

Fourth Sunday in Advent, December 21, 2014 at 8:00 & 10:45

God With Us

A Chronology of the Four Gospels Regarding Our Savior's Birth!

Part 6:

Luke 1:57-66 – John the Baptizer Is *Born and Named!*



Luke 1:67-80 – Zechariah Tells *in Advance* About Jesus and John!

Join Us: Christmas Eve at 6 PM; Christmas Day at 10 AM

Introduction: Dear friends in Christ: In three days it will be Christmas Eve; even though you may have much to do, *I'm so glad you are here today to be blessed by the Christ of Christmas!*

This sermon is part 6 of our **"God With Us"** series! In part 5 we focused on *Mary's visit to Elizabeth*: both were pregnant – ♦Elizabeth with John, ♦Mary with Jesus! Notice the number **6** on the timeline in our **"God With Us"** brochure: It's March of 5 BC, *the time of the Passover*, when Elizabeth gave birth to John. We will also hear Zechariah tell *in advance* about Jesus and John!

1. **John the Baptizer Is Born and Named:**

- a. ^{NIV} **Luke 1:57** When it was time for Elizabeth to have her baby, she gave birth to a son. ⁵⁸ Her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had shown her great mercy, and they shared her joy. // So, about 10 months earlier, the angel had told Zechariah: "...your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son..." (Luke 1:13 NIV) Then, just as promised, the Lord brought it about and those who heard "shared her joy." The Bible says: "God is not a man, that He should lie, Nor a son of man, that He should repent; Has He said, and will He not do it? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?" (Num. 23:19 NAS) Therefore, let us always believe God's Word!
- b. ⁵⁹ **On the eighth day they came to circumcise the child, and they were going to name him after his father Zechariah,** ⁶⁰ but his mother spoke up and said, "No!

He is to be called John." ⁶¹ They said to her, "There is no one among your relatives who has that name."

⁶² Then they made signs to his father, to find out what he would like to name the child. ⁶³ He asked for a writing tablet, and to everyone's astonishment he wrote, "His name is John." ⁶⁴ Immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue was loosed, and he began to speak, praising God. // Again, the word of the Lord came to pass: 10 months earlier– in reference to Elizabeth giving birth to a son and Zechariah naming him John – the angel had said to Zechariah: "...you will be silent and not able to speak until the day this happens..." (Luke 1:20 NIV) Then, immediately, "he began to speak, praising God." Let us believe every word of God!

- c. ⁶⁵ **The neighbors were all filled with awe, and throughout the hill country of Judea people were talking about all these things.** ⁶⁶ Everyone who heard this wondered about it, asking, "What then is this child going to be?" For the Lord's hand was with him. // So +John's conception being told in advance, +Zechariah being unable to speak, and +Zechariah's speech being suddenly restored are some of the ways in which God made it clear that *He had a very special purpose for John.*
2. **Zechariah Tells in Advance About Jesus and John:** Earlier in this series, *when the angels told in advance about John and Jesus*, those were messages from the Lord! This section is similar as the Lord tells *in advance* through Zechariah – first about Jesus, then about John!
 - a. Jesus: ^{NIV} **Luke 1:67** His father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied:
 - i. ⁶⁸ "Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, because he has come and has redeemed his

people. // The God of Israel came in the Person of Jesus, *who – at the time – was still in Mary’s womb*; he came for the purpose of buying back His people from sin and death *through Jesus’ finished work!*

- ii. ⁶⁹ **He has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David ⁷⁰ (as he said through his holy prophets of long ago), ⁷¹ salvation from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us-- ⁷² to show mercy to our fathers and to remember his holy covenant, ⁷³ the oath he swore to our father Abraham: ⁷⁴ to rescue us from the hand of our enemies, and to enable us to serve him without fear ⁷⁵ in holiness and righteousness before him all our days.” // Picture a **bull with horns**; *such an animal could rip and kill a person with those horns!* In a similar way – *just as God had promised* – He raised up a **powerful champion in the line of David** to rescue us from our enemies, *which include sin, death, and those who hate us!* Even though we ♦have sinned and ♦deserved bad, *God has shown us great good through Jesus!* Now, *with peace and joy*, we can serve God each day *“in holiness and righteousness...”***

b. John: ⁷⁶ **“And you, my child, will be called a prophet of the Most High; for you will go on before the Lord**

- i. to prepare the way for him, // John prepared the way for Jesus by calling people to repent, thus to ♦see their sins, ♦be sorry, and ♦believe in Jesus as their only Savior!
- ii. ⁷⁷ to give his people the knowledge of salvation through the forgiveness of their sins, ⁷⁸ **because of the tender mercy of our God, by which the**

rising sun will come to us from heaven //

Baptized infants are saved *but have no knowledge of their salvation*; however, *for us who are aware of our sin*, God has made it known to us that we need to be saved. Furthermore, *by the Spirit working through the Word (Rom. 8:16)*, God assures us that we are saved, *thus forgiven in His sight!*

- iii. ⁷⁹ to shine on those living in darkness and in the shadow of death, // Think about people who *do not yet know Jesus*; they are *engulfed* in spiritual darkness and *ebbing* ever closer to death and eternal doom. Therefore, Jesus came to shine on such people to ♦show them the truth and ♦set them free ([John 8:31-32](#))!
- iv. to guide our feet into the path of peace.” // According to our sinful nature we are all *bent* on taking the path of destruction, **but God**, *in His great mercy*, is working through Word and Sacrament, to keep us on *“the path of peace.”*

⁸⁰ **And the child grew and became strong in spirit; and he lived in the desert until he appeared publicly to Israel.** // As God used *40 years in Egypt* and another *40 years in the wilderness* to prepare Moses to serve, so God used *John’s years in the desert* to prepare him to make the way for Jesus!

Conclusion: Please join us on **Christmas Eve at 6 PM** as → *God sends an important message to Joseph through an angel!*

And all God’s people said: **Amen!**