

PITWM VERSE BY VERSE

LUKE 1:8-20

LESSON: THE FORERUNNER OF THE SAVIOUR — December 18, 2016

INTRODUCTION:

Chapter 1: 1-7 Luke's purpose in writing this book was to show that many had attempted to write accounts of the life and ministry of Christ, and those accounts may have been truthful and authentic; but, even if they were eyewitnesses and actually observed what took place, Luke says it seemed good for him who had perfect understanding of all things to write these things. He himself was not an eyewitness of the day to day life of Christ but he was a constant companion of Paul; also had contact with the apostles. His investigative work led him to the beginning which some of the other accounts then in existence (Matt., Mk.) were not only fragmentary and partial, but also somewhat disarranged. Only Luke recounts the birth announcements of Gabriel to Zacharias and to Mary. The accuracy of his investigation speaks of precision and exactness. Luke felt led to write these things to a man named Theophilus. The writings to Theophilus were not a long letter but a whole book. He said: 1) he had perfect understanding of all things; and 2) that Theophilus may know the certainty of those things instructed (**1:1-4**).

Luke is very exact in giving precise historical and chronological information. ¹Luke places the time here as during the time of Herod, king of Judea. "*Abia*" was a priest in the time of David. He was in the ancestry of Zacharias and his wife's lineage was traced back to Aaron. It seems as though Zacharias and Elisabeth were both of priestly ancestry. Zacharias' name meant "*remembered of Jehovah*" and Elisabeth's name meant "*one whose oath is to God*." Both were righteous before God walking in His commandments and ordinances, however, they didn't have a blessing of a child because Elisabeth's womb was barren. This was a problem in that day. Children were considered a blessing from God; a heritage of the Lord. A Jew whose wife could not bear children was thought to be cut off from God and he was expected to divorce his wife, remarry, and bear children. Now, Zacharias and Elisabeth were of old age; passed the time of child-bearing (**1: 5-7**).

LESSON: I. THE PRIEST AND THE PEOPLE Luke 1:8-10

1:8 **And it came to pass, that while he executed the priest's office before God in the order of his course,**— Zacharias had the unique opportunity of executing his priestly duties before God in the appointed order of his division.

1:9 **According to the custom of the priest's office, his lot was to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord.** It had become his time in lot to perform his priestly service. Incense was burned twice in the Temple daily. Incense was sweet smelling spices burned as an offering in worship. It was a symbol to acknowledge God's presence and prayers going up to God.

¹ <http://www.lovetheLord.com/books/luke/01.html>
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sunday-school.html>

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1:10 **And the whole multitude of the people were praying without at the time of incense.** Only the high priest offered incense before the Holy of Holies, while the people were outside praying and awaiting God's blessing in the Outer Court. When the people saw the smoke from the burning incense, they prayed. The smoke drifting heavenward symbolized their prayers ascending to God's throne.

II. THE ANGEL AND THE MESSAGE Luke 1:11-17

1:11 **And there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense.** In the midst of Zacharias prayers and incense burning unto God, an angel of the Lord appeared on the right side of the altar of incense.

1:12 **And when Zacharias saw him, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him.** Zacharias became afraid when he saw the appearance of the angel.

1:13 **But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John.** The angel said *"Fear not, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John."*

1:14 **And thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth.** The Messenger was feared but the Message would bring joy and gladness to them! And many would rejoice at His birth! The angel did say your prayers had been heard, so it had to be a specific prayer prayed that God heard and was bringing to pass! Their need had been met in a very personal way.

1:15 **For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb.** Their son is going to be great in the sight of the Lord. But, he is not to drink wine nor strong drink, as a Nazarite. And he would be filled with the Holy Spirit as he was even from his mother's womb.

1:16 **And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God.** Their son would be a prophet turning many to the Lord.

1:17 **And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.** Their son would be the forerunner of the Promised Messiah (Jesus)! His ministry would be like that of Elijah, the greatest of the prophets, turning the hearts of the fathers to the children; the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, and making ready a prepared people for his arrival

III. THE RESPONSE AND THE REPERCUSSIONS Luke 1:18-20

1:18 **And Zacharias said unto the angel, Whereby shall I know this? for I am an old man, and my wife well stricken in years.** Now, Zacharias responds by asking the angel a question: *"Whereby shall I know this?"* He informed <http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sunday-school.html>

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the angel that he and his wife were in their old age.

1:19 And the angel answering said unto him, I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God; and am sent to speak unto thee, and to shew thee these glad tidings. It was like asking for a sign from the angel. The angel lets Zacharias know who he is that he is talking to; that's bringing this message. He is the one who stands in the presence of God. He is the one who is sent to speak to him by God. And he is the one to show him these glad tidings.

1:20 And, behold, thou shalt be dumb, and not able to speak, until the day that these things shall be performed, because thou believest not my words, which shall be fulfilled in their season. This was not the time to challenge the angel of God after such good news, for now Zacharias will become dumb; silent and not able to speak until these things proclaimed by the angel would be performed—the day of the birth of Zacharias' son. Why? Because Zacharias did not believe the angel's words to be fulfilled! Zacharias asked the very same question asked by Abraham (Gen.15:8), but Zacharias asked in a spirit of unbelief! Zacharias being a priest who also stands in the presence of God in the temple of the Holy of Holies should have known God speaking to him! The angel had already said that his prayers had been heard. This is the season they were fulfilled. It's not enough to pray but we must believe that what we prayed for will be answered by God. He could not spread his doubt because the angel had made him silent. Do we look at the circumstance or do we look at God, who is able to do all things in His season?

SUMMARY:

At the appointed time in the Temple, Zacharias a priest was doing his priestly duties. He was to burn the incense in the Temple while the multitude was praying outside (**1:8-10**).

An angel of the Lord appeared to Zacharias, standing at the right side of the altar of incense. Fear came upon him and the angel said *"Fear not"* for his prayers had been heard, and Elizabeth would bear a son whose name would be called John. Joy would come upon he and his wife, for their son would be great in the sight of the Lord. He's not to drink neither wine nor strong drink, but will be filled with the Holy Spirit even from his mother's womb. Many in Israel will turn to and follow the Lord because of him. He shall go before him, (Christ), in the spirit and power of Elijah, turning the hearts of the fathers to the children; the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, and making ready a people prepared for the Lord (**1:11-17**).

Zachariah asked the angel, *"How can I be sure of this?"* for he and his wife Elizabeth were up in age. The angel answers that he is Gabriel who stands in the presence of God and was sent by God to speak this good news to him. The angel now tells Zacharias that he would not be able to speak until the birth of his son, for it seems that Zacharias didn't quite believe the words of the angel. It would be fulfilled in its proper time (**1:18-20**).