

Luke 1:57~80

Read verses 57~66... Here we have the “*birth announcement*” of healthy, baby boy, to the proud parents of Elisabeth and Zacharias. There are no words to express the joy that comes with holding your child for the first time. No doubt, this had to be the happiest day in their lives. I’m sure that it was hard for Elisabeth to believe, even though she was holding him in her arms. Something she had long given up hope of ever having, but here he was, and even more beautiful than she could have ever imagined...

No doubt, much the way every other mother feels, I’m sure that *in her eyes*, this was the most precious, baby born ever born. But the difference with Elisabeth is, later on, Jesus himself would substantiate the fact the he was. Speaking of John, the Lord Jesus asked the multitude, what they went out to see, a man in soft raiment? A prophet? ...*yea, I say unto you, and more than a prophet.* ¹⁰*For **this is he**, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.* ¹¹*Verily I say unto you, **Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist...***

Jesus clearly declares that of all the children born of women, there’s none greater than John... As highly esteemed as the office of a prophet was considered, Jesus declares that John was MORE than a prophet.

Jesus went on there to make another statement about John that really puts everything in perspective...

¹³*For **all the prophets and the law prophesied until John...*** That is to say, that everything that was written, was written in lieu of his coming. All the prophets, all the law was speaking and pointing to this time, when John would come on the scene, coming as the “*forerunner*” of Messiah. The purpose of a “*forerunner*” was common knowledge among those of Jesus’ time. Anytime royalty would come to town, there was always someone sent to make everything ready, and declare to the people, the king’s arrival. When Jesus said that “*all the prophets and the law prophesied until John...*” he was referring to the fact that everything that was spoken by the prophets, everything that was written, everything would come to a climatic end and fulfillment in John. In the sense, that when you see this man, you know that Messiah is coming down the road!

Here in Luke, we have the birth announcement of the one that all of Israel had been watching for! The forerunner that Malachi said would come just before the coming of the Lord. From this moment on, the world would never be the same.

(Vs59~66) In accordance with the commandment of the Lord, on the eighth day following his birth, they bring the child to the temple, to be circumcised. This was in keeping with the commandment given to Abraham, concerning the covenant that God had made with him. Circumcision was to be a token or symbol of the covenant. All who were circumcised were part of the covenant, while those who were not, were cut off from among Gods’ people.

In keeping with Jewish tradition, the custom was upon circumcising the child; the child officially received his name, which in this case, sparked somewhat of a controversy. Apparently, those performing the circumcision, referred to the child as “*Zacharias*,” which was not unusual given that nearly every first born male would be given his fathers name. But Elisabeth quickly corrects them, and declares that the child name is to be John, which they had trouble accepting, given that no one in their family was named John. So they turned to Zacharias, and asked what he wanted him to be named. Zacharias, (who had been chastised by the angel for questioning the word of the Lord, and was unable to speak), asked for a writing tablet, and wrote... “*His name is JOHN.*”

And Luke writes that immediately (upon writing his name) that Zacharias *mouth was opened*, and his *tongue was loosed*... he was able to talk again. We are often guilty of reading over such things, and give

them little or no thought, but this one intrigues me. To think how the angel closed his mouth, and bound his tongue, so that it was impossible for him to speak. We're told that the angel did this, in chastising him for questioning the word of the Lord. The angel's response was like, "*How dare you question what I'm telling you, which is from the very mouth of God!*" Just to make sure you don't question anything else, I will make it that it will be impossible for you to question God, you won't be able to question in that you won't be able to speak!

He had been silent now for a little more than nine months, it obvious that he learned his lesson. In those nine months of silence, Zacharias had learned a lot, and it's obvious that it resulted in a good work done in his heart, given that the first thing out of his mouth was "*praise to God.*"

Not only could he speak again, but also now *God is using him to speak forth the prophetic word* of God! God was now using the same tongue that once questioned his word...to proclaim his word...

(Vs 68~79) Zacharias speaks a prophetic word...consisting of two parts...

(Vs 68~75) A prophetic utterance concerning the Lord's promised Messiah...Jesus

(Vs 76~79) A prophetic utterance concerning the Lord's promised Forerunner...John

(Vs 68~75) ⁶⁸*Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people,* ⁶⁹*And hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David;* ⁷⁰*As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began:* ⁷¹*That we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us;* ⁷²*To perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant;* ⁷³*The oath which he sware to our father Abraham,* ⁷⁴*That he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear,* ⁷⁵*In holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life.*

Zacharias praised God for "*raising up an horn of salvation*" for Israel... A "*horn*" is a symbol of strength, a symbol of power. It is to say that God has sent a "*Mighty deliverer*"...one who will conquer the enemy and deliver those held captive.

(Vs 70) God has "*Kept His Promise*", doing *just what He said* He would do... (Notice the language...)

⁷⁰*As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began:*

That's a very interesting statement...the office of the prophets has always intrigued me. Zacharias declares that the prophets were merely instruments that God used to speak to His people through. God set these men aside, *for the sole purpose of using their mouth*. The Spirit of God had taken up residence in the bodies of these men, and every word that came out of their mouth, was literally the words of God...

In a similar way, we are to be the instruments that God works through in our day... Now granted, the prophets were different in the sense that God chose them, and set them aside for His use. They really didn't have any choice, God, being God, overtook their bodies, and used them to carry out His purposes. Even though God doesn't simply overtake our bodies, we, as Christians, are to "*present our bodies a living sacrifice*" unto the Lord to be used for His will and purposes'. This is the mark of "True obedience" for the Christian's life, not that of merely being "good." Paul said in that passage that given what Christ has done for us, in that He laid down His life for us, we should do the same, and lay down our life in the sense of living it to our own will and desires, giving God a body He can work through to accomplish His will. We are to be filled with the Spirit of God, speaking to the lost, reaching out to them...

The prophets were men who were filled with the Spirit of God, and the words that they spoke were the very words of God! Here we see Zacharias, taking on that office, if only for a brief moment...

⁶⁷And his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Ghost, and prophesied, saying, ⁶⁸*Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he **hath visited and redeemed his people**, ⁶⁹And hath **raised up an horn of salvation** for us in the house of his servant David;*

It may have sounded like Zacharias...but it was not Zacharias who was speaking... Notice how he speaks as though it has already happened! He writes as though it was an already accomplished fact...and mind you, Christ was yet in Mary's womb, she was somewhere around three months along. But yet Zacharias speaks as though it had already happened. Reason for that is, prophetic speaking speaks in the past tense, as though the prophet is speaking from the "other side" of the event. It's important to understand, that prophecy is not merely *predicting* what will happen in the future, but rather revealing the events that will take place, speaking from the other side of those events. In other words, Zacharias speaks as though he has been translated in time, into the future, and is speaking from the other side of the event. This is the manner of prophets; they often spoke of things that had yet to happen, as though they had already happened. Because reality was, it was as good as done. What the Lord says, you can speak in the past tense, because it is as good as done, there's no stopping it. Many times the prophets of old would prophesy to Israel of impending judgment, and did so as though it had already happened, because it was as certain as though it had already happened.

Malachi "Saw" this day coming...when the forerunner would come into the world, and lead the way for Messiah...

Isaiah "Saw" the crucifixion of Christ, when he wrote Isaiah 53...The Suffering Servant...

David prophesied that "his hands and feet would be pierced...that they would give him vinegar to drink, that they would cast lots for his clothing...Even that Messiah would cry out, "My God, why hast thou forsaken me..."

You could go on and on, there are over 300 prophecies concerning the Christ that were fulfilled in His life and Death...

(Vs 76~79) Zacharias turns his eyes to "his own son" and speaks yet another prophecy...

⁷⁶And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways; ⁷⁷To give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins, ⁷⁸Through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us, ⁷⁹To give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.

This small infant would be instrumental in bringing about God's plan of redemption!

Zacharias says,

"You my son...you will be the instrument in which God will use, in leading the way for the coming King!
You will bring the message of HOPE to the hopeless...

You will bring strength to the weak...and life to the dying...

God will use you to lead His people into the way of Peace!

(Vs 80) ⁸⁰And the child grew, waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his showing unto Israel.

This is the last we hear of John, until we find him some 30 years later, preaching and baptizing out in the wilderness...