

The Birth of Christ

Lesson 2

Luke 1:5-25, 57-80

December 13, 2020

Good News for Poor Performers

Introduction

Zechariah, a priest, and his wife, Elizabeth, were obedient followers of God. For years, he and his wife Elizabeth prayed for a child. And when they had reached an age when having a child was no longer possible, God sent an angel to answer their prayer finally. When Gabriel appeared with the promise of a son, Zechariah should have been ecstatic. He should have been filled with joy. He should have run out of the temple shouting about God's greatness and His ability to answer prayers. Yet when God responded to their prayer, Zechariah doubted that God could or would give them a child.

Like Zechariah, when we have prayed for something for so long, we begin to doubt that God has the power to answer our prayers. We wonder if He hears us at all. We question His love for us. We forget that God can do anything—that He is all-powerful. We forget that God has a plan for our lives, and His plan may not match our timeline.

Memory verse: "He asked for a writing tablet, and to everyone's astonishment he wrote, 'His name is John.'"— Luke 1:63

Pray and read Luke 1:5-25, 57-80. What questions or observations do you have about these passages?

What do the passages say?

1. What was Zechariah's position? What was he chosen to do? What happened when he went to fulfill his duty? (Luke 1:5, 9, 11-12)
2. What directions did the angel give Zechariah about his son? (Luke 1:13, 15)
3. What did the angel tell Zechariah his son would do? (Luke 1:16-17)
4. What happened when Zechariah questioned the angel? (Luke 1:20, 22)
5. What happened at John's circumcision? (Luke 1:59-64)
6. Why did Zechariah praise God? (Luke 1:68-69)
7. What did Zechariah say God did? (Luke 1:72-75)
8. What did Zechariah predict about John? (Luke 1:76-79)

What do the passages mean?

1. Zechariah and Elizabeth prayed for a child and may have given up hope that God would answer their prayer. Yet, they were still righteous in God's eyes (Luke 1:6). They continued to serve God. Why can we know that God loves us even when He doesn't answer our prayers? (Jeremiah 29:11; Nahum 1:7; Matthew 6:25-26; Romans 8:38-39; 1 Peter 5:7; 1 John 4:10)

2. Zechariah doubts that Elizabeth will become pregnant, and as a result, the ability to speak is taken away from him until John is named. We all struggle with doubt—even those who are mature Christians. How can we overcome our doubts? (Isaiah 41:10; Proverbs 3:5-6; Romans 10:17; 2 Thessalonians 2:15; James 1:5-6)

3. When God doesn't immediately answer our prayers, it's easy to begin doubting that God is even listening to us. How can we be assured that God hears us when we pray? (Psalm 18:6, 31:22, 34:17-18; Lamentations 3:55-57; Isaiah 65:24; 1 John 5:14)

2. What may be standing in the way of God answering your prayers?

3. Write a prayer to God, confessing your sins, asking for forgiveness, and the strength to obey Him with courage.