



## What Child is This? The Gospel of Luke – Luke 1:57-80 December 16-22, 2018

What Child is This?  
Luke 1:57-61

*"Now the time came for Elizabeth to give birth, and she bore a son. And her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had shown great mercy to her, and they rejoiced with her. And on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child. And they would have called him Zechariah after his father, but his mother answered, "No; he shall be called John." And they said to her, "None of your relatives is called by this name." Luke 1:57-61*

Ask, If you have children, How did you choose the name of your child? or How did your parents decide on your name? How long did you wait to name your child?

In Jewish culture, the tradition was to name the child after it was born and boys named after circumcision on the 8th day. Out of custom, they did not name their child after Zechariah. Elizabeth says her name is to be John. Gabriel told Zechariah his name is to be John. God made this barren woman to have a child.

### **A Second Chance for Zechariah**

*And they made signs to his father, inquiring what he wanted him to be called. And he asked for a writing tablet and wrote, "His name is John." And they all wondered. And immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue loosed, and he spoke, blessing God. And fear came on all their neighbors. And all these things were talked about through all the hill country of Judea, and all who heard them laid them up in their hearts, saying, "What then will this child be?" For the hand of the Lord was with him." Luke 1:62-66 ESV*

God was at work in forming John but also forming the faith of Zechariah - he had doubted before but after 9 months of being mute, God was strengthening his faith.

Ask, How have you received a second chance from God recently? Have you been willing to give someone a second chance in your realm of relationships or influence? Remember that we are able to forgive because we have been forgiven. *Colossians 3:13 - bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.*

The Song of Zechariah- the Benedictus (blessed be) (This is the 2<sup>nd</sup> song found in Luke. Remember that last week we explored the Magnificat – The Song of Mary)

*Luke 1:67-79*

*"And his father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied, saying, "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has visited and redeemed his people and has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David, as he spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets from of old, that we should be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us; to show the mercy promised to our fathers and to remember his holy covenant, the oath that he swore to our father Abraham, to grant us that we, being delivered from the hand of our enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness and*

*righteousness before him all our days. And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways, to give knowledge of salvation to his people in the forgiveness of their sins, because of the tender mercy of our God, whereby the sunrise shall visit us from on high to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace."*

Say, God's promises are as good as done.

Ask, How is it that we struggle with the promises of God in our lives? (Possible answers - We may not know the promises. We might be more focused on the benefits of the promises than we are on the Promise Maker and Keeper. We would rather trust ourselves than trusting God in all things.)

Zechariah thanks God for fulfilling the prophecy - Blessed be the Lord God of Israel - God comes to redeem His own (Israel) first.

Zechariah mentions the The Horn of Salvation - A horn of victory to strike fear in the hearts of the enemy. Even though his son John has been born, Zechariah sees the bigger picture of the plan of God's promise or redemption. He realizes that John is not the One, but is preparing the way for the One. He is celebrating the birth of the coming one - Jesus. This is not about his son John but of Mary's son, Jesus.

- *Psalm 132:17*
- *Micah 4:13*
- *2 Samuel 22 and Psalm 18*

Why are we saved? To serve him without fear and in holiness and righteousness.

We can do many good things for the wrong reasons.

v. 76-77

*And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways, to give knowledge of salvation to his people in the forgiveness of their sins,*

The Old Testament makes mention of the John. It is not a random, made of act.

Isaiah 40 - all about Jesus without mentioning His name

Malachi 3:1 - written 400 years before Zechariah is singing

V 78-79

*because of the tender mercy of our God, whereby the sunrise shall visit us from on high to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace."*

Some examples of the visit from on high that will give light –

Divine light - angel appeared

Elizabeth - recognizes that Mary is pregnant; Magnificat (this is revealed through the Holy Spirit as he sheds light on the truth of the child)

Mary - she believes Gabriel. Gabriel is a light that reveals the truth of God to Mary.

John recognizes Jesus – interestingly enough, an unborn child recognizes the Son of God while He is in utero.

God's light is merciful because He reveals Himself to us in our darkness and sin. The Gospel of John speaks much about Christ being the Light of the world.

Where have you seen God illuminate (reveal) Himself to you or to others?

**God's Timing**

*And the child grew and became strong in spirit, and he was in the wilderness until the day of his public appearance to Israel."*

*Luke 1:80 ESV*

Ask, What was John doing while he was growing up? Take some time to imagine what some of the preparation may have been as John grew.

This is an interesting fact - God wasn't ready for John until God was ready for John to burst on the scene. (Remember that John was not perfect or sinless but he was filled with the HS. There is only One who has lived who has been perfect and sinless and that is Christ Himself.)

John was strong in spirit. That is to say that He allowed the Spirit to live through Him.

In Zechariah's song, he is praising God because He has redeemed Israel - but it hasn't happened yet. Remember to count on the promises of God even when we have not seen them completely fulfilled yet! Live in the promised victory. It requires us to be trusting of God and to remain faithful.

As we are rescued from darkness in this world, we are to be a light in the world. What does that look like for you this week?

Take prayer requests and spend time praying for one another.