

Small Group Guide: The Prophecy of Zechariah

Luke 1:57-80



Opening Prayer

Begin your time together by asking God to open hearts and minds to understand His eternal plan and the significance of Jesus' coming.

Key Takeaways

1. **God's timing is perfect** - Elizabeth and Zechariah waited beyond normal childbearing years, yet God fulfilled His promise.
2. **The right response to God's work is worship** - After nine months of silence, Zechariah's first words were blessing God, not complaining about his affliction.
3. **The Gospel was preached before Jesus was born** - Zechariah prophesied about salvation, remission of sins, and Jesus' return before Christ took His first earthly breath.
4. **Jesus is both fully God and fully man** - While He can relate to our human experience, His divine nature remains beyond our complete understanding.

5. **Every life has divine purpose** - John the Baptist's calling was established before his birth, reminding us that God has plans for each of us.
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Discussion Questions

Understanding the Text

1. Why do you think God chose to have Luke begin his Gospel before Jesus' birth? What does this tell us about God's eternal plan?
2. What is the significance of the names "Zechariah" (God has remembered) and "John" (the Lord chose grace) in the context of this story?
3. Read verses 68-79 again. What specific aspects of Jesus' ministry and mission does Zechariah prophesy about?

Personal Reflection

4. Zechariah's first words after nine months of silence were to bless God. When you go through difficult seasons, what is typically your first response? How can you cultivate an attitude of worship even in hardship?
5. The sermon mentioned that becoming a parent helps us understand God's love for us better. What life experiences have given you deeper insight into how God loves you?
6. Zechariah prophesied that Jesus would "give light to those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death." What areas of darkness in your life need Jesus' light right now?

Going Deeper

7. The pastor said, "Trying to get to know [Jesus] means that it's a lifelong journey of humility." What does this look like practically in your daily walk with Christ?
 8. How does understanding that Jesus is both fully God and fully man change the way you approach Him in prayer, worship, or during trials?
 9. John the Baptist had a specific calling to "prepare the way of the Lord." How might God be calling you to prepare others to encounter Jesus?
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Practical Applications

This Week's Challenge

Choose one of the following to practice this week:

Option 1: Practice Blessing First When faced with frustration, disappointment, or difficulty this week, pause and speak a blessing to God before expressing your complaint or concern. Journal about how this changes your perspective.

Option 2: Study Jesus' Dual Nature Spend 15 minutes each day reading passages that highlight both Jesus' humanity and divinity (suggestions: John 1:1-14, Philippians 2:5-11, Hebrews 4:14-16, Colossians 1:15-20). Write down what you learn about who Jesus is.

Option 3: Prepare the Way Identify one person in your life who needs to encounter Jesus. Pray for them daily and look for one practical way to "prepare the way" for them to hear the gospel this week.

Memory Verse

Luke 1:76-77 "And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Highest; for you will go before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways, to give knowledge of salvation to His people by the remission of their sins."

Prayer Prompts

- Thank God for His perfect timing in your life, even when you don't understand it
- Ask for grace to respond to difficulties with worship rather than complaint
- Pray for a deeper understanding of who Jesus is—both His humanity and divinity
- Ask God to reveal your unique calling and how you can point others to Christ
- Pray for those in your life who need to encounter the light of Jesus

Closing Thought

The story of Jesus doesn't begin at His birth—it's been unfolding since before creation. Get to play a part in that eternal story. How will you live in light of that truth this week?

5-Day Devotional: Preparing the Way



Day 1: Blessing God in Every Season

Reading: Luke 1:57-66

Devotional: Zechariah's first words after nine months of silence were to bless God. Despite the discipline he endured for his doubt, he emerged with praise rather than complaint. This teaches us a profound truth: our response to God's work in our lives reveals the condition of our hearts. When seasons of difficulty end, do we rush to complain about what we endured, or do we first acknowledge God's faithfulness? Zechariah's example challenges us to maintain a posture of worship even through trials. Today, reflect on a difficult season you've walked through. Can you, like Zechariah, look back and bless God for what He accomplished in you during that time? Choose gratitude as your first response.

Day 2: The Gospel Before the Birth

Reading: Luke 1:67-75

Devotional: Filled with the Holy Spirit, Zechariah prophesied about salvation, remission of sins, and deliverance—all before Jesus took His first earthly breath. This reveals that God's redemptive plan was established from eternity past. The gospel isn't a reaction to human failure; it's the eternal purpose of a loving God. Zechariah proclaimed mercy promised to the fathers and the fulfillment of holy covenants. Your salvation wasn't an afterthought—you were planned for, prepared for, and purchased at great cost before the foundation of the world. Today, let this truth settle deep: God has always been working toward your redemption. His love for you is ancient and unchanging.

Day 3: Preparing the Way in Your Life

Reading: Isaiah 40:1-5; Luke 1:76-77

Devotional: John the Baptist's calling was to prepare the way for the Lord, making straight paths in the wilderness. But this isn't just about ancient history—it's about your life today. What wilderness areas in your heart need preparation for Jesus to move more fully? What crooked paths of sin, doubt, or distraction need straightening? John's ministry was about repentance and readiness. As you examine your life, ask the Holy Spirit to reveal areas that need clearing out. Perhaps it's unforgiveness, pride, or complacency in your walk with God. Preparing the way means making room—removing obstacles so Christ can be more fully present and active in your daily experience.

Day 4: Light in the Shadow of Death

Reading: Luke 1:78-79; John 1:1-9

Devotional: Zechariah prophesied that the Messiah would "give light to those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death." This isn't merely poetic language—it's the reality of what Jesus does. Perhaps you're sitting in a shadow today: grief, anxiety, depression, or spiritual darkness. The dayspring from on high has visited us. Jesus, the eternal Word made flesh, is light that darkness cannot overcome. He doesn't just illuminate your path; He is the path. He doesn't merely show you the way out of death's shadow; He conquers death itself. Whatever darkness surrounds you today, turn toward the Light. Sit in His presence. Let His truth dispel the lies that darkness whispers.

Day 5: The Eternal One Steps Into Time

Reading: John 1:1-14; Philippians 2:5-11

Devotional: Jesus is both fully God and fully man—a mystery we'll spend eternity exploring. He is eternal, holding the universe together even while in Mary's womb, yet He experienced hunger, temptation, and death. This dual nature means He is both completely relatable and infinitely beyond our comprehension. He understands your struggles because He walked in human flesh, yet He offers divine power because He never succumbed to sin. Don't grow frustrated that you cannot fully grasp Him; instead, let this truth humble and excite you. You have an eternity to know Him more deeply. Today, approach Jesus with both confidence (He understands you) and reverence (He is God). This balance keeps your faith both intimate and worshipful.