

EASY BIBLE LESSONS

Zechariah's Praise and Prophecy

Luke 1:56-80

56 And Mary remained with her [Elizabeth] about three months and then returned to her home. 57 Now the time came for Elizabeth to give birth, and she bore a son. 58 Her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had shown his great mercy to her, and they rejoiced with her.

59 On the eighth day they came to circumcise the child, and they were going to name him Zechariah after his father. 60 But his mother said, "No; he is to be called John." 61 They said to her, "None of your relatives has this name." 62 Then they began motioning to his father to find out what name he wanted to give him. 63 He asked for a writing tablet and wrote, "His name is John." And all of them were amazed. 64 Immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue freed, and he began to speak, praising God. 65 Fear came over all their neighbors, and all these things were talked about throughout the entire hill country of Judea. 66 All who heard them pondered them and said, "What then will this child become?" For, indeed, the hand of the Lord was with him.

67 Then his father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke this prophecy:

68 "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has looked favorably on his people and redeemed them. 69 He has raised up a mighty savior for us in the house of his servant David, 70 as he spoke through the mouth of his holy prophets from of old, 71 that we would be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us. 72 Thus he has shown the mercy promised to our ancestors, and has remembered his holy covenant, 73 the oath that he swore to our ancestor Abraham, to grant us 74 that we, being rescued from the hands of our enemies, might serve him without fear, 75 in holiness and righteousness before him all our days. 76 And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways, 77 to give knowledge of salvation to his people by the forgiveness of their sins. 78 By the tender mercy of our God, the dawn from on high will break upon us, 79 to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace."

80 The child grew and became strong in spirit, and he was in the wilderness until the day he appeared publicly to Israel. — NRSV

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BIBLE QUESTIONS FOR THINKING PEOPLE

Why do you think Mary stayed with Elizabeth for so long? Compare Luke 1:36 with Luke 1:56. Why "might" God have wanted her to leave "before" the birth of John? Think of her safety and future if she had stayed longer.

Why do you think Zechariah was unable to speak until he named his son "John"? What might that tell us about obeying God and God testing us?

Why do you think Zechariah was "filled with the Holy Spirit" only after he had obeyed God rather than God filling him with His Spirit to cause Zechariah to obey Him from the very first vision? What might this tell us about the way God and His Spirit work in people's lives?

Under the influence of the Holy Spirit, how does Zechariah say that we should serve God? Thinking of John's and Jesus' later preaching, how did each one preach these things?

John came to prepare people to receive the Lord. What are some of the things believers can do today to help prepare people to receive Jesus as their Lord and Savior?

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