

## Weekly Study Guide | 12/08/24

### Angels: First Encounter

Read [Luke 1:5-25](#)

*11 Then an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing at the right side of the altar of incense. 12 When Zechariah saw him, he was startled and was gripped with fear. 13 But the angel said to him: "Do not be afraid, Zechariah; your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you are to call him John. 14 He will be a joy and delight to you, and many will rejoice because of his birth, 15 for he will be great in the sight of the Lord. He is never to take wine or other fermented drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit even before he is born. 16 He will bring back many of the people of Israel to the Lord their God. 17 And he will go on before the Lord, in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the parents to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous—to make ready a people prepared for the Lord." 18 Zechariah asked the angel, "How can I be sure of this? I am an old man and my wife is well along in years." 19 The angel said to him, "I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to tell you this good news. 20 And now you will be silent and not able to speak until the day this happens, because you did not believe my words, which will come true at their appointed time."*

**Supporting Verses:** [Luke 1:1-4, 5-25](#); [Daniel 8:15-18, 9:20-21](#); [Hebrews 1:14](#); [2 Corinthians 11:13-15](#); [2 Corinthians 11:3-5](#)

### Questions:

1. What stands out to you in the verses above regarding angels? How is the angel identified? How does the angel appear? What is the angel doing?
2. What was the context? What was going on at the time? To whom did the angel appear? Why might this be significant?
3. What emotions does the angel evoke? How did Zechariah react? How did the angel respond? What was the first thing the angel said?
4. What was the angel's primary purpose and mission? How might this inform our understanding of angels? Why should we be cautious about angels?
5. Who was this angel? Has this angel ever appeared before in Scripture? Where did this angel come from? Who sent it? Does this angel have any special power or authority?

6. Share a few takeaways from this lesson. What is a practical way you can apply this to your life? How can it help strengthen your relationship with God? What difference will this make to your daily walk with Christ?

**For later:** Please take time to prayerfully reflect on how this lesson relates to you. What did you learn? What are some personal takeaways and insights you gained? What is a practical way you can apply this to your life? How will this help strengthen your relationship with God? What difference will this make in your life? Is there anything you need to change in light of this lesson?

**Summary:** An angel of the Lord appears to Zechariah as he is burning incense in the temple. The angel identifies himself as Gabriel. This angel was sent from the presence of God with a message of good news and instruction. Zechariah would be familiar with this angel from his knowledge of scriptures. The angel Gabriel is a messenger who was entrusted to deliver several important messages on God's behalf. Gabriel appears to at least three people in the Bible: first to the prophet Daniel (Daniel 8:16); next to the priest Zechariah to foretell and announce the miraculous birth of John the Baptist (Luke 1:19); and finally to the virgin Mary to tell her that she would conceive and bear a son (Luke 1:26–38). Gabriel's name means "strong warrior" or "mighty one." Gabriel is the one who revealed that the Savior was to be called "Jesus" (Luke 1:31). He is an "Angel of the Lord" or an archangel, chief among the angels. Because Zechariah didn't immediately accept the word the angel shared with him, Zechariah was made mute until his words were fulfilled and John was born.

*"Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?" -Hebrews 1:14*

*"No wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light." -2 Cor. 11:14*