

Luke's Epiphany

Luke 1:5-25

Birth of John Foretold

Wednesday Class (12/11/24)

Read Luke 1:5-25

Zechariah was a priest, serving in the Jerusalem temple. His wasn't a full-time vocation, but priests like Zechariah served two one-week periods a year. His job this day was to burn incense in the inner portion of the temple, the Holy Place. This was a great honor, and a high point in Zechariah's life. Each priest officiated at the sacrifice only once in his life, selected by lot.

Why do you suppose God chose this very high moment to intervene?

What was Zechariah's initial response? Why did he react this way?

The angel informs Zechariah that he and his wife will have a son, a child that will have a special place in God's plan of salvation.

How will others react to the son's birth? (v. 14)

How does the angel describe the son of Zechariah? (v. 15)

What will be the effect of this son's ministry, on the nation of Israel? (v. 16)

Read Malachi 3:1 and Malachi 4:5, for a prophetic description of what Zechariah's son would be doing.

Now read Luke 1:17 again carefully. Zechariah's son will "go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah." Go before whom, exactly?

Why do you think it was important for Zechariah's son, John to be the forerunner of Christ? Why did the nation need for their hearts to be turned? (v. 17)

Do you think that "turning of hearts" implies repentance?

How is John's mission a model for the church's mission today?

How might someone like you "prepare" people for the Lord?

Think more deeply about the personal story of Zechariah and Elizabeth.

If you were told that you (at your age) were going to have a baby within the next year, how might you respond?

Zechariah and Elizabeth were evidently living with deep disappointment, because they were not able to have children.

What term does Elizabeth use for this situation in v. 25?

Their situation reminds us that sometimes righteous people have disappointments in their lives.

How would you describe Zechariah's response to the news that he will become a father?

Do you think it's common for even good people have doubts about God's promises?

When was the last time you doubted God? What caused your doubt?

Why do you think God wanted Zechariah to be silent for the duration of Elizabeth's pregnancy? Was he punishing him? Or teaching him a valuable lesson?

This story teaches us all a crucial lesson. Trust God will do what he says!

Read again vs. 24-25. How would you describe Elizabeth's response to God's intrusion in her life?