

2/16/14

**God's Silence Is Broken**

**Lk. 1:5-25**

The last Old Testament Prophet was Malachi, there had been 400 years of silence, but now once again God was going to reveal His will and purposes to His people by the angel Gabriel, regarding the forerunner of the Messiah.

Gabriel is the angel of good news, always making known the purposes of God.

1. He gave the son of man, Daniel understanding for the vision of the ram and goat. Dan. 8:16
2. He again gave understanding for the 70<sup>th</sup> weeks regarding Israel. Dan. 9:21

Remember Malachi closed with a curse, but now the New Testament opens with a blessed hope!

So now Gabriel announces to Zachariah the birth of his son John, which unfolds for us in three movements: Lk. 1:5-25

- I. The priesthood of Zacharias. vs. 5-10
- II. The prophecy to Zacharias. vs. 11-20
- III. The people and Zacharias. vs. 21-25

**I. The priesthood of Zacharias. vs. 5-10**

- A. The period of time. vs. 5a-b

1. The particular time in history was during the time of Herod. vs. 5a
  - a. There are many Herods in Scripture.
  - b. This one is Herod the Great, a very evil man and time in history.
  - c. An Edomite, a descendent of Esau.
  - d. He reigned from 37-4 B. C.
2. The particular title given to Herod was the King of Judea. vs. 5b
  - a. The title of King was conferred to him by the Roman Senate by the influence of Antonius and Octavius 40 B. C.
  - b. He was a man who was paranoid about people taking his kingdom, to such extent that he killed many of his own family.
    - \* There was a saying that it was safer to be Herod's pig than his son, a play on words by their similarity.
  - c. He ordered the murder of the infants at the time of Christ. Matt. 2:16

**B. The person of Zacharias and his wife. vs. 5c-f**

1. He was a priest of Israel named Zacharias. vs. 5c
  - a. There were three families of the Levites to do the work of the tabernacle, apart from Aaron priesthood. Ex. 6:16
    - 1) The family of Merari.
    - 2) The family Kohath.

- 3) The family Gershon.
    - b. His name was Zacharias, which means “Yahweh remembers”. vs.
  - 2. He was of the division of Abijah. vs. 5d
    - a. David had divided the priests into 24 divisions. 1Chron. 24:1-19
    - b. After Babylonian captivity only four returned. Ezra 2:36-39
    - c. He fell into the eighth division. 1Chron. 24:10
  - 3. He was married. vs. 5e-f
    - a. His wife was also of the priestly line, after the order of Aaron, the High Priest, the brother of Moses.
    - b. Her name was Elizabeth, which means “his oath.”
    - c. All priests had to marry in the priestly line and a virgin. Lev. 21:14
- C. The personal spiritual and family condition. vs. 6-7
- 1. Zacharias and Elizebeth were both God-fearing people. vs. 6a
    - a. Their standing was of being righteous before God.” vs. 6a
      - 1) The word righteous “dikaios”, indicates upright and virtuous.
      - 2) The lives towards others was pleasing to God.
    - b. The explanation was that they both were walking in all the

commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. vs. 6b

- 1) The idea of walking implies in step with God, in fellowship, progressing and advancing in their spiritual relationship.
  - 2) The declaration of being blameless “amemptos” is deserving no censure, not perfect.
  - 3) Truly Zacharias and Elizabeth were part of the Godly remnant of Israel waiting for the Messiah.
  - 4) God reveals His will and purposes to the godly!
- 2. Zacharias and Elizabeth had no heir to pass on their name. vs. 7
    - a. They had no child, because Elizabeth was barren. vs. 7a-b
      - 1) The word “but” marks the sharp contrast between their confident standing before God and their shame before man.
      - 2) Barrenness was considered to be brought on by God, therefore being in disfavor with God.
      - 3) Yet it is interesting that all of the patriarch's wives were barren, Sarah, Rebekah, and Rachel.
    - b. They both were well advanced in years. vs. 7c
      - \* Advanced “probaino”, is to go forwards, at the end of their lives.

**D.** The privilege to serve in the temple came to Zacharias. vs. 8-10

1. His lot fell to burn incense according to the custom in the Temple. vs. 8-9
  - a. “The **lot** is cast into the lap, But its every decision *is* from the LORD.” Prov. 16:33; Acts 1:26
  - b. The time to burn incense was twice a day, 9a.m. and 3p.m. , believed to be 3p.m. and incense is symbolic of prayer.
  - c. There were 20,000 priests, some would never have this privilege, others just once in their lifetime.
2. The multitude of people were praying outside at the hour when the incense was offered up in prayer, waiting. vs. 10
  - a. Zacharias as a priest was a joyful and worshipful in his experience despite his circumstance of being childless.
  - b. The stigmatism of not having favor with God did not stop him from being obedient and faithful in his service to God.

### Illustration

“We should come to church not anticipating entertainment but expecting the high and holy manifestation of God's presence.” A.W. Tozer

### Application

1. God tells us we are a royal priesthood to serve Jesus, as His church humbly, due to the fact that He is the One who has given gift to us.
  - a. “There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit *of all.*” 1Cor. 12:4-7
  - b. “For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think *of himself* more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith.” Rom. 12:3
  - c. “But you *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; who once *were* not a people but *are* now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.” 1Pet. 2:9-10
2. Is there a circumstance, situation or even sin that you are using as an excuse for not serving God?
  - a. My wife, my husband or my kids.
  - b. My job, I don't have time.
  - c. I don't feel qualified.
    - \* “Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: “The Lord knows those who are His,” and, “Let everyone who names the name of Christ

depart from iniquity. But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay, some for honor and some for dishonor.

Therefore if anyone cleanses himself from the latter, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work.”  
2Tim. 2:19-21

3. God has enabled us to walk before Him in righteousness and blameless through Jesus Christ.

- a. He is our mediator.
- b. He is our intercessor.
- c. He is kinsman goel, our Redeemer.
- d. He is our lawyer for our defense to keep us in abiding fellowship with Him and the Father.

\* “My little **children**, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.”  
1Jn. 2:1

4. Are we aware of the high privilege to be able to offer up prayers to God for others, boldly before His throne?

- a. For our husband, wife and our children.
- b. For our daily needs that at times are overwhelming, only to see Him be faithful.
- c. For the needs of the people in the church, the various ministries and missions, et.

d. For wisdom for our marriages, raising our children and for living in the midst of the evil society in America.

\* “Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast *our* confession. For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all *points* tempted as *we are*, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.” Heb. 4:14-16

***The priesthood of Zacharias was for present service!***

## **II. The prophecy to Zacharias. vs. 11-20**

A. The prophetic proclamation to Zacharias by an angel. vs. 11-12

1. The person declaring the prophecy is an angel of the Lord. vs. 11a
  - a. Angeles often were used by God to minister to His people Israel.
  - b. Angels are ministering spirits sent forth to minister to the heirs of salvation. Heb. 1:14
2. The position of the angel is said to be at the right side of the altar of incense, symbolic of favor in prayer. vs. 11b

- a. The right hand is place of favor, authority and honor in scripture. Ps. 110:1; Matt. 25:34
- b. The left had is place of doom and condemnation. Matt. 25:41
- 3. The priest Zacharias saw the angel and was troubled, fear fell upon him. vs. 12
  - a. The word troubled “tarasso”, means to be agitated, anxious and distressed and fear “phobos” means dread, terror.
  - b. This was a frightful experience, since God had not spoken to his people for 400 years.
  - c. Manoah the father of Samson was afraid when he saw the Angel of the LORD, Jesus, thinking he was going to die, having seen God. Judges 13:22
- B. The peaceful proclamation to Zacharias by the angel. vs. 13-14
  - 1. The contrast of his fear and the peaceful news of the angel is marked by the word “but”, as well as the content of his words. vs. 13a
  - 2. The priest Zacharias was not to be afraid he brought good news, his prayer had been heard. vs. 13b-d
    - a. The Greek is literally, “Stop being afraid,”
    - b. The aorist tense indicating one specific occasion of prayer.

- c. “The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and His ears are Open to their prayers.” 1Pet. 3:12a-b; Ps. 34:15
- 3. The prayer regarded the barrenness of His wife Elizabeth. vs. 13e-f
  - a. Elizabeth would bear him a son. vs. 13e
  - b. Zacharias was commanded to call his name John, which means “the grace of Yahweh.” vs. 13f
- 4. The priest Zacharias would have joy and gladness and many would rejoice at the birth of John. vs. 14
  - a. John the Baptist would be cousin to Jesus, six months older.
  - b. Put all three names together.
    - 1) Zacharias means Yahweh remembers.
    - 2) Elizabeth means His oath.
    - 3) John means the grace of Yahweh.
    - 4) God had not forgotten his oath to His people about sending Messiah, so He was announcing the birth of the forerunner of the Messiah, who would proclaim the age of Grace!
- C. The prophetic particulars about the call and ministry of John by the angel. vs. 15-17
  - 1. John would be great in the sight of the Lord. vs. 15a

- a. In contrast to earthly greatness and regarding his mission, as the forerunner of the Messiah.
  - b. Jesus said he was greater than all the prophets before him.
  - c. Jesus said the least in the age of grace is greater than John? Lk. 7:28
2. John would not drink wine nor strong drink. vs. 15b
    - a. He would be a Nazirite from birth, as Samson and Samuel. Num. 6:1-8
    - b. He would not cut his hair and not eat or drink of the vine.
  3. John would be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb. vs. 15c-d
    - a. Only particular Old Testament saints were endowed with the Spirit to come upon them for a time of service or special task.
    - b. These would included Kings, Priests, Prophets and those to build the Tabernacle.
  4. John would turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God. vs. 16
    - a. The implication being that many of the parents had turned away from God!
    - b. They had failed to communicate and teach their children their faith and the Scriptures.

5. John would go forth in the spirit and power of Elijah to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children. vs. 17a-b
    - a. Fulfilling the short term prophecy of Elijah, the long term still future, in the Great-Tribulation. Mal. 4:5-6; Rev. 11
    - b. Jesus said to his disciples Elijah had come referring to John, confirming the two-fold prophecy of Malachi! Matt. 17:12-13; Mk. 9:12
  6. John would turn the disobedient to the wisdom of the just. vs. 17c
    - a. The proclamation would be repentance through the gospel.
    - b. The product would be the new birth.
  7. John would make ready a people prepared for the Lord. vs. 17d
    - a. John would announce the coming the Messiah, the Lamb of God. Jn. 1:29
    - b. John plainly told the people he was not Messiah, but the voice crying in the wilderness, prepare the way of the Lord... Lk. 3:4-6; "Is. 40:3-5"
- E. The prophetic personal sign to Zachariah by the angel. vs. 18-20
1. The priest Zacharias stated his doubts, in view of he and his wife's old age. vs. 18
    - a. He did not understand, "How shall I know this? vs. 18a-b

- b. He was looking to their own abilities, “For I am an old man, and my wife is well advanced in years.” vs. 18c-d
  - c. Zacharias forgot the most important factor of the equation, divine intervention!
2. The priest Zacharias was reproved by Gabriel. vs. 19
- a. The angel reminded Zacharias of his privilege position before God, “And the angel answered and said to him, “I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God.” vs. 19a-c  
\* Gabriel means “man of God”. Dan. 8:16; 9:21; Lk. 1:26
  - b. The angel Gabriel reminded Zacharias of his mission, “and was sent to speak to you and bring you these glad tidings.” vs. 19d  
\* Glad tidings “euaggelizo”, is the word root word for the gospel, the good news!
3. The priest Zacharias was castigated by the angel Gabriel. vs. 20
- a. He would lose the ability to speak, “But behold, you will be mute and not able to speak until the day these things take place.” vs. 20a-b  
\* The fulfillment. vs. 62-63
  - b. He was given the reason,” because you did not believe my words.” vs. 20c

- c. He would witness the prophecy come to pass, even though he did not believe it, “which will be fulfilled in their own time.” vs. 20c
- d. Many in the Old testament received signs when they requested without punishment because it was not in unbelief, God alone knows the heart such as Abraham, Gideon, Hezekiah. Gen. 15; Jud. 6; 2Kings 20
- e. “Thus Ezekiel is a sign to you; according to all that he has done you shall do; and when this comes, you shall know that I *am* the Lord GOD.” “And you, son of man--*will it not be* in the day when I take from them their stronghold, their joy and their glory, the desire of their eyes, and that on which they set their minds, their sons and their daughters: ‘on that day one who escapes will come to you to let *you* hear *it* with *your* ears; ‘on that day your mouth will be opened to him who has escaped; you shall speak and no longer be mute. Thus you will be a sign to them, and they shall know that I *am* the LORD.” Ezk. 24:24-27

### Illustration

A. W. Tozer said, “Any faith that must be supported by the evidence of the senses is not real faith. True faith rests upon the character of God

and asks no further proof than the moral perfections of the One who cannot lie.”

### Application

1. In every generation God will raise up men of God to proclaim the gospel of salvation.

- a. Like Noah, Moses, Joshua and David.
- b. Finney, Moody, Chambers, Tozer and Chuck Smith.

\* Listen to one of the last words of David, “The God of Israel said, The Rock of Israel spoke to me: ‘He who rules over men *must be* just, Ruling in the fear of God.’” 2Sam. 23:3

2. In every generation the man or movements God raises, some will remain faithful, while the majority will become compromising and corrupt within time.

- a. Like the Pharisees and Scribes they become the ones in authority and power.
- b. Like the Pharisees and Scribes they used it to control, destroy and marginalize others.
- c. Like the Pharisees and the Scribes they have forgotten God is on His throne observing their evil exercise of power.

\* “Now when He came into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people confronted Him as He was teaching, and said, “By what **authority** are You doing these things? And who gave You this **authority**?” Matt. 21:23

3. In every generation God will deal personally with individuals to believe God for the things He want to do through them and other things that He will do, even if they do not believe God.

- a. “Now **faith** is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” Heb. 11:1\*
- b. “But without **faith** *it is* impossible to please *Him*, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and *that* He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.” Heb. 11:6

*The prophecy to Zachariah was for the future birth of John the Baptist!*

### III. The people and Zachariah. vs. 21-25

- A. The people were completely oblivious to what had taken place with Zacharias and Gabriel the Angel. vs. 21-22
  - 1. The people waited for Zacharias. vs. 21a
    - a. They were waiting like all other times.
    - b. They were waiting for the benediction from the priest to the people.
  - 2. The people marveled that he lingered so long in the temple. vs. 21b
    - a. They began to wondering what was taking so long.
    - b. They were perplexed as Zachariah lingered in the temple, perhaps even thinking God had smitten him dead.



2. The people recognized Zacharias had a Super-natural revelation. vs. 22
  - a. When he came out he could not speak to them. vs. 22a-b
  - b. They perceived he had seen a vision in the temple. vs. 22c
    - \* A vision is while a person is awake!
  - c. He beckoned to them and remained speechless. vs. 22

**B.** The priest Zacharias saw the words of Gabriel come to pass completely . vs. 23-25

1. He completed his service, despite his handicap of not speaking, he fulfilled his week, then he departed home. vs. 23
2. He witnessed the prophecy come to pass, “After those days his wife Elizabeth conceived; and hid herself for five months.” vs. 24
3. Her personal reproach was removed by God, “Thus the Lord has dealt with me, in the days when He looked on me, to take away my reproach among people.” vs. 25
  - \* There was never a reproach with God, only in the minds of the people!

### Illustration

“God never hurries. There are no deadlines against which he must work. Only to know this is to quiet our spirits and relax our nerves.” A.W. Tozer

### Application

1. We don’t have to depend on visions and dreams for God to speak to us.

- a. He speaks to us through His word.
- b. He directs us by His Spirit that is One with His word.

\* “How long will *this* be in the heart of the prophets who prophesy lies? Indeed *they are* prophets of the deceit of their own heart, “who try to make My people forget My name by their dreams which everyone tells his neighbor, as their fathers forgot My name for Baal. “The prophet who has a dream, let him tell a dream; And he who has My word, let him speak My word faithfully. What *is* the chaff to the wheat?” says the LORD. “*Is* not My word like a fire?” says the LORD, “And like a hammer *that* breaks the rock in pieces? “Therefore behold, I *am* against the prophets,” says the LORD, “who steal My words every one from his neighbor. “Behold, I *am* against the prophets,” says the LORD, “who use their tongues and say, ‘He says.’ “Behold, I *am* against those who prophesy false dreams,” says the LORD, “and tell them, and cause My people to err by their lies and by their recklessness. Yet I did not send them or command them; therefore they shall not profit this people at all,” says the LORD.” Jer. 23:26-32

2. Let your service be complete to God, regardless of whatever your reproach may be, God is able to use it for His purposes and glory.
- a. You will see God bless you.
  - b. You will see God honor His word.
  - c. You will experience the word transform you from day to day.
    - 1) We are God's workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works. Eph. 2:10
    - 2) "Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable *are* His judgments and His ways past finding out! For who has known the mind of the LORD? Or who has become His counselor? Or who has first given to Him And it shall be repaid to him?" For of Him and through Him and to Him *are* all things, to whom *be* glory forever. Amen." Rom. 11:33-36

***The people and Zachariah witness in their lives the prophecy come to pass!***

### **Conclusion**

Gabriel announces to Zachariah the birth of his son John by these three movements:

- I. The priesthood of Zachariah was for present service!
- II. The prophecy to Zachariah was for the future birth of John the Baptist!
- III. The people and Zachariah witnessed in their life the prophecy come to pass!