

# **THE DAILY READING BIBLE**

**Volume 13**

**LUKE 1-6    AMOS    2 CORINTHIANS**

*The Daily Reading Bible (Volume 13)*

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# INTRODUCTION

**R**eadng our Bibles regularly is getting harder. That, at least, seems to be the common experience of many Christians. We could waste lots of ink speculating on the reasons for this: is it the frenetic pace of life these days? Is it spiritual laziness? Is it the impact of postmodernism on our culture and the lack of certainty when it comes to interpreting the written word?

But a better option than speculating on the reasons, we thought, was to provide a new resource for Christians to help them get back into a more regular habit of reflecting daily on God's word. So back in June 2001, we decided to start including a section called 'Bible Brief' in our monthly magazine, *The Briefing* (see [www.matthiasmedia.com.au](http://www.matthiasmedia.com.au) for more information about *The Briefing*). The 'Bible Brief' provided 20 short readings each month—acknowledging that there will be days we miss or days when we want to do something a bit different—with questions, thoughts to ponder, and suggestions to get started in prayer.

Now, several years later, we have a good collection of 'Bible Briefs', and it's time to offer them to a wider audience in a format that will, we hope, be even more convenient and useful.

This thirteenth volume contains 60 readings, all designed to be done in 15–20 minutes. These daily Bible readings are designed to

help you feed regularly from God's word. They won't cover every issue in each passage, nor even every passage from each Bible book. In other words, *they are no substitute for the in-depth study of the Scriptures* that you may undertake personally, in small groups or through listening to sermons.

With the kind permission of our friends at Crossway Bibles, we've been able to make this a complete package to take with you—we've included the English Standard Version Bible text with each daily study. So you can take this one book with you and have everything you need—on the train, on the bus, or to the park at lunchtime—wherever and whenever you can get 20 minutes to yourself.

## How to use these readings

- *With a penitent heart*, the true prerequisite for all Bible reading. Open with prayer (perhaps using the prayer suggested at the beginning of each set of studies).
- *With 15–20 minutes* of peace and quiet. If you can take longer, and want to read and pray further—great! But we have designed the readings to be done in a fairly short space of time.
- *With an accurate modern translation*. We recommend and have included the new ESV translation. The writers of the studies refer to this translation. Contact us for further details about the ESV or visit [www.matthiasmedia.com.au/ESV](http://www.matthiasmedia.com.au/ESV)

- *With a pen.* Even if you only jot down brief ideas, writing focuses the mind.
- *As a guide and help, not a straitjacket.* Feel free to dig further into the passage, to notice and ponder things that the questions don't point to.
- *As a launch-pad for prayer.* Use the prayer ideas at the end of each reading as a starting point for your daily prayer. Many of the points that will arise from the readings will be things you can pray for yourself, and also for others (family, friends, neighbours, etc.). Why not compile a list of people you want to pray for (you can write them in the blank space below), and use the prayer ideas from each reading to pray for the next person on your list?

This thirteenth volume includes:

- studies on Luke 1-6 (written by Andrew Richardson, senior minister at Scots Presbyterian Church, Brisbane)
- studies on Amos (written by Simon Flinders, assistant minister at St Thomas' Anglican Church, North Sydney)
- studies on 2 Corinthians (written by James Warren, senior pastor of the Fifteen congregation and Ministry Training Strategy coordinator at St Paul's Carlingford).

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**Please note:** the main section of Scripture for each study is reproduced before the questions. Other Scripture references are reproduced as footnotes at the bottom of the page, or, where the passages are too long to be included as footnotes, in the Appendix.

## PEOPLE TO PRAY FOR:

# LUKE 1-6

## INTRODUCTION

There are always rumours and legends that spring up around any famous person. The supposed sightings of Elvis Presley after his death are a classic example. Luke's aim in writing his Gospel is to cut through any rumours and legends about the life of Jesus Christ, and to give his friend Theophilus certainty about who Jesus really is. God-willing, as you read through the first six chapters of Luke, you too will become more certain about Jesus Christ, and grow more confident in your faith in him.

You might like to use this prayer (or your own variation on it) before each of the next 20 studies:

*God my Saviour,  
Help me to read Luke humbly. Help me to be hungry to be fed by your word. Please make me more certain about your son Jesus Christ so that I may serve him and trust him as my lord and king.  
Amen.*

NB: Tick the box when you've completed each study ✓

## READING 1

## LUKE 1:1-4

INasmuch as many have undertaken to compile a narrative of the things that have been accomplished among us, <sup>2</sup> just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word have delivered them to us, <sup>3</sup> it seemed good to me also, having followed all things closely for some time past, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, <sup>4</sup> that you may have certainty concerning the things you have been taught.

1. *What kind of account does Luke want to write about the things he's heard?*

2. *Where is Luke's information coming from?*

3. *What is Luke's aim in writing?*

**PONDER** How certain are you about who Jesus is? What kind of confidence does Luke inspire as a historian and biographer?

**PRAYER IDEAS** Thank God for Luke's careful work in recording Jesus' life. Ask him to make you more certain about Jesus' work and identity as you read through Luke 1-6.

In the days of Herod, 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. <sup>6</sup> And they were both righteous before God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and statutes of the Lord. <sup>7</sup> But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and both were advanced in years.

<sup>8</sup> Now while he was serving as priest before God when his division was on duty, <sup>9</sup> according to the custom of the priesthood, he was chosen by lot to enter the temple of the Lord and burn incense. <sup>10</sup> And the whole multitude of the people were praying outside at the hour of incense. <sup>11</sup> And there appeared to him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense. <sup>12</sup> And Zechariah was troubled when he saw him, and fear fell upon him. <sup>13</sup> But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John. <sup>14</sup> And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth, <sup>15</sup> for he will be great before the Lord. And he must not drink wine or strong drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb. <sup>16</sup> And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God, <sup>17</sup> and he will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready for the Lord a people prepared."

<sup>18</sup> And Zechariah said to the angel, "How

shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife is advanced in years." <sup>19</sup> And the angel answered him, "I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I was sent to speak to you and to bring you this good news. <sup>20</sup> And behold, you will be silent and unable to speak until the day that these things take place, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their time." <sup>21</sup> And the people were waiting for Zechariah, and they were wondering at his delay in the temple. <sup>22</sup> And 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 making signs to them and remained mute. <sup>23</sup> And when his time of service was ended, he went to his home.

<sup>24</sup> After these days his wife Elizabeth conceived, and for five months she kept herself hidden, saying, <sup>25</sup> "Thus the Lord has done for me in the days when he looked on me, to take away my reproach among people."

*1. Which Old Testament events and people are brought to mind by Zechariah's and Elizabeth's experiences? (Hint: See Genesis 17:15-21,<sup>1</sup> and Judges 13:2-24 in the Appendix, pp. 67-68.)*

1. And God said to Abraham, "As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name. <sup>16</sup> I will bless her, and moreover, I will give you a son by her. I will bless her, and she shall become nations; kings of peoples shall come from her." <sup>17</sup> Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed and said to himself, "Shall a child be born to a man who is a hundred years old? Shall Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a child?" <sup>18</sup> And Abraham said to God, "Oh that Ishmael might live before you!" <sup>19</sup> God said, "No, but Sarah your wife

shall bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac. I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his offspring after him. <sup>20</sup> As for Ishmael, I have heard you; behold, I have blessed him and will make him fruitful and multiply him greatly. He shall father twelve princes, and I will make him into a great nation. <sup>21</sup> But I will establish my covenant with Isaac, whom Sarah shall bear to you at this time next year."

2. *In the light of these Old Testament experiences, why should Zechariah have known better than to doubt the angel's promise?*
3. *How does this account emphasize God's faithfulness to his promises?*

**PONDER** How does this account give you greater confidence in God's faithfulness to his plans? What expectations about Jesus does this passage raise?

**PRAYER IDEAS** Ask God to help you trust in his promises, even when they seem outlandish.

### READING 3

### LUKE 1:26-38

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, <sup>27</sup> to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary. <sup>28</sup> And he came to her and said, "Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!" <sup>29</sup> But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. <sup>30</sup> And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. <sup>31</sup> And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. <sup>32</sup> He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, <sup>33</sup> and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."

<sup>34</sup> And Mary said to the angel, "How will this be, since I am a virgin?"

<sup>35</sup> And the angel answered her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God. <sup>36</sup> 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. <sup>37</sup> For nothing will be impossible with God." <sup>38</sup> 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.

1. *How is the announcement to Mary connected to the announcement to Zechariah? What expectations does this connection raise?*
2. *What are the key things the angel announces about Jesus?*
3. *How does Mary respond to the angel's announcement?*

**PONDER** Do you think Mary's response to the angel was appropriate? Is her response the same as your response to God's word?

**PRAYER IDEAS** Thank God for sending Jesus, the great "Son of the Most High" (v. 32), to reign over his kingdom forever. Ask God to make you as willing as Mary to be part of his plans.

## READING 4

## LUKE 1:39-56

In those days Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country, to a town in Judah, <sup>40</sup> and she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. <sup>41</sup> And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the baby leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit, <sup>42</sup> and she exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! <sup>43</sup> And why is this granted to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me? <sup>44</sup> For behold, when the sound of your greeting came to my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. <sup>45</sup> And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord."

<sup>46</sup> And Mary said,

"My soul magnifies the Lord,

<sup>47</sup> and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,

<sup>48</sup> for he has looked on the humble estate of his servant.

For behold, from now on all generations will call me blessed;

<sup>49</sup> for he who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name.

<sup>50</sup> And his mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation.

<sup>51</sup> He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts;

<sup>52</sup> he has brought down the mighty from their thrones and exalted those of humble estate;

<sup>53</sup> he has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent away empty.

<sup>54</sup> He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy,

<sup>55</sup> as he spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his offspring forever."

<sup>56</sup> And Mary remained with her about three months and returned to her home.

1. *What does this passage tell you about Mary's and Elizabeth's respective sons?*

2. *According to Mary's song, how has God treated her?*

3. *What does the second half of Mary's song tell you about God's treatment of people generally?*

**PONDER** Mary celebrates the fact that God brings down the proud and self-sufficient, and exalts the humble and needy. How do you think Jesus will do these things in the rest of Luke's Gospel?

**PRAYER IDEAS** Make Mary's song your prayer today as you thank God for his mercy to the humble and needy.

Now the time came for Elizabeth to give birth, and she bore a son.<sup>58</sup> And her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had shown great mercy to her, and they rejoiced with her.<sup>59</sup> And on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child. And they would have called him Zechariah after his father,<sup>60</sup> but his mother answered, "No; he shall be called John."<sup>61</sup> And they said to her, "None of your relatives is called by this name."<sup>62</sup> And they made signs to his father, inquiring what he wanted him to be called.<sup>63</sup> And he asked for a writing tablet and wrote, "His name is John." And they all wondered.<sup>64</sup> And immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue loosed, and he spoke, blessing God.<sup>65</sup> And fear came on all their neighbors. And all these things were talked about through all the hill country of Judea,<sup>66</sup> and all who heard them laid them up in their hearts, saying, "What then will this child be?" For the hand of the Lord was with him.

<sup>67</sup> And his father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied, saying,

<sup>68</sup> "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel,  
for he has visited and redeemed his  
people

<sup>69</sup> and has raised up a horn of salvation for us  
in the house of his servant David,

<sup>70</sup> as he spoke by the mouth of his holy  
prophets from of old,

<sup>71</sup> that we should be saved from our enemies  
and from the hand of all who hate us;

<sup>72</sup> to show the mercy promised to our  
fathers

and to remember his holy covenant,

<sup>73</sup> the oath that he swore to our father  
Abraham, to grant us

<sup>74</sup> that we, being delivered from the  
hand of our enemies,

might serve him without fear,

<sup>75</sup> in holiness and righteousness before  
him all our days.

<sup>76</sup> And you, child, will be called the prophet  
of the Most High;

for you will go before the Lord to  
prepare his ways,

<sup>77</sup> to give knowledge of salvation to his  
people

in the forgiveness of their sins,

<sup>78</sup> because of the tender mercy of our God,  
whereby the sunrise shall visit us from  
on high

<sup>79</sup> to give light to those who sit in darkness  
and in the shadow of death,  
to guide our feet into the way of peace."

<sup>80</sup> And the child grew and became strong in  
spirit, and he was in the wilderness until the  
day of his public appearance to Israel.

1. How does John's birth confirm God's faithfulness to his word?
2. After Zechariah is able to speak again, who are his first words about? What does this tell you about Zechariah's priorities?
3. According to verses 74-75 and 78-79, what is God going to do for his people?

**PONDER** How does Jesus fulfil the promises expressed in verses 74-75 and 78-79? Is this your experience of the Christian life?

**PRAYER IDEAS** Thank God for the wonderful freedom you have through Jesus to serve God "without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him all [your] days" (vv. 74-75).

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. <sup>2</sup> This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. <sup>3</sup> And all went to be registered, each to his own town. <sup>4</sup> And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, <sup>5</sup> to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. <sup>6</sup> And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. <sup>7</sup> And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

1. *What is the extent of Caesar Augustus's power?*
2. *What is the state of the royal house of David at this time? How does it compare to the things that have been prophesied*

*about it in 1:32-33<sup>2</sup> and 1:68-71?<sup>3</sup>*

3. *What are the conditions surrounding the birth of Mary's son? Given what we have already learnt about Jesus and God's Messiah in the preceding chapters, are they appropriate?*

**PONDER** Looking at Jesus Christ and Caesar Augustus from a worldly perspective, what is the extent of Jesus' power and glory compared to Augustus' in this passage? How does this change when you look at them from God's perspective?

**PRAYER IDEAS** Ask God to help you accept the Lord Jesus on his terms, however unexpected they might be.

And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. <sup>9</sup> And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with fear. <sup>10</sup> And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. <sup>11</sup> For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who

is Christ the Lord. <sup>12</sup> And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger." <sup>13</sup> And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying,

<sup>14</sup> "Glory to God in the highest,  
and on earth peace among those with  
whom he is pleased!"

2. "He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, <sup>33</sup> and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."  
3. "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel,  
for he has visited and redeemed his people

<sup>69</sup> and has raised up a horn of salvation for us  
in the house of his servant David,  
<sup>70</sup> as he spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets from of  
old,  
<sup>71</sup> that we should be saved from our enemies  
and from the hand of all who hate us ..."

<sup>15</sup> When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us." <sup>16</sup> And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. <sup>17</sup> And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. <sup>18</sup> And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. <sup>19</sup> But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. <sup>20</sup> And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

<sup>21</sup> And at the end of eight days, when he was circumcised, he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

1. *What does the presence of the angels tell you about the nature of the event of*

*Jesus' birth?*

2. *What does the angel say about Jesus in verse 11?*

3. *How do the shepherds respond?*

**PONDER** How does this passage provide more certainty that Jesus is God's king, the Christ? Following on from the previous reading, what hints are there in this passage that he is no ordinary king?

**PRAYER IDEAS** Give thanks with joy for the good news of Jesus' birth.

## READING 8

## LUKE 2:22-40

And when the time came for their purification according to the Law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord <sup>23</sup> (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, "Every male who first opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord") <sup>24</sup> and to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the Law of the Lord, "a pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons." <sup>25</sup> Now there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon, and this man was righteous and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. <sup>26</sup> And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. <sup>27</sup> And he came in the Spirit into the temple, and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him according to the custom of the Law, <sup>28</sup> he

took him up in his arms and blessed God and said,

<sup>29</sup> "Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace,  
according to your word;

<sup>30</sup> for my eyes have seen your salvation  
<sup>31</sup> that you have prepared in the  
presence of all peoples,

<sup>32</sup> a light for revelation to the Gentiles,  
and for glory to your people Israel."

<sup>33</sup> And his father and his mother marveled at what was said about him. <sup>34</sup> And Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, "Behold, this child is appointed for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign that is opposed <sup>35</sup> (and a sword will pierce through your own soul also), so that

thoughts from many hearts may be revealed.”

<sup>36</sup> And there was a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was advanced in years, having lived with her husband seven years from when she was a virgin, <sup>37</sup> and then as a widow until she was eighty-four. She did not depart from the temple, worshiping with fasting and prayer night and day. <sup>38</sup> And coming up at that very hour she began to give thanks to God and to speak of him to all who were waiting for the redemption of Jerusalem.

<sup>39</sup> And when they had performed everything according to the Law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. <sup>40</sup> And the child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom. And the favor of God was upon him.

1. *What does Simeon say about Jesus?*

2. *How does Anna respond to Jesus?*

3. *How do their claims about Jesus increase your confidence that he is God's saviour and redeemer?*

**PONDER** Simeon and Anna are thrilled to see God's plans for the salvation of the world coming to fruition. Do you share their excitement?

**PRAYER IDEAS** Thank God for fulfilling his plans for the salvation of the world in Jesus. Ask him to help you share Simeon and Anna's excitement at what he has done.

## READING 9

## LUKE 2:41-52

**N**ow his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover. <sup>42</sup> And when he was twelve years old, they went up according to custom. <sup>43</sup> And when the feast was ended, as they were returning, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. His parents did not know it, <sup>44</sup> but supposing him to be in the group they went a day's journey, but then they began to search for him among their relatives and acquaintances, <sup>45</sup> and when they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem, searching for him. <sup>46</sup> After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. <sup>47</sup> And all who heard him were

amazed at his understanding and his answers. <sup>48</sup> And when his parents saw him, they were astonished. And his mother said to him, "Son, why have you treated us so? Behold, your father and I have been searching for you in great distress." <sup>49</sup> And he said to them, "Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" <sup>50</sup> And they did not understand the saying that he spoke to them. <sup>51</sup> And he went down with them and came to Nazareth and was submissive to them. And his mother treasured up all these things in her heart.

<sup>52</sup> And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man.

1. What is Jesus doing when his parents find him in Jerusalem?

2. What does Jesus' reply in verse 49 tell you about his understanding of who he was?

3. How does Luke summarize Jesus' childhood?

**PONDER** What particular aspect of Jesus' identity does this account highlight? Are you ready to listen to Jesus' teaching with the same amazement as the people in the temple?

**PRAYER IDEAS** Ask God to help you listen to and accept Jesus' teaching, especially as you continue reading Luke.

## READING 10

## LUKE 3:1-22

In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene, <sup>2</sup> during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John the son of Zechariah in the wilderness. <sup>3</sup> And he went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. <sup>4</sup> As it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet,

"The voice of one crying in the wilderness:  
'Prepare the way of the Lord,  
make his paths straight.

<sup>5</sup> Every valley shall be filled,  
and every mountain and hill shall be  
made low,  
and the crooked shall become straight,  
and the rough places shall become level  
ways,

<sup>6</sup> and all flesh shall see the salvation of  
God."

<sup>7</sup> He said therefore to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?" <sup>8</sup> Bear fruits in keeping with repentance. And do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children for Abraham. <sup>9</sup> Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire."

<sup>10</sup> And the crowds asked him, "What then shall we do?" <sup>11</sup> And he answered them, "Whoever has two tunics is to share with him who has none, and whoever has food is to do likewise." <sup>12</sup> Tax collectors also came to be baptized and said to him, "Teacher, what shall we do?" <sup>13</sup> And he said to them, "Collect no more than you are authorized to do." <sup>14</sup> Soldiers also asked him, "And we, what shall we do?" And he said to them, "Do not extort money from anyone by threats or by false accusation, and be content with your wages."

<sup>15</sup> As the people were in expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts

concerning John, whether he might be the Christ, <sup>16</sup> John answered them all, saying, "I baptize you with water, but he who is mightier than I is coming, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. <sup>17</sup> His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire."

<sup>18</sup> So with many other exhortations he preached good news to the people. <sup>19</sup> But Herod the tetrarch, who had been reproved by him for Herodias, his brother's wife, and for all the evil things that Herod had done, <sup>20</sup> added this to them all, that he locked up John in prison.

<sup>21</sup> Now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heavens were opened, <sup>22</sup> and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form, like a dove; and a voice came from heaven, "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased."

1. *What is John's role in God's plans (cf. 1:14–17)?*<sup>4</sup>

2. *According to John's instructions, how are people to prepare for the coming of the Christ?*

3. *What does John's teaching and Jesus' baptism tell you about Jesus?*

**PONDER** John is very much an Old Testament-style prophet. His teaching highlights that Jesus is not only a saviour, he is also a judge who will punish those who have rejected God's ways. What makes John's message an uncomfortable one for people then and now?

**PRAYER IDEAS** Ask God to help you take John's teaching about Jesus seriously.

## READING 11

## LUKE 3:23-38

Jesus, when he began his ministry, was about thirty years of age, being the son (as was supposed) of Joseph, the son of Heli, <sup>24</sup> the son of Matthat, the son of Levi, the son of Melchi, the son of Jannai, the son of Joseph, <sup>25</sup> the son of Mattathias,

the son of Amos, the son of Nahum, the son of Esli, the son of Naggai, <sup>26</sup> the son of Maath, the son of Mattathias, the son of Semein, the son of Josech, the son of Joda, <sup>27</sup> the son of Joanan, the son of Rhesa, the son of Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel,

4. "And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth, <sup>15</sup> for he will be great before the Lord. And he must not drink wine or strong drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb. <sup>16</sup> And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God, <sup>17</sup> and he

will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready for the Lord a people prepared."

the son of Neri,<sup>28</sup> the son of Melchi, the son of Addi, the son of Cosam, the son of Elmadam, the son of Er,<sup>29</sup> the son of Joshua, the son of Eliezer, the son of Jorim, the son of Matthat, the son of Levi,<sup>30</sup> the son of Simeon, the son of Judah, the son of Joseph, the son of Jonam, the son of Eliakim,<sup>31</sup> the son of Melea, the son of Menna, the son of Mattatha, the son of Nathan, the son of David,<sup>32</sup> the son of Jesse, the son of Obed, the son of Boaz, the son of Sala, the son of Nahshon,<sup>33</sup> the son of Amminadab, the son of Admin, the son of Arni, the son of Hezron, the son of Perez, the son of Judah,<sup>34</sup> the son of Jacob, the son of Isaac, the son of Abraham, the son of Terah, the son of Nahor,<sup>35</sup> the son of Serug, the son of Reu, the son of Peleg, the son of Eber, the son of Shelah,<sup>36</sup> the son of Cainan, the son of Arphaxad, the son of Shem, the son of Noah, the son of Lamech,<sup>37</sup> the son of Methuselah, the son of Enoch, the son of Jared, the son of Mahalaleel, the son of Cainan,<sup>38</sup> the son of Enos, the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God.

1. *What does the genealogy highlight about*

*Jesus' relationship to Joseph?*

2. *Out of all the names, which five are the most important and why?*

3. *What claims about Jesus does the genealogy support (cf. Luke 1:32-33,<sup>5</sup> 69,<sup>6</sup> 73<sup>7</sup>)?*

**PONDER** For a Jewish genealogy of Luke's time, starting with God is very unusual. It highlights a comparison between the first 'son of God' (i.e. Adam) and the new 'son of God' (Jesus). How is Jesus a better son of God than Adam?

**PRAYER IDEAS** Give thanks that God has sent another son to rescue humanity from the disastrous situation created by his first son, Adam, and Adam's descendants.

## READING 12

## LUKE 4:1-13

And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness<sup>2</sup> for forty days, being tempted by the devil. And he ate nothing during those days. And when they were ended, he was hungry.<sup>3</sup> The devil said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread."<sup>4</sup> And Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'Man shall not

live by bread alone.'"<sup>5</sup> And the devil took him up and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time,<sup>6</sup> and said to him, "To you I will give all this authority and their glory, for it has been delivered to me, and I give it to whom I will."<sup>7</sup> If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours."<sup>8</sup> And Jesus answered him, "It is written,

5. "He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David,<sup>33</sup> and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."

6. "... and has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David ..."

7. "... the oath that he swore to our father Abraham, to grant us ..."

“You shall worship the Lord your God,  
and him only shall you serve.”

<sup>9</sup> And he took him to Jerusalem and set him on the pinnacle of the temple and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here, <sup>10</sup> for it is written,

“He will command his angels concerning you,  
to guard you,

<sup>11</sup> and

“On their hands they will bear you up,  
lest you strike your foot against a stone.”

<sup>12</sup> And Jesus answered him, “It is said, ‘You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.’”

<sup>13</sup> And when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from him until an opportune time.

1. Which part of Israel's history is brought to mind by this passage? (Hint: see Deut 8:1-3,<sup>8</sup> 6:12-16.<sup>9</sup>)

2. How is Jesus' reaction to temptation different from Israel's (cf. Num 14:2-5<sup>10</sup> and Exod 32:1-4<sup>11</sup>)?

3. If Jesus had given in to the devil's third temptation (vv. 9-11), how would it have affected his mission?

## PONDER

What particular temptations are you dealing with at the moment? Read Hebrews 4:15-16.<sup>12</sup> How is the account of Jesus' temptation comforting and encouraging?

## PRAYER IDEAS

Give thanks that Jesus understood temptation but never gave in. Ask for his help in your own struggle with sin.

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8. “The whole commandment that I command you today you shall be careful to do, that you may live and multiply, and go in and possess the land that the LORD swore to give to your fathers. <sup>2</sup> And you shall remember the whole way that the LORD your God has led you these forty years in the wilderness, that he might humble you, testing you to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep his commandments or not.

<sup>3</sup> And he humbled you and let you hunger and fed you with manna, which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that he might make you know that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD.”

9. “... then take care lest you forget the LORD, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. <sup>13</sup> It is the LORD your God you shall fear. Him you shall serve and by his name you shall swear. <sup>14</sup> You shall not go after other gods, the gods of the peoples who are around you— <sup>15</sup> for the LORD your God in your midst is a jealous God—lest the anger of the LORD your God be kindled against you, and he destroy you from off the face of the earth.

<sup>16</sup> “You shall not put the LORD your God to the test, as you tested him at Massah.”

10. And all the people of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron. The whole congregation said to them, “Would that we had died in the land of Egypt! Or would that we had died in

this wilderness! <sup>3</sup> Why is the LORD bringing us into this land, to fall by the sword? Our wives and our little ones will become a prey. Would it not be better for us to go back to Egypt?” <sup>4</sup> And they said to one another, “Let us choose a leader and go back to Egypt.”

<sup>5</sup> Then Moses and Aaron fell on their faces before all the assembly of the congregation of the people of Israel.

11. When the people saw that Moses delayed to come down from the mountain, the people gathered themselves together to Aaron and said to him, “Up, make us gods who shall go before us. As for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.” <sup>2</sup> So Aaron said to them, “Take off the rings of gold that are in the ears of your wives, your sons, and your daughters, and bring them to me.” <sup>3</sup> So all the people took off the rings of gold that were in their ears and brought them to Aaron. <sup>4</sup> And he received the gold from their hand and fashioned it with a graving tool and made a golden calf. And they said, “These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!”

12. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. <sup>16</sup> Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.