

Luke 1:5-25 – The Birth of John the Baptist Foretold

Introduction

1. Luke's Design in Chapter 1: A Comparison and Contrast between John the Baptist and Jesus, the Son of God
2. Two Realities:
 - a. The accounts of John & Jesus originated with God
 - b. Jesus is far greater than John (**Lk 1:32-33, Matt 3:11**)
3. Two Responses to Gabriel's Message:
 - a. Mary: Belief
 - b. Zechariah: Unbelief

Main Idea: God works to continue His redemptive plan requiring us to believe Him. A sinful heart demands too much evidence to believe in God's promises. But this does not mean lapses of disbelief or poor judgment disqualifies God's grace or mercy unto eternal life.

The Gospel is the Continuation of God's Designs (v 17)

1. Luke begins where Malachi left off (**Malachi 4:5-6**)
 - a. 400 Years of Silence, prophesied by Daniel ends with Gabriel's announcement to Zechariah
2. God brings His promises to pass – breeds certainty and assurance in the believer
 - a. God does not hope or wish things will come to pass, He brings them to pass
 - b. Example: *Psalm 22* depicts the Crucifixion 1,000 years before Christ

The Faithful Couple (vv 5-7, 24-25)

1. Zechariah the Devout Priest, Elizabeth the barren Woman
 - a. They were both advanced in years
 - b. They were childless
 - c. When the Bible opens with barren women or aged couples, Expect God to do something miraculous
2. Zechariah and Elizabeth felt Empty, Socially Ostracized because they were childless
3. They were Righteous and Blameless – not sinless perfection, but consistent obedience to the Lord
4. Godly lives do not mean lives of ease
5. Biblical Principle: God finds pleasure in dealing with obstructions and barriers to show us His glory

The Favor of God (vv 8-12)

1. The Custom of the Priesthood

- a. Appx 18-20k Priests served
 - b. Each priest served their division one week per year
 - c. Many would never have the privilege Zechariah received
 - d. His division was chosen, then Zechariah by lot to enter into the temple – this was a high honor, once in a lifetime exper.
 - e. It was no coincidence the lot fell to Zechariah (**Prov 16:33**)
2. The Priestly Scenario
 - a. 9 AM – the doors to the Temple Open, and he walks in
 - b. Three Trumpet Blasts sound to gather people to worship
 - c. One priest clears the altar, another brings in live coals
 - d. Zechariah carries the incense that symbolize prayers for the coming Messiah
 - e. In front of him is the altar, in back is the Holy of Holies
3. The Archangel, Gabriel Appears

The Fervor of God's Prophet (vv 13-17)

1. Gabriel Promises a Male Child to the Aged Couple
 - a. Zechariah's prayer for a child will be answered
2. John the Baptist's Calling
 - a. He will take the Nazarite Oath (**Numbers 6:1-21**)
 - b. He would be redeemed, filled with the Holy Spirit in the womb of his mother, Elizabeth
3. Zechariah and Elizabeth called to Rear this Child for God
4. John the Baptist would be like Elijah
 - a. Elijah was not a man pleaser – He pleased God
 - b. Elijah was fervent against the prophets of Baal (**1 Kngs 18**)
 - c. John the Baptist had this same fervor (**Matthew 3:7**)
5. John the Baptist's Ministry: Repentance and Reconciliation
 - a. Turn the hearts of fathers to the children, the disobedient to the wisdom of the just
 - b. He prepared the people for the coming of Jesus Christ

The Faithless Response of Zechariah (18-23)

1. Zechariah disbelieved Gabriel
 - a. Ironic – for he was religious, doing a ritual according to God's Word to pray for the coming Messiah
 - b. Unbelief is not a metaphysical problem, it is a moral problem – Disbelief is Sin
 - c. Zechariah was struck dumb – He became Mute
 - d. Zechariah resisted the truth of God's Word
2. God chastises Zechariah – his inability to hear God's Word, and then inability to speak the truth of God is a picture of those who disbelieve God's promises of Grace and blessing in Jesus Christ
3. God marred Zechariah to mend him – God still used Zechariah to build His Kingdom, and his son to point to Jesus Christ