

Luke's Ancient Biography of Jesus

Notes on Lesson Two: God Has Spoken Again

Lesson Two: God Has Spoken Again

Parts of Luke 1-2, Luke 3: 1-6, 21-22

Central Message

God has spoken again. God spoke through the angel, "the Savior is born." God spoke through the prophet, "the Lord is coming." God's Spirit came down on Jesus, and the Voice from Heaven gave him a personal message. From now on, Jesus will speak for God.

Life Application

Don't miss it! If you think you are so good that you do not need God, you will not be ready to hear God speak. Sin is not just robbery or murder; it is disobeying and dishonoring God. We have all done that. So when the prophet says, "Turn away from your sins," God is speaking to us all.

Community-Building Activity and Introduction¹⁹

Observation

Preparation: There are three choices for the community-building activity. The observation chart is for language learners, and the other two can be used for anyone.

Instructions: This is a chart that builds the skill of writing observation questions in a fun way. 1. Follow the example on the chart. 2. Fill in one sentence to tell about yourself. 3. Stand up and walk around. 4. Ask each other questions, such as "What do you like to do in your free time?" "How often do you do that?" 5. Fill in the chart with information about your classmates.

Alternate Community-Building Activity

Births and Babies

Preparation: Write the instructions on a board, or print the worksheet or alternate cover page from the supplementary materials. If you use the instruction strips, copy and cut enough strips for each person.

¹⁹ The community-building activities and the introductions are often combined in the lesson notes because sometimes the introduction is first, and sometimes the activity is first.

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Instructions: 1. Where were you born? 2. What stories do your parents tell about your birth? 3. If you have children, do you have any stories to tell? 4. Discuss how babies are wrapped and cared for as newborns. Jesus' mother wrapped him in strips of cloth. This was the traditional tight covering to comfort the newborn.

Alternate Community-Building Activity **Holidays**

Instructions: Since this lesson has the Christmas story, another possibility is to skip ahead to the holiday questions in lesson ten.²⁰ Lesson ten is often taught around Christmas, so the Christmas background paper and this activity are often used out of sequence.

Teaching Notes for All Alternatives: As a reminder, you can always discuss the opening questions as a large group instead of in pairs. If you use pairs, hand a strip to everyone who walks in. Ask them to read the instructions, and then find a partner. You can share at the end of the pair activity if you wish. When you are finished with the community-building activity, read the introduction in the workbook together.

Lesson Notes

Part One: The Prophet John Luke 3: 1-6

Preparation:

Note that the numbers below refer to the numbers in the workbook.

1. Give them a minute to underline the people and places. Walk around, and if they are having trouble, tell them to look for capital letters. Ask the final question, "How do the details show Luke's purpose?" The details set the time and place of Jesus' birth in history. We can check these places and see that they were real. We can check the names of the rulers, also.²¹ Luke's purpose was "to write an orderly account..." "...of the things that have taken place." (Luke 1:4)
2. Be sure they check the next page in the workbook so they see the full text.
3. Read the text together. Decide ahead which footnotes to read together.

²⁰ See the worksheets for lesson ten.

²¹ Historical records can show the truth of scripture. One question arises regarding the dates when Quirinius was governor. See the *New Bible Dictionary, Second Edition*, InterVarsity Press: 1991, p. 1004, for a good explanation of this.

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4. When? What? What happened? ...to Whom? Where? It just takes a minute for them to ask each other questions about Luke 3:3, but it is a good preparation for question writing in the future. Note: Check their understanding of John's words. Read the footnotes together unless you did that during the reading. Questions regarding Luke 3:3: "Who? What happened? Where did he go? What did he do there? What did he say?"
5. Show them the Book of Isaiah in the Old Testament. Isaiah the prophet is telling the people to prepare the way for the coming Lord. It is similar to the way they prepared for a visit from a king. Take the students to the text; they should underline important phrases in Luke 3:4-6.²²
The people prepared the road into their city. Think about building a highway where there is now only a twisting, mountain road. You have to straighten the curves, fill in the valleys, and smooth off the surface. I'm sure they did more to prepare the way. Does this still happen?

They will have their own stories, but here is mine. The Pope visited a certain city for the first time. Since it was the dry season, the grass was brown, but the city officials spray-painted the grass along the road green.²³

6. John is himself out in the desert shouting. He wants them to see that he is fulfilling the prophecy.
7. Again, have them find the answer in the text, Luke 3:3. If you have not gone over the meaning of the terms, do so at this point. We will return to this verse later.

LINK I apologize for the quality of the maps in the workbook. They will improve. Look over this section to decide what you want to do in class. Point out that the words on the smaller maps are provinces or regions. The cities are marked with numbers. The sentences with the city names contain the information they need to know how to number them.

3 Nazareth and 4 Capernaum are in Galilee. Capernaum is next to Lake Galilee (9). 2 Bethlehem and 1 Jerusalem **are** in Judea. Bethlehem is south of Jerusalem.. 5 Tyre and 6 Sidon are near the Mediterranean Sea in the Province of Syria. **Sidon is north of Tyre.** (Words in bold are missing from the workbook.)

²² They will be doing this on their own later, but they can use your help this time.

²³ I saw this in Mexico City, but please don't mention the location.

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Lesson Notes

Part Two: Jesus is Baptized, Luke 3:21-22

Preparation:

Note that the numbers below refer to the numbers in the workbook.

Introduction There is no “look over” section. Read the text together, and do the LABEL section together. If you have the Jesus film, you might want to show the scene with John baptizing people and then baptizing Jesus. Watch it without sound, and without much commentary until after the text is read. You will need to point out who Jesus is.

1. Remind them to find the words in the text. That’s why they are asked to underline. The voice from heaven spoke. Who, *do they think*, this is?
2. The Holy Spirit - Who *do they think* this is? The footnote probably gives enough information at this point, but I will add some of my own ideas. Do they want or need a longer explanation at this point? Please use discretion.

The Spirit speaks to us; He “opens up” to us the things of God. In other words, it is the Holy Spirit who communicates to us all that we know about God from the world around us, the Bible, and even inside our own hearts. Prophets spoke the words that the Holy Spirit gave them, and others did amazing things with the power of the Holy Spirit. However, the Holy Spirit did not live within a person until Jesus came. Jesus was “full of the Holy Spirit” at all times. The amazing thing is that the Jesus gave the Holy Spirit to the disciples and to everyone who becomes a Christian. This was the fulfillment of a promise that God the Father gave in the Old Testament.²⁴ Jesus is “God With Us”²⁵ and the Holy Spirit is “God Inside Us.”

3. This is the first discussion question. You can divide in groups or work together. The “two texts” refers to both parts of the lesson. Have someone in each group make a list of the ways God spoke.

He spoke through prophets, the Word of God that came to John (the Holy Spirit), John the prophet, and directly through his Voice from heaven. They may also say through the Old Testament, or the Bible. If you add the introduction, he also spoke through angels.

4. What do we learn about Jesus? Again, have someone in each group make a list. Ask this question after they read the background paper about the birth

²⁴ See Joel 2: 28-32a, Luke 24:49 , and Acts 2: 16-21.

²⁵ Matthew 1: 23

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account, as well.

According to John (and Luke), the Old Testament speaks of the coming of the Lord. When Jesus was baptized, we learn that Jesus is the Son of God. We can put these together to know that John, and the Old Testament, was speaking of the coming of Jesus. We learn that God (the Voice) is pleased with Jesus. He has no sin, nothing that separates him from God. We learn that Jesus was a man, that he heard John speak, that he responded by being baptized.

5. Ask them, "What did Jesus hear John say?" The answer is from Luke 3:3, "Turn away from your sins and be baptized, and God will forgive your sins." (NIV: "...preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.") We learn from Luke 3:22 that Jesus was already pleasing to God. (Also see footnote #15.) So what was Jesus responding to? Jesus, as a man, wanted to show his agreement. He wanted to be obedient to the Word. *Do you think* He also knew that something special was going to happen at the baptism?

This is just an aside for the leader, but John knew that something special was going to happen. We don't know if Jesus and John have met before the baptism, but we can assume that John's parents told him about Jesus and the two birth accounts. (See Luke 1 and 2.) But how did John know that this was all true? He needed a personal word from God if he was to be a prophet like his parents told him he would be. Luke 3:2 tells us the "word of God" came to John. In the Gospel of John, we learn more. Read John 1:19-34.

John 1:29 ¶ The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"

John 1:30 This is the one I meant when I said, 'A man who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.'

John 1:31 I myself did not know him, but the reason I came baptizing with water was that he might be revealed to Israel."

John 1:32 ¶ Then John gave this testimony: "I saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain on him.

John 1:33 I would not have known him, except that the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, 'The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is he who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.'

John 1:34 I have seen and I testify that this is the Son of God."

NIV

LIVE Choose a question to discuss. The first question will probably get to the heart,

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but they may need to better understand the concept of forgiveness. Be sure to finish by reading the "Consider" section or summarizing the central message.

Background Paper "The Christmas Story"

You have probably already decided if you want to save this until a time near Christmas, but even if you do, you might want to suggest they read this at home. It confirms and adds to the current lesson. They will probably be able to read it on their own without assistance. If they have not read "The First Humans," it would be more important for them to read that. It will prepare them for the next lesson.

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Workbook One: Exploring the Identity of Jesus

God Has Spoken Again

In the last lesson, we read about the power of God's Word. God spoke, and the world was created. God spoke to the first humans.

God gave us his Word, the Bible. We discovered that the Bible also has human authors. The author Luke wrote a careful, historical account so that "you would know the full truth" about Jesus.

In this lesson, we will hear God speak again. God will introduce Jesus. Listen for the different ways in which God has spoken.

Community Time



Observation

1. Follow the example on the chart.
2. Fill in one sentence to tell about yourself.
3. Stand up and walk around.
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Observation Chart

WHO? DOES WHAT? WHAT ? to WHOM? WHERE? WHEN?

Janet	swims		at the gym	three times a week.
Josh	swing dances	with his friends	at the university	every Wednesday.

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Community Time



Births and Babies

Where were you born?

What stories do your parents tell about your birth?

If you have children, do you have any stories to tell?

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