

Jesus Is the Light of the World

Scripture Reading: Luke 1:57-80

Strange things were happening in Israel, and very few people understood what was going on. A young girl named Mary, that was engaged, was already expecting a baby. Everyone thought that the fiance had gotten ahead of things. Then there was this old woman Elizabeth, a relative of Mary. Amazingly she had conceived in her old age and brought forth a fine baby boy. Of course his name will be Zacharias (Also spelled “*Zachariah*”), after his father’s name. Why did Zacarias want to name him John? That didn’t fit the pattern in their family. Where did that come from? And what happened to Zacharias nine months ago, when suddenly he couldn’t talk? Answers to these questions are found in Luke 1:5-56.

Luke 1:5-17 – Zacharias had an angelic visitation (Gabriel – Luke 1:19) while he was serving as a priest in the temple, burning incense. The angel told Zacharias that his wife would conceive a special child that would be a prophet, announcing the Messiah / the Christ (Note Luke 1:16-17,76 – “...*He shall go before Him...*” i.e. “...*The Lord their God... the face of the Lord...*” – Who is Jesus Christ? Cp. Isaiah 9:6; 40:3-5; Philippians 2:5-7; John 1:1-3,14). Zacharias was told to name his son John. Later he will be referred to as John the Baptist / Baptizer (Luke 3:1-18; 7:1-30).

Luke 1:18-25 – Zacharias was doubtful of this angelic announcement. He asked for a sign. So, the angel gave him a sign. He would be speechless until after the birth of his son.

Luke 1:26-56 – During the pregnancy of Elizabeth, a relative / cousin named Mary was also visited by the angel Gabriel. The message to Mary was even more amazing than what was told to Zacharias and Elizabeth – She shall conceive a child while yet a virgin! See Isaiah 7:14 cp. Matthew 1:18-23. Mary asked a reasonable question, but readily believed. Therefore, she was not speechless, but could soon testify and glorify God when she went to visit Elizabeth. Elizabeth and her baby also rejoiced and celebrated the coming of the Messiah (Prenatal Praise!).

Luke 1:57-80 – After Elizabeth gave birth to her son, and Zacharias was able to speak, he immediately started to prophesy and glorify the Lord (Luke 1:67-79). As he declared that John would be “*the prophet of the Highest*”, he also declared that the Messiah would “... ***Give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.***” Now we will begin to discuss the subject of “**Jesus Is the Light of the World.**”

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Luke 1:76-79 – The ministry of Christ's light

Salvation – remission of sins, mercy

Zacharias prophesied that his son John would “... *Go before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways; to give knowledge of salvation unto His people by the remission of their sins, through the tender mercy of our God...*”

A source of Light – likened unto the Sun

Zacharias referred to the Messiah as “*The Dayspring from on high / The Sunrise from on high* (NASB)...” See Isaiah 9:2; 60:1-3; Malachi 4:2 cp. Luke 2:32 (Luke 2:25-33); Revelation 22:16.

Deliverance from the deadly darkness of sin & unbelief, bringing us to peace with God

Zacharias declared that the Messiah would “... *Give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.*” Blinded, paralyzed, lost, we need the Messiah / Christ to deliver us through the light of His love, truth, and grace. See Psalm 23:1-6; John 1:1-5,9,14-17; 14:6; 16:33; II Corinthians 4:1-6; Hebrews 1:1-3 cp. Romans 5:1-5.

Luke 11:33-36 – Our responsibility to the light

We must not hide this light. There is danger – false light. We need to discern the light, receive the light, and act upon the light. See John 8:10-12; 12:35-36, 44-46; Acts 26:18; II Corinthians 11:1-3, 13-15; Ephesians 5:1-17; I John 1:1 – 2:6.