

***Study Hints for Discussion and Thinking Further***  
***International Bible Lessons***

**Luke 1:8-20**

**Sunday, December 18, 2016**

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Some Bible study groups or classes can further discussion by asking some or all of the **Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further** below. Others may want to send the bulletin size *International Bible Lesson* home with their students for further study in the coming week to encourage continuing Bible study. The *Study Hints for Discussion and Thinking Further* below are not actually intended to be *the answers* to the discussion questions. These indeed are “hints” a teacher may use to help students think through and discuss the questions in class. The *Class Preparation Guide* includes the questions below, and it can be given to students at the end of the previous class so they can pray, read, and think ahead to prepare for the next week’s Bible class.

**Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further**

**1. Why was it so special for Zechariah to serve in the temple and burn incense in the Holy Place?**

Zechariah would only be able to do this once in his life, the same with all priests. He was chosen by lot, indicating to the priests that God chose him for that day according to God’s perfect timing. He would meet an angel and receive a personal message from God.

**2. What did the worshipers and Zechariah do when Zechariah burned the incense?**

The worshipers were in the outer court and Zechariah was in the Holy Place praying for the Messiah to come and other needs as was the custom.

**3. What was special about Gabriel?**

Gabriel stood in the presence of God. He was only one of two angels to be named in the Bible. He announced the birth of John the Baptist to Zechariah and the birth of Jesus the Messiah to Mary.

**4. How were Sarah, Hannah, and Elizabeth similar, but different from Mary?**

Sarah, Hannah, and Elizabeth were similar because they were too old to conceive a child, and God worked miracles so they could give birth to children. Sarah gave birth to Isaac. Hannah gave birth to Samuel. Elizabeth gave birth to John the Baptist. Mary was a virgin and she conceived Jesus through the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit.

**5. How were John and Jesus different from everyone born before and after them? What responsibilities did God want each of them to fulfill?**

John the Baptist was the only person to be filled with the Holy Spirit from before he was born. Jesus is the only Person to be born of a virgin, conceived by the Holy Spirit, and be fully God and fully human as a man.

John the Baptist was called to preach a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins to prepare believers for the coming of the Messiah. John was a prophet who was like Elijah.

Jesus is the Son of God and the Messiah who began preaching the gospel after John the Baptist finished his work of preparation. Jesus made a new covenant in His blood, died a sacrificial death on the cross, forgave people of their sins, worked many miracles, healed and fed people, granted believers in Him eternal life, taught people how to love and obey God, called His followers spread the good news about Him after He rose from the dead and ascended into heaven, where He now rules from heaven and waits to come again.

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