

Tis The Season - Luke 1:5-80

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[0 : 0 0] We're going to take these next weeks of December and look at the events of the people, some of the people surrounding the time frame of when that son of promise, Jesus, came into the world.

So this week we will look at Zacharias and Elizabeth. Next week, Joseph and Mary. The next week, the shepherds. The week of Christmas, obviously the son of promise.

And then afterwards, Herod and the three wise men. And the idea is that all of these people were living in a time frame where it was a season where the Messiah was about to come.

The Messiah was coming. And the day and age they lived in, some of them were ready for it and some weren't. I think it's very instructive to us as we live in a day and age where the Messiah is about to come.

He's about to return his second time. And it's exciting. It's going to be different. I hope it goes well. So the title of today's message is Tis the Season.

[0 : 5 8] But what season? We know what season. What season are we in? It's the season. So we will be jumping around a little bit because we're going to cover not just straight through the text.

We're going to cover Zacharias and Elizabeth. And so we'll skip Mary. We'll come back and do her and Joseph another time. So today we'll kind of primarily be looking at Luke 5 to 24. We'll skip then.

That's when Gabriel comes to Zacharias in 5 to 24. We're going to skip where he comes then to Mary and tells her if she's going to have Jesus. And we'll jump down to 36 through 45.

That's kind of then when Mary goes into the hill country to visit Elizabeth. There's some of Mary in there, but we want to see primarily Elizabeth and her response.

And then 57 to 80 is the birth of John the Baptist and kind of that fulfillment. As we go through this, you know, as we said that the days we live in are very similar in a sense.

[1 : 5 6] The days of the time of the coming of the Messiah in Jesus' time, when he came the first time, they were unprecedented days. They're very unprecedented. What does that mean? Well, there was this strange mix where Israel was no longer in a position where they could do anything about their situation.

Right? We had come from the last great hurrah of Israel was Judas the Maccabees, right, where he came in and he cleansed the temple and drove out the Hellenistic mindset that was overtaking the Jewish culture when he drove out Antiochus Epiphanes, cleansed the temple.

And then he sets up a dynasty, which is where Herod the Great comes from. He's the last of, like, that Maccabean empire, the Idumeans. But Rome has come and Rome is ruling the world. And they're ruling the world in such a way that the Jews and in Israel, they're not going to be able to get themselves out of this, that God intervened.

So they're looking for a Messiah. But they're looking for a Messiah to deliver them from these dark days. So unprecedented times, there were times that were foretold by Scripture. It was times that Scripture prophesied much about.

It was filled with spiritual darkness. In the Gospels, you see this extreme presence of the demonic, where you don't see that in Acts. As we've been going through Acts, there's a few times where that's there.

[3 : 10] But in the Gospels, it's like every other page. Someone's got a demon. And there's this demonic presence. And the world was filled with that. Why? Because Satan knew what was coming. So he kind of, like, loaded up as best he could on his forces as Jesus was coming into the world.

We see the same thing today. The demonic activity in this world. Is off the charts. And make no mistake about it. The doctrines of demons that people are pushing as culturally acceptable are demonic.

It was a time of spiritual apathy. It was spiritual darkness. But nobody cared. They were so apathetic. You know, nobody cares. That, like, oh, well. You see that in Jesus' day, that there's a guy in the synagogue with a demonic spirit.

And they're like, oh, I just thought that was John. What's his name, you know? He always was a little different. You know, what do you know? Nobody seemed to care. And we're in that day. Nobody cares. Nobody cares that they're having after school Satan clubs.

Nobody cares that you can go to a museum and create a little vessel to capture your own pet demon in. Nobody cares. Nobody cares that you can, and you can Google this, they're making an AI church.

[4 : 22] Because they want to make an artificial intelligent God. Thousands of people working on coding this because they want to be able to have an entity that they can feel the question to and get an answer back. That is logical and not this strange supernatural idea.

And it was a time of great emotion when Jesus, when the Messiah came into the world. I don't mean like people in touch with their emotions. But the emotions were on the surface. There's just this volatility. And you see that today, that, man, you can't talk to someone about certain topics without it getting volatile.

You know, where do you stand on the COVID vaccine? Whoa. You know, where do you stand on right and left politics? Whoa. Man, there can be great volatility even in the church.

And so that's what we see as we enter into this. And Timothy kind of, or Paul writing to Timothy in 2 Timothy, captures it perfectly for then and for now. In chapter 3, 1 through 5, he says, This know also that in the last days perilous times shall come.

For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce breakers, false accusers, without self-control, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God, having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof.

[5 : 50] From such, turn away. Or go and vote for them, as the case may be, because they're the ones on the ballot. But this is the world. That's the world we're in. It's very much that. And that was the day and age when the Messiah was coming.

As you skip a verse in 2 Timothy there, it then tells us about these type of people, and this is our culture to a T. They're ever learning, but never able to come to the truth.

Ever learning. So much knowledge, but no truth in it. Look at when Jesus says to the Pharisees, Man, you search the Scriptures because in them you think you have life, but these are they which speak of me.

You think you have all this knowledge, but you can't come to the truth. So as God kind of steps into this situation, that's what Luke's recording here. He's recording when the Messiah is coming.

These are the events leading up to his coming. The announcement and then the entering into the world. How does God view this? This mess, as we say. Well, God views it as a time of joy.

[6 : 46] Great rejoicing. In fact, in chapter 1 of Luke, the word joy, rejoice, and rejoice, in some version, happens four times. Glad or gladness in some version is twice.

The word peace and light individually each show up once and blessed five times. And they're all in relation to God's announcement and pronouncement of the coming Messiah.

And when Messiah comes, we're going to see it didn't change. The world didn't change when Messiah came into it. It didn't all of a sudden make all of the problems go away that we just read about.

The dark spiritual times and days of great emotion. The world still continued as it was. But there's an opportunity then for those in the world to take part in that joy in the Messiah's birth.

So we're not going to read like we usually do, read all the text and go back and pray. We're just going to jump right in. In Luke chapter 1, let's start in verse 5. We'll read a chunk. So there were in the days of Herod, the king of Judea, a certain priest named Zacharias of the course of Abiah.

[7 : 50] And his wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. They were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinance of the Lord, lameless.

And they had no child because that Elizabeth was barren. And they both were now well stricken in years. And it came to pass that while he executed the priest's office before God in the order of his course, according to the custom of the priest's office, his lot was to burn incense.

When he went into the temple of the Lord, and the whole multitude of the people were praying without at the time of incense. So Luke throws us into this narrative, and we're introduced to these few people right from the beginning.

We have Herod, and we have Zacharias, and we have Elizabeth right from the start. But Herod would have been, again, Herod the Great, ruling at that time as kind of a puppet king over Israel, but beholden to Rome.

Caesar Augustus was at this time becoming the Caesar over Rome. He was the first one to kind of declare himself August, Augustus, as God. And he's eventually going to enact a census for the whole Roman world, so that he can kind of get a grip on the people that are in his empire.

[9 : 05] But also, it was a sign of allegiance. It wasn't like when you give a pinch of incense to worship Caesar. Not yet. But it was, you were required to go and register, as that you were in allegiance, and you were under Rome's authority.

And that will obviously affect Mary and Joseph. But there's Herod, and there's Zacharias, and Elizabeth. And Zacharias, he's a priest, and of the course of Abiah, we'll look at that in a minute. And his wife was of the daughters of Aaron.

So he marries a woman who's the daughter of a priest. That's really good, like as a priest. You marry another guy's, you know, priest's daughter. Like this guy, good. And it says some things about them.

It says they were both righteous before God. So the Scripture is telling us, the Holy Spirit influencing Luke to write this, says they were righteous in the sight of God. God looked at them and said, I see their faith as righteousness.

They were righteous in the sight of God, walking in all the commandments and ordinance of the Lord, blameless. Blameless. There's nothing that could stick.

[10 : 06] Blameless, but fruitless, aren't they? They were barren. Elizabeth did not have a child, which at that time was extremely, it was quite a stigma attached to you in that culture.

Blameless, but fruitless, and I think a little hopeless, as we're going to see as we go through this. I think they got to the point where they were just kind of accepting the place they were at and not expecting anything more.

So the course of Abiah, what does that mean? And then as it says that he, according to the custom of the priest, his lot was to burn incense. So back in Chronicles, you can look in chapter 24, 1 Chronicles, you see the courses of the priest.

There are so many priests that David decides when he starts kind of prefabbing the temple for his son Solomon, he says, hey, Saul, this is what we're going to do. You're going to break up the priests into 24 courses.

And all of the priests will show up to minister at the temple three times a year. The Feast of Passover, the Feast of Tabernacles, the Feast of Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacle.

[11 : 05] Passover and Pentecost in the spring, Tabernacle in the fall. They're all there for that because there's so many people in Jerusalem. We need them here. Otherwise, you're going to take those 24, and they're each going to come and serve one week in blocks and cycle through, which would result in each course of 24 ending up serving twice, once every six months, so twice over the course of the year.

So Zechariah comes up for his week. He would come up in June and July because being the eighth course, you start the date after Passover, and you go down through. His would then be about June or July, and then it would show up again December, January.

Now, this is important. Why? Because knowing when they were there, and knowing then when Elizabeth is pregnant, and Mary visits her in her six months of pregnancy, and Mary is conceived at that time, nine months later is when Jesus is born.

And I'm not going to tell you when that is. If you want to know, do a little research on when are the shepherds in the fields at Jerusalem at the time around Israel. When would they be allowed to bring their sheep into the fields?

We'll get to that when we get to Jesus, and Mary and Joseph are Jesus. We'll see. Or the shepherds. Who knows? But anyway, so here he is. This is his week. He's old, well-stricken in years.

[12 : 25] Remember it said that about Abraham and Sarah, and then they were rejuvenated. They were de-aged, right? Elizabeth and Zechariah are going to have a son. She's going to miraculously conceive.

We'll find out. She'll have John. It does not say that they were de-aged, but they are still old folk, right? And so they've been doing this a long time. If there are, there's believe that there are 18,000 priests in Israel at this time.

If you divide that by 24, you've got about 750, seven to 750 priests per course. So in his group that he would come to minister with, and it says, as his lot was to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord.

So you'd have the morning and evening sacrifice, and at the time you would do that, you would also have, you'd have the high priest doing that, you'd have other priests who have other duties. And there's various lots that were drawn to see who got to do each one.

The most special thing was to go and offer incense in the temple. Here's a picture of Herod's temple, supposedly. There you see the menorah on one side, the candlesticks, the table of showbread, and the altar of incense before the stairs that led up to the Holy of Holies with the veil.

[13 : 35] Solomon's temple was much more ornate. He had like 10 tables of showbread, 10 menorahs, and the stairs were much higher. But this, at this time, Herod's temple, the Pharisees were very austere.

It was very like, you know, Jesus will say, you strain it in that, and you swallow a camel. You know, you think you're so holy. They're very austere. So it was much more simplified. But he would stand there at that altar of incense, and he would light that altar.

It doesn't show it there, but the veil did not go all the way to the top. And so the incense would go over the top and into the place of the Holy of Holies, like carrying the prayers into the presence of the Lord. If you were a priest who were chosen to do this, that was a once-in-a-lifetime deal.

You didn't get to do this again. You were considered rich if you got to do this. They called you rich if you were chosen to do this. Zacharias's chances of getting chosen to do this was 0.13% chance of 750 people.

He had less than a tenth of a percent chance. His whole life, the guy is like ancient. It says he is well stricken in years, right? He's fulfilling his duties. He never was chosen all of these years, and now the lot falls to him.

[14 : 39] He's like, wow, I get to go in and offer incense in this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. What does Zacharias's name mean? Zacharias's name means remembered of Jehovah.

If you look at that first verse we read in verse 5, the meaning of the names are very interesting. As we start this account in Luke, and we start the story of Jesus, Herod means heroic.

That makes sense. Hero. Judah, he shall be praised. Zacharias, remembered of Jehovah. He was of the course of Abiah, which means my father is Jehovah. His wife, Elizabeth, was of the sons of Aaron, which means light bringer.

And then Elizabeth means oath of God. Not to jump from that slide too quick, but if we put them in, use their definitions and insert them, verse 5, verse 5 says this, There was in the days of the heroic king who shall be praised, a certain priest, remembered of Jehovah, of the course of my father is Jehovah.

And his wife was of the daughters of the light bringer, and her name was the oath of God. Zacharias was so infused with meaning, so infused with like just exploding with God's hand and what's to come.

[15 : 53] This is these two people. This is the life that they are living. And now he gets to go and burn incense. Zacharias, remembered of Jehovah, he was righteous and blameless, the scripture tells us.

He had a solid walk before God. He was faithful and chosen, and he served in a place of prayer that all the people were without praying. Zacharias was fulfilling every role, in anticipation of the Messiah, right?

Everything that we looked at in that temple spoke of Jesus, the menorah, the light of the world, the showbread, that eat my flesh, you know, I am the bread of life, and then the veil that will be torn. It spoke of Jesus, the incense, the prayers going up.

He was fulfilling everything in that role, but without the faith to support it. He didn't, he had lost the anticipation. He had gone through the motions. His theology was correct.

His life looked good. He went to church regularly. He gave. He was in the ministries there. The Messiah coming, been around that a long time, you know, but he was going through the motions.

[16 : 57] Zacharias and Elizabeth were two people who lived good lives, had good theology, and a good walk, but they'd lost the sense of the time and the season that they were in. And so as we continue now, in verse 11, we'll pick up, and there appeared unto him.

So Zacharias gone in to offer the incense. There appeared unto him. He's all alone. An angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense. We just saw that altar. The angel appears. And when Zacharias saw him, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him.

He's like, I didn't know this was part of the job, right? But why was he troubled? Because he was unprepared to meet God in the house of God. We're going to see that. Zacharias was so involved in the motions of service, he forgot the reason for it.

It was to meet with God. What do you think you're in there for, Zacharias? Pick up in verse 13. But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias, for thy prayer is heard, and thy wife Elizabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John.

Thou shalt have joy and gladness, and many shall rejoice at his birth. John means Jehovah is gracious. Zacharias, Zacharias, remembered of Jehovah.

[18:09] Jehovah remembered. He heard your prayers, and he remembered. He's been gracious unto you. He's going to give you a son. And this son will result in what? What does it say there in verse 14?

Joy, gladness, and many shall rejoice. Three different words for joy. We're going to see this all through this. When we get to Mary and Joseph, when we get to the shepherds, it's just constant joy, joy, joy.

In some of the darkest seasons of the history of humanity, right before the brightest light came, it was darkest, and God says, you have a reason for joy. Those words there, joy, they're three different words that kind of express joy, where he says, and thou shalt have joy.

That literally means you shall have a reason for joy. You will have a reason for joy. And gladness. Gladness is the feeling of it. You have a reason, and you have the emotion to go with it.

You shall be filled with joy. And then lastly, and many shall rejoice. Rejoicing is the expression of it, the action. That God has given us a reason for joy. He's given us the feeling, the emotion to go with it, and then the ability to express it.

[19:13] As we continue, we're going to now see in verse 15 through 17, he's going to kind of, the angel is going to say, hey, here's what John's going to do. Here's what your son is going to do. This son that you prayed for, this prayer that's been answered, this is what it's going to look like.

And if you look, verse 15, we're going to see the characteristics of John. Verse 16 into half of 17, we'll see the effect of his ministry, and at the end of 17, the purpose. So it's not about John, so we'll just briefly skim through him.

But verse 15 says, for he shall be great in the sight of the Lord. He shall drink neither wine nor strong drink. He shall be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb. Many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord, their God, and he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah to turn the hearts of the fathers to children in disobedient of the wisdom to the just.

Characteristics, he shall be great in the sight of the Lord. He will not drink wine or strong drink, but be filled with the Holy Spirit from his mother's womb. The effect of his ministry, he will turn many to the Lord, their God, and go before, notice what it says there, he shall go before him.

Him? Who is him? What are we talking about him? Well, the Messiah, obviously. Zacharias, your son is to go before the Messiah. And lastly, what is the purpose of his ministry?

[20 : 30] To make ready a people at the end of verse 17. To make ready a people prepared for the Lord. The purpose of his ministry is to prepare the way for the Messiah. To prepare the people so when Messiah comes, they're ready for this.

You see, the angel is saying to Zacharias, Zacharias, your prayer was heard and it was answered. Now, Zacharias, I'm telling you, your prayer is answered, Zacharias. You just do not get to experience the effect of it yet.

The result, or the truth of it is, your prayer has been answered, even though you've not experienced that yet. In verse 18, Zacharias, he said unto the angel, where by the hell shall I know this?

For I'm an old man and my wife's well stricken in years. Have you seen how old I am? If you think I'm old, look at my wife, right? Whoa, no. We're old. How is this going to happen?

Seriously. He's in the temple. He's at the altar of incense. An angel shows up and he goes, I don't know. Is this really the Lord? I mean, what do you think it's going to be?

[21 : 36] Satan? How do I know this? You see, Zacharias wasn't looking for God to do anything outside what he had become accustomed to. This is all I know.

Okay? This is the situation I'm in. And I don't expect God to do anything different. And the angel answering said unto him, I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God.

I am sent to speak unto thee, to show you these glad tidings. You know, he could have said it like that. I think he might have said it like, dude, I'm Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God.

Come on. And I've been sent to speak unto you these glad tidings. I mean, like, I'm Gabriel. There's Michael and there's Gabriel. You've heard of us, right? I'm Gabriel. That Gabriel. And I currently am standing.

He's saying, I stand in the presence of God. So Gabriel is delivering this message to this man who is unable to experience God's presence the way the angel is. And it's almost like he's like, you see this guy?

[22 : 33] Like, he won't believe me. I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God and stand to speak unto you these glad tidings. And behold, I think he's hearing this in that moment from the Lord, the angel.

Behold, you should be dumb. No, dude, he was already dumb. You should be dumb and not able to speak until the day that these things shall be performed because you believe not my words which shall be fulfilled in their season.

Their season. And there we have that word. Zacharias was not aware of the season he was in. He didn't have any clue of the season he was in and what God wanted to do with him to prepare others for that season. We are told by Paul, but at the times and seasons, brethren, you have no need that I write unto you.

View yourselves, no. Paul says, you're to know the season you're in. 1 Thessalonians chapter 5. Yet despite all of Zacharias' doubts and fears, his unbelief, his lack of awareness, God's word was still graciously fulfilled.

Continuing on in verse 21. So this happens and then the people, they're outside and they're waiting for Zacharias and they marveled that he tarried so long in the temple. And when he came out, he could not speak unto them and they perceived that he had seen a vision in the temple.

[23 : 45] For he beckoned unto them and remained speechless. Zacharias was unable to communicate to the people what he did not believe. You can't communicate what you don't believe. And Zacharias was not given that opportunity either.

Verse 23. And it came to pass that as soon as the days of his ministration were accomplished, he departed to his own house. And after those days, his wife Elizabeth conceived and hid herself for five months.

So he goes back. He can't speak, right? We know he can write because later when John the Baptist is born, he says, give me a tablet and he writes on it, right? And he must have been able to write because before he does that, they say, the friends and family say, well, his name will be, he'll be Zacharias after his father.

And Elizabeth says, no, his name will be John. So that means he's communicated to her this whole story in some way by writing it down or whatever. And it says she's hid herself for five months. It's interesting.

This isn't the time when she would be showing. It's not like, well, I don't want people to know I'm pregnant. You know, this is the time when she wouldn't be, but she's hiding herself five months. I think, I think she's going and getting alone and just processing, just being alone with the Lord.

[24 : 51] What is going on? What is happening? And what God is doing? But at this point in time, something interesting has happened. Elizabeth, she may not know the day or the hour that the Messiah is coming, but she now has a lifetime that he's coming in.

She knows he will come in the lifetime of her son because of the vision given by the angel. She now has an awareness and an expectancy of the Messiah, and she has a season in which he will come.

The interesting thing is, I don't think Zacharias and Elizabeth saw the Messiah. I think they lived in great expectation of it, but they were old and well-stricken in years and it doesn't say they were rejuvenated like Abraham and Sarah.

And then when we see John, he's kind of on his own when he presents himself into the wilderness. And you're talking 30 years later. So if they're old and well-stricken in years and they miraculously have a child I don't want to offend anybody.

95. Right? 75. 30 years later. So, but she now knows when he will come. Where are we?

[25 : 58] I think verse 36. So we're going to skip now Mary. We're going to skip where it would go into when Gabriel goes to speak to Mary. And we're going to jump down to after that fact.

and the angel is giving her some news that has to do with Elizabeth. This is the angel Gabriel again will be speaking to Mary about Elizabeth in Luke chapter 1 verse 36.

And behold, by cousin Elizabeth she has also conceived a son in her old age and this is the sixth month with her who is called barren. For with God nothing shall be impossible.

The sixth month with Elizabeth will be the first month with Mary. The sixth month with Elizabeth the sixth month after Zacharias served in the temple probably June, July.

For with God nothing shall be impossible. God's word did something for Elizabeth. It says there who was called barren. God's word spoken to Zacharias God's word fulfilled changed Elizabeth's identity.

[27 : 03] How did it change it? Through the grace of a new birth. Didn't it? Her identity is completely changed. Who was called barren no longer is she unfruitful. Verse 39.

And Mary arose in those days and went into the hill country with haste into a city of Judea and entered into the house of Zacharias and saluted Elizabeth. Mary's just traveled from Joseph is in Nazareth and he'll go to Bethlehem.

That's in Galilee. Now they're not down in Judea, the Jerusalem area. This is quite a hike. And she saluted Elizabeth and it came to pass that when Elizabeth heard the salutation of Mary the babe left in her womb and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and she spake out with a loud voice and said blessed art thou among women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb and whence is this to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me.

And so Mary shows up the Messiah's drawing nearer. The closer the Messiah drew near to Elizabeth and Elizabeth to the Messiah the closer she drew near to the coming of the Messiah what do we see happen?

Verse 41 there's a quickening. The babe leaps in her womb. Verse 41 again there's a filling that happens as Elizabeth draws nearer and nearer to the coming of the Messiah. There's a speaking forth.

[28 : 18] She speaks forth God's word. There's an increase in joy and then there's a fulfillment of God's word that these things shall be fulfilled at that time.

And we see something else. I think we see in Elizabeth what Paul talks about in 2 Timothy. He says henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord the righteous judge shall give me at that day and not to me only but unto all them that love is appearing.

And you see that in Elizabeth that joy the closer she drew to the Messiah her love for him increased at that time. Ezekiel 12 25 speaking about God's word God says for I am the Lord I will speak and the word that I shall speak it shall come to pass it shall be no more prolonged for in your days or rebellious house will I say the word and will perform it sayeth the Lord God.

And she spake with a loud voice and said that those things shall be fulfilled. Picking up in verse 57 now Elizabeth's full time came that she should be delivered and she brought forth a son and her neighbors and her cousins heard how the Lord has showed great mercy upon her and they rejoiced with her.

So Mary comes and visits her we know she stays with her until her full term. So six months she's there three months because now Elizabeth is at full term and we will look when we get to Mary's story at how that plays out for her.

[29 : 51] So at this time it says her neighbors and her cousins Mary is a cousin so just kind of of what to come that they're there and they're excited for her.

Her time had come and she brought forth a son. This is like the most miraculous wonderful thing that could happen to these people. Not only did she have the pleasure and the privilege of having a child it was a son could carry on the family name.

That's good. I have one son he carries on the family name. But her full time had come and her cousins and her neighbors rejoiced with her. You see what appeared to everyone else as a normal event something to be excited about but a normal event a birth Elizabeth knew was something much more.

She knew that it was a sign of the coming Messiah and as we look at the world around us what looks like normal events to this world what looks like yeah okay it's another war over there and Israel okay you know all right so they're trying to enact a one world digital currency so you know it's just all right okay what looked like a normal event to the people around Elizabeth Elizabeth knew she knew that it was a sign of the coming Messiah and then Elizabeth's fruitful life it affected those around her because we see their reaction to this but in verse 59 and it came to pass that on the eighth day so the child's born they're all rejoicing with her and on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child and they called him Zacharias after the name of his father business as usual this is how this works isn't it 2 Peter 3 verses 3-4 it says knowing this first that there shall come in the last days scoffers walking after their own lust and saying where is the promise of his coming for since the fathers fell asleep it's been business as usual all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation hey great you had a son in your old age that's really a great blessing

God gave you but you know business as usual it's just a birth and his mother answered in verse 60 and said not so but his name shall be called John and Elizabeth stands all alone not afraid to stand in the truth that she knew and said no I know what this really means I know that the Messiah is at the door and that he is sent to go before the Messiah his name will be called John God is gracious verse 61 of Luke they said unto her there is none of thy kindred that is called by this name and they made signs to his father how he would have him called and he asked for a writing table and wrote saying his name is John and they marveled all it's a funny verse where it says and they made signs to him he couldn't speak he wasn't deaf it's just so human nature right oh he's like oh I don't I'll just either talk louder you know or I'll make signs and you know

[32 : 49] Zacharias and he's like I'm not deaf I just can't talk so they make signs to him and then he confirms that he says no no no Jehovah has remembered me and he's graciously given me this son 1 Peter 3 15 we quote it all the time but sanctify the Lord God in your hearts and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asks you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear Zacharias the last time he spoke he spoke in unbelief and doubt this time when he speaks his words align with God's word and he speaks forth in belief and in faith but what changed between then what changed between when Zacharias spoke in unbelief and he spoke in belief and faith God's grace and a new birth it's the same for us we speak in unbelief and then God graciously comes in we experience a new birth except a man be born again he shall not see the kingdom of heaven and it completely transforms and changes our life so then we can speak with faith and assurity of the true things that we know verse 64 and his mouth was opened immediately and his tongue loosed and what did he do with that tongue he spoke and praised

God and fear came out all that dwelt round about them and all these sayings were noised abroad throughout all the hill country of Judea Zachariah spoke with a renewed sense of understanding of the times and seasons he was in it resulted in an awakened awareness in the people around him that God was at work he now knew the time and season he was in he spoke forth that truth and faith and boldness and it completely affected the people around him because we see their hearts they're marveling at what's going on around them in verse 66 and all they that heard them laid them up in their hearts heard these sayings and they said what manner of child should this be the hand of the Lord was with him there's an expectation and an imminency all of a sudden among these people they're expecting much of this kid and they are like excited to see they know it's coming as he ages God's hand is with all his messengers who are preparing for the coming Messiah that's what we're all to be we're all here to be part of that ministry of preparation to prepare a people for the Lord and God's hand is just as with us alright let's wrap this up verse 67 and his father

Zacharias was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied saying blessed be the Lord God of Israel for he's visited redeemed his people we're not going to read out through his whole prophecy you can do that but the fulfillment of God's word in Zacharias life what did it result in as we've seen this it resulted as God's word was fulfilled in his life and he responds in faith to it he responds with joy it results in joy rejoicing and gladness of this son it resulted in worship fullness as they're filled with the Holy Spirit it resulted in a speaking forth the word the fulfillment of God's word to Zacharias resulted in an understanding of the times and seasons he knew yes the Messiah is coming and that's what if you read his prophecy it's just he understands now where he's at in the time clock of history and there's an awakened sense of imminency this isn't something that's happening you know decades centuries later they have a time frame our son within his lifetime

Messiah shall come time the season so as we bring it to a close you know again what did we see throughout that whole thing what was God's perspective on all this as we see Zacharias and Elizabeth reacting and acting in belief and unbelief and as their perspective changes as God fulfills his word in their life as their prayers are answered God's perspective is joy again joy rejoice rejoice glad gladness peace and light that peace and light that's found in verse 79 to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death to guide our feet into the way of peace that's God's perspective on this event we're told to have the same perspective in Luke 21 Jesus said to the disciples and speaking of the end he said there shall be signs in the sun and in the moon and stars and upon the earth distress of nations with perplexity I mean that's like a layer cake of problems the sea and the waves roaring climate change men's heart failing them for fear and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth why is their heart failing them for fear because they're looking at the things that are coming on the earth for the powers of heaven shall be shaken and then shall they see the son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory this is speaking of the second coming of Jesus

Christ before that happened seven years before then is the rapture if we see those things happening in our world today and that will be those signs that precede the second coming then we must be pretty close to the rapture men's heart at that time will fail them for looking after the things that are coming on the earth Jesus then says this to his apostles when these things begin to come to pass don't look at them don't focus on them don't let that inform who you are look up lift up your heads for your redemption draws near the ultimate reason for joy God's grace joy joy is not dependent joy is not dependent on situations or circumstances but in recognizing what God is doing in the midst of those circumstances God is going to work in every circumstance he is not concerned with the circumstance and the situation as what we would call good and bad because in every situation God is at work we can then partake in the joy that he infuses into every situation and so as we see these two awake now the time and season they were in excited about it taking joy did Rome change?

[38 : 50] No were their taxes high? Yes were they still old and well stricken in years? They sure were yes but God had miraculously graciously given them a perspective of joy so I guess as we close the question for us is are you ready for the season?

It is the season but what season? What season are we in? John 15 11 Jesus says these things have I spoken unto you that my joy might remain in you and that your joy might be full that's God's desire in this season not just the season leading up to Christmas but the season of being aware that we are at the door of the coming of the Messiah and that God would use us to be a people prepared and to prepare his people for the Lord Derek and I were talking the night about different churches and how some churches like hospitals some are like evangelistic like outreach and what are we and the people who come here are very grounded and mature and I think what we are is we come together to be a people prepared to be edified exhorted comforted to be built up and then be like okay and then to go out and to live as people prepared hopefully preparing others for the coming of the Lord and I hope that you feel that too but to be prepared the end of chapter 1 in verse 77 it says that the Messiah is to come

Zacharias is saying this that the reason for his coming is to give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins through the tender mercy of our God whereby the day spring from on high has visited us to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death to guide our feet into the way of peace whereby the day spring from on high has visited us literally the sun rises the sun is rising we are just before the dawn in the time clock where we are in this world the dawn is about to break again and the sun will rise and Jesus will return in great glory and he will set up his kingdom on this earth but there is still time to be a people prepared and to prepare people there is not much left man be filled with joy because you are privileged at the end of the age to be the church at the end of the age and I can't remember the quote now just for watching it

Lord of the Rings where Frodo says I wish the ring never came to me and I wish these dark days had never come and Gandalf says something like so do all who live to see such days we can't expect it to be easy guys to be the church at the end of the age to be the church to see the rapture Lord let it be it's not going to be easy but man it can be joyful and so this season God wants to speak joy into this congregation into our lives as we live in a world that's dark it's unprecedented it's demonic but man we can be a prepared people and so Lord as we just sit with you now and we worship you Lord we worship you for being the God who hears and the God who sees as we learned in Genesis Lord with the living one seeing me Lord you see every problem and in the midst of that you're like yeah but I'm there so there's joy in the midst of every dark day you're going to say yeah but I'm there so there's joy and you want to use each and everything that comes into our lives

Lord to prepare us make us a people prepared so that we can go out live prepared lives and Lord let us take the gospel that others may come we may bring a harvest in these last days love you Lord in your presence Lord inhabit these praises again in this name Amen Amen