

VBS

JULY
12-16



KNOW the GOSPEL!

BELIEVE the GOSPEL!

SPREAD the GOSPEL!

1ST - 5TH GRADE

Day 1: What is the Gospel?

What is the Gospel?

The Objective is the key concept for this week's lesson. It should be the main focus of the study.

These are the key verses that you will find helpful in teaching your study this week. The "Main passage" is the basis of the study, where the other verses support the objective of the lesson.

There is a memory verse for the students that relates to every study. If a student can memorize the verse for the following week you may give them a prize from the "reward box" found on your cart.

An introductory activity or question that will settle the class, draw their attention to the study and prepare their hearts for God's Word.

Objective This lesson will teach the kids that the Gospel is the good news that Jesus was born, died, and rose again to forgive our sins and is coming back one day.

Key Verses

Luke 2:8-14; 24:1-10; Acts 1:9-11—Main Teaching Passage

Luke 1:26-38

Romans 3:23; 5:8; 6:23

John 3:16

2 Corinthians 5:21

Memory Verse - 1 Corinthians 15:3-4

"Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures."

Hook

Give a series of statements, asking the students to determine if each one is good news ("free ice cream") or bad news ("extra chores today.") After a few examples, ask the students what they think the best possible good news would be.

This week, we are learning about the best good news ever given, as told by angels in the New Testament.

What does the Bible say? This is where we will read a passage or series of passages that teach on the subject of the day.

BOOK

Throughout the New Testament, there are several key moments in which the Lord used angels to announce some important news to humanity. Today, we are going to look at three of these occasions found in Luke and Acts.

The first appearance we are looking at takes place on the night Jesus was born, several months after the angel Gabriel had already told Mary that she would give birth to the Son of God (Luke 1:35). In Luke 2:8-14, we read that there were shepherds watching their sheep at night when an angel came and announced that the Savior, the long-awaited Messiah, had been born in Bethlehem. In fact, the angels were so excited about this news that a multitude of them began to sing praises to God across the night sky.

Years later, after Jesus was crucified and buried, in Luke 24:1-10 Mary Magdalene and some of the other women who followed Jesus went to His tomb to anoint His body. However, when they got to the tomb, they found that Jesus was gone. Two angels appeared to them and told them that Jesus had risen from the dead, just as He had promised several times throughout His ministry. The women then ran to tell the disciples about this good news.

Our final scene takes place 40 days later in Acts 1:9-11. After commanding His followers to wait for the Holy Spirit and then tell people about Him all over the world, Jesus then rose up and ascended into the air until He was out of their sight. As His followers stared up at the sky, again two angels appeared and told them that Jesus would return to earth one day the same way they saw Him leave.

LOOK

This week, we are studying the Gospel and looking at why it is important for Christians to know the Gospel, believe it, and share it with others. But before we can believe and share it, we first must answer the question, "What is the Gospel?" The word "gospel" means good news, so when Christians talk about the Gospel, they are referring to the good news of what Jesus has done for us. In each of the stories we looked at today, there was bad news, and the angels came to announce good news. Taken together, these three reports form an outline of the Gospel.

From almost the very beginning of history, all of mankind faced some really bad news: all humans have sinned (sin is anything we think, say, or do that displeases God), and that sin separates us from God (Romans 3:23; 6:23). In response to this bad news, in the Old Testament God promised to fix the problem of sin by sending the Messiah (Savior). After years of waiting, in Luke 2, the angels came to announce to the shepherds the good news that the promised Savior had come. God had

The interpretation/exegesis of the passage. What does this passage mean? How does this passage apply to my life?

LOOK (Continued)

sent His Son, the Messiah, to save the world. Jesus, who is God, was born as a human to save all of humanity from sin.

Jesus lived a perfect life, and yet He was killed by wicked men and died on a cross. His followers were devastated by this, but in Luke 24, the women received more good news: Jesus wasn't dead anymore! He had risen and was alive forever. By dying on the cross, He paid the price for our sins by taking the punishment that we deserved, and by rising again, He defeated death for us so that we can have eternal life (John 3:16; Romans 5:8; 2 Corinthians 5:21).

Finally, in Acts 1 His followers, no doubt, were disappointed to see Jesus leaving the earth to return to heaven, but again the angels came with good news. Jesus wouldn't be gone forever. One day, He is coming back to earth to make everything right. We are still waiting for that day to come, but one day Jesus will come as promised and fix all the problems we see in this world and rule forever as King.

So all together, we see that the Gospel is the Good News that God's Son was born as our human Savior, died on the cross for our sins, rose from the dead, returned to heaven, and is coming back to earth to make everything right one day. But it is not enough just to know this good news. The question we will be answering throughout this week is: do you believe it? And if you do believe it, what are you going to do about it?

What is my response to this passage of Scripture? How should my life change according to what this passage teaches me? What are the practical things I can do throughout the week to make this true in my life?

TOOK

As a class, memorize 1 Corinthians 15:3-4.

Review the lesson by asking the kids about each of the three stories. What did the angels announce? Why was that good news?

Pray: Thank the Lord for sending His Son to die on the cross and rise again so that we could be forgiven. Thank Him for sending us the angels to tell us the Good News.

Parent Question: What is the "good news" of the Gospel?

FURTHER STUDY

Commentary on Luke 2:8-14; 24:1-11, and Acts 1:9-11 By David Guzik

Luke 2:8-14

2. ([Luk 2:8](#)) Shepherds watch over their flocks.

Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night.

a. **Now there were in the same country shepherds:** Bethlehem's shepherds were known to care for the temple flock. These men may have also protected and cared for the lambs used in temple sacrifice.

b. **Living out in the fields:** Many have said that a late December date is impossible, because shepherds would not have been out at night at that time of year. Nevertheless, warm winters are not unknown in Judea, which has a climate remarkably similar to Southern California.

3. ([Luk 2:9-14](#)) The angelic announcement.

And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid. Then the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger." And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying: "Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!"

a. **An angel of the Lord stood before them:** Interrupting this quiet, dark night was the shining presence of an angel and **the glory of the Lord**. This first angel brought **good tidings** (literally it means that they preached the gospel) to these shepherds, who were regarded as social outcasts.

i. "As a class shepherds had a bad reputation...More regrettable was their habit of confusing 'mine' with 'thine' as they moved about the country. They were considered unreliable and were not allowed to give testimony in the law courts." (Morris)

ii. "The first preacher of the gospel was an angel. God hath now taken this honour from the angels, and put it upon the ministers, who in Scripture are called angels, [Revelation 2:1](#)." (Trapp)

b. **For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior:** They announced the birth of a **Savior**, which was (and is) exactly the need of mankind. We don't need another advisor, a reformer, or a committee, but a **Savior**.

c. **Suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God:** After the single angel's announcement, a whole group of angels appeared. This was a **heavenly host** (a band of soldiers) that proclaimed peace. The world needed then and needs now **peace**.

i. Even the pagans of the first century world sensed this need for peace and a savior. Epictetus, a first century

pagan writer, expressed this: “While the emperor may give peace from war on land and sea, he is unable to give peace from passion, grief, and envy; he cannot give peace of heart, for which man yearn for more than even outward peace.”

ii. The contrast between the angelic glory and the humble Jesus must have seemed extreme. God loves to put His glory in unlikely packages so His glory is more clearly displayed ([2 Corinthians 4:7](#)).

iii. “Let God have all the glory, so we may have the peace.” (Trapp)

Luke 24:1-11

A. The resurrection of Jesus is discovered.

1. ([Luk 24:1-3](#)) Women followers of Jesus discover the empty tomb of Jesus.

Now on the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they, and certain other women with them, came to the tomb bringing the spices which they had prepared. But they found the stone rolled away from the tomb. Then they went in and did not find the body of the Lord Jesus.

a. **Now on the first day of the week, very early in the morning:** Jesus was crucified on Friday (or on Thursday by some accounts). After His entombment, the tomb was sealed and guarded by Roman soldiers ([Matthew 27:62-66](#)). The tomb stayed sealed and guarded until discovered by these women **on the first day of the week, very early in the morning.**

i. A rich man like Joseph of Arimathea would likely have a tomb carved into solid rock; this tomb was in a garden near the place of crucifixion ([John 19:41](#)). The tomb would have a small entrance and perhaps one or more compartments where bodies were laid out after being wrapped with linen strips smeared with spices, aloes, and ointments. Customarily, the Jews left these bodies alone for a few years until they decayed down to the bones, then the bones were placed in a small stone box known as an ossuary. The ossuary remained in the tomb with the remains of other family members.

ii. The entrance to the tomb was blocked by a heavy circular shaped stone, securely rolled in a channel, so it could only several strong men could move it. This was done to ensure that no one would disturb the remains.

iii. [John 19:42](#) specifically tells us that the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea that Jesus was laid in was close to the place of Jesus’ crucifixion (and the each of the two suggested places for Jesus’ death and resurrection bear this out). Joseph probably didn’t like it that the value of his family tomb decreased because the Romans decided to crucify people nearby; yet it reminds us that in God’s plan, the cross and the power of the resurrection are always permanently and closely connected.

iv. “This became the day of Christian worship (cf. [Acts 20:7](#)). The change from the traditional and biblical Sabbath is in itself a strong evidence of the Resurrection because it shows the strength of the disciples’ conviction about what happened on that day.” (Liefeld)

b. **They, and certain other women with them:** These women are of special note. **They** refers to the women from Galilee who saw Jesus put in the tomb ([Luke 23:55-56](#)). Luke agrees with [Mark 15:47](#) and [Matthew 27:61](#) that **they** included *Mary Magdalene* and *Mary the mother of James* ([Luke 24:10](#)). The **certain other women with them** included *Joanna*, ([Luke 24:10](#)) and others, unnamed (*and the other women with them*, [Luke 24:10](#)).

i. “These women came first, by a wonderful providence, before the apostles, to confute that impudent lie made by the priests, that the disciples had stolen the body away.” (Trapp)

c. **Came to the tomb bringing the spices which they had prepared:** The body of Jesus was hastily prepared for burial by Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus ([John 19:38-41](#)). The women came to properly complete the hurried job performed immediately after Jesus’ death.

i. [Mark 16:3](#) tells us that the women discussed the problem of what to do with the heavy stone blocking the entrance to the tomb.

d. **But they found the stone rolled away from the tomb. Then they went in and did not find the body of the Lord Jesus:** The actual *event* of Jesus’ resurrection is nowhere described, but the discovery of it is recorded in some detail. Here, the women who intended to give Jesus’ body a more proper burial discover that the stone was rolled away from the tomb, and that the body of Jesus was not inside the tomb.

i. “This lack of spectacular detail itself speaks for the historicity of the New Testament documents. There is no attempt on the part of the writers to embellish the event of the Resurrection.” (Pate)

ii. [Matthew 27:65-66](#) reminds us that there was a guard set round the tomb. The stone could not have been rolled away by the women (they were not strong enough) or by the disciples (even if they were brave enough, they could not overcome the armed guards). No one else would have wanted to roll away the stone, and [Matthew 28:2](#) tells us that it was an angel who rolled it away.

iii. The stone was not rolled away to let Jesus out. [John 20:19](#) tells us that Jesus, in His resurrection body, could pass through material barriers. The stone was **rolled away** was rolled away so that others could see in and be persuaded that Jesus Christ was and is risen from the dead.

2. ([Luk 24:4-8](#)) The angelic announcement of the resurrection.

And it happened, as they were greatly perplexed about this, that behold, two men stood by them in shining garments. Then, as they were afraid and bowed *their* faces to the earth, they said to them, “Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen! Remember how He spoke to you when He was still in Galilee, saying, ‘The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.’” And they remembered His words.

a. **As they were greatly perplexed about this:** Once the women saw the stone rolled away and the tomb empty, their immediate reaction was that they were **greatly perplexed**. They did not expect to find an empty tomb. This shows that the resurrection accounts cannot be the product of wishful thinking; they were not even *expecting* that it could happen.

b. **Two men stood by them in shining garments:** Even as angels announced the birth of Jesus, ([Luke 2:8-15](#)) so they also announced the resurrection of Jesus. The announcement of His birth was made to a few humble people, considered unimportant by the culture; His resurrection announced by angels to a few women.

c. **Why do you seek the living among the dead?** This was a wonderfully logical question. The angels seemed almost surprised that the women were surprised; after all, the angels had heard what Jesus said regarding His resurrection, and they knew the women had heard it also. They naturally wondered why the women were surprised.

i. “Jesus is not to be thought of as dead: therefore he is not be sought among the dead.” (Morris)

ii. “As places of burial were unclean, it was not reasonable to suppose that the *living* should frequent them; or that if any was missing he was likely to be found in such places.” (Clarke)

iii. The angels' question made a point: the **living** are not to be found among the **dead**. We should not expect spiritual life among those who do not have it. Many look for Jesus in dead things – religious traditionalism, formalism, man's rules, human effort and ingenuity. We find Jesus only where there is resurrection life, where He is worshipped Spirit and in truth.

d. **He is not here:** These were some of the most beautiful and important words ever spoken by an angel to men. One may look all over Jerusalem and see countless thousands of tombs, but one will never find the tomb of Jesus – because **He is not here**.

i. Every so often someone claims to have found evidence of the tomb of Jesus or the bones of Jesus. Each claim is found to be untrue, while the testimony of the angels is proved true over and over again: **He is not here**.

ii. Even the beginning of the resurrection account refutes many of the false alternative theories suggested by some.

- The wrong tomb theory is answered by [Luke 23:55](#); the women knew exactly which tomb Jesus was buried in.

- The wishful thinking theory is answered by [Luke 24:4](#) and [24:11](#), which note the surprise of the women and the disciples of the news of Jesus' resurrection.

- The animals-ate-the-body theory is answered by the presence of the stone ([Luke 24:2](#)).

- The swoon theory is answered by the presence of the stone ([Luke 24:2](#)).

- The grave robber theory is answered by the presence of the Roman guard and seal ([Matthew 27:62-66](#)).

e. **The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and on the third day rise again:** To the women, it must have seemed like a long time ago that Jesus said these words ([Luke 18:31-33](#)). Nevertheless, they needed to remember them and the angels remind them of what Jesus said.

i. **Must** is the critical word here; just as much as the crucifixion of Jesus was necessary and ordained, so was His resurrection. Jesus would have never come to the place of Calvary unless there was also an empty tomb of resurrection there also.

f. **And they remembered His words:** The first notes of hope were sounded in the hearts of the women when they **remembered** Jesus' words. The empty tomb, the presence of angels, the words of the angels in and of themselves could not change their hearts – but **His words** could change and cheer their hearts.

3. ([Luk 24:9-11](#)) The women tell the apostles and are not believed.

Then they returned from the tomb and told all these things to the eleven and to all the rest. It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women with them, who told these things to the apostles. And their words seemed to them like idle tales, and they did not believe them.

a. **Then they returned from the tomb and told all these things to the eleven and to all the rest:** The women who saw the evidence of the resurrected Jesus and remembered His words were excited about what seemed to be the most wonderful news possible – that Jesus *was* alive and had triumphed over death.

i. They would not be excited if Jesus had only somehow miraculously survived the ordeal of the cross. The news that He was alive meant so much more to them than knowing Jesus was a *survivor*; it meant He was the conqueror over death and that He was everything they had hoped for and more.

b. **It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women with them:** These were the women mentioned in [Luke 24:1](#) as those who discovered the empty tomb. Three are mentioned specifically, and then an unnamed group of **other women**. These were given the privilege of being the first to tell others of the risen Jesus.

i. The only references to **Mary Magdalene** in the Gospels concern her as a witness of the crucifixion ([Mark 15:40](#) and [John 19:25](#)) and of the resurrection (all four gospels) and as one from whom Jesus had cast out seven demons ([Luke 8:2](#), [Mark 16:9](#)).

ii. **Joanna** is mentioned in [Luke 8:2](#) as one of the women who accompanied Jesus and provided for His needs. She is also noted in [Luke 8:2](#) as the wife of Chuza, who helped manage Herod's affairs (a steward). She was likely a woman of privilege and resources.

iii. **Mary the mother of James** is only mentioned in connection with the resurrection appearances of Jesus. She was apparently the mother of one of the apostles, James the Less (not James the brother of John).

c. **Their words seemed to them like idle tales, and they did not believe them:** Despite their excitement, the testimony of the women was not believed. In fact, to the apostles, it seemed as if the women told **idle tales**, a medical word used to describe the babbling of a fevered and insane man (according to Barclay).

i. "In the first century the testimony of women was not deemed authoritative. Luke's inclusion of the incident serves to emphasize his high regard for women." (Pate)

ii. "The disciples were not men poised on the brink of belief and needing only the shadow of an excuse before launching forth into a proclamation of resurrection. They were utterly skeptical." (Morris)

Acts 1:9-11

4. ([Act 1:9-11](#)) Jesus ascends into heaven.

Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, who also said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This *same* Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven."

a. **He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight:** Jesus was taken up from them as He blessed them ([Luke 24:50](#)). As He slowly disappeared into the sky, surrounded by a **cloud** they continued to gaze upward.

i. The **cloud** that **received Him** is suggestive of the cloud of glory (called the *Shekinah*) that is associated with the presence of God in the Old and New Testaments.

b. **While they watched, He was taken up:** It was important for Jesus to leave His disciples in this manner. In theory, He certainly could have simply vanished to heaven and the Father's presence in a secret sort of way. But by ascending in this manner, Jesus wanted His followers to know that He was gone for good, as opposed to the way He appeared and reappeared during the 40 days after His resurrection.

i. Remember Jesus' words to His disciples in [John 16:7](#): *It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you.* Now the disciples could know that that promise would be fulfilled. The Holy Spirit was coming because Jesus promised to send the Spirit when

He left.

c. **Why do you stand gazing up into heaven?** The **two men** (apparently angels) told the disciples to put their attention in the right place (obedience to Jesus' command to return to Jerusalem), not in wondering where and how Jesus went. Jesus told them to go to the ends of the *earth*, and they stood **gazing up into heaven**.

i. Morgan speculated that the **two men** were possibly Moses and Elijah. It seems best to say they were angels.

d. **This same Jesus:** This is a glorious phrase. It reminds us that the Jesus ascended to heaven and seated at the right hand of God the Father is the **same Jesus** of the Gospels. He is the **same Jesus** of love, grace, goodness, wisdom, and care.

e. **Will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven:** Jesus will return just as He left.

- He left *physically* and **will so come in like manner**.
- He left *visibly* and **will so come in like manner**.
- He left from the *Mount of Olives* and **will so come in like manner**.
- He left in the *presence of His disciples* and **will so come in like manner**.
- He left *blessing His church* and **will so come in like manner**.