

Zacharias' Prophecy

Key Verses: *“Thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways; To give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins.”*
—**Luke 1:76,77**

Selected Scripture:
Luke 1:57-80

THE WORD OF GOD LAYS

out all the important events leading to the birth of Jesus, so that no doubt can exist that Christ came to be the Savior of the world. (I Tim. 2:5,6; I Cor. 15:21,22) Luke traces his lineage in the flesh through his mother, Mary, some four thousand years back to Adam. His genealogy runs directly through Israel's King David and his son, Nathan. Jesus would inherit the Davidic Covenant as the promised future king who would establish an everlasting righteous kingdom.
—II Sam. 7:16

In the opening chapter of the Book of Luke, we are introduced to a righteous husband and wife, Zacharias and Elisabeth. “Both of them were righteous in the sight of God, observing all the Lord's commands and decrees blamelessly. But they were childless because Elisabeth was not able to conceive, and they were both very old.” (vss. 6,7, *New International Version*) Like the story of Abraham and Sarah who were in a similar situation, God sent an angel to Zacharias to proclaim the coming birth of a special son. Perceiving Zacharias' fear, the angel spoke: “Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your prayer is heard; and your wife Elisabeth will bear

you a son, and you shall call his name John. And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth.”—vss. 13,14, *New King James Version*

All of this occurred while Zacharias was offering incense in the temple in the course of his priestly duties. However, because he questioned this good news, Zacharias was made mute until the birth of his son. (vss. 18-20) Meanwhile, worshippers had assembled in the court of the temple according to the instructions of the Law waiting for Zacharias to emerge and give God’s blessing. Whether the angel’s conversation with Zacharias was longer, or his amazement made him stay longer in the temple than would normally be the case, the delay had a profound effect on those faithful worshippers. “Meanwhile, the people were waiting for [Zacharias] and wondering why he stayed so long in the temple. When he came out, he could not speak to them. They realized he had seen a vision in the temple, for he kept making signs to them but remained unable to speak.”—vss. 21,22, *NIV*

Being unable to speak after this event was undoubtedly of quite some interest to the Jewish community. Months later, when the child was born and the people said he should be named after his father, Elisabeth declared his name should be John after the angelic instruction. When some pushed harder on the matter, Zacharias asked for a writing tablet and wrote, “His name is John,” and his speech was immediately restored.—vs. 63

What follows is referred to as “Zacharias’ Prophecy” concerning the importance of John to the nation of Israel as the forerunner of Jesus. Zacharias, speaking prophetically of the soon coming of Jesus, declared that God “hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David.” (vs. 69) In Today’s Key Verse he declares his son, John, would be used in preparing the way for the Messiah. Little wonder that later many “mused in their hearts of John, whether he were the Christ, or not.”—Luke 3:15 ■