

# LUKE 1:57-64, 67-79

## LESSON: BIRTH OF THE FORERUNNER —December 15, 2019

### INTRODUCTION

**1:56** And Mary abode with her about three months, and returned to her own house. Because travel was not easy, long visits were customary. Mary had spent time with Elizabeth staying with her for about three months and being a great help to Elizabeth who was experiencing the difficulties of a first pregnancy in her old age. For in this trip, Mary has now come to understand her purpose, and her soul magnified the Lord, and her spirit had to rejoice in God her Savior. She returns home refueled and blessed! And it will be obviously apparent to her own house and to the people around that she is pregnant with child.

### LESSON: I. THE BIRTH OF JOHN LUKE 1:57-64

**1:57** Now Elisabeth's full time came that she should be delivered; and she brought forth a son. By now Elizabeth's waiting time was over. The birth of a child is a significant event, and for Zacharias and Elizabeth, the birth of John was much more significant! These are a few reasons:

- The baby was born as a child of promise demonstrating God's mercy.
- Elizabeth conceived when she was in her old age, beyond child-bearing years, which shows that nothing is impossible with God!
- Zacharias could now finally speak again, for the angel Gabriel had stricken him silent until his child's birth.
- John will be the forerunner to proclaim the coming of the promised Messiah!

**1:58** And her neighbours and her cousins heard how the Lord had shewed great mercy upon her; and they rejoiced with her. This child brought all the neighbors and cousins together as they heard the news of Elizabeth having a child in her old age. They heard how God showed mercy upon Elizabeth, and they rejoiced all the more.

**1:59** And it came to pass, that on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child; and they called him Zacharias, after the name of his father. All Jewish males were circumcised on the eighth day after birth. Circumcision was the Jewish ceremony where the child was offered up or dedicated to God and it was also the day on which the child was officially named. Some of the neighbors and relatives wanted the child to be named after the father, Zacharias.

**1:60** And his mother answered and said, Not so; but he shall be called John. And we see that Elizabeth, the child's mother objected, knowing that the angel had told Zacharias to name the child John. So, she let them know that his name would be John.

**1:61** And they said unto her, There is none of thy kindred that is called by this name. The neighbors and relatives told Elizabeth that none of Zacharias kindred are called John. They really didn't know what the angel had said to him; they didn't even know why his voice was shut-up. They only knew

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about their tradition, they couldn't even conceive anything else, but to call him after his father's name.

**1:62 And they made signs to his father, how he would have him called.** So, the relatives took the matter to speechless Zacharias, even making signs to him and motioning to him because they might have thought he couldn't hear because Elizabeth was the one who answered them first. We do know that he was unable speak to them since coming out of the Temple because his voice was silenced by the angel Gabriel.

**1:63 And he asked for a writing table, and wrote, saying, His name is John. And they marveled all.** Zacharias then asked for a writing tablet in which he wrote the name John. The people marveled; astonished and were surprised over the child's name.

**1:64 And his mouth was opened immediately, and his tongue loosed and he spake, and praised God.** The child's birth caused several important results:

1. The father was miraculously healed; consequently he began to praise God. The restraint upon Zacharias' tongue was removed.

## NOT APART OF THE LESSON: VERSES 65-66

**1:65 And fear came on all that dwelt round about them: and all these sayings were noised abroad throughout all the hill country of Judea.**

2. The people were awe-stricken. The word "*fear*" (phobos) does not mean terror and fright, but reverence. It meant reverential awe and reverential fear of God. They could see God working; His hand was evident.
3. The events were spread abroad. God's hand upon the child was the subject of the countryside. His movement upon Zacharias was noised abroad throughout all the countryside of Judea.

**1:66 And all they that heard them laid them up in their hearts, saying. What manner of child shall this be? And the hand of the Lord was with him.**

4. The sense of destiny surrounded the child. The people kept the things in their hearts. They did not forget what they were hearing and they were waiting for the child to grow, to see what would happen with him, for the hand of the Lord was with him.

## II. THE PROPHECY OF ZACHARIAS LUKE 1:67-79

**1:67 And his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Ghost, and prophesied, saying,—** After Zacharias tongue was loosed and was finally able to speak, he was filled with the Holy Ghost and began to praise God (1:64) by prophesying. What a wonder to come out of your mouth after being shut up for 9 months. It reminds me of Jeremiah when he says "*it's like fire shut up in my bones.*" Zacharias' Prophecy is often called "*the Benedictus*" after its first words in the Latin translation.

**1:68 Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people,—**The first part of Zachariah praise predicts redemption. He addressed God (Yahweh) as "*the Lord God of Israel.*" Israel was the chosen people of God. And as God's chosen people, Israel had been given (entrusted with) both the Word and promises of God. Zachariah was predicting the future, proclaiming what the Messiah will do. The Messiah was to be the One through whom God will use to visit and redeem His

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people. It is God Himself who visits the earth in the Person of the Messiah. In the past, God had been actively involved in the world's affairs. He had sent His Word through His Old Testament messengers to the world, but now God was becoming personally involved in the world by visiting the world Himself! Zacharias was prophesying here in the Book of Luke, but God's promise to Israel has been fulfilled today!

**1:69 And hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David;—**This refers to the Messiah, the mighty Savior of David's house. Zacharias says God is sending us a mighty Savior. The phrase "*horn of salvation*" is a reference to Christ. The word "horn" throughout the Old Testament was a symbol of strength, power, and might. The Messiah is called "*the horn*" or "*the mighty One of salvation*" because He alone possesses the might, the strength, and the power to save. Also note where the horn or the Messiah was raised up—in the house of His servant David. The Messiah was the horn promised to David; the One who fulfills prophecy concerning David ("*There will I make the horn of David to bud: I have ordained a lamp for mine anointed*" Ps.132:17). The Messiah appears to re-establish the Davidian kingdom.

**1:70 As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began:—**God was the One doing the speaking through the mouths of His holy Prophets since the world began. In Genesis chapter 3:15, God speaks and we see the first prophecy of the Savior. However, a search shows that Moses may have been the first prophet, to reference his prophesy to the Savior in Deuteronomy 18:15 "*God will raise up unto thee a prophet...*" Also, Balaam in Num.24:17 spoke of "*Jesus as a Star out of Jacob...*", And Isaiah in Is.7:14; 9:6 spoke of His name "*Immanuel; called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace*", and etc.

**1:71 That we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us;—**The Messiah was to save believers from their enemies and from all who hated them. <sup>1</sup>The Jews had many enemies. In the past, powerful foreign nations attacked and ruled them. Therefore, most Jews would describe 'enemies' in political ways. This was especially true at that time because the Roman soldiers were in their country. However, Christ is interested in saving men from their enemies that wage an endless war against the spirit, and enslave men both now and eternally.

**1:72 To perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant;—**The Messiah was the One who fulfilled the mercy that was promised, and the covenant of faith. God promised Abraham that if he would get up and leave his old country and follow Him, then Abraham would receive both "*the mercy of God*" and "*the covenant of faith.*" The covenant was based on "*the Promised Seed*", Christ Himself. Thus, Zacharias, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, prophesied that the promised mercy and covenant to Abraham will be in the fulfillment of Jesus.

**1:73 The oath which he sware to our father Abraham,—**We have heard of that oath many times (Gen.12:3; 17:4; 22:16-17) and it brings comfort to the offspring of Abraham from generation to generation as God honors His oath.

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<sup>1</sup><http://www.easyenglish.info/bible-commentary/luke-lbw.htm>

[www.pitwm.net/pitwm-versebyverse.html](http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-versebyverse.html)

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**1:74 That he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear,—**God has mercy and delivers man through faith, that men might serve Him without fear. He does not want men fearing the pain of death and the coming judgment of hell. God wants men to have peace of mind and heart, to feel secure and to know meaning and purpose throughout all of life. Being delivered out of the hand of the enemy frees us to serve Him.

**1:75 In holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life.** <sup>2</sup>We can be holy and righteous, because we have taken on His righteousness and holiness. We will no longer be servants to sin, for God will enable us to serve Him in holiness and righteousness in all the days of our lives; forever.

**1:76 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;—**The second part of Zacharias' prophecy concerned John, his son—to be known as John the Baptist, predicting that John would prepare the Messiah's way.

1. John was to be the prophet of the Highest!
  - a. There had been no prophet in Israel for some four hundred years. John was to be the first since Malachi.
  - b. Christ was called the Highest, that is the Most High—a title for God. Therefore, the Incarnation of God in Christ was being proclaimed. He is "*God blessed forever.*"
  - c. John was called the prophet of the Highest!
2. John was to prepare the Lord's way. He was to be the forerunner of the Messiah. He would be the One who was to prepare the people for the coming of the Lord.

*"To go before the face of the Lord"* — is the same as to go immediately before one, or to be immediately followed by another. John would be the "*forerunner*" of the Lord Jesus, the Messiah, that was about to appear.

**1:77 To give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins,—**John was to proclaim salvation, even forgiveness of sins. Note: salvation may be freely given, but it also comes by the forgiveness of sins. That means Salvation is conditional. Thereby, John's purpose was to call men to salvation; however, one's sins must be forgiven before he could be saved.

**1:78 Through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us,—**One thing for sure, the Messiah was sent through the tender mercy of God. He is the "Dayspring from on High," the morning light, the rising sun who had visited them.

**1:79 To give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.** The Messiah was sent to give light. To who? 1) to those who sit in darkness; 2) and to those in the shadow of death; for 3) their feet are guided into the way of peace. God spoke light from nothing that was created. Therefore, it is never too late or far for the light of Jesus to penetrate into darkness: "*those who sit in darkness*" (ignorant to the truth of God's Word); or "*those in the shadow of death*" (on death row or hospice), peace is available through the Messiah!

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# PITWM VERSE BY VERSE

## NOT APART OF THE LESSON VERSE 1:80



**1:80** *And the child grew, and waxed strong in the spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his showing unto Israel.* To prophesy is not only to be able to foretell coming events only, but to give the mind of God in relation to both the present and the future. The only record of John the Baptist's early life is given in this verse. John remained separate from the religious leaders of his day. His message was different from theirs, and his life proved it.

### SUMMARY

Elizabeth's time had fully come for her son to be born. <sup>3</sup>When Elizabeth's son was born, her neighbors and relatives, heard how kind the Lord had been to her, and they too were glad (**1: 57-58**).

On the eighth day Zacharias and Elizabeth came to circumcise their child, and the people thought his name should be called Zacharias, after his father, but his mother said *"not so."* His name will be John. The neighbors and relatives didn't understand this. They began to motion to Zacharias as who had been silenced by the angel since conception, as to what he wanted to call him. He asked for a writing tablet and he wrote the name John, and again everybody was astonished and surprised. Then all of a sudden, immediately after Zacharias wrote the child's name down, his mouth opened and his tongue was loosed, and he began to speak and praise God, filled with the Holy Ghost and prophesizing. The reverential fear of God came over all the people that were around him. And these sayings were noised abroad throughout all the countryside of Judea. And all that heard about it, kept all this in their hearts and began to say *"what then shall this child be?"* They did not forget what they heard and waited for the child to grow, to see what would happen (**1:59-66**).

It had been many years since God had spoken through the prophets. But now in a special way God opened the lips of Zacharias. <sup>4</sup>Zacharias prophesied the coming of the Savior who would redeem His people and he predicted that his son John would prepare the Messiah's way. God had opened up his mouth and enabled Zacharias to speak prophetically for He filled him with the Holy Ghost. No wonder Zacharias praised God! (**1:67**).

- a. He gives an exhortation of praise to God (**1:68a**).
- b. He noted the reason God should be praised (**1:68b**).
- c. He described the deliverance for Israel through the Messiah (**1:69-75**).
- d. He described the ministry John would have (**1:76-79**).

To prophesy is not only to be able to foretell coming events only, but to give the mind of God in relation to both the present and the future. The only record of John the Baptist's early life is given in one verse (**1:80**) *"And the child grew, and waxed strong in the spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his showing unto Israel."* John remained separate from the religious leaders of his day. His message was different from theirs and his life proved it.

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.family-times.net/commentary/elizabeth-gives-birth-to-john/>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.family-times.net/commentary/zachariah-prophesies-of-johns-ministry/>