

## **[After the Order of Abia] / Gospel of Luke 1:5 – 35**

~ Our Spiritual Safari expedition through the entire Word of God dedicated the entirety of our introductory report to the Gospel of Luke examining just one sentence. We learned what a Periodic Sentence is in the Greek language; and our safari endured a crash course into Greek 101. Well, in this report, we are going to evaluate historical data presented by the Spirit of God. The Lord Jesus Christ comes now out of eternity and into the concept of time as we know it - so we can comprehend His truth. John says in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God; and the Word became flesh! Luke doesn't approach it in that spiritual way, because he is a highly educated man dealing only in scientific medical facts....

***5 There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judaea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the course of Abia: and his wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elisabeth.***

~ We saw in Matthew that this event marks where the Angel of the Lord broke back into the lives of God's people after four hundred long years of complete silence and utter darkness. Luke lays out the chronological account of births beginning with John the Baptist and the account of his father as he served in the temple. Zacharias means "...God remembered;" and Elisabeth means "...His oath!" So, I find it more than strangely interesting how this Gospel opens up with God remembering His oath. It's just not a coincidence that this couple has a name by which God commemorates His oath, friends. Impossible. Remember, God took the oath and said He does not lie! God said He would bring One in the line of David Who would sit upon his throne.

*Psalm 89:34 My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips. 35 Once have I sworn by my holiness that I will not lie unto David. 36 His seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before me. 37 It shall be established for ever as the moon, and as a faithful witness in heaven ~*

The oath that God made to David is continued; the Lord Jesus is coming again, friends. What you are reading is the announcement that Christ is on His way! After four centuries of complete silence, God speaks out of the blue and into the golden altar where His man, Zacharias, stood! Both of these people, Zacharias and Elisabeth, were made righteous before the Lord; that is, they were right in their hearts with God. They had problems, of course - and having no child was a tragedy for them - but they were right with God because they brought the proper sacrifice, according to the commands of God, and they recognized they were sinners who needed redemption. Let's understand that the WALK of this married couple commended their salvation and gave glory to the Lord God. That's why He used them and spoke through them....

***6 And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.***

***7 And they had no child, because that Elisabeth was barren, and they both were now well stricken in years.***

~ We see a Christian couple before us in this section of Scripture that has no child. It was practically a disgrace to a Hebrew woman in Israel not to have a child. The entire community they lived in would have whispered and murmured behind their backs. Why would God allow this to happen to these righteous and just people? Well, that's the question of many who are turning to Christ. They say they have accepted God, but their lives have become worse – or, at least, no better. Well, a marriage vow is for better or for worse. Interestingly, the husband of this woman is of the tribe of Levi, and we see him worshipping in the temple - likely having LONG given up on his prayer about having a son. My friends, God is trying to tell you something about you here - and how He see YOU - and it's not good....

***8 And it came to pass, that while he executed the priest's office before God in the order of his course,***

***9 According to the custom of the priest's office, his lot was to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord.***

**10 And the whole multitude of the people were praying without at the time of incense.**

**11 And there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense.**

**12 And when Zacharias saw him, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him.**

**13 But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John.**

~ According to the custom of the priest's office, Zacharias lot was to burn incense on the Golden Altar. With our safari having just come from Leviticus, we are very familiar with the altar of prayer, which is the altar of incense. We now see Zacharias placing incense on the altar. Well, this angel is interrupting the ceremony, and that deeply troubles this man. If an angel appeared to you would you be troubled and fearful? Most people think they would enjoy it and chat with the angel – entertain it - and all that stuff. I'm afraid they do not happen to understand the realities involved with being in the presence of an angel. Well, Zacharias is praying, and do you know what he and his wife had been praying for? – A son! I believe a lot of people ask God for a child, and I believe in asking people to pray for us, but only providing they are people that you would want to pray for you; because my beloved, not everyone is that - and prayer is powerful. Candidly, it can be extremely dangerous....

**14 And thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth.**

**15 For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb.**

~ We're going to discover in Numbers the true extent of what this really means; but, here, let's just say that to abstain from strong drink and wine means he is to be a Nazirite. The vow that a Nazirite took included,

amongst many other things, to abstain completely from what we would call alcohol. In fact, they were not to even touch grapes! The Nazerite was to find his joy solely in the Holy Spirit of God. Let's get our joy from God, friends, not from a bottle. We have a whole lot of bottle babies today, but they aren't in a crib! They're hanging off of a bar stool somewhere. Honestly, though, I don't really blame them; because if I were in their sad condition, I would probably reach for it, too. Many Christians have to be hopped up and propped up in order to face the realities of their miserable life. We need to recognize that all the drugs and alcohol in the world will not do what the Spirit of God can do for us! ~

***16 And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God.***

***17 And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.***

~ Let's just make sure we understand that John the Baptist went forth in the power of the Holy Spirit first - and the power of Elijah second; and that he was NOT Elijah, of course. To 'turn the hearts of the fathers toward the children' means to bridge the generation gap. The problem with our youth today is not between the youth and the adult. No, the problem is between the adult and God! If our relationship with God is correct, then we won't have a problem with the youth at all. We could really elaborate on that, but we need to get back to our subject: John coming forth in the Spirit and power of Elijah! ~

***18 And Zacharias said unto the angel, Whereby shall I know this? for I am an old man, and my wife well stricken in years.***

~ Zacharias doubts very much that the thing he is praying for is going to be granted. I know that doubt all too well. There is a great deal of humor in the Bible, and this is one place it stands out. Do you ever pray like that; asking God for something but not really believing He will give it to you? I think that's one reason that many people feel as if their prayers are not heard or answered – and they probably aren't, because they have no faith

at all. Then, when our prayers are answered, we seem surprised. That's the way it goes with me, at least. Maybe it's not that way with you? ~

***19 And the angel answering said unto him, I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God; and am sent to speak unto thee, and to shew thee these glad tidings.***

~ The Word of God has the seal of God, and His Approval is upon it, friends. We have an authority when we handle it properly, correctly and sincerely. This Book isn't about what you say or what I say, it's about what God says! The mind of Christ is the important thing. However, don't think you are going to learn the Bible on your own just by asking God to reveal it to you. That's pure foolishness. Even the Ethiopian Eunuch asked Philip, "...how can I understand if there is no man to teach me?" God doesn't operate in your bubble like that. God has put some very intelligent and Spirit filled men on this earth. The problem is: the world is ignoring those men and ignoring God and the reason they do that is because they are NOT serious about learning the Bible. No, they want to verse grab and make a social gospel or a prosperity gospel. The rest just want a self justification and self glory. They have no intention on asking God how they can be OBEDIENT and HOLY! Well, Zacharias knew the Mosaic Law, and he was obeying God and worshiping Him God's way when his prayers were answered! ~

***20 And, behold, thou shalt be dumb, and not able to speak, until the day that these things shall be performed, because thou believest not my words, which shall be fulfilled in their season.***

~ Zacharias probably wasn't finished asking "...how is God going to do this?" when the Angel of the Lord said, "...you're going to be unable to speak!" If you question the Lord, friends – that's okay - but He is going to stop your mouth completely. You can just write that down. Unbelief is always dumb. Atheism has no message of any sort for anyone. I think it was the late Elizabeth Barrett Brown who said, "...if you have no faith; just keep quiet." That's smart. These people around this forum on which I teach who everlastingly spouting off about their gifts and blessings are really stating their unbelief. We know that because they have no message. either. If you don't have anything to say, then why don't you just shut up? So many

people would do so well to take my advice – and just – stop. They're not furthering the cause of Christ. They aren't interested in the Gospel. The Lord isn't accepting or using their works; and, naturally, they never want to hear what a man who actually believes God has to say....

***21 And the people waited for Zacharias, and marvelled that he tarried so long in the temple.***

***22 And when he came out, he could not speak unto them: and they perceived that he had seen a vision in the temple: for he beckoned unto them, and remained speechless.***

~ Maybe you don't find this funny, but I find it hilarious; after four hundred years of complete silence, God speaks to man again, but the man doesn't even believe Him. Do you know anything about that in your own life? Now, Zacharias is unable to speak, and you can imagine a priest that can't explain what happened: he would be suspected of having some serious issues! It's too funny! I doubt Zacharias saw the humor in it, though. How would you attempt to explain and make known that you have seen an angel if you could not speak? Well, let's just say it wouldn't be easy. If you think about the gyrations that are described as "beckoning" you will simply have to laugh! ~

***23 And it came to pass, that, as soon as the days of his ministration were accomplished, he departed to his own house.***

~ Remember, the priests had terms that they served, and Zacharias had to complete his term without being able to open his mouth. Then, he is given the time off and God just keeps him quiet! I think God gave Elisabeth a chance to say everything she ever wanted to say to him during his period of dumbness. Well, he can't talk, and Elisabeth goes off and hides herself, which is unusual. She probably talked his ears off during those days! She must have asked a million times, "...isn't it wonderful?" To which old Zacharias could only nod his head in agreement....

***24 And after those days his wife Elisabeth conceived, and hid herself five months, saying,***

***25 Thus hath the Lord dealt with me in the days wherein he looked on me, to take away my reproach among men.***

~ This section of this chapter began six months after the angel appeared to Zacharias. Twice in the same verse Mary is designated as a virgin. A virgin is a woman who could never have a child in a natural way. Many think the virgin birth was a biological miracle. Others preach a parallelogram saying the Bible doesn't teach a virgin birth! I don't think the Spirit of God could make it any clearer to us that the Lord Jesus Christ was virgin born. I have no problem with unbelievers saying they do not BELIEVE in the virgin birth – because they have a right to be wrong. However, to say that the Bible does not teach a virgin birth of the Holy Spirit is to proclaim you are completely and totally ignorant of what you are talking about - which is the Word of God. To say we uphold the Bible as the inspired and inerrant Word of God, but then deny the virgin birth is what the Biblically illiterate person does....

***26 And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth,***

***27 To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary.***

***28 And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women.***

~ Our natural and unfortunate tendency in the fundamental conservative church is to downplay the role of Mary. Of course, that is done because the Roman cult known as Catholicism elevates her status disproportionately. Mary was highly favored – BUT – she was blessed AMONG women - not ABOVE any other woman! Mary is not to be lifted up above anyone; and certainly not above the Lord Jesus Christ! Mary lifts womanhood up, in general up – and that is the only role Mary plays in the Bible! It's easy to blame woman for bringing sin into this world, but man did not bring the Savior! ~

***29 And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be.***

~ Again, we have another troubling appearance by an angel. Whenever the supernatural touches the natural it ALWAYS creates fear! No one in the world ever believes in ghosts until they've seen one! If you see an angel, you will have every right to be completely and totally afraid! If you've never seen one, then you know nothing about this. Because I have never seen an angel – I know nothing about this. However, I can assure myself that if I ever do see one, I will be afraid, naturally....

***30 And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God.***

***31 And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS.***

~ This is all very plain language and there is simply no way of misinterpreting it if we are sincere in studying the Word of God. This is, actually, all quite literal. If you deny the virgin birth, then you are really saying you don't believe Christ will sit on the throne of His father David! Well, in Jesus day, apparently, it was more than understood that all of this was literal. The womb of a virgin is literal, and the throne of David is literal – both are as literal as we can get! To say He will reign over the house of Jacob forever is totally literal, too! The Kingdom that has no end is a very real reality! ~

***32 He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David:***

***33 And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.***

***34 Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?***



***35 And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.***

~ Mary was the first person to question the virgin birth. She just doesn't understand how it can be. That's a very good question in verse thirty-four, too, by the way. Luke gives the answer as he quotes the angel. No man had anything to do with the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ. In Leviticus, we saw that the birth of a child caused a woman to be unclean. She was unclean because she brought a sinner into the world! Luke says, "...this is no sinner that she is bringing into this world." The virgin birth is the only way Christ could arrive in this world. David knew his mother had conceived him in sin - but not Mary. You can deny the virgin birth if you want to; and if you are not a believer then I expect nothing except unbelief from you; but, either way, Jesus was called the Son of God because He IS the Son of God! We have the scientific approach to the Gospel right here from Luke. Luke says that he examined Jesus and his conclusion is that Jesus is God! John, Matthew and Mark all came to the same conclusion that Luke did about Jesus - but their techniques were all different. What a beautiful Gospel our Spiritual Safari is moving into ~

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