

# Zechariah

△ Luke 1:57-80

## Intro

### Last week

We looked at Mary

And the song she sang when Elizabeth recognised that Mary was pregnant

### This week

Zechariah is in focus

Although a Priest

Maybe a person we can identify better with than Mary

He had difficulty believing the Angel Gabriel

That his wife would become pregnant

as both of them were elderly

It gives him some humanity

Would we not have reacted in the same way?

The Sound of Silence

Because he did not believe, he could not speak: he became mute

He may also have been deaf, as in our passage today, the people were signing to him

Was it just a punishment?

Or was this silence not a prophetic act?

It sounds a bit like what Isaiah and Ezekiel had to do

As they had to prophecy by acting something out

The worst act was Ezekiel's as he could not move when his wife died

So although Zechariah's silence was not voluntary

The people realised that God had spoken

And this was a time of waiting, waiting in silent expectation

But today we see that Zechariah can break his silence!

## Birth of John the Baptist

The news of the birth itself is low key

A miracle in itself!

No complications!

Just a normal birth

even though the mother is elderly

And a supportive community

they rejoiced with her

Because God had shown her great mercy

Again here also we find echoes with Hannah

Who we also looked at last week

Who cried out to God to become pregnant

And God also showed her mercy

The Circumcision and name giving

Here is where the drama is!

It is the eighth day, and the community comes together to circumcise the baby

Take of the foreskin of the boy's penis

As an indication that he is one of the people of God

And with that comes the question: what is his name?

As Zechariah could not speak, the community takes over

This disregards the wishes of Elizabeth

And want to name the baby Zechariah

Was it because the baby would have normally been named already?

**Before this passage, children were already named before they were circumcised**

But Zechariah could not speak - so no name was given

Do they therefore take the custom in their own hands

**But Elizabeth is insistent**

He is to be called John!

**Writing tablet**

Zechariah:

"His name is John"

"John is his name"

Stop arguing, you can hear him think

He is John!

**Prophecy fulfilled**

And with Zechariah's statement Angel

Gabriel's prophecy has been fulfilled

Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will name him John

**You - Zechariah**

And the his speech was freed and he could speak, praising God!

## Zechariah's Prophecy

### Filled with the Holy Spirit

Again we see the Holy Spirit at work

As He comes upon Zechariah

Filled upon

And as a result Zechariah prophecies

### Three parts

Part 1: Prophecy of what God will do

Part 2: Prophecy how Zechariah's son: John the Baptist is involved

Part 3: What is the result?

### Part 1: What will God do?

This is the centre of Z's prophecy

Not what his Son will do, but what God is about to do

**Z blesses God**

He has redeemed the people of Israel

How?

He has raised up a mighty saviour (or horn - symbol of strength) for us

^ v69

as promised by the OT prophets

so that Israel will be saved from

**all their enemies**

**and from all who hate them**

**He has shown mercy to Israel**

remembered the holy covenant with  
Abraham

**God will rescue Israel from the hands  
of their enemies**

**So that they will serve God without  
fear**

In holiness and righteousness

For ever

**This saviour is of course Jesus!**

## **Part 2: John the Baptist's role**

**Prophet - of the Most High = God**

**But he will go before the Lord to  
prepare his ways**

This is God and this is Jesus!

Jesus and God are one!

**So that his - God & Jesus' - people**

will know salvation

through the forgiveness of sins

**The means of salvation is not getting  
rid of the enemies of Israel**

No it is through forgiveness of sins

Of Israel

It is the restoration of the relationship  
between Israel and God

Which can only be done through the  
forgiveness of Israel's sins and our sins

## Part 3: The Dawn from on high

A dawn from on high

Giving light to those

who are in darkness and still under the  
oppression of death

The ultimate enemy to be defeated is death

Guiding the people of Israel into peace

Echoing Isa 9:2

The people walking in darkness  
have seen a great light;  
on those living in the land of deep darkness  
a light has dawned.

and Isa 60:1-3

“Arise, shine, for your light has come,  
and the glory of the Lord rises upon you.  
<sup>2</sup> See, darkness covers the earth  
and thick darkness is over the peoples,  
but the Lord rises upon you  
and his glory appears over you.  
<sup>3</sup> Nations will come to your light,  
and kings to the brightness of your dawn.

With Jesus there will be a new dawn on  
the people who live in Darkness

For us?

Z's message is clearly set in the  
nation of Israel

And yes, Jesus is the Messiah first to  
Israel

But unfortunately they have not accepted

him (yet)

And as we can see Israel is still not released from their enemies and all that hate them

^ v73

We can only pray that they will do so soon!

## But by referencing to Isaiah, Z brings in a more cosmic dimension

Isa 60:3: Nations and kings will come to the light of Jesus

This is not only Israel's Messiah

This is the whole world's (all nations') Messiah

Here is Z propephsyng the coming of the Messiah

For all peoples

To save us all from our enemies

And from all who hate us

And if other people hate us, they will also be rescued from that hate and they will love us and we will love them

## The end is for us all to

serve Jesus without fear

As he rescues us from ourselves, others, destruction and even hell

Because he has opened up the relationship between us and God

It is there: for us to accept

His hand is stretched out

Do we grab it?

And be saved ourselves?

And what about the others?

Do they know what Christmas means?

They may not want to know

But if no one is telling them, how can they know

Or are we just like Z.

Are we also struck with silence so that we cannot speak about what Jesus has done to others?

Do we dare to pray for the HS to come upon us, as he came on Z.

And prophesy and proclaim Jesus' good news

As we burst out in singing?

Amen