

- Order of Service -

Call to Worship

Welcoming Prayer

Reading Luke 1:5-23

- *Away in a manger*
 - Westminster Catechism question 47
- *146, O sing a song of Bethlehem*
 - Westminster Catechism question 48
- *I cannot tell*
 - Westminster Catechism question 49
- *All glory be to Christ*
 - Westminster Catechism question 51

Announcements and Prayer requests

Greeting

God sends His fore-runner of Christ, John the Baptist

Pt-1, Gabriel's annunciation of John to Zacharias

Luke 1:5-23

Sending prayer

You may notice we don't pass an offering plate

We invite you to participate in the ministry, and the offering box in the foyer is for your gifts and offerings for the Lord's work.

- 2 Corinthians 9:7-8, Galatians 6:6 -

Grace Bible Fellowship

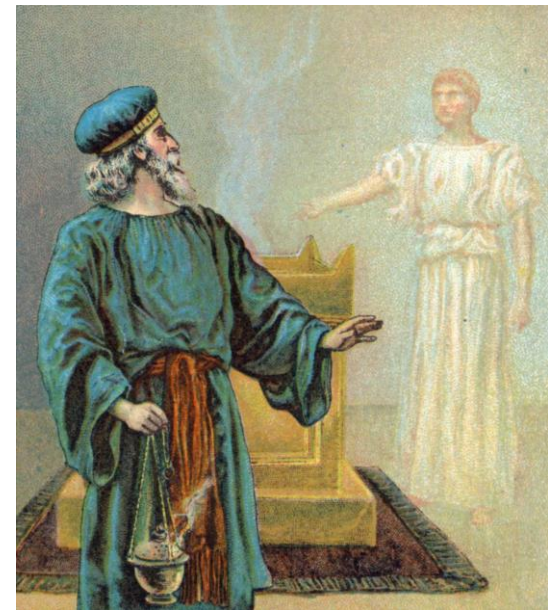
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We are identified with Jesus Christ in his crucifixion, death, burial, resurrection, ascension, and heavenly seating.



- Teaching -

Eric Peterman

God sends His fore-runner of Christ, John the Baptist

Pt-1, Gabriel's annunciation of John to Zacharias

Luke 1:5-23

- December 31st, 2023 -

God sends His fore-runner of Christ, John the Baptist

Pt-1, Gabriel's annunciation of John to Zacharias

Luke 1:5-23

In his gospel, Luke lays alongside for similarity and contrast the records of the annunciation, conception and birth of John the Baptist and that of Jesus. We're going to invest the next few Sundays exploring the prophesy, birth and ministry of John the Baptist. Today we focus on John's annunciation, and miraculous conception and birth.

*One immediately is struck as one reads Luke's account, at the similarities between John's parents, being barren and beyond child-bearing age, and that of Abraham and Sarah. One is also made aware, however, of the differences. In the case of Abraham and Sarah, the questioning of the message of a child in her old age from the Lord is by Sarah yet she is not punished for her doubt (though she is questioned for it). See Genesis 18. In the case of John's father, Zacharias, he questions the message of a child being conceived in old age, and Zacharias is punished for it. **A key question is, why the difference in their treatment?***

In both the annunciation of John and of Jesus, Gabriel the angel is the central figure. Gabriel is the annunciator and explainer of God. In Daniel 8 and again in Daniel 9, Gabriel is called upon to explain God's revelation.

May we learn a lesson here: May we heed and not question the Lord when He makes a declaration or issues a command! Our powers of action and of insight are limited due to our creatureliness and our fallen estate. We need God to reveal, and He has in His Word. Let us trust Him!

As we will discover, John the Baptist will become a man who trusts God and changes the world!

Luke 1:5-7, The introduction of John's Parents: The elderly couple Zacharias (the priest) and Elizabeth of the line of Aaron.

John's parents were a priest named Zechariah and Elizabeth, who was *also* a descendant of Aaron. John therefore was by lineage one who was to become a priest. His parents lived when Herod the Great ruled as king of Judea, from 37 to 4 B.C. They were godly, or upright (δικαιοῖ, "righteous"), observing all the Lord's commandments in the Law. They well along in years and thus had no prospect of children, which fact was a constant embarrassment to Elizabeth as is evident from her statement later on (v. 25). God's allowing a barren woman to have children occurred several times in the Old Testament (e.g., the mothers of Isaac [Sarah], Samson [Manoah's wife], and Samuel [Hannah]).

V8-10, The situation of the annunciation. 1:8-9. Luke recorded that Zechariah's division of Abijah was on duty. This division was one of 24 groups of priests, drawn up in David's time (1 Chron. 24:7-18). The priests in each division were on duty twice a year for a week at a time.

V11-13, Zechariah was gripped with fear (lit., "fear fell on him"). In Luke, many people responded with fear or awe (φόβος) when confronted with mighty acts of God (cf. 1:30, 65; 2:9-10; 5:10, 26; 7:16; 8:25, 37, 50; 9:34, 45; 12:4-5, 32; 21:26; cf. 23:40). Because of the angel's response, Do not be afraid, Zechariah; ***your prayer has been heard***, it may be inferred that Zechariah was praying for a son, or possibly even for the coming of the Messiah and that the birth of John would be a partial answer to his prayer. ***The angel told Zechariah what to name his son. This was also the case when the angel appeared to Mary*** (1:31)

v14-17, The angel not only gave the name of the son, but also detailed six aspects of John's character.

1. **He will be a joy and delight to you** (v. 14)
2. **He will be great in the sight of the Lord.** The expression "in the sight of" (ἐνώπιον) is characteristic of Luke. Though it appears 35 times in Luke and Acts, it is used only one other time in the other Gospels (John 20:30).
3. **He is never to take wine or other fermented drink.** Later John voluntarily took on himself a Nazirite vow, refusing to drink anything fermented (Num. 6:1-21). The lack of drink indicated the seriousness and urgency of his message, as did his later dress, acts/living arrangement, and his eating/food.
4. **He will be filled with the Holy Spirit even from birth** ("from his mother's womb" – literal). Jesus and John interacted in the womb! Both of John's parents were filled with the Spirit (Luke 1:41, 67).
5. **Many of the people of Israel would he bring back to God.** Crowds of Israelites did turn to the Lord through John's ministry (Matt. 3:5-6; Mark 1:4-5, though not the leaders, which resulted in the national rejection of Jesus as Messiah.
6. **He will go before the Lord.** John was the Lord's forerunner, announcing His coming in the spirit and power of Elijah. Luke referred to 2 passages in Malachi regarding messengers: (Mal. 3:1), (Mal. 4:5-6) to restore the hearts of the fathers to their children. Zechariah understood that the angel was identifying John the Baptist with the messenger in Malachi 3:1, in his song of praise he noted that John would "go on before the Lord to prepare the way for Him" (Luke 1:76; cf. 3:4-6). Jesus affirmed that John was the fulfillment of Malachi 3:1 (Matt. 11:10) and stated that John would have fulfilled Malachi 4:5-6 if the people had accepted his message (Matt. 11:14).