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THE LOOKOUT

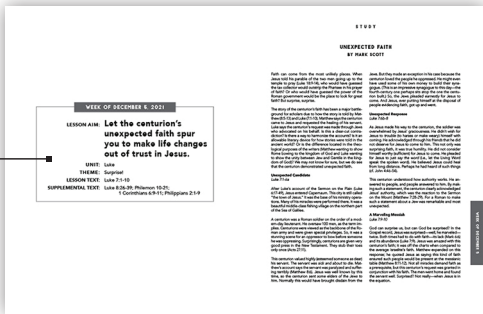
DECEMBER 2021

Unit: LUKE
Theme: SURPRISE!

Overview: The God of the Bible is a God of surprises. About the time we think we have God figured out, he does a “180” and leaves us with our mouths open. Luke’s Gospel of messianic joy holds surprises for soldiers, disciples, shepherds, religious leaders, and others. The ultimate surprise to the crucifixion may well be the resurrection. Buckle up for a study in Luke about a God who surprises.

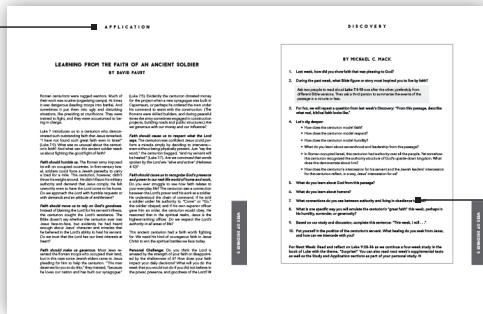
HOW TO USE

Each week has a **lesson aim**, **lesson text**, and **supplemental text**.



Tabs indicate the week of each lesson.

Each week features three sections: **Study**, **Application**, and **Discovery**.



Use the **Discovery** questions to study, discuss, and apply the Scripture passages in a group or class.

WEEK OF DECEMBER 26, 2021

LESSON AIM: **Expect that God has in store for you something greater than you can imagine.**

UNIT: Luke

THEME: Surprise!

LESSON TEXT: Luke 20:27-40

SUPPLEMENTAL TEXT: 1 Corinthians 15:20, 42-44, 51-58;
1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Revelation 2:7,
10-11; 7:9-17; 22:14

UNEXPECTED HOPE

BY MARK SCOTT

Hopes are dashed when the new year begins the same way the old year ended. We long for a new year that breathes expectation and hope into our life. Jesus is a polar opposite of an Eeyore and a Debbie Downer. We find unexpected hope in him even in the midst of the questions over his authority.

We move from the joy of the shepherds spreading the good tidings of Christmas (last week's lesson) to the Sadducees asking Jesus about the future (this week's lesson). Jesus rode into the city of Jerusalem like he owned the place. It was quite a parade. Then he cursed a fig tree and cleansed the temple. These three events made the religion police ask about his authority. Jesus said he would not answer their question, but then he did, through parables (Matthew 21:28–22:14). After sharing the parables, Jesus answered several questions—a political one about paying taxes, a doctrinal one dealing with the future, and an interpretative one dealing with the greatest commandment. This lesson deals with the doctrinal question.

Hypothetical Question

Luke 20:27-33

This second question on the “Day of Questions” (Tuesday of Jesus’ final week) came from the Sadducees. They were the priestly aristocracy. They were the temple power brokers. The high priest was chosen from among their group. Politically they were liberal, but theologically they were conservative. In their view, if Moses did not write it, then it was not Bible. Annas, Caiaphas, John, and Alexander were all Sadducees (Acts 4:6).

The Sadducees’ presuppositions caused them to ask this hypothetical question. They did not believe in the reality of resurrection and future life. Neither did they believe in angels or spirits (Acts 23:8). Keep in mind, they were more interested in trapping Jesus than in finding truth. Thus, the hypothetical question.

Their question went back to Deuteronomy 25:5 to what was called Levirate marriage. God placed a provision in the Law to protect the heritage of families and property. When a man died and left no heirs, the brother-in-law had responsibilities to father children through the dead man’s wife. The law seems strange to us. But the Messiah would have to come to earth to a specific location. The land of Israel was that spot (where East meets West—the literal center of the earth). This law perpetuated that family and land.

So the Sadducees posed this hypothetical question about seven brothers and a woman. They each married her one after the other. In the resurrected life, which they did not accept, whose wife would she be? It’s likely they were proud of themselves and their question.

Heavenly Answer

Luke 20:34-40

Luke recorded Jesus’ answer in a rather kind and gentle manner. Matthew recorded Jesus attacking the Sadducees for their lack of knowledge of the Scriptures and their lack of faith in the power of God (22:29). Mark’s account added, “You are badly mistaken!” (12:27).

The only one who can tell us about the world beyond us is one who came from there. Jesus began speaking about what life in that world is like. The institution of marriage will not be necessary in the resurrected world because everyone will love everyone equally. (Sidebar: Jesus did not say we would not know our mates as our mates.) Life in the resurrected world will be so much greater than even the closest of all earthly relationships (i.e., marriage). The resurrected world is a world of perfect, unselfish love.

Jesus also taught that in the resurrected world there would be no need to worry about the dead man or his brothers dying. In fact, people will be *like the angels*. There is no promise of wings, but it probably suggests that, like the angels, we will constantly be in the presence of God. Our best label is *children of the resurrection*. That is the best identity.

Jesus then assured that God is a living God and his people will be resurrected by taking the Sadducees on their own turf. He referenced the call of Moses at the burning bush (Exodus 3–4). God identified himself to Moses as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Jesus spoke about these patriarchs as if they were currently alive. Throw out the hypothetical question as *all are alive* to God.

The *teachers of the law*, who were Pharisees, commended Jesus’ answer. They did not want the Sadducees to use this fine point of theology against them (cf. Acts 23:9-10). While there would be one more question—the one about the greatest commandment—Luke’s account reads, “And no one dared to ask him any more questions” (20:40). In the resurrected world, all of our questions melt into unexpected hope. ■

APPLICATION

THERE WILL BE A LAST TIME

BY DAVID FAUST

My son and I painted the outside of his house last summer. When the job was over, I told Matt, "This is the last time we'll do that together. Years from now when the house needs to be painted again, I will be too old to climb a ladder."

I remember the day my grandfather handed his car keys to my dad. Grandpa was a capable and independent man, but he was wise enough to recognize his limitations. That was the last time he ever drove a car.

The "last time" can sneak up on us. One morning a healthy-looking young father led his family in a prayer of thanksgiving before his kids left for school. His heart gave out while they were gone, and a few days later I conducted his funeral.

On this fallen, faltering earth, there will be a last time for all kinds of things. In the future, the house I live in now will belong to someone else. One day my clothes will be donated to a thrift store or tossed into the trash. Someone else will drive my car, and eventually it will rust in a junkyard. Someday my savings will be distributed to my next of kin.

There will be a last time I pet my dog and mow my lawn. There will be a last time I eat my favorite meal and watch a ballgame on TV. There will be a last time I kiss my wife and hug my kids and grandkids. There will be a last time I watch the sun rise, enjoy a mountain view, and hear a bird sing. Some Sunday will mark the last church service I attend and the last time I share in the Lord's Supper. Someone has said that preachers should approach every sermon as if it's the last time they will ever preach the Word of God. Someday that will, in fact, be the case.

There will be a last time. There will be final words to say and a final breath to take.

But . . . the story doesn't end with our last heartbeat. Yes, "the world and its desires pass away," but the rest of the verse says, "whoever does the will of God lives forever" (1 John 2:17). For all who have been saved by God's grace, what we call the end is actually the beginning.

There will be a first time!

After death I will open my eyes to a never-ending day. In my new resurrected body, I will begin to examine a safe and spacious land where tears never flow but the river of life always flows. There will be a first time I embrace friends who arrived ahead of me. There will be a first time I walk on golden streets and hear the angels sing their melodies of praise around the throne of God. There will be unlimited time to explore a glorious place no eye has seen, no ear has heard, and "no human mind has conceived" (1 Corinthians 2:9).

The first time I glimpse the Holy City that shines with the unfiltered glory of God, I won't worry about the last time my back ached or tears filled my eyes.

And the first time I see the Savior's face, I won't miss anything I left behind.

Personal Challenge: Begin assembling a "When I Die" box. It should include your will, financial information for your family and executor, instructions about your funeral preferences, and encouraging notes you want to share with your family and friends. Make sure it also includes a list of your favorite Scriptures and a written or videotaped personal testimony about your faith in the Lord. ■

DISCOVERY

BY MICHAEL C. MACK

1. Over the last week, how were you able to “spread the word” about the good news of Jesus’ birth?
2. In what way did you find great joy and/or peace last week?

Ask two people to read aloud **Luke 20:27-40** one after the other, preferably from different Bible versions. Then ask a third person to retell the narrative in their own words in a minute or less.

3. How does Jesus’ response provide hope for Christ followers?
4. Let’s dig deeper:
 - The Sadducees didn’t believe in the resurrection of the dead, and yet they asked Jesus about what would happen at the resurrection. What was their motive for their question?
 - The Sadducees’ view of life was very limited: we live, we die, that’s it. How do you think that kind of viewpoint would affect a person’s life?
 - What points did Jesus make in his response to their question?
 - What Old Testament evidence did Jesus use to prove the resurrection of the dead?
 - How would you summarize Jesus’ main point in his response?
5. What do you learn about our eternal God from this passage?
6. What do you learn about people?
7. Since we are God’s children, what does that teach you about obeying God our Father?
8. Consider how you could retell this story to someone who does not believe fully in Jesus. What would you tell them about the eternal hope you have that Jesus provided when he died on the cross?
9. Based on our study and discussion, complete this sentence: “This week, I will . . .”
10. In what area of your life do you need hope this week?

For Next Week: Read and reflect on Romans 1:18-32 as we begin a five-week study in the book of Romans and the topic, “Righteous.” You can also read next week’s supplemental texts as well as the Study and Application sections as part of your personal study. 📖