

Spiritual Growth in Later Years: Keep Maturing in Your Walk

Luke 1:5-20

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Historical Context – Luke is writing to a primarily gentile audience (1:3) to prove that Jesus was the promised Messiah of Israel and the Son of God who became the Son of Man to provide a way for the gentiles to become a part of the Kingdom of God. A unique quality of the Gospel of Luke is that he provides a more detailed life of both Jesus and John the Baptist infancy narratives. Here is where we pick up the story of Zacharias the Priest's encounter with Gabriel the angel.

Subject – Maturity means having a deeper dependency and trust in God

I. The Story of Zacharias the Priest

A. The Reputation of Zacharias – vs. 5-7

1. Herod the Great was King

- i. Herod the Great was the King who ordered the male babies to be killed when he heard of Jesus's birth (Matt. 2:7-23)

2. The Character of Zacharias and his wife Elizabeth

- i. Zacharias was a priest of the division of Abijah and Elizabeth was a daughter of Aaron. This meant that whatever child they had would rightfully be of priestly descent.
- ii. Righteous - pertaining to being in accordance with high standards of rectitude, upright, just, fair
 - a. Righteous in the sight of God; godly
- iii. Blamelessly – faultless

a. Specifically, when pertaining to the Mosaic Covenant.

3. But they were childless and advanced in years.

i. This is a direct contrast between being a righteous couple and being childless. Being childless was seen as a disgrace (vs. 25)

ii. Zacharias is still performing his duties as a priest even though God was silent (no prophets) for over 400 years during the Intertestamental Period.

B. The Obedience of Zacharias – vs. 8-17

1. Zacharias still performed his duties before God

i. Despite God's silence, he never felt that God wasn't there and continued to be obedient.

2. God's Sovereignty

i. During David's reign as king, he organized the division of the Levites in which they would perform their priestly duties (1 Chron. 24:1-18).

ii. Casting Lots

a. God commanded lots to be cast during the Day of Atonement (Lev. 16:5-10)

b. The Israelites believed God brought about the decision in casting lots (Proverbs 16:33).

c. Therefore, God, Himself, choose Zacharias to be the

father of the last OT Prophet before the Messiah.

iii. Two things we learn from Zacharias during this time:

a. He did not grow weary in well doing (Gal.6:9)

b. He kept being faithful despite what he did not see (Heb.
11:1, 6).

c. He kept praying and believing that God would provide (vs.
13).

3. Zacharias' Reward

i. His wife would bear him a son named John

a. The fact that God named his son shows that John would be
specifically owned and used for God's purposes.

ii. He would have joy and gladness

a. Joy – the experience of delight and gladness

b. Gladness – extreme exultation

iii. His son would be used by God

a. Many would rejoice at the birth of his son

b. He will be great in the sight of the Lord

c. He would be the first to be filled with the Holy Spirit

d. He will turn the Sons of Israel's hearts back to God

e. He is the promised forerunner of the Messiah

C. Zacharias' Doubt – Vs. 18-20

1. Zacharias doubt was based on his capabilities and not God's

2. In doubting what Gabriel said, Zacharias was doubting God Himself.
3. Because he doubted God, he was punished severely.

II. Biblical Principles & Applications

A. Biblical Principles

1. Our reputation as believers should not be dependent on the times we live in.
2. God still expects us to be faithful even when things don't seem to go our way.
3. We must trust what God has put in place rather than try to trust in ourselves.
4. We can't put our physical limitations on God's ability

B. Applications

1. Take some time to reflect on this. If this is true, what does this mean for you?
