

Episode #448 - Christmas Messages 1: Introducing the Forerunner

I. The birth of Christ was a miraculous event that prepared the way for all that He would accomplish in His death, burial, and resurrection. At this time of year we remember that birth and the glorious salvation that God gave us as a result.

II. In this message we are going to consider what happened just before the birth of Jesus the Christ, and consider the birth of the forerunner.

III. Luke 1:5-7. We are introduced to a Godly couple

- A. Verse 5. Zacharias, a priest of the division of Abia (Abijah), I Chronicles 24:10. The priests were divided according to their service, I Chronicles 24:3.
- B. Elizabeth: also of the priestly line of Aaron.
- C. Verse 6. They were both righteous before God, keeping the whole law.
- D. Verse 7. To have no child was thought to be a curse and sign of disobedience. Deut. 28:18.

IV. Luke 1:8-20. Zacharias and the Angel

- A. Verses 8-9. Zecharias serves in the course of Abijah. Probably chosen by Urim and Thummim. To be chosen to serve was a great honor.
- B. Verses 10-12. You could be struck dead for doing anything wrong when serving in the holy place. Leviticus 10:1-7. No wonder he was afraid!
- C. Verses 13-17. The angel's message: they will have a son, John. He will be a Nazarite (Numbers 4), and will fulfill Malachi 4:5-6.
- D. Verse 18. Zacharias doubts this because of his age and Elizabeth's. Notice that the man who kept the law blamelessly stumbles when it comes to faith!
- E. Verse 19. The angel identifies himself as Gabriel, last seen hundreds of years before! Daniel 8:16, 9:21.
- F. Verse 20. Zacharias will be mute. In spite of keeping all the commandments, he did not have faith when called upon to do so!

V. Luke 1:21-25. The child conceived.

- A. Verse 21. Zacharias was a strangely long time in the temple.
- B. Verse 22. He was supposed to bless the people when he came out, but could not. The people realize he had a vision, but he could not tell them what it was about.
- C. Verses 23-24. Elizabeth conceives after he returns home. Just like Abraham and Sarah! Gen. 21:1-2. Elizabeth hides out for five months.
- D. Verse 25. She does not immediately trumpet it around. Not having a baby was a reproach.

VI. Zecharias and Elizabeth proved in their righteous lives what many people have trouble believing is true: that it was possible to keep all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blamelessly. Yet when given by an angel the stunning prophecy that he was going to have a child in his old age, Zecharias proved that he fell short when it came to faith. Faith is more than just doing what is right. It is believing what God tells us. Let us not be like righteous Zecharias, who nevertheless was weak in faith. Let us believe all that God has to say!