



# **Zacharias**

## The Father Of John The Baptist

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## Overview

### **ZECHARIAS (JOHN THE BAPTISTS FATHER)**

### **IS STRICKEN**

#### **Zechariah's story is told in Luke 1.**

Zechariah was told before anyone else that God was setting in motion his own visit to earth. Zechariah and his wife, Elizabeth, were known for their personal holiness.

They were well suited to doing a special work for God. But they shared the pain of not having children, and in Jewish culture this was considered not having God's blessing. Zechariah and Elizabeth were old, and they had stopped even asking for children.

This trip to the temple in Jerusalem for Zechariah's turn at duty had included an unexpected blessing.

Zechariah was chosen to be the priest who would enter the Holy Place to offer incense to God for the people. Suddenly, much to his surprise and terror, he found himself face to face with an angel.

The angel's message was too good to be true! But Zechariah did not respond to the news of the coming Savior as much as he expressed doubts about his own ability to father the child the angel promised him.

His age spoke more loudly than God's promise. As a result, God prevented Zechariah from speaking until the promise became reality.

## Zacharias and Elisabeth

### Luke 1:5-25

The father and mother of John the Baptist were sinners as all are, and were justified and saved in the same way as others; but they were eminent for piety and integrity.

They had no children, and it could not be expected that Elisabeth should have any in her old age.

While Zacharias was burning incense in the temple, the whole multitude of the people were praying without.

All the prayers we offer up to God, are acceptable and successful only by Christ's intercession in the temple of God above.

We cannot expect an interest therein if we do not pray, and pray with our spirits, and are not earnest in prayer. Nor can we expect that the best of our prayers should gain acceptance, and bring an answer of peace, but through the mediation of Christ, whoever lives, making intercession.

The prayers Zacharias often made, received an answer of peace. Prayers of faith are filed in heaven, and are not forgotten. Prayers made when we were young and entering into the world, may be answered when we are older.

Mercies are doubly sweet that are given in answer to prayer.

Zacharias shall have a son in his old age, who shall be instrumental in the conversion of many souls to God, and preparing them to receive the gospel of Christ.

He shall go before Him with courage, zeal, holiness, and a mind dead to earthly interests and pleasures.

The disobedient and rebellious would be brought back to the wisdom of their righteous forefathers, or rather, brought to attend to the wisdom of that Just One who was coming among them. Zacharias heard all that the angel said; but his unbelief spake. In striking him dumb, God dealt justly with him, because he had objected against God's word.

We may admire the patience of God towards us. God dealt kindly with him, for thus he prevented his speaking any more distrustful, unbelieving words. Thus also God confirmed his faith. If by the rebukes we are under for our sin, we are brought to give the more credit to the word of God, we have no reason to complain.

Even real believers are apt to dishonour God by unbelief; and their mouths are stopped in silence and confusion, when otherwise they would have been praising God with joy and gratitude.

In God's gracious dealings with us we ought to observe his gracious regards to us. He has looked on us with compassion and favour, and therefore has thus dealt with us.

### **Christ's Birth Announced**

#### **Luke 1:26-38**

We have here an account of the mother of our Lord; though we are not to pray to her, yet we ought to praise God for her.

Christ must be born miraculously. The angel's address means only, Hail, thou that art the especially chosen and favoured of the Most High, to attain the honour Jewish mothers have so long desired.

This wondrous salutation and appearance troubled Mary. The angel then assured her that she had found favour with God, and would become the mother of a son whose name she should call Jesus, the Son of the Highest, one in a nature and perfection with the Lord God. JESUS!

The name that refreshes the fainting spirits of humbled sinners; sweet to speak and sweet to hear, Jesus, a Saviour!

We know not his riches and our own poverty, therefore we run not to him; we perceive not that we are lost and perishing, therefore a Saviour is a word of little relish.

And that we might find him so, we should trample on all that hinders our way to him. Mary's reply to the angel was the language of faith and humble admiration, and she asked no sign for the confirming her faith.

Without controversy, great was the mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh, 1Ti 3:16.

Christ's human nature must be produced so, as it was fit that should be which was to be taken into union with the Divine nature.

And we must, as Mary here, guide our desires by the word of God. In all conflicts, let us remember that with God nothing is impossible; and as we read and hear his promises, let us turn them into prayers, behold the willing servant of the Lord; let it be unto me according to thy word.

### **Interview of Mary and Elisabeth**

#### **Luke 1:39-56**

It is very good for those who have the work of grace begun in their souls, to communicate one to another. On Mary's arrival, Elisabeth was conscious of the approach of her who was to be the mother of the great Redeemer.

At the same time she was filled with the Holy Ghost, and under his influence declared that Mary and her expected child were most blessed and happy, as peculiarly honoured of and dear to the Most High God.

Mary, animated by Elisabeth's address, and being also under the influence of the Holy Ghost, broke out into joy, admiration, and gratitude. She knew herself to be a sinner who needed a Saviour, and that she could not otherwise rejoice in God than as interested in his salvation through the promised Messiah.

Those who see their need of Christ, and are desirous of righteousness and life in him, he fills with good things, with the best things; and they are abundantly satisfied with the blessings he gives. He will satisfy the desires of the poor in spirit who long for spiritual blessings, while the self-sufficient shall be sent empty away

## **The Birth of John the Baptist**

### **Luke 1:57-66)**

In these verses we have an account of the birth of John the Baptist, and the great joy among all the relations of the family. He shall be called Johanan, or "Gracious," because he shall bring in the gospel of Christ, wherein God's grace shines most bright.

Zacharias recovered his speech. Unbelief closed his mouth, and believing opened it again: he believes, therefore he speaks. When God opens our lips, our mouths must show forth his praise; and better be without speech, than not use it in praising God.

It is said, the hand of the Lord was working with John. God has ways of working on children in their infancy, which we cannot account for. We should observe the dealings of God, and wait the event.

## **The Song of Zacharias**

### **Luke 1:67-80)**

Zacharias uttered a prophecy concerning the kingdom and salvation of the Messiah.

The gospel brings light with it; in it the day dawns. In John the Baptist it began to break, and increased apace to the perfect day.

The gospel is discovering; it shows that about which we were utterly in the dark; it is to give light to those that sit in darkness, the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

It is reviving; it brings light to those that sit in the shadow of death, as condemned prisoners in the dungeon. It is directing; it is to guide our feet in the way of peace, into that way which will bring us to peace at last, Rom 3:17.

John gave proofs of strong faith, vigorous and holy affections, and of being above the fear and love of the world. Thus he ripened for usefulness; but he lived a retired life, till he came forward openly as the forerunner of the Messiah.

Let us follow peace with all men, as well as seek peace with God and our own consciences. And if it be the will of God that we live unknown to the world, still let us diligently seek to grow strong in the grace of Jesus Christ.

Doubt is a terrible thing when it concerns our trust in God. Like Zacharias, you can be forgiven and restored.

### **Life application**

The record of the prayer in Luke 1 is our last glimpse of Zechariah. Like so many of Gods most faithful servants, he passed quietly from the scene once his part was done. He becomes our hero for those times when we doubt God and yet are willing to obey. We gain hope from Zechariah's story that God can do great things through anyone who is available to him.

### **To ask Jesus to come into your heart please pray this Prayer:**

Dear Lord Jesus, I believe you are the Christ, the Son of the Living God. I ask you to forgive me of my sins and coming into my heart. I accept you as savior and will follow you as Lord. Amen.

### References:

Holy Bible: King James Translation

Holy Bible: Living Bible Translation

Matthew Henry's Concise Bible Commentary

Additional comments and charts are taken from: *Life Application Study Bible*.

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