

The Forerunner Foretold

PASTOR MIKE YODER • LUKE 1:5-25



In the time of Herod king of Judea there was a priest named Zechariah, who belonged to the priestly division of Abijah; his wife Elizabeth was also a descendant of Aaron.

Both of them were righteous in the sight of God, observing all the Lord's commands and decrees blamelessly.

Luke 1:6

But they were childless because Elizabeth was not able to conceive, and they were both very old.

Once when Zechariah's division was on duty and he was serving as priest before God,

*he was chosen by lot, according to the custom of the
priesthood, to go into the temple of the Lord and burn incense.*

And when the time for the burning of incense came, all the assembled worshipers were praying outside.

Luke 1:10

Then an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing at the right side of the altar of incense.

Luke 1:11

When Zechariah saw him, he was startled and was gripped with fear.

Luke 1:12

But the angel said to him: “Do not be afraid, Zechariah; your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you are to call him John.”

“He will be a joy and delight to you, and many will rejoice because of his birth,”

Luke 1:14

“for he will be great in the sight of the Lord. He is never to take wine or other fermented drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit even before he is born.”

“He will bring back many of the people of Israel to the Lord their God.”

Luke 1:16

“And he will go on before the Lord, in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the parents to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous — to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.”

Luke 1:17

Zechariah asked the angel, “How can I be sure of this? I am an old man and my wife is well along in years.”

Luke 1:18

The angel said to him, “I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to tell you this good news.”

“And now you will be silent and not able to speak until the day this happens, because you did not believe my words, which will come true at their appointed time.”

Luke 1:20

Meanwhile, the people were waiting for Zechariah and wondering why he stayed so long in the temple.

Luke 1:21

When he came out, he could not speak to them. They realized he had seen a vision in the temple, for he kept making signs to them but remained unable to speak.

When his time of service was completed, he returned home.

Luke 1:23

After this his wife Elizabeth became pregnant and for five months remained in seclusion.

Luke 1:24

“The Lord has done this for me,” she said. “In these days He has shown His favor and taken away my disgrace among the people.”

Luke 1:25

Context & Conflict:
Righteous Yet Barren (1:5–7)



*(Or: Why Bad Things
Happen to Good People)*



As He went along, He saw a man blind from birth.

John 9:1

His disciples asked Him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?”

John 9:2

“Neither this man nor his parents sinned,” said Jesus, “but this happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him.”

John 9:3

The parents of John the Baptist are of the best spiritual ancestry. Yet no lineage or right living can prevent hardship or suffering in life.

Our disappointments have a way of producing terrible theology and denials of God's goodness. Our disappointments will either make us bitter or make us better.

Thabiti Anyabwile

[Zechariah and Elizabeth] served God even though they did not have what they wanted. If you serve God for what you can get, then you actually serve yourself.

Thabiti Anyabwile

Rising Action & Climax: Divine Encounter, Divine Lesson



(Or: Seeing the
Bigger Picture)



This is both a personal human story and a cosmic divine story. God includes all personal stories in the cosmic story. Our stories are part of His redemptive plan.

Your life may not be written in the book of Luke, but it's written in the heart of God.

Jonathan Wiley

Zechariah's Moment of Fame (1:8–10)



Divine Answer to Prayer (1:11,12)



Now to Him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work within us...

Ephesians 3:20

God was tackling two problems at once. He was dealing with something absent from Zechariah's personal life, while dealing with Israel's prayer and plea. God's answers sometimes come at a surprising time, in a surprising place, and in a surprising way.

Darrell Bock

The Significance of John (1:14–17)



“I will send My messenger, who will prepare the way before Me. Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to His temple; the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come,” says the Lord Almighty.

“See, I will send the prophet Elijah to you before that great and dreadful day of the Lord comes.”

Malachi 4:5

“He will turn the hearts of the parents to their children, and the hearts of the children to their parents; or else I will come and strike the land with total destruction.”

Malachi 4:6

Zechariah's Struggle to Believe (1:18–20)



God's reversal for one family signifies that He is present to save and deliver His entire people.

When our eyes are on our problems, we will not remember God's Word and how it applies to us. He wants proof rather than the promise.

Thabiti Anyabwile

Zechariah's asking for a sign suggests that he is attempting to respond positively to the angel's message, though he has grave doubt and needs prodding.

Zechariah Muzzled (1:21,22)



**Resolution & Gratitude: Watching
the Hand Of God (1:23–25)**



(Or: God Is Not AWOL)



As God deals with His salvation plan, He is also meeting human needs.

God scripts His story
through lots of little
(but important) stories.

