

WINTER QUARTER SUNDAY SCHOOL 2016-2017


THEME: CREATION AND SALVATION

UNIT ONE – THE SAVIOUR IS BORN

“ZACHARIAS IS CALLED TO BELIEVE GOD’S MESSENGER”

**BIRTH OF JOHN
UNBELIEF**

18 Zacharias said to the angel, “**How will I know this for certain?** For I am an old man and my wife is advanced in years.” ...20 And behold, you shall be silent and unable to speak... **because you did not believe** my words...”
Lk 1



Sunday School Lesson No. III, December 18, 2016 Presented by Rev. Frank Davis, III, Pastor-Teacher

- Lesson Text:** Luke 1:8-25
- Required Reading:** Luke 1: 5-25
- Memory Text:** Luke 1:13-14, “*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. And thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth.*”
- Reliable Resources:** Precepts for Living by UMI; Union Gospel Press Expositor and Illuminator; Standard Lesson Commentary; Wilmington’s Bible Handbook; The Bible Knowledge Commentary; Logos Bible Software; Libronix Electronic Library

INTRODUCTION

After over 400 years of prophetic silence from the Lord, the silence is broken by the words of the angel Gabriel in the Temple to a priest named Zacharias as he performed his office. Now beloved, one would think that this elder priest should have been prepared for whatever Jehovah would say, being a long-term laborer, but he was startled and even doubted the prophetic voice of the angel. Let us visit Zacharias as God calls him to simply believe His message, and not doubt His word! Beloved, what would you or I have done if we were standing in the shoes of Zacharias?

Anticipated Power Points:

- **Active Service of Zacharias. Luke 1:8-10**
- **Appearance of God’s Angel. Luke 1:11-12**
- **Announcements of the Lord’s Angel. Luke 1:13-17**
- **Attitude of Zacharias. Luke 1:18-20**
- **Actions Taken by Zacharias. Luke 1:21-25**

LESSON OUTLINE

I. Active Service of Zacharias. Luke 1:8-10

Zacharias, a member of the priestly order of Abijah, had been chosen by lot to burn the incense during his two weeks of duty at the Temple. Now since the duties of the priests were limited, it was a great honor to be chosen to serve in this capacity! (Read I Chronicles 24 to see the divisions of the priests.) This was a great privilege and a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, since according to historical records, “a priest could not offer incense more than once in his entire lifetime”

(Morris, *Luke*, InterVarsity). Now, during the incense burning, the people would lift up their prayers before the Lord as the smoke ascended upward. This was done twice a day at morning and evening; it was a sacred moment of faithful anticipation.

II. Appearance of God's Angel. Luke 1:11-12

As Zacharias went about his priestly duties, one of God's angels appeared at the right side of the altar of incense. This caused a sense of fear to fall upon the priest, as I'm sure, would have happened to any of us; this was no every day experience! (Judges 6:11-12; Matthew 1:20; Acts 12:7)

III. Announcements of the Lord's Angel. Luke 1:13-17

A. God's assurance. vss. 13-14

No need to fear, says the angel, because He is God's representative who is the bearer of good news. Zacharias and Elisabeth will receive their long-awaited prayer answered and become parents. The child will be a special gift for the service of God, and he shall be named John. God will use him to bring joy to those who anticipate the coming of God's Messiah!

B. John's appearance. vs. 15

The son will be under the Holy Spirit's control from his conception in the mother's womb. He is to be much like the Nazirite of the Old Testament. Numbers 6:1-3 (NLT), *"Then the LORD said to Moses, 'Give the following instructions to the people of Israel. If any of the people, either men or women, take the special vow of a Nazirite, setting themselves apart to the LORD in a special way, they must give up wine and other alcoholic drinks. They must not use vinegar made from wine or from other alcoholic drinks, they must not drink fresh grape juice, and they must not eat grapes or raisins.'"*

C. John's attributes. vss. 16-17

He would be used of the Holy Spirit to turn God's people back to Him in repentance. John would also operate in the power and spirit of the Prophet Elijah. This makes him extremely special as he prepares the path for the coming Messiah! Malachi 4:5-6 (NLT), *"Look, I am sending you the prophet Elijah before the great and dreadful day of the LORD arrives. His preaching will turn the hearts of fathers to their children, and the hearts of children to their fathers. Otherwise I will come and strike the land with a curse."*

IV. Attitude of Zacharias. Luke 1:18-20

Zacharias, a notable student of Scripture and servant of God, should have been receptive to the angel's message, but he suffered a case of the doubt! For his doubt, the angel Gabriel struck him dumb until the fulfillment of God's prophetic word! Upon the birth of his son by God's grace, he regained his speech!

V. Actions Taken by Zacharias. Luke 1:21-25

The lesson concludes with the people waiting for Zacharias to exit the Temple and pronounce the prayer of Numbers 6:24-26, *"The LORD bless thee, and keep thee: The LORD make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: The LORD lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace."* But when he exited the Temple, it was very obvious that something divinely strange had happened to him. He was speechless and awestruck. He could only beckon with gestures that something awesome had happened. Then, after finishing his service time, Zacharias went home, and with his wife Elisabeth, conceived the promised child and waited nine months until his birth. God's mercy is long-suffering.

CLOSING

Beloved, Zacharias was called and chosen to believe God's messenger, but he doubted and had to suffer a speech setback. My beloved, how many times do we doubt God's word, and are set back in our lives? Let us not doubt the word of God, but *"trust the Lord with all our hearts, and lean not to our own understanding. In all our ways, let us acknowledge Him, and He shall direct our paths."* Psalm 12:14 encourages the patient and prayerful in Christ to wait on the Lord: *"Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD."*

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Looking Ahead: December 25, 2016 Luke 2:8-20



Please join us each Wednesday noon at Bibleway as Pastor Davis teaches the Sunday School lesson.

"Yesterday's victory is now a memory. Today's will come as we presently perform, and tomorrow's is based on our consistency from day to day!" Pastor Frank Davis