

Episode #449 – Christmas 2018 2: The Birth of 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. Last time we saw Zecharias and Elizabeth, a Godly couple from the family of Aaron, who failed to have children, yet received a promise from an angel that they would have a child in their old age. The promise came true and Elizabeth conceived. This time we will see the birth of this amazing forerunner to the Lord Jesus Christ.

III. Luke 1:26-27, 39-56. The visit of Mary.

- A. Verses 26-27. Six months later Gabriel visits Mary. Course of Abijah = either June or December. So this is December?
- B. Verses 39-40. Mary comes to them, probably to guard her reputation.
- C. Verse 41. The baby John leaps in Elizabeth's womb!
- D. Verses 42-45. Elizabeth blesses Mary. It must have been a relief to Mary to have a confidant.
- E. Verses 46-55. Mary's magnificat. Her rich praise to the Lord. He will help her.
- F. Verse 56. Mary stays three months. She gets pregnant, and helps Elizabeth in her third trimester.

IV. Luke 1:57-58. John's birth.

- A. Verse 57. Elizabeth brings forth John. Mary may have been here to help, then left.
- B. Verse 58. Everyone finally hears. God had shown great mercy to them.

V. Luke 1:59-66. John's circumcision and naming.

- A. Verse 59. This was a community event (not at the temple). All came to it. These others call him Zacharias like his father (basically Zacharias Junior).
- B. Verse 60. Elizabeth must have learned the story from her husband by now.
- C. Verse 61. They do not like Elizabeth naming him John. Family names were common at the time. Friends and relatives often stand in the way of God's commands!
- D. Verses 62-63. Zacharias backs up his wife.
- E. Verse 64. Zacharias can speak once he shows faith! His first words are praise.
- F. Verses 65-66. Everyone talks about this sensational event. It is kept quiet no longer!

VI. Luke 1:67-80. Zacharias' prophecy.

- A. Verses 67-69. He acknowledges this will lead to salvation. Yet he speaks of David's house, which refers to Mary's child, not his own!
- B. Verses 70-75. This was in fulfillment of God's promises. Notice that it is about salvation from enemies, not just from sin and death.
- C. Verses 76-79. He speaks to John, and of what his mission from the Lord will be. This time he speaks of the higher salvation from sins.
- D. Verse 80. John grows and becomes strong. He too is hidden away in the wilderness until the right time.

VII. The birth of the forerunner of our Lord Jesus Christ, John the Baptizer, was a significant event in leading up to the fulfillment of prophecy and the Lord's ministry. The miraculous event of this child's birth was overshadowed by the even more miraculous event of the virgin birth of our Lord. Yet the forerunner to our Lord was a very important person, and we must not sell him short. Whatever our own mission might be, may we all fulfill the role the Lord has for us, as John did.