

Luke 1:5-14. the Angel's Visit to Zacharias.

by Favell Lee Mortimer

Zacharias and Elizabeth, righteous before God, became parents of John the Baptist, a great prophet, through faith in the promise of a Savior.

Scripture: Genesis 15:6, Luke 1:6, Luke 1:13, Romans 3:22, Ephesians 2:8

Topics: "Faith And Obedience", "Gods Faithfulness"

Description

Favell Lee Mortimer preaches on the remarkable story of Zacharias and Elizabeth, a righteous couple who believed in the promise of a Savior and were declared righteous through faith. Despite their struggles with infertility, they remained faithful and obedient to God, walking blamelessly in His commandments. Through a miraculous encounter with an angel, they received the blessing of a son, John the Baptist, who would prepare the way for the Savior. This story highlights the power of faith, obedience, and God's faithfulness in fulfilling His promises.

Transcript

Luke said in his preface, that he had perfect understanding of all things from the very first; so we find that his history begins very early indeed, and describes events that happened before the birth of Jesus.

John the Baptist was born six months before Jesus. In this chapter we have an account of his parents. His father was a priest named Zacharias. His mother Elizabeth also was of the family of the priests, the descendants of Aaron.

Zacharias and Elizabeth "were righteous before God." How could they be righteous? Is it not written, "There is none righteous; no, not one?" God, who knows all hearts, has made this declaration. But when a man believes in Christ, he becomes righteous, for the righteousness of Christ becomes his. Jesus bore our sins that we might obtain his righteousness. But it may be said, "How could Zacharias and Elizabeth believe in Christ? Did they not live before he came into the world?" They did. But they believed in the promise of a Savior; and thus they became partakers of his righteousness. It was in this way Abraham was righteous. It is written, "He believed in the Lord, and he counted it to him for righteousness."

Faith is the means by which sinners receive the righteousness of Christ. It has often been compared to the hand; and righteousness to a treasure. As the hand grasps the treasure, so faith lays hold of Christ's righteousness.

Zacharias and Elizabeth were pardoned sinners. Therefore they were sanctified by the Holy Spirit. Though still subject to sin, they indulged in no sinful habits. They were not satisfied (as hypocrites are) with observing those commandments that it was convenient to obey, while they neglected those that were more difficult--but they walked in all the commandments of the Lord blameless. We shall soon have a proof that they were still subject to sin; for we shall soon read how Zacharias was overtaken by unbelief.

Zacharias and Elizabeth had no child; and the lack of children was considered by the Jews as a heavy affliction. Yet at length they became the parents of one of the greatest prophets that ever appeared in the world. All the circumstances connected with this event were very remarkable.

As Zacharias was a priest, it was his office at certain times to burn incense in the temple. The priests were so numerous, that they could not all live at Jerusalem. They were divided into twenty-four courses; and each course came up to Jerusalem in its turn, to serve for one week in the temple. It was determined by lot every morning who was to enjoy the privilege of burning incense that day at the golden altar. The priest, on whom the lot fell, went alone into the temple both morning and evening, to burn sweet spices as an offering to God, while the people remained in the court repeating public prayers for a blessing upon all nations.

On the day when God purposed to speak to Zacharias, he caused the lot to fall upon him. The most minute circumstances are under his control, and are often the beginnings of very great events.

When Zacharias beheld the angel standing by the altar, he was troubled. We always find that men are troubled at the presence of angels. Yet Zacharias had no reason to fear, for the heavenly messenger came not to destroy him, but to bless. He said, "Your prayer is heard." What prayer? Was it for a son that Zacharias had prayed? Or was it that the Savior might soon come into the world? Both these blessings were soon to be bestowed. A son was to be born to Zacharias, to prepare the way for the Savior that was to be given to men. Well might a father rejoice at the birth of such a son! His very name showed that God would bless him and make him a blessing. The word "John" signifies "the grace or favor of God."

When a child has been born, it has very seldom been known whether he would become a curse or a blessing. There has often been joy at the birth of children, who have lived to do great harm, and even to break their parents' hearts. When Cain was born, Eve rejoiced; saying, "I have gotten a son from the Lord," little thinking how wicked a man he would be. Other children have been born undesired; perhaps the family was already numerous and badly provided for; yet some of those unwelcome little strangers have lived, not only to rejoice their parents' hearts, but to save souls from eternal death. Did Christians know when a faithful minister was born into the world, how much they would rejoice! We cannot tell, when we look upon a helpless baby, what it will become; but we may offer up our earnest prayers that it may be a blessing and not a curse.

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