

LUKE – THE SON OF MAN

dr matthew jacoby

■ MAY-JUL 2026
thrive

LIVING LIFE AS GOD INTENDED

thrive

MAY-JUL 2026

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Copyright © Five Pty Ltd 2026
Published 2026 by Five Pty Ltd
PO Box 3055 Geelong West
Victoria 3218 Australia

Executive Editor - Deb Lynn
Development and marketing - Five Pty Ltd
Design and layout - Stephen Cooling
Printed in Singapore by KHL Printing Co. Pte Ltd

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THIS ISSUE

thrive

MAY-JUL 2026

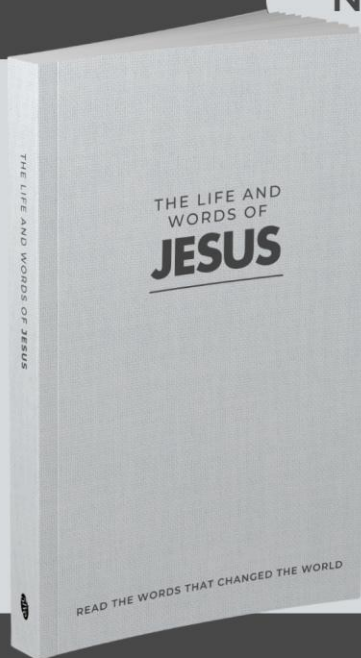
LUKE

– the Son of Man

In this edition of *Thrive* we will be reading through Luke's account of the life and ministry of Jesus. Luke's Gospel provides a unique perspective of Jesus' life and contains much profound material that is only found in this Gospel. His portrait of Jesus is full of grace and compassion. In many ways this Gospel teaches us what it means to be truly human. We see the perfect humanity of Jesus, who appears as the second Adam, the Son of Man, to begin the great reversal of all that the first Adam began when he rebelled against God. You will find this journey deeply rewarding and challenging. So please join me as we read through Luke's Gospel together in this edition of *Thrive*.

MJ

NEW RESOURCE



Well, now you can find out for yourself. This book presents a compilation of readings from the original accounts of the life and teaching of Jesus Christ. This is the perfect starting point for those who want to find out about Jesus for themselves from the original sources.

Whether you're searching for life's purpose, curious but sceptical about Christianity, or simply wondering about the significance of Jesus, this book invites you to discover for yourself why history credits Jesus Christ with changing the course of the world.

This is an invitation to explore, question, and uncover the story behind history's most influential figure.

An ideal resource for those exploring the Christian faith, or just curious about Jesus.

Why does the life of a single individual continue to shape laws, culture, and even our calendar?

Why do billions recognise the name Jesus, regardless of their beliefs?

What did Jesus actually say that ignited the world's largest movement and inspired centuries of transformation?

How can words spoken two millennia ago still matter to us today?

Guide notes, introduction and summary written by
Dr Matthew Jacoby.



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For hundreds of years the Jewish prophets had predicted the coming of a divine-human saviour king from the line of David, an “Anointed One” (Hebrew: *Messiah*; Greek: *Christ*), who would one day rule over the whole earth. This book, written by Luke, a companion of Paul and the apostles, narrates the fulfilment of that long expectation. Luke doesn’t, however, begin with Jesus. He begins his account with the story of the miraculous birth of the prophet, John the Baptist, who would prepare the way for Jesus. It so happens that the account of David’s life in the first book of Samuel begins the same way: it narrates the miraculous birth of Samuel who would prepare the way for David. This patterning is enormously significant. Here is the point: God speaks before God acts, and he always acts in accordance with his word. God speaks to us to prepare us for what he is about to do. When Malachi predicted the coming of Jesus, he said that he would be preceded by a messenger who would “prepare the way” so that the people would “stand when he appears” (Malachi 3:1-5). Jesus’ coming was not ‘out of the blue’. There was lots of divine activity preparing the way, and the story of the miraculous birth of John the Baptist, is part of that. Those who responded to the ministry of John would be prepared for Jesus’ coming. God is doing things in your life now that will prepare you for what he wants to do next. He is speaking to you, and you listening to him will be what will prepare you for what is coming.

Read Luke 1:1-25

Reflect on what God is saying and doing in your life right now.

Prayer and Response – Psalm 95

In relation to God we are always in a position of response. This fact could become the key to a life of prayer that feels much more relational, mutual and less ritualistic. God has already spoken to us through Scripture; he has and is doing things that we should respond to, and he has been speaking to you lately in various ways. People struggle to get started in prayer because they try to get prayer started. But God has already started the conversation and we are always in a position of response. If I expressed to you something very important and you ignored me and started a different conversation, that would be a sure way to stifle our relationship. If you give me a great gift which I then fail to acknowledge when we next meet, it would, again, stifle our relationship. So, ask yourself, what has God done for me that I should acknowledge and give thanks for. There is more gracious divine activity in and around your life than you can conceive. So thank and praise God. God has probably been highlighting things in your life that grieve him. He speaks into our hearts by his Holy Spirit and also by circumstances that press on these infected areas in our character. Don't ignore him and start a different conversation that suits you. Agree with his concerns in penitence and repent. Before you express your concerns to God, open your heart to his concerns about you. This will make your prayer life into a real and perpetual conversation.

Read **Psalm 95**. Give thanks to God and confess the sins that he is grieved by in your life.

STRANGE FAVOUR

Luke 1:26-38

MONDAY

4 MAY

The angel comes to Mary and tells her that she is “highly favoured”. Wow, that’s great! So what does this favour look like? Here is the bombshell: “You will conceive and give birth to a son.” A few issues would have occurred to Mary at this ‘annunciation’. First of all, she was a virgin; so there is a physiological impossibility to consider here. But more serious was the fact that Mary wasn’t married, which meant that her pregnancy would bring her disgrace at best and death by stoning at worst. We know now that the angel would visit Joseph too and clear things up with him. Mary, however, didn’t know this would happen. But wait there is more! The angel told her that she would give birth to the Messiah even though she lived in Nazareth. But the Scriptures clearly indicate that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2). We know now that just before the birth of Jesus the emperor called for a census which would require people to return to their ancestral land, which in Joseph’s case meant Bethlehem. But Mary didn’t know this would happen. So there are a number of issues with this so called ‘favour’. The favour of God comes in very strange forms. It often looks like confusion at best and sheer doom at worst. Have you experienced the strange providential favour of God? Maybe you are experiencing it now. Are there things going on that seem confusing and worrying? Let your trust be like that of Mary who responded to God saying: “May your word to me be fulfilled.”

Read Luke 1:26-38

What is God saying to you in your present situation? Trust God to fulfil his promises for you through whatever means.

TUESDAY
5 MAY

A SIGN FOR EVERYONE

Luke **1:39-80**

Elizabeth, a relative of Mary, was barren but was enabled by the miraculous intervention of God to conceive a child. This child was John the Baptist. The miraculous conception would be an important sign, both to Mary (to whom the angel announced this miracle) and to the Jewish people among whom Elizabeth's husband Zechariah was serving as a priest. Certainly both Mary and Zechariah recognised it not just as a miracle but as a sign. Mary's famous exclamation on meeting Elizabeth (the 'Magnificat') and particularly Zechariah's prophecy, make this explicit. Throughout the Gospel narratives there are many miracles, and it is important to understand that they were not just done for the sake of the individuals themselves. A miracle for someone is a sign of breakthrough for everyone. The fact that one person, in this case Elizabeth, experienced a miracle, meant that God was doing things and this had consequences for everyone. The nature of Elizabeth's miracle is particularly symbolic within the biblical context. The giving of life where there was barrenness symbolised the very thing that Israel most needed at the time. They were in a period of great barrenness. There had not been a prophet in Israel for four hundred years. They were wondering where God was and why he wasn't turning up to help them. This miracle for Elizabeth was a sign to Israel that God was at work among them again. If God does a miracle in your life, it is a sign for everyone. If God does a miracle in someone else's life, it is a sign for you. A miracle for someone is a sign for everyone.

Read Luke 1:39-80

What do you most want to see God do in yours or another's life?

KINGDOM OF HUMILITY

WEDNESDAY

6 MAY

Luke 2:1-21

By the providence of God Mary gave birth to Jesus in the very town where the Scriptures predicted the Messiah would be born (See Micah 5:2). And see how this providence works: it included a decree of Caesar Augustus! Mary would not have undertaken such a journey in her condition and may have felt the decree to be terrible timing. But God is sovereign over history, and his plan was perfect. This didn't mean, however, that it was easy for Mary and Joseph. Mary had to give birth in a stable! Couldn't the God who ruled over the acts of Caesar have provided a guest room in Bethlehem? No, Jesus was to come in humility, to serve in humility and to raise up a humble people to overcome the world with humility. His birth in a manger served as a sign of this (2:12). As a further sign of this, the first people to visit Jesus and spread the news about him were lowly shepherds (the lowest class of people in those times). God was going to establish his kingdom in a completely inverse way to how the kingdoms of this world arise. As the prophet Zechariah had said, God's kingdom will be established "'not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,' says the Lord Almighty" (4:6). He had predicted a humble movement of a humble Messiah: "See, your king comes to you, righteous and victorious, lowly and riding on a donkey" (9:9). The victory of the Kingdom will come through humility, and only the humble will prevail. Don't *rise up* over others. Stoop down to serve and *raise up* others.

Read Luke 2:1-21

Ask God to show you who he wants you to bless and encourage today.

THURSDAY
7 MAY

THE SEEKERS FIND

Luke **2:22-52**

There is a difference between expecting God to act and pre-empting how God will act. The first is faith, the second is folly. The Jews were expecting their Messiah to come, but they made the mistake of pre-empting what that coming would look like. They therefore missed it completely. The Jews didn't expect their king to be born in a stable and be heralded by shepherds. They did not expect that he would be the son of parents so poor that they could only bring a pair of birds as an offering (cf. 2:24 with Leviticus 12:18). They didn't expect him to be a poor carpenter's son. He came in a completely different way to what they expected. So, many people missed him. But there were some who saw him and it was their open expectancy that caused them to be in the right place at the right time to see God's promise fulfilled. Anna and Simeon were looking for the coming of the Messiah and they did not tire of praying and seeking after God, even though they lived in a time of spiritual barrenness. Both Anna and Simeon were very old, and they had sought God all their lives. So, when the infant Jesus was brought into the temple by Joseph and Mary, amongst the crowds of people, they were in tune enough with God to catch the moment and not let it pass them by. The Messiah, the Son of God, was there amid the crowds, but only two people recognised him. God comes to us in unusual ways. But those who persistently seek God will encounter him when he acts.

Read Luke 2:22-52

Is God trying to speak to you through your circumstances?
Are you missing what he is saying and doing?

A SERIOUS PROBLEM

Luke 3:1-20

FRIDAY
8 MAY

God sent John the Baptist to prepare people for the coming of their saviour by reminding them that they needed saving. John's words seem harsh, but his harshness is like that of a doctor who tells us that we have a cancer that needs surgery. John was sent to help his people see that their hearts were deeply corrupted and beyond cure (Jeremiah 17:9). He was sent to prepare them for 'surgery'. If these people would not allow God to cut them open for surgery, they would be cut down by their sin. John immersed (the Greek word *baptizo* means 'to immerse') people in the Jordan river as a sign of what Jesus would do to save his people. The only cure for sin was in the forgiveness and cleansing that Jesus was bringing. John declared that Jesus would save people from sin by immersing (baptising) them in the Holy Spirit. Ezekiel had pictured a river of life symbolising the outpouring of God's Spirit in these days (Ezekiel 47). Joel had spoken of a great outpouring of God's Spirit, a time when "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved" (Joel 2:28-32). John was announcing this time. John warned the people that if they refused to be baptised in water and the Spirit, then they would be immersed instead in unquenchable fire. Many people heard this warning and rejected it because it sounded unreasonably harsh and unfair. People reject this warning today for the same reason. To respond like this is to deny that the problem is really that serious. John's mission was to tell us that sin is that serious.

Read Luke 3:1-20

Pray for people you know and love,
that they might know God and Christ.

9/10 MAY

weekend

Prayer and Scripture – Psalm 19

In relation to God, we are always in a position of response. In the first instance we must respond to what he has done and said for *us*. We tend to think of prayer too individualistically. God isn't just speaking to you. He is most importantly speaking to *us*. And he has started that conversation thousands of years ago through word and deed. These words and deeds are recorded in the Bible. Anything he wants to say to you now will be the application of those truths first revealed in the books of the Bible. Have you ever joined a table conversation late and struggled to join in on the interaction? Because you missed so much of the conversation, you don't get the jokes, and you don't understand the references. The reason we read the Bible is to get in on God's conversation with us. If you neglect Scripture, you show disregard for the conversation he is having with us. You should not then complain if God seems silent. If you want to hear from God, start with what he has already said, and make it a priority to continually meditate on his Word. I don't read the Bible just for daily inspiration. I read the Bible to orient my soul to God's conversational agenda. I can hear what he is saying to me now, because I am continually reflecting on what he has said to us. The Bible is the foundational revelation of God, and all prayer is ultimately a response to that.

Read **Psalm 19**. Ask God to help you engage more deeply with his Word in the Bible.

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With your guide
Matthew Jacoby



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Photo: Pascal Debrunnera
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Distributed by
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Geelong West VIC 3218 Australia
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Category: Dated Daily Devotional

ISSN 1836-7887 Issue 17 Vol.3



9 771836 788004

Code: THVMJJ26