

HEARING THE WORD



NIGEL BARGE

Luke 2²¹ – 4³⁰

Leader's Guide

Hearing the Word Luke 2:21 – 4:30 Leader’s Guide

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Nigel Barge, December 2011

Scripture Quotations taken from THE HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION

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Resources

The *New Bible Dictionary* 3rd edition, published by Inter Varsity Press
The *New Bible Commentary* 21st century edition. A commentary on every Bible book, IVP
www.blueletterbible.org

This is the second Volume in a series on Luke's Gospel.

Each of the thirteen parts was written to accompany sermons on Luke preached by the Rev Nigel Barge in Torrance Parish Church between September 2011 and December 2020.

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Reading Narrative

In seeking to hear the Word of God throughout the Bible, we need to take into account the *type of literature* in which each part is written. Exodus is mainly narrative (story), the most common type. To approach narrative correctly we need to keep in mind the following principles.

1 In General: It is *God's story*

The whole Bible recounts the story of God's dealings with humankind. After creation and the fall in Genesis, the rest describes how God works out his unfolding plan of salvation for humanity in Jesus. The OT prepares for the arrival, life, death and resurrection of Jesus. The NT recounts these and looks forwards to his return at the end of time. It is *all* about Jesus. Therefore:

- a) Every part relates to Him (Luke 24:27; John 5:39).

So as we read, we should be asking – ‘what does this show about Jesus; what is He doing?’

- b) Everything is relevant.

In a film every scene plays some part in the overall story. Often we are shown things in the early stages that make no sense until later. The Bible is the same. So as we read Bible narrative – knowing how it ends – we should be asking ‘what relevance has *this* part of the story to the *main* story?’

2 In particular: ‘Follow the camera angle’

A film director focuses the viewer's attention on particular shots to tell ‘his story’. In the same way each narrator in the Bible is selective about what to tell us. They leave out much general detail, only giving us what is relevant to what they are trying to convey.

As we read we should therefore be asking the question, ‘Why is he telling me this and in this particular way?’

3 Warts and all

Human beings often get things wrong. The Bible narrative faithfully records errors, even by people who are elsewhere commended. For instance, Moses murdered a man, King David committed adultery, and Peter, who was praised for realising Jesus was the Christ, was minutes later roundly scolded when he tried to stop Jesus being the Christ through suffering! (Exodus 2:12; 2 Samuel 11; Matthew 16:16-23)

So we can't treat every thought or action in a narrative as something to copy, just because ‘it's in the Bible’. We must ask the Holy Spirit to use the rest of Scripture to discern good examples to follow, and bad ones to avoid.

Background to Luke's Gospel

The Author

Luke was a doctor and friend of the apostle Paul, who calls him 'the beloved physician' and 'fellow worker' (Colossians 4:14; Philemon 1:24). He began to travel with Paul at Troas (Acts 16:10). He was close to Paul near the end of his life (2 Timothy 4:11).

He may have come from Antioch in Syria, or Troas, or Philippi in Macedonia. He was a Gentile (i.e. not a Jew). Indeed he is the only non-Jewish writer in the New Testament.

He had carried out careful research (see Luke 1:3, 2:51). He also wrote the story of the early church in the 5th book of the New Testament, whose full title is: 'The Acts of the Apostles'. It takes us up to Paul's imprisonment in Rome but not his trial, suggesting Luke finished writing it before that event

The Date of writing

Luke wrote his gospel before he wrote Acts (see Acts 1:1), probably before 63AD.

The structure

A	The introduction	(1: 1 - 4)
B	The birth of Jesus	(1:5 - 2:52)
C	The start of Jesus' ministry	(3:1 - 4:13)
D	Jesus in Galilee	(4:14 - 9:50)
E	From Galilee to Jerusalem	(9:51 - 19:44)
F	Jesus in Jerusalem	(19:45 – 21:38)
G	The death of Jesus	(22:1 – 23:56)
H	The resurrection of Jesus	(24:1 - 53)

Its purpose

Matthew and Mark probably wrote their gospels before Luke. Unlike them Luke had not himself witnessed Jesus' birth, life, death and resurrection, but he had personal contact with many eyewitnesses who had. He addresses both his Gospel and Acts to someone called Theophilus. This may have been a real individual: could he have been an official in Roman government?... Someone who wanted details of Christianity before Paul's trial in Rome?... Someone who paid Luke's expenses while writing? Actually, the name means, 'friend of God', so it might refer to anyone, in any time or place, who *wanted to know the Gospel and be a friend of God*.

The Themes

Five themes keep re-occurring in Luke's Gospel:

1 Salvation

- a) a historical event

Jesus Christ's coming to earth as a man is the centre point of history. Luke points out the exact time and situation of Jesus' birth. (Luke 2). Jesus sets his face towards Jerusalem (9:51) where he completes his work, commits his Spirit to the Father, and dies (23:46). On the third day he rises from death. Forty days later, having promised to return, he ascends to heaven (Acts 1:9-11). Meantime, the Good News of this salvation is offered to all by the power of the Spirit (Acts 2:38,39).

- b) for all mankind

From the announcement by the angels of 'good news ... for all people' (2:10) to the genealogy of Jesus stretching back to Adam (3:38), it is clear the non-Jews are included too. This does not deny the importance of Israel. Luke begins and ends his Gospel with people in Jerusalem and shows it to be the ultimate destination of Jesus' earthly ministry (1:8; 2:22, 36; 9:51-53; 13:22; 17:11; 18:31; 19:28).

2 The 'outsiders'

Luke shows that people seen as 'weak' are equally welcome in the Kingdom of God, by recording Jesus' interaction with them. This includes:

- a) Women

Women are central to the story. At the beginning, the angelic announcement of His birth was to Mary (1:26-38) and at end, the truth of His resurrection was given first to the women at the tomb (24:1-11). He ministered to women in various settings (7:11; 7:37; 13:11; 21:1-4) and it was women who helped finance Him and His apostles (8:2-3).

- b) Children

The accounts of Jesus' birth show the importance and value of a child from the womb (1:41!). At various times he intervenes to heal the child of a distraught parent (7:12; 8:42; 9:38)

- c) The poor

Jesus himself was from Nazareth (4:16) – a poor, insignificant town (John 1:46). His birth was to an unmarried girl and witnessed by the 'outcasts' of society, the shepherds (2:8-20). The offering at His birth was that of the poor (2:24; Leviticus 12:8) and the message he preached was for the poor (4:18; 7:22). He died with common criminals (23:32,41).

d) Gentiles

Luke, himself a Gentile, is writing to another Gentile, Theophilus (1:3). He records the faith of a Gentile Roman Centurion: Jesus says he had ‘not found such great faith in Israel’ (7:9). Possibly out of deference to his non-Jewish readership, Luke seldom quotes the Old Testament.

3 The Holy Spirit

The ministry of the Holy Spirit is explicit throughout the Gospel, in:

a) the birth of John the Baptist (1:15,41,57) **b)** the conception of Jesus (1:35) **c)** the prophecy about Jesus by Simeon (2:25-27) **d)** John’s promise that Jesus would ‘baptise with the Holy Spirit’ (3:16) **e)** the baptism of Jesus (3:22) **f)** the temptations of Jesus (4:1) **g)** the power of Jesus’ ministry (4:18) **h)** the joy of the Spirit (10:21) **i)** the promise of the Spirit for His followers (11:13; 12:10-12; 24:49). This promise was fulfilled at Pentecost, as Luke records in Acts 2.

4 The humanity of Jesus

There is no clearer way of demonstrating Jesus’ humanity than noting his recourse to prayer. Through this he shows:

- a) his own dependence on the Father through prayer (3:21; 5:16; 6:12; 9:18, 28, 29; 10:21; 11:1; 22:39-46; 23:34, 46).
- b) his identification with his disciples, as He similarly instructs them in prayer through
 - i) parables - the friend at midnight (11:5-13) the unjust judge (18:1-8); the Pharisee and the tax collector (18:10-14)
 - ii) teaching on prayer (6:28; 11:2; 22:40, 46)

5 The deity of Jesus

Luke presents Jesus as God in an *oblique* way. This fact was not acknowledged at that time. This is the key theme of the first 5 chapters:

1:17 John prepares for the Lord
1:32 called Son of the Most High
1:43 Mary mother of ‘my Lord’
2:11 Saviour who is Christ the Lord
2:49 in ‘His Father’s house’
3:22 God says ‘you are my Son’;
4:34 The Holy one of God

4:41 the Son of God
5:8 the Holy presence
5:13 able to cleanse an individual
5:20 a forgiver of sin
5:32 (righteous one) calling sinners to repentance
5:34 the bridegroom

Study 1

Luke 2:21-40

Jesus presented in the Temple

Background

Regulations were given for circumcising baby boys on the 8th day, and the timing and sacrifice necessary for their parents to redeem (buy back) their first born son, that had been claimed by the Lord (Exodus 13:2,12), on the 40th day.

Word List

21	<i>circumcise</i>	removal of foreskin. OT token of God's grace: he chooses and marks men as his own. Sign that the covenant between God and Israel applied to this man
	<i>Jesus</i>	Greek for Hebrew name <i>Joshua</i> , means 'God saves'
22	<i>purification</i>	ritual for a woman's cleansing after childbirth
	<i>Law of Moses</i>	the first five books of the OT
	<i>Jerusalem</i>	capital and site of the Temple
	<i>Law of the Lord</i>	a term similar to 'the Law of Moses'
25	<i>Simeon</i>	a common name; no other NT reference to <i>this</i> one
	<i>righteous</i>	i.e. behaved well towards other people
	<i>devout</i>	i.e. careful about religious duties
	<i>consolation of Israel</i>	the coming of the Messiah
26	<i>Christ</i>	Greek for Hebrew <i>Messiah</i> means 'the Lord's anointed'
27	<i>custom of the law</i>	the five shekels paid to redeem the first-born, <i>see</i> Numbers 18:8,14-16
32	<i>Gentiles</i>	i.e. non-Jews
	<i>Israel</i>	the Jews
36	<i>Anna</i>	Greek form of Hebrew name Hannah, means grace

Bible Connections

21	<i>circumcision</i>	<i>see</i> Genesis 17:1-14
	<i>born under the law to redeem those under the law</i>	<i>See</i> Galatians 4:4-7
22	<i>purification, 40 days for boy, 80 for girl</i>	<i>see</i> Leviticus 12:1-4
23	<i>consecration of firstborn males</i>	<i>see</i> Exodus 13:2,12; Numbers 18:15
30	<i>God's salvation</i>	<i>see</i> Isaiah 40:5; 52:10
32	<i>light for the Gentiles</i>	<i>see</i> Isaiah 42:6; 49:6
34	<i>fall and rise of many in Israel</i>	<i>see</i> Isaiah 8:14,15; 1 Corinthians 1:23-24

LOOK

1) **The Text** What questions does the passage raise?

21 *Why does Luke record circumcision / purification /consecration?*
What does the name 'Jesus' mean, and why does Luke remind us that it was given by the angel before he had been conceived?

22 *What does 'presenting to the Lord' mean?*

25 *How was 'the Holy Spirit upon him'?*

27 *How did Simeon identify the child?*

31 *How was the salvation 'in the sight of all people'?*

33 *What caused his parents to marvel about what was said?*

34 *Why did Simeon bless the parents and not the child?*
What was the sign?

36 *What was significance of Anna's lineage, marriage & widowhood?*

38 *What was Anna's contribution?*

40 *What does the grace of God being 'upon' Jesus mean?*

b) What surprises you or catches your eye?

33 *Parents marvelled at what was said in Temple - though not at what the angel had told them!*

39 *Emphasis on everything required by the Law being done.*

2) **The Context** Is there any help elsewhere in the Bible?

a) Surrounding passages

21 *you are to give him the name 'Jesus' (1:31)*

26 *Saviour, Christ the Lord (2:11)*

b) The Individual book

24 *Widow's mite (21:2,3)*

32 *Gentiles accepted by Jesus (4:26; 7:9; 9:52; 11:32; 17:18; 24:47)*

c) The Whole Bible

34,35 *Mary and 'the cross' (John 19:35)*

39 *Fulfil, not abolish the Law (Matthew 5:17)*

d) The Bible Story

God's people failed to keep God's Law and Covenant. During a long period of silence (no prophets, and oppression by foreign powers - Greek and Roman), anticipation of a delivering and redeeming King, Messiah, had grown. Now this Saviour has come - as a child.

LEARN

1) How do you answer the questions that the passage raises?

21 *Luke is reminding us that Jesus was born 'under the Law'. (Though as first born He belonged to the Father, he was bought back by mankind for the 'princely' sum of two pigeons or two doves!*
Jesus' means 'Saviour'.
The name was given before he was conceived, to show God's eternal purpose.

22 *'Presenting...' means symbolically offering the first born to God.*

25 *Holy Spirit upon him infers on-going association with Spirit. This was unusual in OT, where it was usually just for one specific purpose.*

27 *Simeon was expecting someone. (The Holy Spirit had told him he would see Messiah before he died and had moved him to go to the Temple.) The child brought in was called 'Jesus' (27) means Saviour.*

31 *'All people' represents the extent of the Salvation (cf John 3:16)*

33 *They marvelled at inclusion of Gentiles; angels did not mention them.*

34 *Blessed the parents only, because the child would be the 'blessing'.*
It was a warning. Blessing would come through pain – the cross.
The sign was the cross – foolishness to many but to those who believe, it is the power of God to salvation (cf 1 Corinthians 1:23,24).

36 *She spoke to all listening who were faithfully expecting the Messiah.*
Anna was not of the tribe of Judah but of one of the ten 'lost' tribes of Israel – they too were included.
A widow for 84 years; OR aged 84 - a very long time! If significant, could it be the perfect number (7) times the tribes of Israel (12)?

40 *He was strong (body) filled with wisdom (mind) and the grace of God was upon him (spirit).*

How do you resolve what surprised you?

Luke underlines Jesus did not abolish the Law but lived within it and fulfilled it. This was recognised by a devout law-keeper (25). The marvellous thing was that the Saviour whom the angels announced was going to save not only Israel, who already knew God's law, but also the Gentiles, who did not.

Can you summarise the passage?

Through his parents, Jesus completely fulfilled the obligations of the Law; his identity as Saviour was recognised by 'Israel'.

LISTEN

What is the main point of the passage?

MP *Jesus, born under the Jewish Law, fulfilled the whole Law and so could become the Saviour of the World*

Which verse best expresses this? **v 39a**

KV *'And when they had performed everything according to the Law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town Nazareth.'*

LIVE

1) What does the passage show you about God (Father/Son/Holy Spirit)
a) His nature and character?

27 God orchestrates by His Spirit.

36f His blessing is for all Israel.

39 God has a standard (Law) that must be kept.

b) His grace?

26 God chooses to reveal His purposes to individuals

38 God bestows His grace on all looking for redemption of Israel

c) Jesus / his salvation?

24 Jesus humbly submitted to the Law

Now underline the application of the Main Point.

2) What should I do?

21 Note - *Obedience expresses faith* e.g. Zechariah at Luke 1:63.

24 Obey God's precepts and demands.

Note - Poverty (only able to afford 'small' sacrifices) is no bar to spiritual effectiveness.

25 Under the Spirit - wait v25b, be moved v27, see v30

29,33 Marvel at the grace of God!

34f Note -*the blessing of Salvation comes through the cross – for Jesus and His family, and is inevitably opposed.*

36 Note -*Those 'left behind' may have a central role in God's purposes.*

39 Trust Jesus to keep the Law perfectly

40 Grow in body (strength), mind (wisdom) and Spirit (grace of God).

Now underline the application of the Main Point.

Study 2

Luke 2:41-52

The boy Jesus at the Temple

Background

We know nothing of Jesus' boyhood apart from this one incident, which Luke alone relates. All Jewish adult males were expected to attend the Temple in Jerusalem for three annual festivals, at Passover, Pentecost and Tabernacles (Exodus 23:14-17). Most made the effort once a year. At other times, they worshipped every week in their local synagogue.

Jewish boys could become a 'son of the law' (*Bar Mitzvah*) and a full member of the synagogue when they were thirteen. They then assumed all the responsibilities to keep the covenant implied in their circumcision.

In later practice, women and children travelled ahead; the men and older boys took up the rear. If this were the case here, Jesus would have gone up with Mary; whereas on the way home, she would have assumed he was now with Joseph. Each thought he was with the other parent. Confusion!

Word List

41 *Feast of the Passover* remembering how God brought Israel out of Egypt and into the Promised land (Exodus 12).

43 *the boy* greek *pais* (note progression from *brepbos* v16 meaning 'baby', to *paidion* v 40 meaning 'little boy', then *pais* v 43).

46 *temple courts* Temple precincts, used as area for teaching.

46 *questions* asking questions was the normal teaching method.

Bible Connections

47 *amazed at Jesus' understanding* see also Matt 7:28; 13:54; 22:33; Mark 1:22; 6:2; 11:18; Luke 4:32; John 7:46

50 *not understanding Jesus* see also Mark 9:32 9:45; 18:34; John 12:16

51 *Nazareth – a backwater* see John 1:46 c.f. Phil 2:8

52 *Jesus growing in wisdom and stature* see 2:40
c.f. 1 Samuel 2:26 Proverbs 3:4

LOOK

1) **The Text** What questions does it raise?

42 *What was the significance of Jesus' age?*
What was the custom?
What about the rest of the family?

43 *How could His parents not know whether Jesus was with them or not?*

46 *Why three days?*
What was the significance of 'sitting' and 'asking questions'?

47 *Why were they amazed at his 'answers' – wasn't he asking questions?*

48 *What astonished his parents?*

49 *What is special about this statement?*

50 *What did they not understand about 'my Father's house'?*

51 *Why does the writer put in his obedience here?*
What did she treasure?

52 *How could Jesus grow in favour with God?*

What surprises you?

Mary did not understand about Jesus being 'in His Father's house.'?

2) **The Context** Is there any help elsewhere in the Bible?

a) Surrounding passage

49 *He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord will give him the throne of his father David (1:32).*

51 *His mother treasured these things in her heart (2:19).*

52 *He became strong; he was filled with wisdom and the grace of God was upon him (2:40).*

b) The Individual book

46 *Three days (24:46)*

49 *My Father (10:22, 22:42; 23:34; 23:46)*
Joseph's Son (4:22)

c) The Whole Bible

41 *Passover attendance regulations (Exodus 23:14-17)*

49 *Son of Father means Son of God. (John 5:18)*
Son and Father (John 6:37-47; 8:18,27,28,38,49,54,55)

51 Jesus was made like His brothers in every way, ... sympathise with weaknesses (Hebrews 2:17; 4:15)

52 Jesus' obedience (Philippians 2:8)
growing in favour with God (Hebrews 5:7,8)

LEARN

How would you answer the questions?

41 Twelve years old was the year before a child's Bar Mitzvah (becoming a man, a 'son of the Law)
To attend one festival per year if lived outwith Jerusalem
They were with them? Cf Mark 6:3

43 Each could think he was with the other (Jesus at crossover age)

46 A day's walk out, a day's walk back, a day looking for him.
'Sitting and asking.' The Sanhedrin met in open forum in the Temple courts during Passover.

47 Jesus was the teacher! – asking questions (46) and drawing out answers.

48 His parents were astonished both by his authoritative/perceptive questions and by his apparent lack of care of them?

49 First recorded words of Jesus!

50 They thought of Joseph as 'father'. Calling God 'Father' = claiming to be equal to God **H**imself (John 5:18).

51 His obedience underlines **h**e was still a minor (v43 the boy Jesus)
She treasured the sight of Jesus amongst the leaders teaching them about God.

52 He grew in knowledge of, and obedience to, the Father.

How do you resolve what surprised you?

Mary still did not understand that Jesus was really Son of God / God in the flesh

Can you summarise the passage?

*Mary and Joseph take their son Jesus to Passover the year before His Bar Mitzvah. He stays on in Jerusalem in the Temple while they return home, unknowingly. That evening they miss **H**im and return to look for **H**im, discovering **H**im in the Temple.*

He explains that He is in 'His Father's house'. They do not grasp the implications of this; but despite the fact that Jesus does understand, He returns obediently with them to Nazareth.

LISTEN

What is the main point of the passage?

MP *Jesus, fully God and fully man, submitted to His Father in heaven and so secondly to His earthly parents.*

Which verse best expresses this? **v 49...51**

KV *Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house'.....Then He went down to Nazareth and was obedient to them'*

LIVE

1) What does the passage show you about God (Father/Son/Holy Spirit)
a) His nature and character?

49 *'God's house' was the Temple.*

51 *God expect that under Him, earthly authority is to be obeyed.*

b) His grace?

51 *Jesus' submission to His parents was an undeserved gift.*

c) Jesus / his salvation?

49 *Jesus is God the Son.*

51 *Jesus' is humble – (he emptied Himself and became one of us; he was limited in physical, mental, spiritual and social development and had to grow.)*

Now underline the application of the Main Point.

2) What should I do?

44 *Never take for granted that Jesus is 'with you'.*

46 *Look for Jesus in the company of His people.*

51 *Be obedient to those in authority - God and those on earth.*

52 *Be like Jesus - grow mentally, physically, spiritually and socially.*

Now underline the application of the Main Point.

Study 3

Luke 3:1-20

John the Baptist prepares the way

Background

All the Gospels tell us that John the Baptist's ministry prepared the way for that of Jesus and that it was characterised by a call to repentance.

Before John the Baptist, baptism was already being given to Gentile women wanting to become Jews; Gentile *men*, of course, were circumcised. John's innovation was to invite men and women who were *already Jews* to be baptised, as a sign they were repenting of their sins (Luke 3:1-20). He also distinguished it from the Baptism which would come after him.

Luke carefully dates the beginning of John's ministry and all that followed, setting it firmly in secular history. Scholars estimate the date as AD 27-29. Later, Christians dated events from the supposed date of the birth of Jesus, Before Christ (BC) or after (AD means *anno domini* which means 'in the year of the Lord').

Word List

1	<i>Tiberias Caesar</i>	Roman emperor, AD 14 -37
	<i>Pontius Pilate</i>	Roman governor of Judea AD 26-36
	<i>Herod</i>	Herod Antipas, (son of Herod the Great) 4 BC – AD 39
	<i>Iturea and Traconitis</i>	area NE of Sea of Galilee; Philip ruled here from 4 BC to 33/34 AD
	<i>Abilene</i>	Area north of the regions mentioned above
	<i>Lysanias</i>	Nothing else is known about him.
2	<i>Annas</i>	High Priest in Jerusalem AD 6-15. Deposed by Romans, but still had power and influence
	<i>Caiaphas</i>	High Priest AD 18-36, son-in-law of Annas
	<i>John, son of Zechariah</i>	see Luke 1:5-25, 57-80
3	<i>baptism</i>	Symbolic cleansing, already in use at this time for Gentile women who wanted to convert to Judaism
8	<i>stones/ children</i>	There is a play on words here: in Aramaic, the language Jesus spoke, the words sound similar.
	<i>Abraham</i>	The 'father' of the Jewish nation. See God's promise to him in Genesis 15
15	<i>the Christ</i>	The Messiah, the anointed one
16	<i>sandals...untie</i>	A slave's job

Bible Connections

1	<i>an ordered account</i>	Luke 1:1
2	<i>The Word of God came to John cf. Jeremiah 1:2; and 1:1 of Hosea Joel, Jonah, Micah, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi.</i>	
3	<i>baptism, repentance, forgiveness of sins</i>	<i>see Zechariah 13:1; Ezekiel 36:25f; Acts 2:38</i>
4-6	<i>prophecy fulfilled</i>	Luke quotes Isaiah 40:3-5
7-9	<i>God's wrath and judgement</i>	<i>see Romans 1:18-2:16</i>
8	<i>Abraham as father</i>	John 8:37
16-18	<i>John points to Jesus and His ministry.</i>	John 3:22-36 Acts 18:24 -19:7

LOOK

1) The Text

a) What questions does it raise?

- 1 *Why does it mention so many people?*
- 2 *What does the 'Word of the Lord came to John' mean?*
- 3 *Why all the country around the Jordan – long narrow strip?*
- 4 *How does the Isaiah quote fulfil or tie in to baptism of repentance?*
- 7 *Why did he call the crowd 'vipers'?*
- 8 *What would it mean to call Abraham 'father' (8)?*
- 9 *How was the axe at the root?*
- 13 *What were the tax collectors 'required' to do?*
- 14 *Why would they accuse people falsely?*
- 16 *What did it mean - 'baptise with Holy Spirit and with fire'?*
- 18 *What was John's 'Good news'?*
- 19 *Why did John rebuke Herod?*

b) What surprises you or catches your eye?

- 18 *The warning of judgment is called 'good news'?*

2) The Context

a) Surrounding passages

1:15,17 Angel said, 'John filled with the spirit from birth ... Like Elijah ... preparing the way for the Lord'.

1:76,77 Zechariah said John would be ‘prophet of the most high... bringing knowledge of salvation through forgiveness of sins.

b) The Individual book

3 *forgiveness of sins (1:77)*

4 *John was to be ‘great in sight of Lord...before the Lord in power of Elijah...bring people back to Godmake ready a people prepared for the Lord (1:14 ff).*
John had been in the desert for many years (1:80).

8 *No good tree bears bad fruit (6:43).*

15 *Jesus is the Messiah. John, even though the greatest among men, was the least in kingdom of God (7:18-35).*

c) The Whole Bible

2	<i>God chose the lowly</i>	<i>1 Corinthians 1:26-29</i>
3	<i>John’s preaching</i>	<i>Matthew 3:1ff; Mark 1:4ff; John 1:19ff</i>
4	<i>John quoted a prophecy</i>	<i>Isaiah 40:3-5</i>
7	<i>Vipers escaping</i>	<i>Acts 28:2ff</i>
8	<i>Trees that do /do not bear fruit</i> <i>Not all Jews are ‘sons of Abraham’</i>	<i>John 15:1-8</i>
16	<i>Washing feet was a slave’s job</i> <i>Baptism with the Spirit and fire</i>	<i>Romans 9:6-9</i>
18.	<i>‘good news’ = of Messiah/Kingdom of God</i>	<i>John 13:5ff</i>
20	<i>John the Baptist’s death</i> <i>‘He must become greater, I must become less’</i>	<i>Acts 2:1-4</i>
		<i>Matthew 14:1ff</i>
		<i>John 3:30</i>

LEARN

How would you answer the questions?

1 *To pinpoint the date in history, God spoke in a way he hadn’t for c. 500 years, and not to the powerful, but to John in the desert.*

2 *He was given a message from God that he had to speak out.*

3 *He was preaching ‘a baptism’; so needed a ready supply of water.*

4 *Repentance is a prerequisite before the Lord can come to people.*

7 *‘Vipers’ escape from a fire/destruction?*

8 *It would mean to assume the blessing of Abraham’s inheritance. (8)*

9 *John’s Good News was that Messiah was about to come.*

- 13 Tax collecting was a franchise – a set price for Roman government, the rest for yourself – so they should only take a fair share.
- 14 Accuse people falsely then accept a bribe to let them off.
- 16 Baptism = immerse; Holy Spirit = power; Fire = judgment.'
- 18 The Lord was going to gather 'the wheat' into the barn?
- 19 John rebuked Herod as his message applied to the whole nation – king included.

How do you resolve what surprised you?

The bad news is man is sinful, under judgment and needs saved. The good news is God's salvation is here for those who will receive it.

Can you summarise the passage?

The Word of the Lord announcing his approach came not to the rich and powerful in palaces but to lowly John in the desert. It promised the gift of the Holy Spirit. It demanded repentance from sin by all, including the King.

LISTEN

What is the main point of the passage?

MP *God gives the repentant sinner forgiveness of sin and the gift of the Spirit of Jesus.*

Which verse best expresses this? **v. 16**

KV *'I baptise you with water, but he who is mightier than I is coming, the strap of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie. He will baptise you with fire.'*

LIVE

- 1) What does the passage show you about God (Father/Son/Holy Spirit)
 - a) His nature and character?
- 3 *God anticipates His work through His prophets.*
- 10ff *God expects evidence of faith.*
- 16f *God is a consuming fire.*
- 19 *God has one rule for all.*

b) His grace?

16 God baptises in the Spirit those who are unworthy to untie his sandals.

17 God warns sinners of judgment.

c) Jesus / his salvation?

16 Jesus is 'the Lord' - the holy one whose sandals we are unworthy to untie.

Now underline the application of the Main Point.

2) What should I do?

3 Note – salvation comes through the forgiveness of sin

8 Note - Repentance is an action - Fruit is what results.

Display the fruits of repentance.

10ff Note - Fruit of repentance should be seen at our workplace, not just in church.

16 When you are repentant, expect the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

18 Note - Exhortation should accompany preaching.

19 Pay no attention to rank or position with regards to the Gospel.

Now underline the application of the Main Point.

The Baptism and Genealogy of Jesus

Background

Jesus begins His public ministry by being baptised by John. He did not have any sin of his own to repent of – elsewhere the NT says He was without sin (Hebrews 4:15, 7:26-28) – so John was reluctant (Matthew 3:13-15). Scholars think Jesus was identifying Himself with the sinners He came to save. Just as he would later *die* in place of sinners, His baptism by John implied He also *repented* on behalf of those who would later trust in Him.

In the Old Testament and first century AD, Jews carefully preserved their genealogical tables. Luke here gives us Jesus' family tree through His mother, *Mary*, who was descended from King David. He wants us to know that Jesus is the Son of God.

Word List

23 *about thirty years old* age at which Levites began their ministry (Numbers 4:47)

Bible Connections

21 *Jesus was baptised too.* *See* Matthew 3:13-15

22 *God confirms Jesus' Sonship*, - combining Psalm 2:7 about a victorious Messiah, and Isaiah 42:1, about a servant who suffers. *See also* the Transfiguration Luke 9:28-36; Matthew 17:1-8; Mark 9:2-8

Jesus asks the Father to glorify His name. John 12:23-33; 17:1

23 *genealogical table* compare this with Matthew 1:2-16 which shows that *Joseph*, the legal father of Jesus, is also descended from David. Matthew, writing mainly for Jewish readers, starts with Abraham, the founder of the Jewish race. Luke, with his Gentile readership, goes right back to Adam.

A Bible with cross references will show where to get more detail about the famous names in this list, but don't get bogged down: *See* 1 Timothy 1:3-5

LOOK

1) The Text

- a) What questions does it raise?
- 21 *Why was it significant that all the people were there?*
What was he praying about?
- 22 *Why did the Holy Spirit come ‘in bodily form as a dove’?*
Why need to be told he was God’s son if he already knew?
- 23 *What was the significance of the age of 30?*
Why Joseph’s line if Joseph was not the father?
Why only sons given (c.f. some women too in Matthew 1)?
Why all the incidental unknown names given after David?
- 23-38 *Why is a genealogy given?*
- 38 *In what way is Adam son of God?*

- b) What surprises you?

Why a full genealogy of Joseph when Jesus was not his son?

2) The Context Is there any help elsewhere in the Bible?

- a) Surrounding passages
- 22 *A sacrifice of doves* 2:24
- b) The Individual book
- 21 *Jesus at prayer* *Luke 6:12; 9:28; 11:1; 22:40*
- 22 *Son of God* *2:49; 4:3*
Mary treasured these things. *2:19,51*
He was obedient to His parents. *2:51*
Isn’t this Joseph’s son? *4:22*
submission to the Father’s will *22:42*
- c) The Whole Bible
- 21 *baptised by John – became nothing* *Philippians 2:7*
- 22 *to Abraham, r/e Isaac ‘your only son whom you love’* *Genesis 22:2*
- 22 *doves for sacrifice* *John 2:16; Leviticus 14:22*
You are my son *Psalm 2:7*
with whom I am well pleased *Isaiah 42:1*
without sin *Hebrews 4:15*
- 23 *The Lord’s timing! e.g. Paul –* *Galatians 1:15; 2:1!*

	<i>a day is as a thousand years a record of the genealogy Jesus is a real man</i>	<i>Psalm 90:4 Matthew 1:1 I Timothy 2:5; Hebrews 9:15</i>
31	<i>of David, Messiah the awaited King of Israel</i>	<i>Isaiah 9:7</i>
38	<i>Adam for the whole human race the last Adam to God/the Son of God, the creator of all things</i>	<i>2:32; Psalm 67:2-4 I Corinthians 15:22,45 Colossians 1:15-17</i>

LEARN

How would you answer the questions?

21 *Jesus was baptised amongst the crowd of repentant sinners.*
The reply of the Father was the gift of the Spirit and affirmation, so the prayer may have been one of submission and commitment, seeking for power and direction at start of ministry.

22 *The Holy Spirit came in bodily form to underline the ministry – Jesus was to be a sin offering for the poor.*
He was told this to affirm him and confirm him to onlookers.

23 *Age of 30 - when a Levite's ministry began cf John the Baptist 3:2f*
Joseph was His father, but by 'adoption'; (He obeyed Joseph and treated him as His father.)
The human line is passed through the father.

23-38 *the genealogy* - Jesus is a real man
 to David - Messianic qualification
 to Adam - He is for Israel AND the whole human race
 to God - He is the Son of God, the creator of all things

38 *Adam is the son of God created by the Father. Jesus is the Son of God, begotten (John 3:16) not created (Colossians 1:15ff).*

How do you resolve what surprised you?

This genealogy shows Jesus did not appear 'out of thin air'. His ministry was the culmination of a history in which God had worked through mankind fulfilling the Law and the prophets and it was to benefit all mankind.

Can you summarise the passage?

Jesus presents Himself for a sinner's baptism amidst the crowd. As He prays at the start of his ministry, God comes upon Him as a dove, showing His calling as a sacrifice for the 'poor' and affirms His love for Him and approval of Him. He began His earthly ministry continuing the work of God since Adam.

LISTEN

What is the main point of the passage?

MP Jesus was offering Himself for the sins of all mankind and was acceptable to the Father who enabled Him by the gift of the Spirit.

Which verse best expresses this? **v 22**

KV The Holy Spirit descended on Him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven saying, 'You are my beloved son in whom I am well pleased.'

LIVE

1) What does the passage show you about God (Father/Son/Holy Spirit)
a) His nature and character?

22 God speaks.

b) His grace?

22 Jesus repented and assumed the guilt of our sin through baptism.

23 Note -The individuals named in Jesus lineage did not know that they were being included in the Messiah's line.

c) Jesus / his salvation?

21 Jesus is humble – assuming baptism.

22 By the power of the Holy Spirit, Jesus was pronounced as the pleasing / acceptable sacrifice to the Father.

Now underline the application of the Main Point.

2) What should I do?

21 Be ready - Prayer is a time when God can speak and Heaven can open.

22 Accept that, in / through Jesus, you are well pleasing to God.

23 Be patient - There is a right time for the purposes of God.

24-38 Note - My life, as part of the purpose of God, is significant.

Now underline the application of the Main Point.

Study 5

Luke 4:1-13

The temptation of Jesus

Background

Before he began his public ministry, Jesus spent time alone in the desert, reflecting on God's word in the Old Testament, and the words he had heard at his baptism (Luke 3:22). God had quoted two strands of OT prophecy, about a victorious king, and a servant who suffered.

What sort of Messiah was he to be? How was he to use his powers?

For personal convenience?

For establishing a mighty empire on earth?

For working spectacular, if pointless, miracles?

He rejected all these as temptations of the devil.

Word List

3 <i>devil</i>	Greek <i>diabulos</i> , in hebrew <i>satan</i> meaning adversary or slanderer
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Bible Connections

2 <i>Adam was tempted to eat.</i>	<i>see Genesis 3:1ff</i>
<i>Jesus was tempted like us.</i>	<i>see Hebrews 4:15; 2:14-18</i>
3 <i>God's ways is not ours .</i>	<i>see Isaiah 55:8</i>
<i>the foolishness of God (crucifixion), wisdom of man</i>	<i>1 Cor 1:22ff</i>
3,9 <i>'If you are the Son of God'</i>	<i>see Luke 3:22</i>
4,8,12 <i>Jesus' use of Scripture</i>	<i>see Deuteronomy 8:3; 6:13; 6:16</i>
5 <i>The kingdom of evil</i>	<i>see John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11; Ephesians 2:1-13; 6:11-12; 1 John 5:19</i>
<i>Christ's kingdom</i>	<i>see John 18:36; Matt 26:51-55; 2 Corinthians 10:3-5</i>
<i>by-product of seeking Christ's kingdom first:</i>	<i>Matthew 6:33</i>
<i>satan in religious guise</i>	<i>see 2 Corinthians 11:13-15</i>
11 <i>satan misuses Scripture.</i>	<i>see Psalm 91:11-12</i>
13 <i>the devil left him until an 'opportune' time.</i>	<i>see Luke 8:12; 10:18; 11:18; 13:16; 22:3,31; Mark 8:32-33</i>

LOOK

1) **The Text** What questions does the passage raise?

1 *What did being 'full of the Holy Spirit' mean?*
 Why did the Spirit lead him into the desert?
 Where was the desert?

2 *What was the significance of 40 days?*
 'He was hungry' - Why does Luke state the obvious?

3 *How did the Devil appear to Him/speak to Him?*
 What has 'son of God' to do with 'bread'?
 What was the sin in turning stones to bread?

6 *Did the Devil really have that authority?*

7 *Could he really give it to someone else?*

9 *Why to Jerusalem?*

10 *Was the Devil right in applying Psalm 91 to Jesus?*

12 *What was the test?*
 Could Jesus have performed these miracles?

13 *What was the 'opportune' time?*

What surprises you?

I The Holy Spirit could lead Jesus to be tempted?!

2) The Context Is there any help elsewhere in the Bible?

a) Surrounding passages

3,9 God had said, 'You are my son...'
13 'brow of the hill to throw him off'

b) The Individual book

2	<i>a hungry human</i>	Luke 24:41
3	<i>create bread</i>	9:13
	<i>deny self and take up the Cross</i>	9:23
9	<i>no signs given</i>	11:16, 29

c) The Whole Bible

	<i>Jesus destroyed the works of the Devil</i>	<i>I John 3:8</i>
	<i>The Devil tempts - I Thessalonians 3:5 - not God</i>	<i>James 1:15</i>
	<i>Temptation to disbelieve Word of God</i>	<i>Genesis 3:1</i>
	<i>Second (and Last) Adam</i>	<i>I Corinthians 15:21, 45</i>
	<i>Given the keys of the Abyss</i>	<i>Revelation 9:1</i>
	<i>Resist the Devil / temptation</i>	<i>I Peter 5:8</i>
6	<i>Different kingdom</i>	<i>John 18:36</i>
	<i>The ‘splendour of Jesus’”</i>	<i>Philippians 2:6-8</i>
13	<i>Satan entered Judas</i>	<i>John 13:27</i>

LEARN

How would you answer the questions?

- 1 *Jesus had not previously been ‘filled with the Spirit’. The Spirit had newly come upon Him, as He would later come upon others on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:2ff)*
It was a place without distraction as Jesus prepared for ministry.
Desert/wilderness probably means Judean Wilderness – limestone area between the central inhabited plateau and the Dead Sea.
- 2 *40 days = limits of a man’s endurance without food?/ a time of divine testing and proving.*
“Hungry” underlines Jesus’ humanity/vulnerability.
- 3 *Devil appeared to Him as he does to any human – speaking through His thoughts (?)*
Son of God meant He was the creator (John 1:3; Colossians 1:16) therefore able to change one thing into another.
Turning stones to bread was not a sin in itself; it was sinful only if it were self-indulgent/ against the Father’s will / separating the call to be king from the call to be suffering servant. Psalm 2:1; Is 42:1.
- 6 *Yes, but it was a half truth. He was given it for a time. John 12:31.*
- 7 *Yes, he can ‘delegate’, but only for a time.*
- 9 *Jerusalem was ‘the dwelling place of God’, the seat of his authority, the centre of the Jewish faith. It was a place of mass population to gather an audience.*
- 10 *Yes, the Devil was correct: Psalm 91:12 does apply to Jesus!*
- 12 *The test was to ignore faith and try to rely on proof.*

No. Jesus was limited by the will and working of the Father (Mark 6:5, John 5:19).

13 The opportune time(s) – Luke 4:29; 22:39-45.

How do you resolve what surprised you?

He was led into the desert to prepare for His ministry. The devil seized the opportunity to try and snuff it out at the very start.

Can you summarise the passage?

Jesus, newly filled with the Holy Spirit, was led into the desert to prepare for His mission. The devil sought to tempt Him to find a way other than sacrifice (the dove); to use physical, political and spiritual means - feed the world, rule the world, prove to the world. Jesus refutes each time by standing by the Father's Word.

LISTEN

What is the main point of the passage?

MP Jesus was tempted by the Devil to disregard the Word of God, but stood firm and did not sin.

Which verse best expresses this? *v. 13*

KV And when the Devil had ended every temptation, he departed from him until an opportune time.

LIVE

1) What does the passage show you about God (Father/Son/Holy Spirit)
a) His nature and character?

2 *God allows temptation.*

4 God's Word is absolute.

b) His grace?

3,4 *God will provide all our needs.*

c) Jesus / his salvation?

1 *Jesus emptied Himself (- He could be 'filled with the Spirit').*

Now underline the application of the Main Point.

2) What should I do?

1 Note - testing can be beneficial, especially prior to ministry.

2 Note - Jesus was a man just like us - filled with the same Spirit, subject to the same desires / needs, tempted by the same Devil, reliant on the same Word of God.

Note - Being tempted is not a sin if you resist it.

4.8.12 Employ the Word of God to foil temptation.

4 Note - Meeting man's physical needs is not enough.

8 Note - Political power cannot address all man's needs.

12 Do not expect signs to replace the need for faith.

13 Be prepared -The Devil does not give up.

Now underline the application of the Main Point.

Jesus rejected at Nazareth

Background information

From 4:14 to 9:50, Luke gives us an account of Jesus' ministry in Galilee. Much of this information is also given in Matthew and Mark, but Luke alone describes in detail what happened in Jesus' home town of Nazareth, soon after Jesus was baptised and tempted (cf v.23).

Thanks to Luke, we hear Jesus explaining from Isaiah's prophecy the kind of ministry he would exercise, as someone who came to bring salvation not only to the Jews but to all who believe in him.

Word List

14	<i>Galilee</i>	North Palestine; well-watered by streams from mountains further north; much of it fertile; dense and prosperous settlement; exported olive oil, cereals and fish.
16	<i>Nazareth</i>	a town in Galilee, about 25 miles west of Sea of Galilee.
	<i>Sabbath</i>	seventh day of the week; Jewish day of rest, running from sunset Friday to sunset Saturday.
	<i>Synagogue</i>	jewish place of meeting for worship in a locality. From a greek verb meaning <i>to gather together</i> .
19	<i>Year of the Lord's favour</i>	ie the era of salvation.
23	<i>Capernaum</i>	village on NW shores of Sea of Galilee; the first village west of where the R Jordan entered the lake.
25	<i>Elijah</i>	notable OT Prophet <i>see</i> 1 Kings 17-19; 2 Kings 1-2.
26	<i>Zarephath</i>	a small Phoenician town in Sidon, ie not part of Israel.
26	<i>Elisha</i>	Elijah's successor <i>see</i> 2 Kings 2:1 – 9:13.
27	<i>Naaman</i>	commander of Syrian army during the reign of Ben-hadad <i>see</i> 2 Kings 5.

Bible Connections

18f *Elijah & the widow of Zarephath*, 1 Kings 17:7-24 Isaiah 61:1-2; 58:6
(c.f. 18-19 with the questions in Study 5...What sort of Messiah had Jesus to be?)

LOOK

1) The Text What questions does the passage raise?

14 *What does 'in the power of the Spirit' mean?*

What was the news that had spread about him?

15 *Why did everyone praise him?*

16 *What was his custom?*

17 *Why did he unroll the scroll?*

21 *What did he mean by 'Today this Scripture is fulfilled'?*

22 *What were the 'gracious words'?*

What did they mean by, 'Isn't this Joseph's son'?

23 *Why did Jesus reply so negatively?*

24 *What did Jesus mean by referring to Elijah and Elisha?*

28 *What so incensed them as to attempt murder?*

29 *Why did they not just kill him in Nazareth?*

How could they take him to the brow but not throw him over?

What surprises you?

28 *The sudden total change in attitude of people of Nazareth.*

2) The Context Is there any help elsewhere in the Bible?

a) Surrounding passages

22 *Son of God 1:32; 3:22; 23*

23 *Has already been to Capernaum, then returns there (4:31)*

b) The Individual book

Luke's Gospel is peppered with people who respond to Jesus who are unlikely/unworthy - Gentiles, sinners, women, children etc.

c) The Whole Bible

24 *The Prophet, like Moses*

Deuteronomy 18:17

25 *Elijah and widow*

1 Kings 17:7

27 *Elisha and Naaman*

2 Kings 5

30 *The 'right time' for Jesus*

John 7:6; 12:23

LEARN

How would you answer the questions?

- 14 *At his Baptism, Jesus was given power from the Holy Spirit that he did not have before. See also 4:1.*
News of his baptism, teaching, miracles.
- 15 *He was doing good - and threatening no-one?*
- 16 *His custom was to go to the synagogue on the Sabbath, Saturday.*
- 17 *They chose (or he asked for) the book – he chose the reading.*
- 21 *He meant He himself was the ‘anointed one’ - the Messiah.*
- 22 *The ‘gracious words’ (words of grace) were the good news for those who couldn’t ‘pay’ – poor, blind, prisoner etc.*
They did not expect these things from ‘just Joseph’s son’.
- 23 *Despite what they heard and saw, they still thought he was from Joseph from not God.*
- 24 *Elijah was a prophet who was persecuted by his own people.*
- 28 *He claimed to be from God and suggested they’d rejected God?*
- 29 *Law breakers were to be killed outside the camp.*
It was not yet ‘his time’.

How do you resolve what surprised you?

‘Isn’t this Joseph’s son’ showed Jesus that they saw him simply as one of them. Jesus claimed to be The Prophet, the fulfilment of the Prophecy (Isaiah 61), whom they, and other Jews who ignored God, were rejecting. They are incensed by this claim and acted to kill him.

Can you summarise the passage?

Jesus returns to Galilee. News spread of His baptism by John and subsequent teaching and miraculous ministry in Galilee. He comes to Nazareth where they are willing to receive him as a ‘son made good’ – but not as the Messiah/Son of God. Jesus berates them for their lack of faith, likening them to the people of Israel rejecting God and his prophets in the time of Elijah and Elisha. Incensed by his claim that they are rejecting God/His Word, they try to kill him but are unable to do so as this was not his time or his way to die.

LISTEN

What is the main point of the passage?

MP *Familiarity with Jesus may offend people and provoke them to reject Him as Messiah/Son of God.*

Which verse best expresses this? **v 29,30**

KV *They (tried to) throw Him down a cliff But passing through their midst, he went away.*

LIVE

1) What does the passage show you about God (Father, Son, Spirit)?

a) His nature and character?

14 *God's Spirit is powerful.*

15 *God's Word may be superficially attractive.*

18 *God saves the weak.*

23f *God is willing to confront the complacent.*

25f *God does not show favouritism.*

30 *Though the forces of evil oppose Him, God is in complete control, always*

b) His grace

18,19 *His favour is given to those who cannot pay.*

24 *He preached to those who would not listen.*

c) Jesus / his salvation

8,19 *He proclaimed freedom for slaves – the year of the Lord's favour.*

Now underline the application of the Main Point.

2) What should I do?

14 *Note - The Spirit empowered Jesus.*

15 *Expect the teaching of Jesus to be generally appreciated.*

16 *Note - Jesus adhered to the Law.*

22 *Note - it is not enough to admire Jesus*

28 *Humble yourself before the Word of God.*

Be prepared - To challenge someone's relationship with God may infuriate them.

30 *Be assured - Nothing can alter God's time or thwart his purpose.*

Now underline the application of the Main Point.

Sharing the Word

Use

'Hearing the Word' can be used alone, with another, or in a group.

Preparation

Time put in alone beforehand will greatly benefit time spent together.

Work through the stages - LOOK, LEARN, LISTEN, LIVE. *

Write down your own questions and answers.

(With good preparation and discipline in the time together, the study may be conducted in as little as 45 mins!)

Format

- a. LOOK - Any questions? (If answer is known or not!)
Relevant cross references in rest of the Bible?
- b. LEARN - Answers to questions?
- c. LISTEN - Key verse and Main Point?
- d. LIVE - What does it show about God /His grace/ Jesus?
What should I do

n.b. Leave plenty of time for the LIVE section!

By also eating together and a time of prayer, you will have shared something of the life of the early church! (Acts 2:42-47)

Remember!

As we gather round God's Word -

- a) Listen to the views of others.
- b) Make room for the novice. (They can join in too when you start by listing 'Any questions'.)
- c) Don't let the 'knowledgeable' dominate. Encourage everyone to think for themselves.
- d) Try to include others, especially 'seekers', in your time together.

* The **process** is explained and practised in a four-hour course, suitable for all, called '**An Introduction to 'Hearing the Word'**'. **???????? website?**

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