

Zacharias and the Birth of John

Luke 1:5-25, 57-80

What sorts of things do people promise to one another?

Why do we sometimes add the words "I promise" to what we say?

Are people's promises ever broken?

Prayer

Dear Heavenly Father, Your promises are the most important truths we have. You promised and sent Your Son who took our sins away. You have promised to be with us always. You have promised to take us to heaven. Help us remember that all Your promises are sure! Amen.



The Story (Luke 1:5-25; 57-80)

There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the division of Abijah. His wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. (6) And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. (7) But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and they were both well advanced in years.

(8) So it was, that while he was serving as priest before God in the order of his division, (9) according to the custom of the priesthood, his lot fell to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord. (10) And the whole multitude of the people was praying outside at the hour of incense.

(11) Then an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing on the right side of the altar of incense. (12) And when Zacharias saw him, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him. (13) But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your prayer is heard; and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John. (14) And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth. (15) For he will be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink. He will also be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb. (16) And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God. (17) He will also go before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, '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."

(18) And Zacharias said to the angel, "How shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife is well advanced in years."

(19) And the angel answered and said to him, "I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God, and was sent to speak to you and bring you these glad tidings. (20) But behold, you will be mute and not able to speak until the day these things take place, because you did not believe my words which will be fulfilled in their own time."

(21) And the people waited for Zacharias, and marveled that he lingered so long in the temple. (22) But when he came out, he could not speak to them, for he beckoned to them and remained speechless.

(23) So it was, as soon as the days of his service were completed, that he departed to his own house. (24) Now after those days his wife Elizabeth conceived; and she hid herself five months, saying, (25) "This the Lord hath dealt with me, in the days when He looked on me to take away my reproach among people."

(57) Now Elizabeth's full time came for her to be delivered, and she brought forth a son. (58) When her neighbors and relatives heard how the Lord had shown great mercy to her, they rejoiced with her.

(59) So it was, on the eighth day, that they came to circumcise the child; and they would have called him by the name of his father, Zacharias. (60) His mother answered and said, "No; he shall be called John"

(61) But they said to her, "There is no one among your relatives who is called by this name." (62) So they made signs to his father - what he would have him called. (63) And he asked for a writing tablet, and wrote, saying, "His name is John." So they all marveled.

(64) Immediately his mouth was

opened and his tongue loosed, and he spoke, praising God.

(65) Then fear came on all who dwelt around them; and all these sayings were discussed throughout all the hill country of Judea. (66) And all those who heard them kept them in their hearts, saying "What kind of child will this be?" And the hand of the Lord was with him.

(67) Now his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Spirit, and prophesied, saying: (68) "Blessed is the Lord God of Israel, For He has visited and redeemed His people, (69) And has raised up a horn of salvation for us In the house of His servant David, (70) As He spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets, Who have been since the world began, (71) That we should be saved from our enemies And from the hand of all who hate us, (72) To perform the mercy promised to our fathers And to remember His holy covenant, (73) The oath which He swore to our father Abraham: (74) To grant that we, Being delivered from the hand of our enemies, Might serve Him without fear, (75) In holiness and righteousness before Him all the days of our life.

(76) "And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Highest; For you will go before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways, (77) To give knowledge of salvation to His people By the remission of their sins, (78) Through the tender mercy of our God, With which the Dayspring from on high has visited us; (79) To give light to those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death, To guide our feet into the way of peace."

(80) So the child grew and became strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his manifestation to Israel.

What the Story Tells Us - Fill in the blanks with the best answer from the lesson.

1. _____ was a priest.
2. _____ was his wife.
3. Gabriel said that God promised to give Zacharias a _____.
4. Because Zacharias doubted, he was not able to _____.
5. When the time came to name the baby, Zacharias wrote, " His _____ is _____."
6. John would point people to _____.

Outer Aim

God sends John as a messenger to prepare for Jesus' coming.

What God Tells Us – Mark each as (T)rue or (F)alse.

1. _____ Zacharias and Elizabeth prayed for a son.
2. _____ God would not give them what they asked because Zacharias doubted.
3. _____ God kept His promise.
4. _____ God sent John to be a priest in the temple.
5. _____ Elizabeth named the baby after his father.
6. _____ God's promises are still sure today.

Inner Aim God keeps His promises.

Passages

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” John 3:16

Jesus said, “Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Amen. Matthew 28:20

“Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.” Joshua 1:9

Now, faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.
Hebrews 11:1

Hymn - TLH 428 v. 1-4

I am trusting Thee, Lord Jesus,
Trusting only Thee;
Trusting Thee for full salvation,
Great and free.

I am trusting Thee for cleansing
In the crimson flood;
Trusting Thee to make me holy
By Thy blood.

I am trusting Thee for pardon;
At Thy feet I bow,
For Thy grace and tender mercy
Trusting now.

I am trusting Thee to guide me;
Thou alone shalt lead,
Ev'ry day and hour supplying
All my need.

Hymn 428 was written hundreds of years after Zacharias' and Elizabeth's time. Explain whether or not this hymn could apply to them.

Your Turn - Make three columns on a sheet of paper. In the first column, list as many of God's promises as you can. Next to each one, list who first received the promise. In the third column, show which promises apply to you.

Prayer

Dear Father in heaven,

We have learned that You keep all Your promises to us. When our reason would make us doubt Your Word and our patience wears thin, overcome our doubt and strengthen our faith to believe Your promises will be fulfilled according to Your wise plans. Send Your Holy Spirit on us that we may be bold in believing Your promises of forgiveness, of life and salvation in Jesus and so reach the home You have promised to all who believe in Jesus. Amen.