

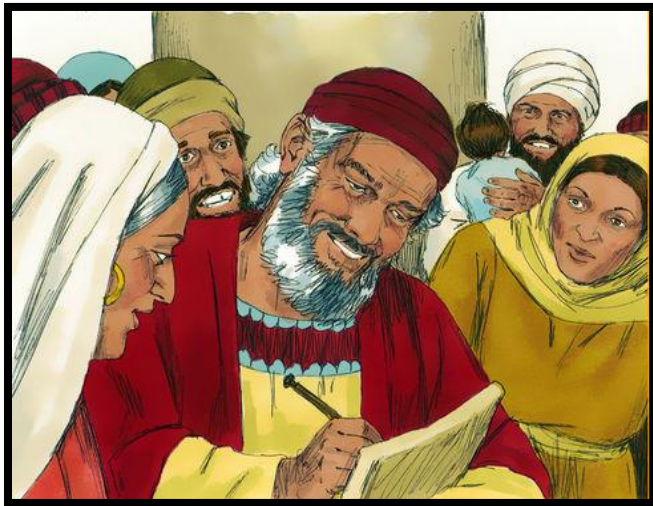
Go and Tell!

Luke 1:67-80

Online Sermon: http://www.mckeesfamily.com/?page_id=3567

It is hard to believe that Christmas is almost here! Just the thought of getting hugs from loved ones, giving gifts and breaking one's diet to eat mountains of food makes me quiver with excitement. As grand as these "traditions" might be they pale in comparison to the thought that over 2,000 years ago our Savior was born and provided the means of reconciliation with a holy God! While this truth makes one's heart leap with overwhelming joy, one can't help but feel a sad that for many in this world the birth of their Savior is the furthest thing from their minds! Despite the testimony of nature and God's holy word for many people their "commercial Christmas" leaves no room for giving their heart over to Jesus! While they will ultimately be held accountable for rejecting Jesus on His birthday one can't help but think that those who are His ambassadors will also be held accountable for sharing the Good News that all can be reconciled and adopted into God's family! The following sermon is going to look at Zechariah's song in hope that it will challenge us to share the best gift ever given to humanity with the world!

Story of Zechariah's Silence



At the very beginning of Luke's Gospel, the reader is told of the "extraordinary phenomena" surrounding the birth of John the Baptist.¹ The story starts off by telling us of the piety of John's parents.² Not only was Zechariah a priest and his wife Elizabeth the daughter of a priest³ they both blamelessly kept the Lord's commands and decrees (1:6). Despite their amazing standing we are told they were childless. Elizabeth's womb was closed which was "a sign of divine punishment and shame"

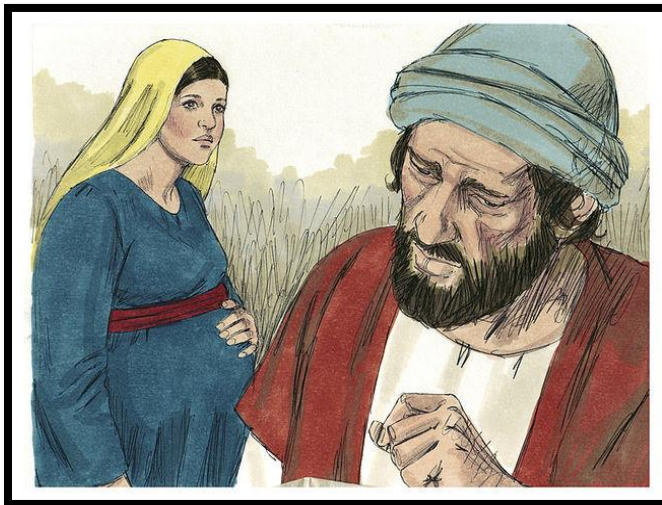
¹ Joel B. Green, [*The Gospel of Luke*](#), The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1997), 112.

² Leon Morris, [*Luke: An Introduction and Commentary*](#), vol. 3, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 85.

³ Leon Morris, [*Luke: An Introduction and Commentary*](#), vol. 3, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 85.

in the eyes of the Jewish people.⁴ Zachariah's disgrace soon ended when God chose Him by lot to go into the temple and burn incense (1:10), which was at best a once in a lifetime experience.⁵ While in the temple the angel of the Lord appeared to Zechariah and told him the good news that he and Elizabeth were going to have a child that would "bring back the people of Israel to the Lord their God" (1:16). Zechariah did not believe the angel⁶ so Gabriel punished him by making him unable to speak or hear.⁷ When the baby was born Elizabeth broke with tradition and told her relatives that his name would not be the same as a parent or grandparent⁸ but would instead be called "John." In disbelief they summoned Zechariah to write the boy's name and the moment he wrote "John" on his tablet⁹ his ears were opened, and his tongue was freed up to speak again.¹⁰

Following Jesus, Not Culture at Christmas



While Zechariah's nine months of silence was most likely a divine rebuke for his unbelief it was also an opportunity to ponder, pray, and meditate on the Bible so that he might be reassured and accept the miraculous birth of John.¹¹ Despite his age and stature as a righteous priest (1:6) the "peer pressure and attitudes of the world" had had a profound effect on Zachariah's unbelief before God.¹² Even though Scripture clearly taught that God could open any womb,¹³ Zacharias chose to believe as

⁴ Joel B. Green, [The Gospel of Luke](#), The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1997), 65.

⁵ D. A. Carson, ["A Naming Ceremony, a Prophecy, and Jesus,"](#) in *D. A. Carson Sermon Library* (Bellingham, WA: Faithlife, 2016), Lk 1:57–80.

⁶ Darrell L. Bock, [Luke](#), The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996), 74.

⁷ Walter L. Liefeld, ["Luke,"](#) in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Matthew, Mark, Luke*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin, vol. 8 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1984), 838.

⁸ Darrell L. Bock, [Luke](#), The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996), 74.

⁹ Walter L. Liefeld, ["Luke,"](#) in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Matthew, Mark, Luke*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin, vol. 8 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1984), 838.

¹⁰ Darrell L. Bock, [Luke](#), The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996), 74.

¹¹ John Piper, [Sermons from John Piper \(1980–1989\)](#) (Minneapolis, MN: Desiring God, 2007).

¹² Darrell L. Bock, [Luke](#), The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996), 78.

¹³ Joel B. Green, [The Gospel of Luke](#), The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1997), 65.

the world does that such a miracle could not happen. He had nine long months of watching Elizabeth's belly grow in silence to not only bask in his shame of initial disbelief but also to spiritually grow in his understanding of the awesome power of God! Because Zechariah was not an arrogant man¹⁴ he learned that sanctification was not a "momentary" event but a lifetime one!¹⁵ If a prestigious priest could learn more about God surely, we can as well!

Christmas is almost upon us and if we are not careful the peer pressure and customs of this world¹⁶ will keep us lukewarm and unreceptive to proclaiming the Good News that Jesus is



our Savior. Christmas is not just about gifts, eating and visiting friends and relatives, nor is it about standing on the "perceived" power and prestige¹⁷ of our supposed spiritual maturity! Like Zacharias we need to spend time in silence and solitude this Christmas¹⁸ so that we might learn to "walk where God tells us to walk!"¹⁹ Holy living is not found in "taking control" and doing the things that pleases oneself but in following the One who is in control!²⁰ While not all of us were called to be evangelists are not all Christians called to go and make disciples

of all nations (Matthew 28:19) or at the very least be ready to give the reason why we have hope in our Lord (1 Peter 3:15)? If one is concerned about what to say to the unsaved then keep reading the rest of this sermon for the song the Holy Spirit gave to Zacharias not only tells us of the significance of Christ's birth but also solidifies His command to GO and tell everyone the Good News!

¹⁴ Darrell L. Bock, [Luke](#), The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996), 74.

¹⁵ Darrell L. Bock, [Luke](#), The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996), 79.

¹⁶ Darrell L. Bock, [Luke](#), The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996), 78.

¹⁷ Darrell L. Bock, [Luke](#), The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996), 80.

¹⁸ John Piper, [Sermons from John Piper \(1980–1989\)](#) (Minneapolis, MN: Desiring God, 2007).

¹⁹ Darrell L. Bock, [Luke](#), The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996), 78.

²⁰ Darrell L. Bock, [Luke](#), The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996), 81.

Do not be Afraid to Speak that God Visited Us (67-75)

67 His father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied: 68 “Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, because he has come to his people and redeemed them. 69 He has raised up a horn ^z of salvation for us in the house of his servant David 70 (as he said through his holy prophets of long ago), 71 salvation from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us— 72 to show mercy to our ancestors and to remember his holy covenant, 73 the oath he swore to our father Abraham: 74 to rescue us from the hand of our enemies, and to enable us to serve him without fear 75 in holiness and righteousness before him all our days.

Instead of a voice of frustration for having been silenced²¹ Zachariah became filled with the Holy Spirit²² and began to prophesy²³ and praise the God of Israel.²⁴ To fulfill a promise



made to Abraham some 4,000 years ago²⁵ God would once again visit²⁶ this world like He did in the days of the Exodus²⁷ and deliver His people. The one in whom great prophets like Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel spoke of²⁸ would empty Himself of His reputation in heaven (Philippians 2:6-11) and be born as the “horn of our salvation.”²⁹ From the line of King David³⁰ would come God’s only son whose divine strength³¹ would purchase victory not over political

²¹ Gavin Childress, [Opening up Luke’s Gospel](#), Opening Up Commentary (Leominster: Day One Publications, 2006), 19.

²² Joel B. Green, [The Gospel of Luke](#), The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1997), 115.

²³ Walter L. Liefeld, [“Luke.”](#) in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Matthew, Mark, Luke*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelien, vol. 8 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1984), 839.

²⁴ D. A. Carson, [“A Naming Ceremony, a Prophecy, and Jesus.”](#) in *D. A. Carson Sermon Library* (Bellingham, WA: Faithlife, 2016), Lk 1:57–80.

²⁵ D. A. Carson, [“A Naming Ceremony, a Prophecy, and Jesus.”](#) in *D. A. Carson Sermon Library* (Bellingham, WA: Faithlife, 2016), Lk 1:57–80.

²⁶ Joel B. Green, [The Gospel of Luke](#), The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1997), 116.

²⁷ Joel B. Green, [The Gospel of Luke](#), The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1997), 117.

²⁸ D. A. Carson, [“A Naming Ceremony, a Prophecy, and Jesus.”](#) in *D. A. Carson Sermon Library* (Bellingham, WA: Faithlife, 2016), Lk 1:57–80.

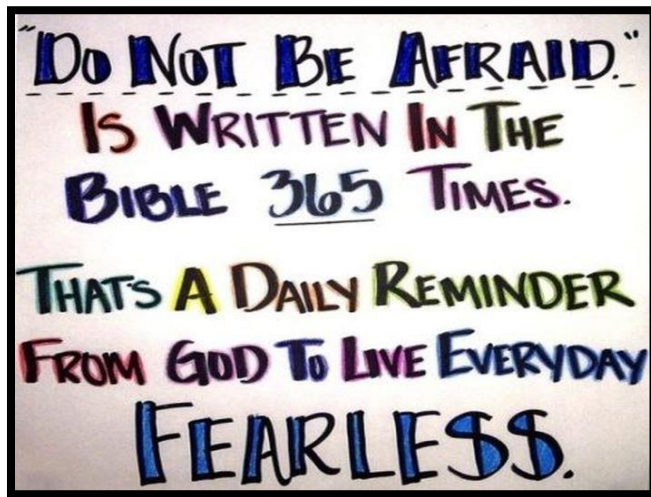
²⁹ John Piper, [Sermons from John Piper \(1980–1989\)](#) (Minneapolis, MN: Desiring God, 2007).

³⁰ Joel B. Green, [The Gospel of Luke](#), The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1997), 116.

³¹ John Piper, [Sermons from John Piper \(1980–1989\)](#) (Minneapolis, MN: Desiring God, 2007).

but spiritual enemies of His people.³² Jesus conquered sin and death³³ so that His people might be freed to serve God “without fear and in holiness and righteousness.”³⁴ With numerous references to the Old Testament Zechariah made it abundantly clear that the “stupendous, unrepeatable, incredible” birth of Christ not only fulfilled prophesy but was to be the song their hearts were to sing to the world ... “the Wonderful Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace”³⁵ has arrived!³⁶

From this part of Zachariah’s song we learn that Jesus did not come to earth to redeem His people from sin and death so that they might become carnal lukewarm pretenders of the



faith but so that they might receive and proclaim the Good News that all might be saved! Even though we are told in Scripture that the world will hate us for speaking the truth concerning Christ on His birthday (John 15:18-19) this does not mean we should hide silently in fear of their scorn and possible attempts at retribution. We are to take refuge in our rock and shield (Jesus) who has already conquered Satan and death³⁷ and shout from the mountaintops “our Savior has arrived!” Like John the Baptist our role this Christmas is to not fear but to

embrace the opportunity to point those who are dying of a disease called sin to the Redeemer³⁸ that can not only save them from spiritual death but also provide every spiritual blessing in Christ, Jesus our Lord (Ephesians 1:3)!

³² John Piper, *Sermons from John Piper (1980–1989)* (Minneapolis, MN: Desiring God, 2007).

³³ D. A. Carson, “A Naming Ceremony, a Prophecy, and Jesus,” in *D. A. Carson Sermon Library* (Bellingham, WA: Faithlife, 2016), Lk 1:57–80.

³⁴ Gavin Childress, *Opening up Luke’s Gospel*, Opening Up Commentary (Leominster: Day One Publications, 2006), 19.

³⁵ D. A. Carson, “A Naming Ceremony, a Prophecy, and Jesus,” in *D. A. Carson Sermon Library* (Bellingham, WA: Faithlife, 2016), Lk 1:57–80.

³⁶ Zachariah in this song talked as if Jesus was already born.

³⁷ John Piper, *Sermons from John Piper (1980–1989)* (Minneapolis, MN: Desiring God, 2007).

³⁸ D. A. Carson, “A Naming Ceremony, a Prophecy, and Jesus,” in *D. A. Carson Sermon Library* (Bellingham, WA: Faithlife, 2016), Lk 1:57–80.

The Passion to Go and Tell Everyone (76-79)

76 And you, my child, will be called a prophet of the Most High; for you will go on before the Lord to prepare the way for Him, 77 to give his people the knowledge of salvation through the forgiveness of their sins, 78 because of the tender mercy of our God, by which the rising sun will come to us from heaven 79 to shine on those living in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the path of peace.” 80 And the child grew and became strong in spirit; and he lived in the wilderness until he appeared publicly to Israel.

Through the Spirit Zachariah was told that his baby boy was called by God (Malachi 3:1; Isaiah 40:3)³⁹ as an agent or forerunner⁴⁰ to testify to “God’s saving purpose and plan.”⁴¹ Those living in darkness and were about to see a great Light⁴² and thus were to prepare their hearts⁴³ for “repentance, contrition, and new paths of righteousness.”⁴⁴ The Dawn was about to rise⁴⁵ whose kingship would reign⁴⁶ and reveal God’s mercy to send His Son⁴⁷ to conquer the cosmic forces of evil that had enslaved and entangled His people in their sins. Using Scriptural images of “visitation, Exodus, Jubilee, New Covenant and illumination,⁴⁸ Zachariah was overwhelmed with joy that his son John was called and set apart to preach “a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins!”⁴⁹ The shoot or offspring of David, the raising Star Jesus’⁵⁰ life, atonement and resurrection would pave the way for Israel and the world (Romans 6:10) to receive the gifts of peace⁵¹ and eternal life with God the Father in heaven!⁵² Even though the world was

³⁹ Craig A. Evans, *Luke*, Understanding the Bible Commentary Series (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1990), 34.

⁴⁰ Leon Morris, *Luke: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 3, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 97.

⁴¹ Craig A. Evans, *Luke*, Understanding the Bible Commentary Series (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1990), 34.

⁴² D. A. Carson, “[A Naming Ceremony, a Prophecy, and Jesus.](#)” in *D. A. Carson Sermon Library* (Bellingham, WA: Faithlife, 2016), Lk 1:57–80.

⁴³ D. A. Carson, “[A Naming Ceremony, a Prophecy, and Jesus.](#)” in *D. A. Carson Sermon Library* (Bellingham, WA: Faithlife, 2016), Lk 1:57–80.

⁴⁴ D. A. Carson, “[A Naming Ceremony, a Prophecy, and Jesus.](#)” in *D. A. Carson Sermon Library* (Bellingham, WA: Faithlife, 2016), Lk 1:57–80.

⁴⁵ Joel B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1997), 119.

⁴⁶ Darrell L. Bock, *Luke*, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996), 77.

⁴⁷ Joel B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1997), 119.

⁴⁸ Joel B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1997), 119–120.

⁴⁹ D. A. Carson, “[A Naming Ceremony, a Prophecy, and Jesus.](#)” in *D. A. Carson Sermon Library* (Bellingham, WA: Faithlife, 2016), Lk 1:57–80.

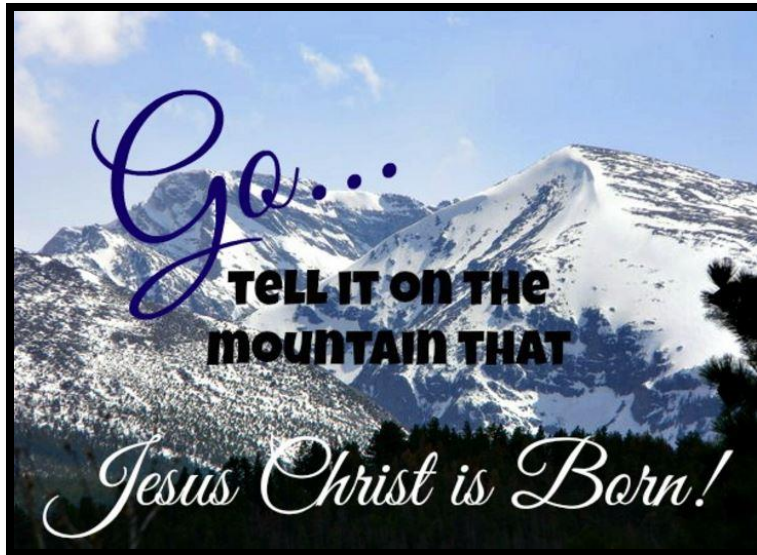
⁵⁰ Robert H. Stein, *Luke*, vol. 24, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1992), 101.

⁵¹ Walter L. Liefeld, “[Luke.](#)” in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Matthew, Mark, Luke*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelien, vol. 8 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1984), 841.

⁵² D. A. Carson, “[A Naming Ceremony, a Prophecy, and Jesus.](#)” in *D. A. Carson Sermon Library* (Bellingham, WA: Faithlife, 2016), Lk 1:57–80.

covered in darkness and death and John's preaching ground was to be in a desert he was overwhelmed with joy to say a Savior had been born!

How will you respond to the birth of your Savior this year? Will you give into the commercial Christmas and eat mountains of food, show your love for your friends and family by merely offering them gifts that meet no real needs and do not satisfy their true heart's



desire?⁵³ Christmas is almost here and we as Christ's ambassadors will be held accountable for what if anything we say about our Lord, Savior and King. The horn of salvation arrived more than 2,000 years ago to provide the cure for the deadliest disease humanity has ever seen⁵⁴ and defeat an enemy that is best described as a ferocious lion.⁵⁵ Praise be that Christ took on a human nature to atone for our sins and destroy this lion who held the power of death (Hebrews 2:14-15).⁵⁶ Will

you be brave and bold enough to tell others about the awesome gift of salvation that Christ gave to you? Will you this Christmas show God how much you love Him and others by running to the highest mountain and shouting "Jesus is not just a baby lying in a manger He is your only way to be reconciled unto a holy God?"

⁵³ John Piper, [Sermons from John Piper \(1980-1989\)](#) (Minneapolis, MN: Desiring God, 2007).

⁵⁴ John Piper, [Sermons from John Piper \(1980-1989\)](#) (Minneapolis, MN: Desiring God, 2007).

⁵⁵ John Piper, [Sermons from John Piper \(1980-1989\)](#) (Minneapolis, MN: Desiring God, 2007).

⁵⁶ John Piper, [Sermons from John Piper \(1980-1989\)](#) (Minneapolis, MN: Desiring God, 2007).