

Dec 04, 2022



Oaks Early Risers Bible Class

**The Oaks
Baptist Church**
Grand Prairie, Texas

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FOOD FOR THOUGHT

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK:

The Lord speaks to His children, but we need to discern His voice

PRAYER FOR THE WEEK:

Open our eyes, Lord, that we might see You. Open our ears, that we may hear You. Open our mouths, that we might speak Your praise

SCRIPTURE FOR THE WEEK:

Now the Lord came and stood and called as at other times, "Samuel! Samuel!" And Samuel answered, "Speak, for Your servant hears."

(1 Sam 3:10 NKJV)

(From "Our Daily Bread", Oct 30, 2016)

**Series: From Darkness
to light**

UNIT 1: God's Preparation

NEXT WEEK

**Zacharias Speaks
(Luke 1:51-66, 76-79)**

Zacharias Hears from God Luke 1:8-20

Lesson Background and Introduction

The text concerns the birth of John the Baptist, who was another important part of God's messianic plan. God determined that the Savior would benefit from a forerunner who would prepare the world for His entry. Our text points to two mighty effects of John's ministry, first in the lives of his family and then in the lives of the wider world, since many would rejoice over his birth. Obviously, John's parents, Zacharias and Elisabeth, were greatly blessed to have a role in the fulfillment of God's promise to send the Savior. Joy and gladness came to them; this was personal. We cannot look at these Bible characters merely as passive instruments in the hand of a sovereign God. They were real people, and they personally received the grace of God in their lives. Let us always take the grace of God to heart in our lives so that it might instruct us in God's love and hold us strong in His mercy. But the wider concern here is the joy and rejoicing that John's birth would bring to the many. His birth would have a widespread impact. His whole life and ministry would have a powerful role in preparing the way for the Lord Jesus. John's ministry exalted Christ, and the blessing of God's salvation came to many in those days. John preached Christ, always making a clear distinction between himself and Jesus. He pointed others to the Lord, saying that he was not worthy to untie the sandal of the One who would come after him.

(Adapted from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator)

The Gospel of Luke is one of two Gospel accounts that describe Jesus' birth and its context. The other account comes from the Gospel of Matthew (Matthew 1:18-2:23). Luke's account is distinct in at least two ways. First, Luke's account is interwoven with events regarding the birth of Jesus' cousin John (Luke 1:5-25, 57-80). Both pregnancies were announced by an angel (1:13, 30-33), were accompanied by great wonders (1:62-66; 2:13-15), and had prepared the people for God's salvation (1:32-33, 67-79). Second, Luke's account highlights the significance of these parallel birth narratives through depictions of worship. Mary (Luke 1:46-55), Zacharias (1:67-79), a heavenly host (2:13-14), and Simeon (2:28-32) all give praise to God for His work. Luke's account opens by way of introducing Zacharias, the father of John and a priest in the division of Abia (Luke 1:5). Zacharias and other priests descended from Aaron, the brother of Moses (see Exodus 28:1). Over the centuries, Aaron's descendants became numerous to the point that they could not all serve in the temple at the same time. King David had organized the priests into 24 divisions for service (1 Chronicles 24:1-19). The divisions required adjustment following a season of captivity (see Ezra 2:36-39). Every division would serve in the temple for roughly two nonconsecutive weeks each year. The assigned priests would complete the necessary tasks for the temple, including accepting and offering sacrifices, burning incense, and leading prayers. Zacharias and his wife Elisabeth, also a descendent of Aaron, were "righteous before God" and "blameless" regarding obeying His commandments (Luke 1:6). The couple was without children due to their ages and Elisabeth's barrenness (1:7). Zacharias expected that God would use someone exceptional, not ordinary, to work out His divine plan of salvation. However, God frequently calls the unassuming or the seemingly ill-equipped. Zacharias and his family were the latest iteration of God's working through people who least expected it. Though Zacharias served as a priest, he was skeptical that God would work through him and his wife. Of course we are not the parents of the forerunner of Christ, but Zacharias's story shows us that God will work through our lives as well. Will we doubt that God is serious when He calls us to fulfill His plan? Or will we believe and trust that God, who often has worked through ordinary people, will work through ordinary us?

(Adapted from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary)

NOTES AND CROSS-REFERENCES

God's Hand in Ordinary Life (Luke 1:8-10)

Through service (8)

Service that has as its foundation the precept that it is more blessed to give than to receive (Acts 20:35)

Service that bears the failings of the weak and tries to strengthen them (Rom 15:1-2)

Service that carries other's burdens (Gal 6:2)

Service that meets the needs of others (James 2:15-17)

Through election (9)

An election that is according to God's purpose (Rom 8:28-30)

An election accomplished through the sanctification of the Holy Spirit (2 Thess 2:13-14)

An election accomplished through the foreknowledge of God (1 Peter 1:2)

An election whereby God makes me holy and beloved (Col 3:12)

Through prayer (10)

Prayer that is continual (1 Thess 5:17)

Prayer for the spreading of the gospel (Eph 6:19)

Prayer in faith and the Holy Spirit (Jude 20)

Prayer that waits in expectation (Ps 5:3)

Prayer about everything with thanksgiving (Phil 4:6)

A heart that is devoted to prayer (Col 4:2)

God's Message at the Perfect Time (Luke 1:11-17)

From a Divine source (11-13)

From a Divine source because God promises to teach, counsel and watch over His people (Psalm 32:8)

From a Divine source because God guides with His counsel (Ps 73:22-25)

From a Divine source because God teaches what is best and directs in the right way (Isa 48:17)

From a Divine source because obedience to it results in blessings (Acts 8:26)

With joy (14)

Joy expressed in praise and song (Ps 33:1-3)

Joy expressed in the soul (Isa 61:10)

Joy expressed in spite of circumstances (Hab 3:17-19)

Joy expressed because the Bible tells us to do so (Phil 4:4)

Joy expressed because we believe and love God (1 Peter 1:8)

Seek to be filled with the Holy Spirit (15-16)

Filled with the Holy Spirit so that the word of God can be spoken boldly (Acts 4:31)

Filled with the Holy Spirit as part of living wisely (Eph 5:15-18)

Filled with the Holy Spirit to serve (Acts 6:2-6)

Filled with the Holy Spirit as evidence of the grace of God (Acts 11:22-24)

Seek to be prepared for Jesus' coming (17)

Prepare by letting our light shine before men (Matt 5:14-16)

Prepare by being watchful because the day is nearer than believed (Rom 13:11)

Prepare by being watchful because we don't know the day or hour (Matt 25:13)

Prepare by making the most of every opportunity (Eph 5:15-17)

Prepare by being putting on the armor of God because the time is near (Rom 13:12)

God's Proof to Help Doubt (Luke 1:18-20)

Believe without knowing everything (18)

Believe without knowing because one should hope without regard to seeing how it will turn out (Rom 8:23-25)

Believe without knowing because doubt causes disobedience because it causes us to waffle (James 1:6)

Believe without knowing because belief should be by faith not by sight (2 Cor 5:7)

Believe without knowing because belief should be looking toward the unseen, not the seen (2 Cor 4:18)

Believe without knowing because Jesus says that those who believe without seeing would be blessed (John 20:29)

Believe because God says it (19)

Believe because when God says it, it is trustworthy (Rev 21:5)

Believe because God cannot lie (Heb 6:18)

Believe because God's testimony is the greatest (1 John 5:9)

Believe because God's word is holy and righteous (Rom 7:12)

Believe because God's word gives freedom and blessings (James 1:25)

Consequences of unbelief (20)

A consequence of unbelief is sin (Rom 14:22-23)

A consequence of unbelief is condemnation (John 3:18)

A consequence of unbelief because of not being one of Jesus' sheep (John 10:26)

A consequence of unbelief is rebuke because of doubt (John 20:24-29)