make a distinction here that is thought plausible, namely that

while a woman can be approached by a divine spirit during pregnancy, there is no such thing as carnal intercourse and communion between a man and a divinity.

The idea that a spirit can make a woman pregnant is not new. It is, however, new that a spirit is going to be solely responsible 100% for pregnancy. But you see, we are seeing it play out here with Mary alone.

If you are a Catholic, this is where some of the doctrines emerge to say Mary is a very unique person, that God will choose to do this, and she will remain a virgin for the rest of her life. But if you are a Protestant, you take the narrative at face value as Luke narrates it. That God will choose this wonderful woman who doesn't receive more attention than she deserves in our churches.

But she is not supposed to be a virgin for the rest of her life, and she is not supposed to be someone we can pray to or call to intercede for, as in the way Catholics will think. But wait a minute, though. She has a unique experience, according to Luke.

An experience like no other. Luke writes that in those days, Mary rose and, with haste, went into the hill country to a town in Judea, and she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit, and she exclaimed with a loud cry, Blessed are you among women.

Blessed is the fruit of your womb. And why is this granted to me? That the mother of my Lord should come to me. For behold when the sound of your greeting came to my ears the baby in my womb leaped for joy and blessed is he who believes that there will be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord.

To which we will have what we will refer to as Mary's Magnificat later on. And Mary said, My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant. From now on, all generations will call me blessed.

For the mighty one has done great things for me. Holy is his name. His mercy extends to those who fear him from generation to generation.

He has performed mighty deeds with his arm. He has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts. He has brought down rulers from their thrones but has filled up the humble.

He has filled the hungry with good things, but he has sent the rich away empty-handed. He has also helped his servant Israel remember to be merciful to Abraham and his descendants forever, just as he promised our ancestors. When Mary visited Elizabeth, this was what was playing out.

Elizabeth would take a very unworthy posture in a very humble way. She was asking What a privilege for me, an undeserved person, to be the host of the mother of the Lord. She will refer to Jesus, the baby in the womb, as Lord at his stage Elizabeth in a prophetic way in Luke's narrative without Mary speaking or saying a word already knew that Mary was carrying the Messiah in her womb. She goes on to say God is acting in fulfillment of the messianic prophecies.

God is acting in fulfillment of what he wants to do with his people. Wow. Wow.

Jesus Christ is not the only one who was told about by the angel. He is not only one who is being experienced by the teenage girl who is pregnant with her, but even the relative in a distant hill country in Judea is now beginning to perform a prophetic tradition. We know that Elizabeth comes from the priestly line of Aaron, but we have no history of her being a prophet, here, she is prophesying and testifying to the status of the baby in the womb.

John will be born. John will be born, and we will see a lot of things playing out in the life of John the Baptist, followed by what will be going on in the life of the Messiah. Here what we find in the first part of the infancy narrative is this.

We find in the first part of the infancy narrative the subjects are informed that the children will be born. Zechariah in the temple and Mary in Nazareth. They will all be pregnant.

The angel's visitations will be real in both cases. The same angel will visit a man, Zechariah and the same angel will visit a woman, Mary. And the way the events are being juxtaposed together by Luke.

Luke is beginning to show how Elijah-like personality is just coming at the right time within that connection of the wider family tradition that will lead to the birth of the Messiah, who is going to shape the rest of the story from Luke chapter 3. In the first part of the infancy narrative, I hope you understand how Luke is showing the agency of spiritual beings and human responsibility and obedience. In Luke's world, angels can speak. The spirit will work with people.

People are enabled and empowered to speak prophetically. Gender did not matter here. In fact, it happened with men, and it happened with women.

God is doing something in the world, and that is going to shape the narrative of the kingdom of God that Theophilus should know about, and the rest of the world should know about. As we go on in this study, it is my hope and prayer that you will be engaged as much as your heart will also be open. That you encounter this mighty God of whom the angel said, with him all things are impossible.

He is able to make the impossible happen because he's God, and we are not. I hope that you are learning, and through this learning experience together, we will grow in our desire to make this world a better place and be the people God wants us to be. God bless you.

This is Dr. Dan Darko and his teaching on the Gospel of Luke. This is session 3, The Infancy Narratives, Part 1, Luke 1:1=2:52.