

Visions and Revelations

Message 3: The One Who Prepared the Way for the Lord of Life

Now, we come to the third week. I'm very happy that we could have this chance that I must to, am forced to, and have a burden to properly share with you. Every Lord's day is about thirty minutes, so you can hear a message very concrete. Why is it only thirty minutes? Because very little illustrations, very few stories, almost no stories. So the whole thing is kind of concrete. It's very much like a kernel. So with this, the brothers, I strongly advise you, not just listen to the messages, but spend time with the brothers through the website, through whatever. That you can review it, go over with it. You have, you could have the transcript of this message, which may not be, may be raw, it's not fully edited, but it should be profitable. Then more than that, I hope the full-timers can add in the abstracts and different items for us to fellowship together, pray together, pursue together. So in a way, this one or two months, or three months time, can actually become a blessing to the church life. Bring us out of the principle of what we have, week after week after week. Going, coming to the meeting, going home, making no difference in your life. Rather, we may desire to have a new beginning before the Lord through this fellowship.

Last meeting we shared that there's seven dispensations. The first five in the Old Testament, concluding with the law. The two dispensations, New Testament, actually is the basic, most crucial dispensations or age. That is, the dispensation, or age, of grace. Lord Jesus Christ is gracious. And in His grace we have Him. In His grace we have Him abide in us. In His grace we can be one with Him. In His grace we can grow in Him. In His grace we can live by Him and with Him. In His grace we can enjoy Him and partake of Him. In His grace we are short of nothing, because we have the bountiful supply of the Spirit, which, or who, is just Christ Himself. We should be happy that we are in the new covenant. But you see, with man's thought, not just with two thousand years ago the thought of Jews, even today, we are still fighting, struggling between the Old Covenant and the New Covenant. Between the Age of Law and the Age of Grace.

So for this change, the Bible give us what we can see, at least five persons with clear visions to show us different aspects for us to be ready to come, to participate in the New Covenant age, in the Age of Grace. So the first one is Joseph, which we covered. Now, from this morning we will have two three mornings cover other four. Number one, the revelation or the vision, God appeared to Zechariah. Which is, a Jew, a perfect Jew, and a priest. A faithful priest. And secondly the visions which brings in the reality, which is given to Mary, and that shows, no matter what the age, or how corrupt the age can be, there's always some who are very pure before the Lord, and ready to do anything, pay any price, for the Lord's sake. Mary's purity and faithfulness caused her to be able to have, to beget Jesus, the substance, actually, of the universe. And thirdly, there's a group of men, who are unknown to anybody, who even, had, will never even have a thought they will be remembered in anything. They're just common, yet they are

very pure and faithful. So they tend the flock, the sheep at night. And Lord appeared to them. Then the fourth one is most interesting. There are some wise men. The Bible call them men of wisdom. You can also, they have philosophical training, or you can also, they pursue the meaning of human life. So they are the real pursuers, trying to understand what is going on with human life. These wise men saw the star and take them more than a year journey all the way until they find the boy, the baby boy. So don't look down at that story. It's not just a story of three wise man come with three offerings and eventually, praise the Lord, they depart and going back by the visions or revelations the Lord has told them, go back and don't see Herod anymore. No. Actually, it typifies, it indicates, the Savior Jesus, he's ready not just for Jews, but for all the tribes, all the races, all the nations, all the God-created people on this Earth. Whole globe is the site to receive the salvation of Jesus Christ. So there's advancement of that star. That star becomes us. And we are the stars with different lights. And that stars advanced, Lord says, in my hand I hold seven stars which are seven messengers. In our word, which are the serving ones, the life-giving ones, the helping ones, those who can minister life. These are the ones holding by the Lord, and eventually, remember what Peter says, you wait until day dawns, the star appears in your heart. Then the Lord come back. That's the morning star, that's the star turn darkness into day. Tell you, day is coming. You see? A clear picture from the three, or the few wise man. Not as simple as we say, three wise man saw the star, come offer three things, then they left, then it's over. No, it's not over. It's an indication of how rich is the New Covenant. With the New Covenant age, the Age of Grace. The grace is not only given to Jews, the grace is given to Gentiles. Not only Gentiles nearby, even Gentiles far away need to trace, trace the star, track, follow the star for close to two years. Including everyone on this earth. No matter how remote you are, the Lord says, "My grace is for you". Do you realize? Now you consider this, are they extremely interesting and extremely meaningful? There's a vision with Zechariah. There's a vision with Mary. There's a vision with shepherds. There's a vision, or through a star, that shown, by those who pursue the meaning of life. Marvelous.

This morning we still could have a simple meeting, cover Zechariah, the first one. If you read the outline you can see. Zechariah, Elizabeth, and John. That's the first vision with three crucial characters. What does Zechariah mean? Means "God remembers." Then what Elizabeth mean? "God swears," or "God's oath." Then what John mean? Many people say means, John means "God loves him." No, more, if you really study the Greek word, it means "God gives grace". God is the gracious giver. Marvelous. Why this family? One is extremely godly, a serving priest. And his wife is not only godly but with noble inheritance, she's from Aaron. Then eventually, together, they beget a person, totally bring them out of what they have. He is John, the one who gives grace.

Now let's just come to story. Zechariah he is very faithful so according to his turn, he come into offering to God which means he is not only just a godly man, he is godly serving man. Not just godly serving man, he's able to come into the temple, even the holy place where he is able to

enjoy the showbread as his satisfaction, enjoy the lampstand as his need. Eventually the most crucial, he's mature to the point he is able to walk to the incense altar. Eventually he's able to come to the incense altar, he's able to offer incense. You know the incense altar is the crucial part in the Old Testament. All the experience conclude to the incense altar, where God and man walk together. Man become so constituted with God typifies man so constituted with God that they can be one with God, and offering incense to God. This is marvelous. Do you know where the incense altar is? After Jesus' death incense altar came into the holy of holies, which means he bears the testimony of the ark of testimony, makes the ark of testimony to be real to show how a Christian can be mature. How man can be mature so they are in full operation of God's economy.

This is marvelous but anyway let's come back still to the story. When he was there he was trying to offer the incense. Then the angel Gabriel appeared to him and tell him now you shall have a son and if I come to the verses he says come to him you shall have a son right? How did he get it? Because it was according to custom of the priesthood. His lot fell to burning incense in other words he does everything according to custom. I was born a priest. At 30 years old, I began to serve as a priest for 20 years. I am able to walk in if it's my turn to walk into the holy place to offer the incense and this is my lot. This is my life but here something vital happened. I don't know how many times he has been there. There should be a lot of priests, so a lot families of priests, according to Aaron. So finally it's his turn but he must have more than one, two, three of four times must be there a number of times. That's the custom. That's the habit. So now he does the same thing. He never expected something will be different. Now it's my turn. So he was very godly, faithful. So he went in to fulfill his duty. He brings the incense, come to incense altar, try to offer but this time something different. You know what's different? An angel came and told him, hey wait a minute. Just don't do these things. All the time it is from God, you must have something of God! From God is marvelous but of God is very precious! If I have a lot from God, but nothing of God, where is the value? So he says it's from God, God told Moses and Moses arranged the order and now it's your turn. So now finally, you come, you offer the incense, but let me tell you; no, not everything from God, you got to have something of God! So now you shall have a son. You should name him John. You understand now if you were Zechariah how would you respond? Of course he kneels down, the Bible says. Kneel down so his first response should be praise the Lord hallelujah. You tell me something new, I see something new, but no. His question is how can this be? I been in Church in Cleveland, I've been in church meetings for 20 years. If angel really comes say something to me, my answer is how can this be? I'm so used to it now, I'm accustomed to it. This is my custom. This is what I'm doing every day, every week, I come to the meeting. I see brothers and say hi to them. I even have love feast with them, then we even listen to the message, have fellowship and we go home and wait for another seven days. What is that? That is a custom. We need revelations, visions. This time he saw a vision and the first response is "no impossible." Just like today, I tell you Church in Cleveland can be revived, you say impossible. Church in Cleveland can become a strong testimony, your word is

“impossible.” Church in Cleveland can bear something of Lord, your word is “impossible” because you get so accustomed to what you’re doing now. That’s why maybe God allowed a kind of virus come in to tell you get out of your custom. You still have Christ, you still have life, you still have the Bible, you still have the ministering ones, you still have brothers and sisters, you still have fellowship, but get out of that hall. Have some reality of Christ. Your first reaction is how can this be if you take the hall meeting away. I will be dead at my home for how many months? No, God is God of grace. God give you grace. God say I’ll use this situation for you to have a new beginning. You can have a new beginning, so his answer is how can this be? Just like you brother. How can this be? Like me. My question is if someone tell me Cleveland can be revived will say doctrinally, yes! Because the Lord is mighty. In fact no because I don’t believe it works. I would never even dream a virus come in and tell you stop your meeting, your meeting too old, you need something new, something afresh. You don’t need just a gathering of religion, you need a gathering of Christ. So now, these are a few months, we don’t know how long maybe two, three months maybe even more. These are months for us to rejuvenate. We restart our Christian life. How do you start? By begetting. Are you able to beget, beget a son? And when you see the son is here you’ll be so happy and begin to declare this is totally by the grace of God. God give grace. You should be so happy, but anyway, then the angel told him you don’t believe because you ask how can this be? You don’t believe, I’ll make you dumb, not dumb, Bible used the word mute actually. I believe it was dumb because not only he cannot speak, seemingly, he also cannot hear. Now the mute is not a light mute. Seems, he can only hear the Word of God. The angel told him you shall be mute. He heard it, then he came out. He can’t say anything, just used his hand point at his ear, point at his mouth, then they know he saw a vision. He must have seen something. I’m always amazed or surprised at those people. Why don’t they pursue anymore. The Bible never said one person even asked what did you really see. What happened to you? Very interesting. A lot of people come to the church meetings. No one cares what happened from the Lord. Everybody cares that I’m in the service. I’m listening to messages. I offer my money. I do my dues, I even have love-feast with the brothers. Brother, all people were there, nobody cares, but anyway, eventually the child came, right?

Here, come from what? From number one, Zechariah. God remembers. Number two, Elizabeth. God swears. The oath of God. God remembers and God swore. All of a sudden, he saw John. They become true. My name is God remembered. I have lived my life, all of my life, God remembered. And Elizabeth says “I’m a descendant of Aaron.” I know God made an oath. I’m in God’s oath. So, I’m in God’s oath. Just like you brothers. Sorry, let me be very honest with you. I’m saved. Praise the lord I’m eternally saved. I’ll go to whatever. Brother, how many really care? Let me ask you brother, do you care? Do you care? Do you care about the salvation you have? But, god remembers. God made an oath. One day, God Himself came through Gabriel. You will have a son. The reality will come. It’s interesting, when the reality finally came, all those Jesus lovers and today at that time, all those who are godly after Jehovah surrendered this miracle joyfully and they declared he must be tradition. His father’s name is Zechariah. His name should

be Zechariah. We live a Christian life. I go to this church. My children and grandchildren go to this church. That's what the name Zechariah means. I do this, I follow this, I'm in this, I'm with this, and I will be all my life in this and my generations in this. So people say, I was in this church and my mother was in this church, my grandmother was in this church. When this building was built, my ancestors participated in these meetings. They're very proud of it. Do you realize God would say, "Oh wait a minute. Where is grace? Where is my grace?"

I want to build grace. Gracious God. So that you're able to come to the New Testament age. So, here it's very interesting, that when the baby was born, they insisted on his name should be Zechariah, because if you're a Christian, your kids got to be Christian. If you go to this church your kids got to go to this church. Is this wrong? I wouldn't say it is wrong, but it's inadequate. There's got to be something new right? There's got to be something fresh from God right? So eventually, the wife can win. Wife says, no, god told us. No, his name is John. No his name should be Zechariah. Even the elders may decide his name should be Zechariah. Do you realize that? Sorry, I'm not talking about any elders. Once someone is saved, what is your first concern? "Would they come to Lord's day?" Isn't that Zechariah? A baby is born and who cares for his food? Who cares for his health? Who cares to be with him. Who cares to raise him up? We count people by "Are they coming to the meetings?" What does that mean? Zechariah. I'm Zechariah. I'm making meetings. My son should also be Zechariah, making the meetings. Oh, this is a sober matter.

Brother, so eventually they say "Okay, Elizabeth, you're so strong, let's talk with the dad." So they talk with the dad and the dad says "Oh, his name should be John." He wrote it on a piece of board or something. His name should be John. God gives grace. Right after that you know what happened? He can hear. In turn, he can speak. There was a time he had a vision I believe when the angel told him, "You shall be mute". All of a sudden he found out, "I can't hear anything. I can't speak anything." Now, within him, he became very clear. The angel told him because of your unbelief. He began to consider, "I believe in God. I'm a priest. I'm serving God. Right? I've been serving God all of my life. I'm going to be a retired priest. Now, how can you say I don't believe?" The belief must be something new. It's not the belief I used to think. Now, in my old belief, I'm sinful. The sin offering. I have problems. I offer a trespass offering. I don't live proper. I offer a meal offering. Now, I begin to think about something new. It's more than just, "I have a situation and I offer something. It's a matter of "Now I see something". So, when he considers it, I will have a son. My son, god, the angel gave him the name, John. Which means God gives grace. God is gracious. God is graceful to us. To human beings. I realized now it's not a law, it's grace. It's not Moses' commandment, it's grace. It's not even I offer, my priestly life is grace. It's not how good I have been in my life. My life is *God remembers*. My wife's name is "God swears". God remembered and God swears. Now, the reality has come. What is the reality? Grace. Grace! Not go to church Sunday morning. Not go to 3170 Warren Rd, but God's grace. I don't despise coming to the meetings. You should come to the meetings. But if you really think

that's enough. NO! That's not enough. You need something new. Something fresh. You need God's grace. Eventually the whole church needs something new.

I have a dream or can see something. If one day, there's a vitality produced, there'd be groups pursuing together. Groups reading together and praying together. Groups preaching the gospel together. Groups that could even pick up a burden to care for the needy. Go to a jail. Go to an old man's retirement home. We're old and can't do anything, but I can make a cake for those who are old. My life is different. I'm in the church life. I care for God's interest. I care for God's created man's profit. Brother, don't you believe it's possible the church in Cleveland can come to that? The church in Cleveland should have that kind of church life. No one says I go to the meeting, but everyone says I go to the meeting every Lord's Day is only a part of my church life. My real church life is in my operation during the weekdays. What is that? Grace. Brother, by grace you were saved and by grace you love the Lord. But for some reason, even if you're saved, you love the Lord and it becomes a custom. To express His grace means "I go to church. I go to the meetings. No, no, he says something new! Something fresh!" John should come, not an old Zechariah God remembers. But no the reality, he not just remembers, but he gives you grace. By grace, a lot of things will happen. If in the church in Cleveland, there would be 10, 20, 30 brothers and sisters could declare I want to live a life by grace how great this would be.

Well, we only have 30 minutes so we have to go real fast. Right after that, he testified that I will beget a son and his name will be John. That then everything is different with him. He opened his mouth, where in that def there could be 9 months. 9 months time, ten months or more that period of time he can't hear. He can't speak. Which typifies the old testament, remember the Lord spoke to the Israelites. I speak to you, you won't listen. Because you won't listen, there is nothing you can say for me. You are dumb. You are mute. You can't hear, then you can't speak. I think Zachariah, will have a lot of consideration on this. My life is a life of a priest. But what am I really doing here?

Brother, I am sorry, this meeting, I will take you ten minutes more.

Now in these nine, ten, months, he was considering, reconsidering, I believe his heart is opened, gradually, gradually, more and more. He began to realize, the age changed! No longer Old Testament age. The salvation, the savior we are waiting for is coming! When he comes, everything is different. You know what is happening brothers? Let me tell you. At that time, he has such a joy. You know who is my son? My son is not the savior, but my son will be a man walking, running before the savior, pioneering the way for the savior. This is what the angel told him. That eventually he will have Elijah's heart, Elijah's energy or strength. He will be like Elijah. When everybody forsook God, Elijah says come here, I stood for Lord's interest. So when the whole Old Testament, man typified by man's, religion... What is religion? Custom. I get used to it. It is something holy but I get used to it. It is something precious but I get used to it.

Because I get used to it, there is no new speaking, no new revelation, no new light, no new encouragement, no new strength, nothing new, because I habitually live in this.

Now the Lord says, come on. My son he says. Now my son. My son. Lord has told me, he is the man of grace and he will have the heart and the strength of Elijah and walk in front of the Holy One, the Lord. What a commitment. What a commitment. I think within him there is a lot of joy. He may be mute. I don't know if mute can smile with a "mute'y" way, but anyways, he was joyfully declaring, "marvelous". Just in these times when the kids come, eventually he begin to testify something, which is marvelous.

If you turn to the Bible, verse 66, chapter 2 of Luke. He says "*His name is John, then his mouth was opened*". The interesting part is all of the people see it and all of the people keep on saying what kind of child will this be? I like this statement, I hate it. I like this statement because they really care. I hate it because they really don't care. Isn't that you? Sorry, brother, isn't that you? You care, and don't care. Do you love the Lord? Yes. Do you love the church? Yes. Do you care for the Lord and church? Yes. Do you really care? Then all of a sudden, no, it doesn't interfere with my life. I still have my life. So they all ask a question, what kind of kid is this? Nobody says, I buy a house beside it and watch him grow. I will follow him. No, everyone go back to their old life. Isn't that today's situation? We all come home to our old life and the Lord through his government says, I will cause a certain virus to come up, you will be at home adequately, too much. You will get tired of your home until what, by being home, you have a desire Lord, something new, something new. I want something new.

But with this, he became, he has a marvelous declaration. He says, "*Lord is to be blessed!*" Now he is very bold. It is not the old Zachariah, nice, pious, even in a way godly. Now, he become wild. He stood up and declared "*Blessed is the Lord God of Israel...*"

Hey, can you stand up and say, "bless the Lord of the Church in Cleveland!" Can you? One day, if two or three, one or two, two or three or four or five, a group of you, everyone one by one stand up and begin to declare, "blessed is the Lord of the church in Cleveland," the church in Cleveland is really blessed, because the Lord is blessed.

And more than that, he redeemed his people and salvation for us. He saw something. All the Old Testament indicate redemption, but they called atonement, not redemption. But here he says redemption is coming, and salvation is coming. So redemption is judicial, salvation is organic. Judicially, he solved all of our problems, organically, he also solved all of our problems. Then more than that, he says God remembered his holy covenant. That is in verse 72. God has covenant, not promise, to Abraham, because he said, his holy covenant, which he swore to our father Abraham. He and Abraham had a covenant. What is the covenant? You will have the land. Your seed will be like the skies. Then you will be a great nation. With the land, with the seed, there should be a great nation. This is the promise. Now I think Zachariah, can sit there, even close his eyes. He will have a view, it was a history, it was a story, it was an attractive story, but

now I see something! I see something is coming. My son will be pioneer to bring into the reality of it that there will be a land for the Lord. There will be decedents for the Lord and eventually the Lord will have a great nation unto himself.

More than that, the Lord swears right, more than that he says, oh John, as a child, let me tell you, you shall be called the prophet of the highest, or of the most high. The Lord is highest, but you are his prophet. For you will go before the face of the Lord. He is coming. You go before that and to prepare his ways. What a commitment. He predicted. What is John's life? He will be preparing the way. Remember John's life? It is true. He get away from religion. He has a camel... whatever, as his clothes. His word is "repent!" What does repent mean? Change! What does change mean? Change from Old Testament to New. Change from your old mind following the law to prepare yourself for the savior to come. Repent! So eventually *you will "prepare his way"*.

His concluding is very interesting, even somewhat poetic, right, he said. I just read to you.

"Through the tender mercy of our God, With which the Dayspring from on high has visited us;"

Isn't that poetic? Could you write something like that? And more than that...

"To give light to those who sit in darkness and shadow of death"

I really like this. Give light to... you are in darkness, in shadow of death...

"To guide our feet into the way of peace."

Do you see how vision change people? How vision produce reality? How vision is bringing you from one place to another place? What a marvelous story. You should tell the Lord, Lord I worship you. I have such a Lord, such a Christ. May the Lord be with us.