

Faith and Love C.O.G.I.C Sunday School

Lesson 3 December 17, 2023

ZACHARIAS PROPHECIES ABOUT JOHN

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ZACHARIAS PROPHECIES ABOUT JOHN

- ▶ Bible Basis: Luke 1:57, 58, 67-79
- ▶ Bible Truth: God rewards faith and punishes unbelief.
- ▶ Memory Verse: “And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways; To give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins” (Luke 1:76-77, KJV)
- ▶ Lesson Aim: By the end of the lesson, we will REVIEW the story of Zacharias’ prophecy concerning his son, John the Baptist; GAIN an appreciation for prophecy; REFLECT on expectations we have for the next generation; and ADDRESS the justice modeled in Zacharias’ prophecy.
- ▶ Background Scriptures: Luke 1– Read and incorporate the insights gained from the Background Scriptures into your study of the lesson.

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Lesson Scripture: Luke 1:57, 58, 67-80, KJV

57 Now Elisabeth's full time came that she should be delivered; and she brought forth a son.

58 And her neighbours and her cousins heard how the Lord had shewed great mercy upon her; and they rejoiced with her.

67 And 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,



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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;



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Lesson Scripture: Luke 1:57, 58, 67-80, KJV

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.

76 And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways;



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77 To give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins,

78 Through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us,

79 To give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.

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



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LIGHT ON THE WORD

Zacharias, a priestly descendant of Aaron, was ministering in the temple when an angel came and promised him a son. John was born to elderly Zacharias and Elisabeth. Their story was written by Luke, who also wrote the Book of Acts. Born in Antioch, Luke was known as “the beloved physician” (Colossians 4:14) and was Apostle Paul’s friend and companion on missionary journeys to Macedonia, Philippi, Caesarea, and Jerusalem. He died a martyr.



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Teaching the Bible Lesson

LIFE NEED FOR TODAY'S LESSON:

AIM: We will learn that nothing is impossible with
God.



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INTRODUCTION

Birth Announcement

Chapter 1 begins with Luke informing readers his only purpose in writing this book was to make a truthful record of Jesus' birth. He recounted how Zacharias was working in the temple when the angel Gabriel announced Elisabeth would give birth to a son. Zacharias questioned Gabriel's words, his voice was taken away, and he couldn't speak until his son was born.

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INTRODUCTION

Birth Announcement

Elisabeth hid herself for five months. In her sixth month, Luke focused on Mary, Elisabeth's cousin. Mary also received a surprise visit from Gabriel with the same announcement—she, too, would bear a son. But her pregnancy would not result from relations with a man but through the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit. Unlike Zacharias, Mary believed Gabriel; hurried to visit Elisabeth, then stayed three months.

BIBLE LEARNING

AIM: We will learn from biblical history the relationship of prophecy and faith.

I. REJOICING WITH ELIZABETH

Luke 1:57-58

Elisabeth was the second cousin of Mary, the mother of Jesus. Both of their babies had divine origins, for the angel Gabriel stood before Zacharias in the temple just as he stood before Mary. Zacharias and Elisabeth differed from Mary for they were old so pregnancy seemed like a lost cause. The promise did come true, and even in the womb their baby was already filled with the Holy Ghost and leaped with joy in response to hearing the voice of Mary when she visited (Luke 1:15, 44). For three months, Mary and Elisabeth spent time together, probably preparing the home for the baby. Just after Mary left, Elisabeth gave birth to a baby boy.

I. REJOICING WITH ELIZABETH

Luke 1:57-58

The Jewish custom for welcoming babies was music, food, and celebration. Family and neighbors would gather for a party and wait to hear if a boy or girl was born, anxiously hoping for a boy, maybe the Messiah. Boys took on greater significance than girls. One theologian said if a boy was born, musicians would start playing, people would dance and party. If a girl was born, musicians would leave, and there would be no great celebration. This may be why the word “mercy” (Gk. eleos, eh-LEE-ose) is used because it indicates a unique kindness or good will toward someone who is afflicted.

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LIGHT ON THE WORD

Filled with the Spirit

Zacharias was previously told his son would be filled with the Spirit (John 1:15). Afterward, his wife was filled with the Spirit (John 1:41). Finally, it was his turn.



II. PRAISES FOR GOD

Luke 1:67-75

Zacharias endured more than 270 days of scribbling requests, grunting to emphasize what he used to easily say, and gesturing with his hands. He made it through the delivery of his son, but when Zacharias opened his mouth, he did not praise himself, his wife, or his son. He blessed Jesus, the child still to be born.

II. PRAISES FOR GOD

Promises for Jesus

Luke 1:67-75

Being filled with the Holy Ghost (Gk. pneuma, NOO-ma) during this time was a rare gift. Zacharias, a priest from the line of Aaron, was the first person God spoke to through an angel about his baby's birth. He'd been divinely struck mute since this happened due to his unbelief. Now that the events had come to pass, God blessed Zacharias with Himself and the return of his voice. Biblical prophecies often begin with praises of who God is and then move into a personal application or promise. Zacharias' praise, the Benedictus, is a Latin term to describe his praise to God. Even though he could have been angry at God for the punishment of not being able to speak for nine months, he instead celebrated who the Lord is and what He was about to do.

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II. PRAISES FOR GOD

Promises for Jesus
Luke 1:67-75

This song can be divided into two sections, including an initial burst of thanksgiving that then leads into an address from Zacharias to his son. It reveals his personal thrill at seeing his household take part in the great purpose of God to save all people.

Jews commonly saw a horn as a symbol of strength, so a “horn of salvation” means a mighty Savior. God is described this way in Psalm 18, so by sharing similar sentiments here, Zacharias provides another link to the Trinity through the birth of Jesus. People viewed the reign of David as a time when Israel held power to defend itself against its enemies. The coming Messiah would again put the Jews in a place of prominence, but in a divine, spiritual sense versus merely a political one.



II. PRAISES FOR GOD

Promises for Jesus

Luke 1:67-75

This is the meaning behind what true salvation (Gk. soteria, sow-TAY-ree-ah) is. Deliverance is more than protection from physical oppression; it also affects internal and ethical issues like humanity's sin. The Messiah would present both to Christians, but in stages: personal transformation that would lead to an eternal dwelling with God when the kingdom of God arrives in fullness.

II. PRAISES FOR GOD

Promises for Jesus

Luke 1:67-75

Zacharias affirmed that all that was taking place was in accordance with God's promises to His people in the past. In each verse that follows, Zacharias tracked a chronology of different core events Jews experienced in waiting for their Messiah. Zacharias simultaneously fulfilled his roles as a priest and prophet by pouring out worship toward the Lord and instructing others to remember their people's story.

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II. PRAISES FOR GOD

Promises for Jesus

Luke 1:67-75

By sending someone like John the Baptist who would prepare the way for the Messiah, God declared that the people had not been forgotten. They endured the scorn of surrounding nations and their Roman oppressors but were never without the promise that God would one day save them. God visited His people when they were captive in Egypt (Exodus 3:16, 4:31) and then continued to send them numerous prophets throughout succeeding generations, it was time for the Lord to supernaturally save His people from all that stood against them. It began with John, who would remind them of their sin so that Christ alone would be shown to be the Savior.



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II. PRAISES FOR GOD

Promises for Jesus

Luke 1:67-75

A covenant (Gk. diatheke, dee-ah-tha-KAH) is a unique arrangement that's valid between a superior party and a lesser party. The one with more power or authority would initiate the arrangement, finalize the terms, and then validate things through a symbolic sacrifice. God always played the stronger role, and Israel the yielding role.

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LIGHT ON THE WORD

A Father's Hopes

What parent doesn't have high hopes for his or her child? There aren't too many parents who look over their newborns and envision visiting them in prison when they get older. Most parents visualize their children as productive scholars, professionals, and stars. Zacharias was no different.



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III. PROMISES FOR THE CHILD

Luke 1:76-79

Zacharias had endured years of his wife's barrenness and months of silence, so he wondered what kind of child John would be. Knowing he had not suffered in vain, Zacharias declared an affirmation of Gabriel's earlier message "And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest." Zacharias needed only to look to Hebrew Scripture for evidence of John's future: John would be the servant who would prepare the way of the Lord (Isaiah 40:3). John would be the prophet to call the people of Israel to repentance. Even with his limited understanding of the entire story, Zacharias spoke life over his son, proclaiming his purpose and establishing him as the forerunner for Christ.



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III. PROMISES FOR THE CHILD

Prophecies for John

Luke 1:76-79

Isaiah 40:3 speaks about the forerunner of the Messiah, and John himself would later own this truth and claim it publicly (John 1:23). Zacharias knew this pattern as a priest, for as Aaron was Moses' mouthpiece (Exodus 7:1), so would John be a messenger to prepare people for salvation and the kingdom of heaven. He would preach repentance by calling people to open their hearts to the Lord.

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III. PROMISES FOR THE CHILD

Prophecies for John

Luke 1:76-79

Psalm 56:13 states, “For thou hast delivered my soul from death: wilt not thou deliver my feet from falling, that I may walk before God in the light of the living?”

Zacharias said the Messiah would not just reveal sins but actually purify people of their sins. This freedom is more than being delivered out of the hands of enemies—it involves forgiveness of what we’ve done wrong and the sin nature that corrupts us, and then it enables us to have a relationship with God.



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III. PROMISES FOR THE CHILD

Prophecies for John

Luke 1:76-79

The ability to even know that John would be a prophet who would prepare the way for the Messiah was a sign that Zacharias was speaking under divine guidance, knowing things that only the Holy Ghost could have revealed to him. By speaking even now about Jesus, whom he didn't know, Zacharias revealed his relationship to the God he did know. There is also a backdrop for this statement from Isaiah 60:1–2 that says, "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the LORD shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee."



BIBLE APPLICATION

AIM: We will understand that God is displeased with
unbelief as well as belief.

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BIBLE APPLICATION

We live in a society that prides itself upon its right to exercise freedom of speech. Though we can freely say whatever we think and feel, this lesson shows we ought to exercise our right to remain silent. What if we were arrested every time we spoke against the Lord? Zacharias' ability to speak was taken away when he verbalized unbelief. Growing up, we are taught how and when to speak. Spiritual maturity is evidenced by those who know how and when not to speak.



STUDENT RESPONSES

AIM: We will begin to use positive words instead of
negative ones.

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STUDENT RESPONSES

This week, challenge yourself to practice something you learned when you were a child—to only speak if you have something nice to say. Enjoy a week without complaining, cursing, or criticizing. It should be a week of positivity.

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Prayer

Dear Heavenly Father,

We praise you because we know that nothing is impossible for you. You are the all powerful God of the universe. We thank you that you chose to call us your people and we can call on you in prayer. Lord, we ask that you strengthen our hearts so we can walk by faith and believe you for the impossible things in our lives.

In Jesus' name we pray.

AMEN



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Next Sunday
December 24, 2023
Lesson 4
The Messiah Arrives
Luke 2:1-17

