

Luke 1:57-80

Part 1: The birth and naming of John—1:57-66

- 1) God magnifies His mercy with Elizabeth—1:57-58 ⁵⁷ *Now Elizabeth's time was fulfilled for her to give birth, and she gave birth to a son.* (cf. 1:13) ⁵⁸ *And her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had magnified His mercy* (cf. Genesis 19:19) *with her, and they rejoiced with her.* (cf. 1:14)
- 2) God clarifies the confusion at John's circumcision and naming—1:59-61 ⁵⁹ *And it happened on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child, and they were calling him the name of his father Zachariah.* ⁶⁰ *And his mother responded and said, "No so! But he will be called John."* (cf. 1:13) ⁶¹ *And they said to her, "There is no one among your relatives who is called by this name."*
 - a) The parents are obeying part of God's covenant with Abraham (cf. Genesis 17:10-12) as well as the God's covenant with Israel (cf. Leviticus 12:3)).
 - b) The parents reject the social custom of their people in order to obey God, despite the protests of their neighbors and relatives.
- 3) God is blessed as Zechariah clarifies John's name—1:62-66a ⁶² *So they gestured to his father (was he also deaf?), as to what he wanted to call him.* ⁶³ *So, having asked for a writing tablet, he wrote, saying, "John is his name."* *And they were all astonished.* ⁶⁴ *And immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue, and he spoke, blessing God.* (cf. 1:20)
 - a) Zechariah demonstrates his faith by his choice to obey God. John had his name from the moment of Gabriel's announcement (cf. 1:13). Zechariah is given a second opportunity and passes flawlessly!
 - b) The response—1:65-66a ⁶⁵ *And fear came upon all their neighbors; and all these things were discussed through all the hill country of Judea.* ⁶⁶ *And all those who heard these things kept them in their heart, saying, "What kind of child will this be?"*
- 4) God demonstrates His enabling presence—1:66b *And the hand of the Lord was with him.*

Part 2: The prophecy of Zechariah—1:67-79 (referred to as the **Benedictus**)

- 1) ⁶⁷ *Then his father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit* (cf. 1:41) , *and prophesied, saying,* (he answers the neighbors' question (cf. 1:66) by communicating new revelation from God by the Spirit)
 - a) A prophecy is both predictive of the future and an exhortation for the present.
- 2) He praises God for working through the Messiah—⁶⁸ *"Blessed be the Lord God of Israel,*
 - 1:68-75 is one long sentence in the original language
 - a) Why? *because ...*
 - i) Faithful to Israel—*He has watched out for and provided redemption* (cf. 2:38; 24:21) *of His people* (Israel),
 - ii) Faithful to God's covenant with David—⁶⁹ *and has raised up a horn of salvation for us* (Israel) *in the house of His servant David,*

- (1) Faithfully: ⁷⁰ *just as He (the Father) spoke through the mouth of His holy prophets from long ago,*
- (2) Politically: ⁷¹ *salvation from our enemies, and from the hand of all who hate us (Israel), (cf. Psalm 106:10; Jesus' **second** coming)*
- b) What did God do for His people?—1:72-75 (the infinitives show the results of salvation)
 - i) Faithful to Israel—⁷² *to show mercy toward our fathers,*
 - ii) Faithful to God's covenant with Abraham—*and to remember His holy covenant, ⁷³ the oath that he swore to our father Abraham,*
 - iii) What was the intent of His oath? *to grant us, ... to serve Him **without fear**,* (salvation is not the end itself; it is a means to an end)
 - (1) Politically: ⁷⁴ *having been rescued from the hand of our enemies,*
 - (2) Spiritually: ⁷⁵ *in holiness and righteousness before Him all the days of our life.*
 - (a) The essence of genuine Godward service is God-enabled responsiveness to God's demands.
- 3) He prophesies about God's future working through John and Jesus—1:76-79 ⁷⁶
 - a) John: *And **you**, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High* (cf. 1:32);
 - i) Who? John the prophet is subordinate to the Jesus the Son. He is the last of the line who looked forward to the Messiah's coming.
 - ii) Why? *for you will go on before the face of the Lord* (cf. 1:17)
 - iii) To do what? *to prepare His ways,* (cf. Isaiah 40:3)
 - iv) What does this preparation look like? ⁷⁷ *to give knowledge of salvation to His people* (which results) *in the release of their sins,* (Jesus' **first** coming)
 - b) Jesus: ⁷⁸ *through the tender [σπλάγγνον] mercy [ἔλεος] of our God (the Father), with which the Sunrise (the Son) from on high will watch out for us,*
 - o What will Jesus accomplish?
 - i) Spiritual enlightenment: ⁷⁹ *to give light to those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death,* (cf. Isaiah 9:2)
 - ii) Spiritual guidance: *to guide our* (including Zechariah) *feet into the way of peace."* (cf. Isaiah 57:19-21)
 - iii) John proclaims this; Jesus accomplishes this.

Part 3: The maturing of John—1:80

- 1) ⁸⁰ *And the child kept growing* (physically) *and becoming strong in spirit* (spiritually), (cf. Samuel in 1st Samuel 2:26)
- 2) *and he was in the wilderness*
 - a) For how long? *until the day of his public appearance to Israel.* (cf. 3:2)

Take-home truth: If God has done these things, God will also act on the rest of His promises.