

Luke 1-2

the fulfillment of God's saving promises

Christmas 2023

FULFILLMENT: LIFE OUT OF BARRENNESS

... Zechariah and Elizabeth / Abraham and Sarah
December 3, 2023

THE FULFILLMENT OF GOD'S SAVING PROMISES Luke 1:5-25

Luke 1-2: presents Jesus as the fulfillment of God's saving promises to Israel and to "all peoples." God's redemptive work was revealed in humble and weak circumstances. (A childless and aged couple; a young virgin; a baby in a manger; lowly shepherds; a man who had spent his life waiting on God's fulfillment; and an elderly widow.) Israel's expectations of deliverance into God's Kingdom were being accomplished in a way that turned their worldly thinking **upside down**.

OT and NT continuity: Luke's gospel account recorded specific OT prophecies and allusions in order to prove that Jesus was the fulfillment of God's promises to Abraham/Israel. (OT/NT - 400 years)

Today: God's work to fulfill the promises of the ancient prophets began as John the Baptist was conceived as the one who would prepare Israel for the Messiah. (Like Elijah.) The OT fulfillment is unmistakable.

Coram Deo: HFC must continue to hold fast to all our redemptive hope in God's faithfulness realized in Jesus Christ alone. We can live expectantly, even when our lives appear very barren. God is always working to use our weaknesses to reveal His grace.

HOW WERE GOD'S OT PROMISES FULFILLED IN THIS STORY?

I. THROUGH A FAITHFUL LIMITATION.

Luke 1:5-7 *In the days of Herod, king of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah, of the division of Abijah. And he had a wife from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. 6 And they were both righteous before God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and statutes of the Lord. 7 But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and both were advanced in years.*

Coram Deo: Pursuing "Christ's righteousness" carries our weaknesses into the working of God's grace. Obedience reveals our faith. If we do not obey God, we are not believing God. (Be-living in Christ.)

II. THROUGH A MIRACULOUS REVELATION.

8 *Now while he was serving as priest before God when his division was on duty, 9 according to the custom of the priesthood, he was chosen by lot to enter the temple of the Lord and burn incense. 10 And the whole multitude of the people were praying outside at the hour of incense. 11 And there appeared to him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense. 12 And Zechariah was troubled when he saw him, and fear fell upon him.*

Coram Deo: Our devotion to serving God carries us along into His providential timing of events. Prayer is essential to desiring God's will and experiencing God's will. What are you praying for?

III. THROUGH A PROPHETIC EXPLANATION.

13 *But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John. 14 And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth, 15 for he will be great before the Lord. And he must not drink wine or strong drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb. 16 And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God, 17 and he will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready for the Lord a people prepared."*

Coram Deo: As John the Baptist was to prepare Israel for Christ's first appearing, we must remain in continuous preparation for Christ's return.

IV. THROUGH A SILENCED SPECULATION.

18 *And Zechariah said to the angel, "How shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife is advanced in years." 19 And the angel answered him, "I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I was sent to speak to you and to bring you this good news. 20 And behold, you will be silent and unable to speak until the day that these things take place, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their time." 21 And the people were waiting for Zechariah, and they were wondering at his delay in the temple. 22 And when he came out, he was unable to speak to them, and they realized that he had seen a vision in the temple. And he kept making signs to them and remained mute. 23 And when his time of service was ended, he went to his home.*

Coram Deo: Silence and faith often work together as a display of patient endurance. God works faith in us before He works it out of us. (Phil 2:12-13) Meditate upon what God has done for you so that you will know what to say and do when the time comes for your obedience.

V. THROUGH A PERSONAL LIBERATION.

24 *After these days his wife Elizabeth conceived, and for five months she kept herself hidden, saying, 25 "Thus the Lord has done for me in the days when he looked on me, to take away my reproach among people."*

Coram Deo: What God gifts to us in private, we must treasure in our hearts with great thanksgiving and expectancy.

Coram Deo Summary:

1. Serve the Lord **faithfully**; even when your life appears **weak** to others who judge you by worldly standards. (2 Cor 12:9)
2. Pray with the **expectation** of God's Presence and Provision.
3. Be prepared to work out what God has worked into your heart by faith. Live as if **God's salvation** is being **revealed** in your life.
4. For the righteous, **weakness is never wasted!** (1 Peter 1:5-7) Carry your suffering as Zechariah and Elizabeth did in duty and service.
5. **Be prepared** for Christ's Second Coming. Live as people who live righteously through the **power** and **promises of God** in Christ!