

# (Luke) 06 - Songs of Mary & Zacharias

by Ed Miller

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*Ed Miller's sermon explores the themes of faith and the Holy Spirit in Luke chapter 1, focusing on the songs of Mary and Zacharias as pivotal expressions of belief and worship.*

**Duration:** 47:00

**Scripture:** Genesis 12:3, Malachi 4:5-6, Luke 1:5-57, Luke 1:73-75

**Topics:** "Biblical Prophecy", "Spiritual Renewal"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker focuses on three additional aspects of chapter 1 of the Bible. They approach the text from a broad perspective, looking at the overall message rather than specific details. One of the topics discussed is Zacharias' song, where he praises the Lord based on what Gabriel had told him. The speaker also mentions that Luke serves as a transition from the Old Testament to the New Testament, emphasizing the message of grace. Lastly, the speaker introduces John the baptizer as an illustration of a Spirit-filled person, highlighting that he will be further discussed in chapter 3.

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## Transcript

Luke chapter 1, the Gospel of Luke, as you remember, presents our Lord Jesus as the Son of all mankind, a title that Jesus reserved for Himself. That was His favorite title for Himself, and over and over again He referred to Himself as the Son of all mankind. In Luke chapter 1, verse 4, God gives us one of the purposes for the Gospel of Luke.

According to chapter 1, verse 4, Luke was written that we might know for sure, that we might have certainty as we consider the life and the ministry of our Lord Jesus. And so, when we study one of the prayers that I've been praying, for my heart and for yours, is that God would ground us more deeply in assurance, and just root us in the rock, that as never before we might be stable and hold fast the great truth that we love and have been taught from our youth. For the last several weeks, we've been in Luke chapter 1, and we summarize the content of that precious chapter in these words, certainty through faith.

Luke chapter 1, in a special way, starts us off on the right foot, and we're going to read a lot about the Son of all mankind, about His ministry and His work, but it all begins with the simplicity of faith. Here's the outline we've been following. Chapter 1, verses 5 to 23, is just an illustration of unbelief, illustrated by Zacharias, the father of John the baptizer.

And then in verses 24 to 56, we have an illustration of faith, illustrated by Mary, the virgin mother of the Son of all mankind. And then the chapter ends in verses 57, right to the end, unbelief turned to faith. And so you can see the heart of the chapter.

You have unbelief, then you have faith, and then you have unbelief turned to faith. And so God is calling our attention to the simplicity, certainty through faith. Now, even though I think that gives the heart of chapter 1, there are other things in chapter 1 that we've sort of glazed over, that we passed over in order to get the heart of chapter 1. And they're instructive, and I don't think we should leave chapter 1 without some comment on some of these precious things.

As those of you know who have studied with me in the past, that our approach is very surveyed. We sort of stand back and try to get the big picture and look over the whole thing. That delivers me from having to answer detailed questions about specifics which I'm not qualified to answer.

And it's easy, I just say, well, you know, we'll get to that maybe someday or something like that. But anyway, we're looking at the big thing. And though we've looked at the heart of chapter 1, there are several danglers.

There are other things that I think we ought to at least spend a little bit of time on. And so what I'd like to do before we leave chapter 1 is focus on three more things that are in this chapter. If you like logical connection and that kind of thing, and are analytical, I don't know how that sets with you.

Three more things that we can look at. Thing number 1, thing number 2, thing number 3. Anyway, in chapter 1 there is also a strong emphasis on the Holy Spirit. And so we can't bypass chapter 1 without at least calling attention to that.

Also, we've got to spend at least a few moments on this wonderful song. Beginning in verse 46 through 55, Mary's Magnificat. We just can't leave chapter 1 and not say something about that song.

And just so, the chapter ends with the great Benedictus, the song of Zacharias, when unbelief was turned to faith, beginning in verse 68 all the way to 79. And so we're going to look at those three things at least to pull chapter 1 together. The mention of the Holy Spirit, Mary's wonderful song, and then the song of Zacharias.

Having said that, you'll think that now we're finished with chapter 1, ready to go to chapter 2. No, there are some sub-danglers too. There are a couple of other things I want to mention in Luke chapter 1. And we'll pick that up the next time we gather together. Let me begin by calling your attention, and if you'll glance at chapter 1 please, the strong emphasis of the Lord on the Holy Spirit.

Now when you think of the blessed Holy Spirit and the work of the Holy Spirit, if you were to ask the average Christian, where would I find information about the Holy Spirit in the Gospel? Probably they wouldn't say Luke, that's my guess. They'd probably say the Gospel of John. Because in the Gospel of John we have so much about the Holy Spirit.

But most of what's in the Gospel of John has to do with the promise of the Holy Spirit as it relates to His church. He's going to come and indwell us and be the comforter and walk alongside us and His ministry in our lives. What you have in Luke is a little bit different.

There's some of that, but not much of that. Most of what God says about the Holy Spirit in Luke is in terms of our Lord Jesus. And the big exception is chapter 1. And chapter 1 is sort of a summary of the whole ministry of the Holy Spirit.

Glance, if you would, at these four references please. Chapter 1, 14 and 15. The first reference.

This is Gabriel now speaking to Zacharias. You will have joy and gladness. Many will rejoice at his birth.

He'll be great in the sight of the Lord. He'll drink no wine or liquor. And he'll be filled with the Holy Spirit while he's yet in his mother's womb.

And when you realize where Zacharias was in the Bible, you might wonder if he even understood what was being said. Who is this Holy Spirit? And all of a sudden, God says, Now your son's going to be filled with the Holy Spirit while he's still in the womb. He may have scratched his head about that, but we don't have much light on the Holy Spirit.

Who is that? But the first reference has to do with John being filled from his mother's womb. And then verse 34 and 35. And Mary said to the angel, How can this be, since I am a virgin? And the angel answered and said to her, The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you, and for that reason the holy offspring shall be called the Son of God.

The second reference is that Mary would become pregnant by the Holy Spirit with our Lord Jesus. And then verse 41, the third reference to the Holy Spirit. It came about when Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting.

The baby leaped in her womb. Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. And then at the end of the chapter, verse 67, And his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied saying, And then he went into his wonderful song.

Those four people in chapter one are especially connected with the Holy Spirit. John in the womb of his mother, Mary in order to conceive, Elizabeth as she greeted Mary, and then Zacharias when his unbelief was turned to faith. Now it's not surprising to me that Luke emphasizes the Holy Spirit right at the beginning of his book.

Because he's laying down the key. As the chapter is a chapter on faith, it must also be a chapter on the Holy Spirit. Because he is telling us about the foundations.

He's going to say a lot in this book about the Son of all mankind. He's going to tell us about our relationship with Him and His ministry. There's going to be a lot of miracles in the Gospel of Luke.

But it all begins with the Holy Spirit. There's nothing apart from the Holy Spirit. So right at the beginning, he gives the key.

He gives the secret. He unlocks the how of the ministry of the Son of all mankind. I told you that I thought Luke was the transition from the Old Testament to the New Testament.

From the message of law to the message of the grace of God. Let me show you in principle form how these four illustrations of Spirit-filled people sort of in a comprehensive way give us the whole message of the Gospel of Luke and the Christian life. The first illustration is John the Baptizer.

Now, John is first mentioned in Luke chapter 1, but we're going to actually deal with him when we come to chapter 3 because that's when he grows up and we see his ministry in Luke chapter 3. But what I'm going to show you at that time and I'll suggest it now is just like God gives us many pictures in the Bible, Peter is a picture of progressive sanctification and the Apostle Paul is a picture of a new covenant Christian and Abraham is a picture of faith. Who is John the Baptizer? What does he picture in the history of redemption? And the answer is ministry. All ministry, real ministry, is patterned after John the Baptizer.

In this sense, all ministry, if it's real, is a forerunning ministry. That's the essence of true ministry. It's a forerunning ministry.

And what I mean by that is this. John came to prepare the way for the Lord and then he said, after me comes the Lord. He'll do the real work.

I'll baptize with water, John said. But if that's all you have, then you're just wet. I'll baptize with water, but someone's coming after me and he'll baptize with the Holy Spirit.

And so the whole point of his ministry was to prepare the way and then get out of the way and let someone else come and do the real work. And that's what all ministry is. John the Baptizer represents every ministry.

Now, we've been meeting together almost six years, I think. Who's counting? But for a long time. And I do pray that my ministry here is patterned after John the Baptizer.

I want to be a forerunner. I hope I give a little bit of light now and then. But if Jesus doesn't follow after, what's really accomplished? Nothing.

The real work is from the Lord. And we gather together and we have fun and we look into the Word of God. But my prayer is, then God will show up and do the real work.

And that's what real ministry is. So, I think God is mentioning John the Baptizer here for that reason because he represents all ministry. Now, Luke 1, verse 17.

One of the prophecies Gabriel gave Zacharias was this. It's he who will go as a forerunner before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah. We're going to talk about that next time we gather the relationship John had to Elijah and that prophecy.

But what good is it to come in the spirit and power of Elijah if you don't come in the spirit and power of the Lord? In the spirit and power of the Holy Spirit? The thing that made John what he was was not the spirit and power of Elijah. And God begins not with Elijah, but He begins with the spirit and the power of the Lord. Luke's going to have a lot to say in these 24 chapters about ministry, but the first thing He gives us about ministry, John represents all ministry and all ministry begins with the Holy Spirit.

I think that's why it's mentioned that He's baptized in the womb, filled with the spirit in the womb. You can't go back further than that. I mean, here's a minister.

You're going right back to the starting point. He's filled with the spirit from the womb. In order to illustrate this truth, John represents all Christian service and all Christian service must begin with the Holy Spirit.

And God begins in Luke chapter 1 to illustrate this. A glance at the second illustration, please. Verse 34 and 35.

We talked in some detail on this. If you missed that, see Lillian. She'll be glad to give you the tape.

But Mary is God's first picture of the church in the New Testament. Her contribution to the history of redemption, she gave Jesus to the world. In that, she pictures the church.

That's our mission, to give Jesus to the world. How did she do it? She did it... the Holy Spirit formed Christ in her with her permission and without the help of man. And Christ was gradually formed in her and in the fullness of time manifest to the world.

How does the church, how do we give Christ to the world? The same way. The Holy Spirit, with our permission, forms Christ in us without the help of the flesh and in the fullness of time Christ is manifest and given to the world. And so, once again, you see how foundational Luke is.

What's my hope for ministry? The Holy Spirit. What's my hope to fulfill the Great Commission? The Holy Spirit. There's no other hope.

Just so, look at verse 41. It came about when Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting. The babe leaped in her womb.

Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. This is a wonderful section here. When Mary met Elizabeth, a wonderful thing happened.

The baby that was in Elizabeth leapt for joy when it came face to face, if you could say that, face to face with the baby that was in Mary. Some have used this as a proof text against this terrible aborticide that's taking place in our country. And they use that to show that these babies are real.

Evidently, Mary had just conceived and her baby's not developed at all. And yet, there's a recognition that there are real babies here. I think equally strong is Elizabeth's greeting in verse 43.

Now, I don't know how long ago Mary had conceived. From the record, as soon as she got the news, she went straight to Elizabeth's house. And now Elizabeth greets her at the door.

Has she conceived for a day? For an hour? For two days? Who knows how long? Not very long. And Elizabeth greets her and says, How has it happened that the mother of my Lord should come to me? She's already a mother. And she just conceived.

And yet, she's already a mother in Elizabeth by the Holy Spirit recognizes that. When someone asks us how many grandchildren we have, we always say seven. One's in heaven.

So what? We count that one. That's still our grandchild. Five are on the earth.

One is in the womb. So what? We still count that. We count all of them.

If you'd asked me last week, I'd have said seven. But two would have been in the womb. But I became a grandfather this weekend.

And so now there's only one in the womb. But we count that because that's a real child. But back to the point about the Holy Spirit.

There's a principle here as well. I told you John represented ministry and ministry always begins with the Holy Spirit. I like to word it this way, that the John in Elizabeth responded to the Christ in Mary.

Now those are the facts. But lay hold of the principle. You've got to remember also that the Christ in Mary was very undeveloped at this point.

So it's not only saying that the John in Elizabeth responded to the Christ in Mary, but you can say the John in Elizabeth responded to the undeveloped Christ in Mary. I have no doubt Mary and Elizabeth had some wonderful fellowship together. Now we know from verse 36 that they were related.

The Bible says, go to your relative Elizabeth. Some say, now how were they related? Usually you hear cousin. Mary went to her cousin Elizabeth.

Nobody knows if they were cousins. There's no way to know what that relationship is. Cousin is sort of the generic Greek word.

And so you can say for sister or son or daughter, you can say cousin. It's the generic word and it just covers everything. So they just say cousin.

I think in the Roman Catholic Church they hold the perpetual virginity of Mary. In other words, Mary was always a virgin. And so then you say, well, what about those verses that say Jesus had brothers? Well, they just say cousin because that word can be cousin as well.

And that's how they use that particular word. But here's the point. Let's get to the principle.

They had wonderful fellowship, I have no doubt. But it wasn't the blood tie. It wasn't the fact that they were related in the flesh in some way that gave them such fellowship.

It was their spiritual relationship when the one who was in Elizabeth recognized the one who was in Mary. The Holy Spirit enabled Elizabeth to recognize the undeveloped Christ in Mary. They were spiritually one and they needed one another.

Let me put it in simple, simple words. I hope when I come to this place week after week, I hope by the Holy Spirit you can see the Christ in me even though He's undeveloped. And I hope by the Holy Spirit that the John in me, the ministry in me, the desire to prepare the way of the Lord can see the Christ in you even though it's undeveloped.

What a wonderful thing this is. Fellowship is based on the Holy Spirit. And it's the Holy Spirit that allows us to see the Christ in the other Christian, in the other believer.

How God's people these days need to lay hold of that simple truth rather than seeing all the differences and seeing all the divisions and oh, we don't agree on this and we don't agree on that. By the Holy Spirit, when we come together, we need to see the Christ in each other. You say, well, it's so undeveloped.

It's hardly there at all. Oh, by the Holy Spirit, you can still see it. And when you see it, there's going to be joy.

You see, the Jesus that was in Elizabeth needed the John that was in, rather the Jesus that was in Mary needed the John that was in Elizabeth. There was an interrelationship with their ministry. One was a forerunner.

And very simply, we need each other. And what's in you, I need. And what's in me, you need.

And we need to see Christ in each other. You say, how am I going to do it? How am I going to have ministry? By the Holy Spirit. How am I going to fulfill the Great Commission? By the Holy Spirit.

How are we going to fellowship together and see the Christ in each other? And the answer is, again, by the Holy Spirit. Glance, please, at verse 67 and 68. His father, Zacharias, was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied, saying, Blessed be the Lord God of Israel.

He has visited us and accomplished redemption for His people. Notice the context there of Zacharias. Remember, he was guilty of unbelief.

And now unbelief was turned to faith. What's my hope after I've been under chastening that I'll ever sing again? What's your hope after you mess up, after there's been unbelief, that the unbelief will be turned to faith and you'll burst out in song like Zacharias did? And the answer is, the Holy Spirit. And all the way through, he begins right in this chapter, My hope for ministry, the Holy Spirit.

My hope for the Great Commission, the Holy Spirit. My hope for the fellowship among believers, the Holy Spirit. And then we'll edit it once it's fine.

When you go through the Gospel of Luke, Luke will emphasize ministry, mission, fellowship, and restoration. Those are the four illustrations in chapter one when the Holy Spirit showed up. Ministry, mission, fellowship, and restoration.

And so he's just setting the stage for what's coming in the book. In addition to these four references to the Holy Spirit, I want you to glance, please, at this wonderful song of Mary beginning in verse 46. Her Magnificat.

Mary said, My soul exalts the Lord. My spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior. He's had regard for the humble state of his bond slave.

Behold, from this time on, all generations will count me blessed. For the Mighty One has done great things for me. Holy is His name.

His mercy is upon generation after generation toward those who fear Him. He has done mighty deeds with His arm. He's scattered those who were proud in the thoughts of their heart.

He's brought down rulers from their throne. He's exalted those who were humble. He's filled the hungry with good things and sent away the rich empty-handed.

He's given help to Israel, His servant in remembrance of His mercy as He spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and his offspring forever. Now, in order to get the impact of Mary's wonderful song, we need to understand the context. Here's what I mean by that.

Remember, Mary was told some wonderful things by Gabriel the angel. Glance, if you would, at chapter 1 verse 31. She was told as a virgin that she was going to conceive by the Holy Spirit.

Verse 32, she was told that her son would be great, would be called the Son of the Most High, that the Lord God would give Him the throne of His father David, that He'd reign forever, verse 33, and of His kingdom there'd be no end. Those are some tremendous things. Think of it.

You're going to supernaturally have the Holy Spirit, and you'll conceive. Son of the Most High, throne of David, kingdom will have no end. Why didn't Mary sing about those things? She didn't sing about anything like that.

Wouldn't you expect after those kind of words from Gabriel, that Mary's Magnificat would be filled with singing about what Gabriel said? She crammed all of what Gabriel said into one sentence. From this time on, all generations will call me blessed, for the Mighty One has done great things for me. And in that general statement, great things for me, she included the virgin birth and all the rest.

If we didn't know about the virgin birth, you'd never find out from her song. He's done great things. That's all we know.

We know what those great things are, but she didn't say a word about her song. She doesn't mention the Holy Spirit. She doesn't mention Son of the Most High God.

She doesn't mention the throne of David. She doesn't mention her royal seed. His kingdom will be forever.

Nothing Gabriel said. So what's her song about? What's her Magnificat about? You see, at the end of Luke 1, and this is what leads us astray, Zacharias sings. And he sings about what Gabriel told him.

But Mary didn't sing about what Gabriel told her. And if you don't understand what Mary's singing about, you're not going to understand Mary's song. Mary is not responding to Gabriel's song.

When I read her Magnificat, to be honest, I was disappointed. I said, come on, Mary, sing. There's a lot to sing about here.

Why don't you sing? That's what I mean when I say you've got to understand the point. Mary is not responding to Gabriel's message. She's responding to Elizabeth's greeting.

And so you need to understand her song in the light of Elizabeth's greeting. Glance at Elizabeth's greeting. Verse 39.

Now at this time Mary rose and went with haste to the hill country, to the city of Judah, entered the house of Zacharias, and greeted Elizabeth. It came about when Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting. The babe leaped in her womb.

Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. She cried out with a loud voice and said, Blessed among women are you. Blessed is the fruit of your womb.

How has it happened to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me? Behold, when the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby leaped in my womb for joy. Blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what had been spoken to her. Now there's no question as to the privilege Mary received to become the mother of the Son of all mankind.

All the women in the world never had this privilege, never had this blessing, and Mary was singled out. But now try to put yourself in Mary's shoes. Let's say you were given a high privilege.

The reality is we have the same privilege. We can bear Christ to the world. But just think of another privilege.

Let's say God opened some door of opportunity for you. You were given a privilege. And on the level of earth, now I'm not knocking Elizabeth because the Bible says what she said, she was filled with the Holy Spirit.

So it wasn't wrong what she said, but on the level of earth, it was a little bit hard to take. Being flesh, being what we are, her mouth was full of praise for Mary. And when Mary showed up at the door, and heard Elizabeth, there's a lot of exaltation here.

There's a lot of things to make somebody proud that Elizabeth said. I read that man's a strange animal. Pat him on his back and his head swells up.

Well, that's sort of true. I'm going to give you a proverb, and just ask you to finish it if you can. It's Proverbs 27, verse 21.

It says, the crucible is for silver, and the furnace is for gold, and man is tested by blank. The crucible is for silver, the furnace is for gold, man is tested by... See, it's expected to say affliction or trouble. You know what it says? Man is tested by the praise that's afforded him.

The crucible is for silver, and the furnace is for gold. Your biggest task is not going to be some trouble that you go through. It's going to be some flattery.

Somebody's going to come along and say, good job! Now you're in the furnace. See, now you're in the crucible. That's the task.

And that's what happened to Mary here. She shows up, and the first thing Elizabeth says, Blessed are you among women. How is it that the mother of my Lord should come to me? You see, when she hears these things, when the sound of your greeting came, my baby leap for joy.

Blessed are you, Mary. Blessed is the fruit of your womb. Now, Mary begins to respond, and she breaks out in song.

Now you'll understand the song. Not because of what Gabriel said, but because Mary said, Blessed are you, Mary. And Mary starts off, Exalted be the Lord.

Exalted be the Lord. She didn't deny her universal fame. She accepted it.

She knew that God had privileged her. And now you begin to see her song and the humility. God has had regard for His handmaid, His bondservant.

And right in the middle of her song, she said, His mercy is great from generation to generation with those that fear Him. She said, I am privileged. I am honored.

But it's not because of anything in me. It's by the mercy of God. And then she begins to give this most beautiful revelation of the paradoxes of God.

She acknowledges her privilege. She said, my soul exalts the Lord. And then she begins to say, God has always done it this way.

He's brought down the high and He's brought up the low. He's brought down the proud and exalted the humble. He feeds the hungry and the rich.

He sends empty away. Mary's song is beautiful. It's a song of humility.

It's an exaltation. But if you're going to appreciate it, read it in response to what Elizabeth said, not in response to what Gabriel said. And I think then you'll enter into this.

More than one half of Mary's song is about the mercy of God to choose an instrument like her. And she's just overwhelmed with the mercy of God. Again, it's not wrong to be used by God.

And it's not wrong to sing about it. It's a furnace. It's a crucible.

You'll be tested by the praise of four of you. But don't just throw it away. Praise God for praise.

Just understand, it's the mercy of God that gave you the privilege and that has put you into that particular place. Before we close, let's look for one moment or so at Zacharias' song, beginning in verse 68 to 79. Now, unlike Mary's song, Zacharias is responding to Gabriel.

Gabriel told him some wonderful things. If you look at what Gabriel told him in verses 13 to 20, and then compare it to his song in 68 to 79, you'll see that Zacharias is singing the praises of the Lord in terms of what Gabriel said. But now let me add this.

Having said that, he's singing about what Gabriel said. He's singing about what Gabriel said plus, plus a lot more. I think Zacharias was a little bit surprised that he was delivered from his mutinous and his deafness at the circumcision of his son.

Now, according to verse 20, Gabriel had told him, you're going to be this way until the day these things take place. What thing? Until the day the baby's born? Or until the day he's the forerunner and goes before the Lord and grows up? Which day? I can't prove this, but I have an idea. If I were John the baptizer's father, if I were Zacharias, I'd be wondering as Mary, or Elizabeth got ready to deliver, I wonder if when he's born, that'll be the day these things take place.

And the baby's born, and he'll go in the bathroom because he don't want anybody to hear him practicing. He'll try to talk. It's not working.

Oh, I thought it would when the baby was born, see. I don't think he expected it eight days later. I think he resigned himself to the fact that he is going to, all his life, be a mute and be dead.

And I think God surprised him on the eighth day when at the circumcision he wrote his name is John, and then all of a sudden he got it back, and then he blurted out this marvelous Benedictus which we have here in the record. Now, it seems clear from what Gabriel told him and what he sang about that he started with what Gabriel told him, and I think I can prove to you how he spent those nine months. While his wife was carrying the baby, he was doing some Bible study.

You see, Gabriel said, your son's going to be the forerunner. Well, he started looking up all forerunner passages. And he wanted to see what, you know I know that? Because in his song he makes reference to some of those forerunner passages, see.

Gabriel had told him, for example, in verse 17, and it is he who will go as the forerunner in the spirit and power of Elijah. And he'll turn the hearts of the children to the parents. He quoted the last verses, five and six, of the last chapter, chapter four, of the last book Malachi in the Old Testament.

In other words, how does your Old Testament end? Gabriel quotes that and applies it to John. That's the end of Malachi 4. When he sings, he not only sings the end of Malachi 4, but he sings the beginning of Malachi 4. That's how I know he went back to the Bible. You see, this idea that the son of righteousness will rise, that's how Malachi 4 begins.

The son of righteousness will rise with healing in his wings. When Zechariah sings his song, he begins to talk about the sunrise from on high will come and visit us. See, he's singing about the things he studied about.

And so, Zechariah sang what Gabriel said, but a lot more than that. In verse 69, Gabriel didn't mention that Christ would be the horn of salvation, come from the house of David. He didn't tell Zechariah that.

In fact, it was sort of a vague reference. If you look at chapter 117, the only reference to Christ in what Gabriel said is that He will go as the forerunner before Him. Who's Him? Forerunner before Him.

That's all he knew. And then in sort of a vague way, He goes to prepare the way of the Lord. Maybe that's also a reference to Christ.

But when he sings, he's talking about the horn of salvation and the house of David and Christ is come and sunrise from on high. Zechariah goes a lot further. Even into the Abrahamic covenant.

And he said the covenant that God promised Abraham. Zechariah went through the whole Old Testament and he did a whole Bible study and he received life. Now, let me sort of tie this all together.

When we are unbelieving or we meet somebody that's unbelieving. Let's say you're talking to a friend and they're full of unbelief like Zechariah as well. We think the way to get them out of their unbelief is to argue them out of their unbelief.

If they have more information, then maybe they won't be unbelieving. Well, let's be logical. Let's reason that.

Gabriel didn't try to reason Zechariah out of his unbelief. He chastened him out of his unbelief. Chastening is a mighty weapon for good.

See, unbelief is a matter of the will. It's not a matter of the mind. Faith is a matter of the will.

It's not a matter of the mind. In this connection, I love John 7, 17. John 7, 17 said, If any man is willing, he'll know the doctrine.

And it always has to do with our particular will. I call attention to this. Why was Zechariah's song so wonderful? The answer is because of chastening.

God had dealt with him, and through chastening he studied the Bible. And through chastening he sought the Lord. Read his song.

It is so chrysanthemous. In fact, he's got eight verses on Jesus and two verses on his son. And even the two verses on his son, when he looks in his eyes and says, and you child, then he goes back to Jesus.

You're going to be the forerunner of him. And he's just so chrysanthemous. How did he get that way? Chastening.

God brought that into his life, and that drove him to the Word of God and to the God whose Word it is. Let me give you one final illustration, and we're going to leave it up in the air, and we'll pick it up here next time. I want to show you the depth of Zacharias' insight into spiritual things illustrated by the Abrahamic covenant.

Now, in the Old Testament, God had given a promise to Abraham. And the promise involved three things. You're going to have children.

You're going to have seed. You're going to have land. The seed, the land.

And you're going to have blessing. And every family of the earth is going to be blessed through you. That's the Abrahamic covenant.

But by the time Zacharias thinks about it, he gets under the skin of it to the spiritual method. Look at the Abrahamic covenant according to chapter 1 and verse 73. The oath which he swore to Abraham, now he's going to give it, to grant us that we, being delivered from the hand of our enemy, might serve him without fear in holiness and righteousness all our days.

Say what? When did God ever tell Abraham that? I read the Old Testament. I don't see where He ever told Abraham that. Zacharias said, He's fulfilling what He promised Abraham.

He promised Abraham that we would be free from our enemy, serve the Lord without fear, and walk before Him in holiness all our days. That's the essence of it. That's the spirit of the Abrahamic covenant.

The whole message of the grace of God. Isn't that true? Isn't that what God wants? Doesn't God want you and me to be free from all our enemies, serve Him without fear, and walk before Him in holiness and righteousness all our days? This man was meditating for nine months. This man was getting into the heart.

Chastening had driven him to the Lord. And it is unbelief. And now he had become Christ-centered.

And he had understood the spiritual side. And he knew that the essence of the covenant was that we would be free to serve the Lord and to live holy lives. And he laid hold of that.

And when God removed the chastening, he just started to sing. And we're going to look more at Zacharias' song. But I wanted you to see, we can't leave chapter 1 without seeing the Holy Spirit.

We had to say a word about Mary's song and how you can only understand it as a response to Elizabeth's greeting. And then Zacharias' song, without chastening, I doubt if he ever would have sang that song. Praise God for His good hand of chastening because it drives us to the book and it drives us to the Lord.

And look at what he sang because he responded to Chastening. Well, we'll pick this up the next time we come together. Comments or questions? Yes? Can you say that Zacharias was servant of the Lord? No, the unbelief in Zacharias' life was an occasion, not a direction.

The direction of his life was faith. This was just an occasion. And for all those who live righteously, the main direction of our life is faith.

But every now and then, there's this unbelief. This was just an occasion for him. Other comments, questions? Well, let's bow before the Lord.

Now don't forget, if someone praises you, you're in first. Let's pray together. Father, thank you for your precious word.

We thank you, Lord, for ministry. We have the Holy Spirit. For the Great Commission, we have the Holy Spirit.

And for sweet fellowship together, we have the Holy Spirit. And for restoration, we have the Holy Spirit. Put a song in our hearts and let us rejoice.

Thank you for every time you've chastened us. We know that we're instructed that way and are driven back to you. Work these things in our hearts and in our lives, we pray, and bring us back in your will that we might fellowship more around your word.

We ask in Jesus' precious name.

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