

Luke 1:5-25, 57-80

Dedicated Zacharias turned from disbelief to delight.

I. Zacharias was dedicated (1:5-10).

A. He was blameless (5-6).

1. Pure lineage
 - a. He was a priest who kept serving after retirement age (5a).
 - b. His wife also descended from Aaron (5b).
 - It was a “two-fold honor”¹ to also marry a woman from the priestly line.
2. They were blameless in the Law’s outward demands (6).
 - As far as person “could judge,”² they kept the law and loved God.

B. He was childless (7).

- They had no child for two stated reasons (7).
1. Elizabeth was barren.
 - a. A barren wife brought shame to her (25b).
 - b. It was a ground for divorcing a wife, if she was barren.
 - c. Some thought barrenness was a sign of sin.
 2. They were now too old to have children - naturally.

C. He was tireless (8-10).

1. It was his time to serve (8-9).
 - a. His division of the 20,000 priests had its turn to serve in the temple area (8).
 - He kept serving despite his ruined reputation and his old age.
 - b. His destiny put him in the holy place to offer incense on that day.
 - i. The role of the dice-like lot determined that he would have the privilege.
 - ii. If he had gotten to do burn incense early on in his career, he now knew that this would be his final opportunity due to his age.
 - iii. Like Abraham and Sarah, Zach and Liz could have been around 90 and 100.
2. It was during public worship (10).
 - a. He was in the inner court.
 - b. People were waiting for him to appear after the incense burning to the outer court.
 - c. Before him was a giant veil blocking his vision into the holy of holies, God’s throne room.
 - If he inched back a corner of the veil, he would be struck dead.
 - d. In the outer court people were silently praying for their wives to have children, for deliverance from Rome, for peace, for Elijah to come, for Israel to return to God, and for Messiah to come soon.

II. Zacharias was doubtful (1:11-25).

A. Zacharias was surprised (11-17).

1. Gabriel came with a birth announcement (11-13).
 - a. No new scripture had been given or prophetic message spoken for 400 years (11).
 - b. Now Gabriel came with an announcement to break the silence.

¹ Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah* (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1971), 1:135.

² Ibid

2. Zacharias might have thought that he had done something wrong (1:12; Lev 10:1-2)
 3. God had heard all along (13).
 - a. James 5:16b
 - b. Elizabeth would bear him a son (13).
 - c. You will name him John (13).
 4. John was described (14-17).
 - a. He would be Elijah's similarity (17).
 - b. God was keeping His promises/
 - c. John's service provided a genuine offer of the kingdom to Israel (Isa 40:3; Mal 4:5-6).
 - d. Because Jew's ended up rejecting their king, Elijah (himself) will come just before Jesus's second coming (Matt 17:11-13; Rev 11).
- B. Zacharias was doubtful (18-20).
1. He asked for a sign to verify that this message was truth from God (18a).
 2. He doubted the supernatural (18b).
 - a. David was old and advanced in age at 70 (1 Kgs 1:1).
 - b. From a human viewpoint, their reproduction ability had died.
 - c. Is anything impossible with God at even 90 and 100 (Gen 18:11)?
 - d. *Zacharias was a holy man in God's holy place doubting God's holy word.*
- C. Zacharias was silenced (19-23).
1. To verify this Christmas promise, God muted Zacharias (20).
 2. He finished his duties in silence (21-22).
 3. Elizabeth was thankful (23).

III. Zacharias was delighted when the promise was fulfilled (1:57-66).

- A. He delightfully affirmed John's name (57-66).
1. "John" (1:63) = "The Lord is gracious."
 2. "Grace is God's goodness toward sinners, while mercy is God's goodness toward sufferers."³
 3. Zacharias praised his God (64).
- B. He delightfully announced Messiah's soon deliverance (65-66).
1. Fulfilled promises (Gen 22:18; 1 Sam 7:16)
 2. The rescuer was on the verge of coming (Col 1:13).
 3. Luke's theme (Luke 9:36)
- C. He delightfully affirmed John's role (76-80).
1. John would prepare the way for Messiah's coming, fulfilling Mal 3:1 (76).
 2. John would point the way to Messiah's forgiveness, fulfilling Jer 31:34 (77).
 - John 1:29
 4. John would prepare the stage for Messiah's promised light and peace (78-79).
 - a. Sunrise of Mal 4:2 (78-79a)
 - b. Peace of Isa 9:6 (79b)
 5. John prepared for his ministry in the wilderness (80).

³ Sam Storms, <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/essay/saving-grace>, accessed November 25, 2022.