

group Bible Study – September 27, 2006

Read Luke chapters 1-3

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When the angel of the Lord appeared to the priest Zechariah, he declared that John would be born, and that he would be filled with the Holy Spirit even before his birth. This John would “make ready a people prepared for the Lord.” What’s going on here?

This passage in Luke contains a direct quote from the Old Testament prophet Malachi, where we read that God will send a prophet to the people to turn them back to their maker “before the great and terrible day of the LORD comes” (chapter 4). This is a warning about judgment. The terrible day of God is coming! And before God, unrighteousness cannot stand. This is what Luke has in mind when he describes John the Baptist as the second Elijah – the prophet that was spoken of in Malachi. The message is both comforting and absolutely terrifying:

God is coming! The holy One is on his way, and the world will be changed! Wherever you are, whatever you’re doing – STOP. Turn around.

When you read the opening chapters of Luke, do you even realize how powerful this text is? This is a declaration that the whole universe is about to be turned rightside-up, and in the end all that remains is the kingdom of God. This is an invitation to a revolution. It’s time to flip the upside-down kingdom of this world – there is a new government in town, and it means a completely new way of being human. And that means us – Now.

Study Questions (for individuals or groups):

- What is Luke’s purpose for writing this book? (Don’t just think obvious answers... ponder what he is trying to accomplish in writing this.)
- Read the song of Mary and the prophecy of Zechariah in chapter 1 – do you think these two people had a good grasp on the importance of what was happening? What about Simeon, and the prophet Anna in chapter 2?
- What is the significance of John the Baptist? What is the point of the message he preaches in chapter 3? What is his part in this big drama?
- In this text, both John and Jesus are very important – both filled with the Holy Spirit and both sent into the world with a special mission. In what ways are John and Jesus similar, and in what ways are they different?

Special Bonus: **The Lord’s Prayer**

(As Jesus taught his followers to pray in Matthew 6 and Luke 11)

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name.
Thy Kingdom come.
Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For Thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory
forever and ever.
Amen