



Previously on Divine Mission

Luke: traveller, scholar, scientist undertook extensive research write this book

Zechariah: old man angelic encounter but doubts angels words & is struck dumb

Mary: teenage virgin visited by an angel & told she will give birth to the long awaited for Messiah.

Learning the ways of God

Luke 1:57 Now the time came for Elizabeth to give birth, and she bore a son. 58 And her neighbours and relatives heard that the Lord had shown great mercy to her, and they rejoiced with her. 59 And on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child. And they would have called him Zechariah after his father, 60 but his mother answered, "No; he shall be called John." 61 And they said to her, "None of your relatives is called by this name." 62 And they made signs to his father, inquiring what he wanted him to be called. 63 And he asked for a writing tablet and wrote, "His name is John." And they all wondered. 64 And immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue loosed, and he spoke, blessing God. 65 And fear came on all their neighbours. And all these things were talked about through all the hill country of Judea, 66 and all who heard them laid them up in their hearts, saying, "What then will this child be?" For the hand of the Lord was with him.

1) God called Zechariah to silence to discover his ways

Some things can only be discovered in the secret place

2) God took away Zechariah's voice in order to give him a voice

In God, your greatest area of defeat can become your greatest area of victory

3) When we don't understand reasons for our circumstance we must learn to wait in faith

You can choose whether your circumstance makes you bitter or better.

God is mysterious. But He is not mysteriously bad, He's mysteriously good.

Luke 1:67 And his father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied, saying, "*Blessed¹ be the Lord God of Israel, for he has **visited and redeemed** his people 69 and has raised up a **horn of salvation** for us in the house of his servant David, 70 as he spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets from of old, 71 that we should be **saved from our enemies** and from the hand of all who hate us; 72 to show **the mercy** promised to our fathers and to remember his holy covenant, 73 the oath that he swore to our father Abraham, to grant us 74 that we, being **delivered from the hand 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 in the **forgiveness of their sins, 78** because of the tender mercy of our God, whereby the sunrise shall visit us from on high 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.**"*

¹ Note Zechariah's prophecy is called the Benedictus because that is the first word in Latin

Luke 1:80 *And the child grew and became strong in spirit, and he was in the wilderness until the day of his public appearance to Israel.*

4) God wants us to know the things he is doing generally

Visited, redeemed, horn of salvation, saved from enemies, show 'performed' mercy, delivered to serve him, freedom from fear, free to be holy, free to be righteous, forgiveness of sins, light to those in darkness, led into peace

God's desire is to give you what you need which is not always what you want

For centuries Jews thought that their true enemy was on the outside. In the secret place Zechariah realised that they had a greater enemy on the inside

5) God wants us to know the things he is doing specifically

Jesus operated out of

- *his general initiative (Matt 12:15, Luke 6:19 'he healed them all')*
- *his specific initiative (Luke 19:5 'Zaccheus hurry and come down')*
- *response to the initiative of others who needed help (Matt 14:15 'disciples came to him and said send the crowd away to buy food')*

6) God speaks before he acts

v70 spoke by the mouth of his prophets

v72 show the mercy promised to our fathers

v73 the oath that he swore to our father Abraham

Amos 3:7 "For the Lord GOD does nothing without revealing his secret to his servants the prophets."

God declares first but still expects us to contend

76 And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways

Two common mistakes with the prophetic (words from God)

a) waiting passively for it to happen instead of 'preparing the way'

b) trying to skip the process

It's not about how many words from God you receive – it's what you do with the ones you've had.