

Visions and Revelations

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

- A. Zechariah (“God remembers”), Elizabeth (“God swears/oath”), John (“God gives grace”)
 - a) Zechariah’s faithfulness in religion only left him unable to receive vision.
 - i. His service in the Temple is perfection in religion.
 - ii. He was unable to receive the holy revelation and blessing, thus becoming mute.
 - iii. This depicts the condition of those in religious Judaism or those in religious Christianity today—they had the outward form and habitual living, yet they could not speak for the Lord.
 - b) While Zechariah was under God’s governmental discipline, he became clear in his heart, knowing that God’s promise would be fulfilled.
 - c) Zechariah understood God’s changing of the age, the coming of the Most High, and God’s use of his son, John, to prepare the way for the Lord.
 - d) Zechariah entered into the reality of God’s desire—writing out John’s name, he was then able to be one to praise God with his mouth and one who sees God’s coming New Testament age.
- B. Zechariah’s testimony for John:
 - a) God carries out redemption for His people (v. 68)
 - b) God remembers His holy covenant (v. 72)
 - c) The blessed one—John would become the prophet of God’s Most High and the one who prepares His way (v. 76)
- C. In vision, Zechariah witnessed the change of the age, declaring the salvation of the Most High.

Luke 1:5–22; 57–80, New King James Version

⁵ There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the division of Abijah. His wife *was* of the daughters of Aaron, and her name *was* Elizabeth. ⁶ And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. ⁷ But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and they were both well advanced in years.

⁸ So it was, that while he was serving as priest before God in the order of his division, ⁹ according to the custom of the priesthood, his lot fell to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord. ¹⁰ And the whole multitude of the people was praying outside at the hour of incense. ¹¹ Then an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing on the right side of the altar of incense. ¹² And when Zacharias saw *him*, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him.

¹³ But the angel said to him, “Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your prayer is heard; and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John. ¹⁴ And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth. ¹⁵ For he will be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink. He will also be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother’s womb. ¹⁶ And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God. ¹⁷ He will also go before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, ‘to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children,’ and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.”

¹⁸ And Zacharias said to the angel, “How shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife is well advanced in years.”

¹⁹ And the angel answered and said to him, “I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God, and was sent to speak to you and bring you these glad tidings. ²⁰ But behold, you will be mute and not able to speak until the day these things take place, because you did not believe my words which will be fulfilled in their own time.”

²¹ And the people waited for Zacharias, and marveled that he lingered so long in the temple. ²² But when he came out, he could not speak to them; and they

perceived that he had seen a vision in the temple, for he beckoned to them and remained speechless.

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⁵⁷ Now Elizabeth's full time came for her to be delivered, and she brought forth a son. ⁵⁸ When her neighbors and relatives heard how the Lord had shown great mercy to her, they rejoiced with her.

⁵⁹ So it was, on the eighth day, that they came to circumcise the child; and they would have called him by the name of his father, Zacharias. ⁶⁰ His mother answered and said, "No; he shall be called John."

⁶¹ But they said to her, "There is no one among your relatives who is called by this name." ⁶² So they made signs to his father—what he would have him called.

⁶³ And he asked for a writing tablet, and wrote, saying, "His name is John." So they all marveled. ⁶⁴ Immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue *loosed*, and he spoke, praising God. ⁶⁵ Then fear came on all who dwelt around them; and all these sayings were discussed throughout all the hill country of Judea. ⁶⁶ And all those who heard *them* kept *them* in their hearts, saying, "What kind of child will this be?" And the hand of the Lord was with him.

⁶⁷ Now his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Spirit, and prophesied, saying:

⁶⁸ "Blessed *is* the Lord God of Israel,

For He has visited and redeemed His people,

⁶⁹ And has raised up a horn of salvation for us

In the house of His servant David,

⁷⁰ As He spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets,

Who *have been* since the world began,

⁷¹ That we should be saved from our enemies

And from the hand of all who hate us,

⁷² To perform the mercy *promised* to our fathers

And to remember His holy covenant,

⁷³ The oath which He swore to our father Abraham:

⁷⁴ To grant us that we,

Being delivered from the hand of our enemies,

Might serve Him without fear,

⁷⁵ In holiness and righteousness before Him all the days of our life.

⁷⁶ “And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Highest;

For you will go before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways,

⁷⁷ To give knowledge of salvation to His people

By the remission of their sins,

⁷⁸ Through the tender mercy of our God,

With which the Dayspring from on high has visited us;

⁷⁹ To give light to those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death,

To guide our feet into the way of peace.”

⁸⁰ So the child grew and became strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his manifestation to Israel.