



When God Came to Visit Zechariah (Hope) Luke 1:5-25

Hope can give birth when all looks hopeless!

⁷ But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and both were advanced in years.

Text Message:

- The phrase “three strikes and you’re out” describe well the hopeless condition of Zechariah and Elizabeth:
 - 1) Strike: They had no child (“there’s always hope!”)
 - 2) Strike: Elizabeth was barren (“Oh...”)
 - 3) Strike: Both were advanced in years (“I’m so sorry...”)
- The Zechariah story is a parallel to Israel’s story at the time!
- The period between the Hebrew Scriptures (OT) and New Testament is referred to as the “Four Hundred Silent Years:”
 - 1) Fruitless: Israel is living as a stranger in her homeland...
 - 2) Barren: God isn’t speaking up/showing up for Israel...
 - 3) Years passing by with no change.
- Any hope for things to be different is quenched as Israel is ruled by the Persians (430 BC), Greeks (333 BC), Egyptians (323 BC), Syrians (204 BC), and Romans (63 BC).
- Into this hopeless condition that God came to visit Zechariah!
- **Yet** notice what Zechariah is doing in Verses 8-10: remaining faithful to God in service and prayer even in the silence!
- While we cannot choose the timing of God’s activity, we can always choose to be faithful to Him in the meantime!

Hope can give birth at the most unlikely time!

Verses 11-14:

Text Message:

- Remember what Zechariah is doing amid the hopelessness? That he is serving and praying, remaining faithful to God?
- Get this:
 - 1) The name Zechariah means “The LORD remembered.”
 - 2) Zechariah is burning incense when God visits Zechariah.
 - 3) This incense was called זִכָּרוֹן (*Zikkaron*), meaning “memorial or remembrance.”
- Naturally speaking, the God-visitation Zechariah received was all-the-wrong timing:

^{18b} “I am an old man, and my wife is advanced in years.”
- Spiritually speaking, it was right on time and according to the plan of God!
- God’s delays are not God’s denials!
God may not come when you want, but He’s always on time!

Hope can give birth to more than we bargained for!

Verses 15-17:

Text Message:

- God not only remembered and granted a child to a barren, childless couple advanced in years (Verse 14), **but the child:**
 - 1) Will be great before the Lord!
 - 2) Will be filled with the Holy Spirit from his mother’s womb!
 - 3) Will turn many of Israel back to God!
 - 4) Will have the spirit and power of Elijah!
 - 5) Will turn the hearts of fathers to their children!
 - 6) Will turn the hearts of the disobedient to wisdom!
 - 7) Will make ready for the Lord a prepared people!
- This is what Advent Hope is about!
- Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen. Ephesians 3:20
- *Where am I (are we) most in need of Advent Hope?*
Will I remain faithful in serving in prayer in the meantime?