

# A People Prepared for the Lord

Luke 1:5-17

Isaiah 40:1-11

Matthew 3:1-12



18 December 2022

## Pursuing God-Given Goals

- ★ The GLORIOUS GOSPEL! - Is it boring to you or does it only get more and more awesome and glorious with every one of our sermons.

## God's Eternal Plan

- God's eternal purpose.
- Eternity and Time
- Isaiah's prophecy 700 years earlier: "Comfort, comfort MY people! Their warfare is ended, their iniquity PARDONED . . ." (Isaiah 40:1-5)

## Living in Dark Ages

- Malachi 4:6 (curse) to Matthew 1:1 (genealogy of Jesus Christ)
- God silenced Himself for 400 years to a rebellious/disobedient people.
- God still at work unfolding His plan as revealed to Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 2 - preparing the world for the sending of His promised Messiah to save His people.
- Summary of God moving history in those 400 years.
- Another demonstration that God was not in a hurry. He would unfold His plan His way in His timing! (Isaiah 30:18; 25:9; 40:31)

## God Keeping His Covenant (Genesis 12:1-5; 17:19)

- His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob . . . . . Jesus Christ!

## God Chose Zacharias & Elizabeth (Luke 1:5-10)

- Ordinary people! Very old and barren.
- Zacharias - a priest - just like born-again Christians. (1 Peter 2:5, 9)
  - Made prayers for the people.
  - Division of Abijah (see 1 Chronicles 24:10, 19)

- Zacharias and Elizabeth LOVE God.
  - ★ Righteous in the sight of God.
    - Walking (living daily) in ALL the commandments and ordinances of the Lord.
    - Do only what God expects of each of His people. (Deut 10:12-13; 1 John 1:7)
    - They lived daily what they believed! (James 1:22)
    - Their righteousness could never save them. (Titus 3:5)
    - BUT the grace of God produces righteous living. (Titus 2:14)
    - They LOVED God!. (John 14:15, 21, 23; 15:10, 14; 1 John 5:2-3)
  - ★ Righteous, yet suffered reproach - Elizabeth was barren!
    - Continued to serve. (“YET I will praise.”)
- “his lot fell to burn incense” - NOTHING HAPPENS BY ACCIDENT. (Proverbs 16:33)

### **Answer to Prayer** (Luke 11-20)

- “your prayer has been heard” - 1 John 5:14-15
- BECAUSE we keep His commandments!! (1 John 3:22)
- Zacharias’ prayer was for God’s people! And part of God’s answer to his prayer was his wife would conceive!!!!
- The child will be called “John” - “Yahweh has graced”.
- The child is chosen before birth to fulfill God’s plan - fulfillment of Isaiah’s prophecy.
- God’s purpose for John: “HE WILL turn many of the children of Israel to the LORD their God.”
  - ★ Prepare a people for their God. This presupposes the people were not ready! (Look at Amos 4:12)
- Righteous and blameless, yet not perfect!
  - “Lord, we believe help our unbelief! . . . Lord, increase our faith.” (Mark 9:24; Luke 17:5)
- Consequences of sin.
- God’s plan/purpose fulfilled despite our unbelief. (Luke 1:20; Psalm 33:11; Proverbs 19:21; Isaiah 14:24-27; 46:10; Ephesians 1:11)

### **Zacharias’ Prophecy** (Luke 1: 57-79)

- ★ (v. 68) “visited” - “to oversee”
- ★ (v. 68) “redeem” - to buy, to purchase, “to ransom” (Matt 20:28)
- ★ (v. 69) “horn of salvation” - “power” - destructive power for destroying our enemies.
- ★ (vv. 71, 74) “saved from our enemies”
  - Sin, Satan, World, Self

- ★ (v. 72) He came to perform the mercy promised!
- ★ (v. 73) Back to Abraham - back to the EVERLASTING COVENANT!!
  - HIS COVENANT: Salvation never begins with us! It begins and ends with God! (Philippians 1:6)
  - Jesus Christ is God's covenant with His people!!! (Isaiah 42:6; 2 Corinthians 1:20-22)
- ★ (v. 74) God's purpose for saving His people from their enemies:
  - ☆ That His people would SERVE Him without fear!!
- ★ (v. 76) Prophet of the HIGHEST to prepare the way.
- ★ (vv. 77-79) To give knowledge of salvation, remission of sins, through the mercies of God, to give light to those in darkness and the shadow of death, to **guide our feet into the way of peace.**

### John's Ministry and Message (Matthew 3:1-17)

- ★ The Greatest Man
  - His name was JOHN.
  - Christ's evaluation: No one greater! - Matthew 11:11
  - Miraculous birth:
    - Born to elderly couple, Zacharias and Elizabeth (Luke 1:5-7)
    - Filled with the Holy Spirit *prior to birth*. (Luke 1:15)
  - Though the GREATEST yet humble. (Matt. 3:11; John 1:27; 3:30)
  - Ministered in the wilderness – not Jerusalem.
  - Christ called him, "**the burning and shining lamp.**" (John 5:35 with Matthew 5:14-16; Ephesians 5:8; Philippians 2:15-16)
  - A man who did not know the word "**compromise.**"
  - His ministry lasted **only six months**. Christ increase John decreased!!
  - Beheaded by Herod.
- ★ His Command/Message
  - The herald's message is NOT an invitation – but a command.
  - His was a message of the KING, and not tradition, popular misconceptions or ideas, teachings of men or groups of men.
  - "**REPENT!**" – this was spoken to JEWS – religious people!
    - **THE KING DEMANDS REPENTANCE!** (Acts 17:30-31)
  - What is biblical repentance? Repentance is a continuous turning away (putting away; forsaking; mortifying; putting to death) **from** all sin in genuine godly sorrow **to** living one's life on every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. It is a confession and putting away of sin. (2 Corinthians 7:9-11; 1 John 18; Luke 4:4; Proverbs 28:13; Luke 13:1-5)
  - The KINGDOM of heaven is near: Matthew uses "the kingdom of Heaven" 32 times in his gospel.

- Four requirements of a kingdom:
  - ① A supreme/sovereign Ruler/Lord. (Daniel 5:18-19; 7:13-14; Revelation 17:14; 19:16; Matt 28:18; John 17:2; Isaiah 9:7; Acts 10:36; Ephesians 1:20-22; Philippians 2:9-11; Romans 10:9-10)
  - ② Territory. (1 Peter 2:9; Hebrews 11:13-16; John 18:36; Luke 17:20-21; Colossians 1:13; 1 Cor 15:23)
  - ③ Law (Hebrews 8:10; 10:16; 1 John 2:3-4; 5:3; John 14:15, 21, 23-24; 15:10, 14)
  - ④ Subjects (Philippians 3:20; Ephesians 2:19; Hebrews 12:22-24)
- \* Today, Christ's kingdom is spiritual (Romans 14:17; Luke 17:20-21) but there is a day coming that He will come to the earth with His saints to establish an earthly kingdom.
- Either one is **inside** the Kingdom or **outside** the Kingdom. (Matt 8:11-12; 25:46)
- The Warning of the AX - Matthew 3:10-12
  - ★ Are you FRUITFUL or FRUITLESS? (Psalm 1:3; 92:13-14; John 15:1-10; Matt 7:16-20)
  - ★ Are you WHEAT or CHAFF?
- John announced the Messiah, "**Behold the Lamb of God**" - John 1:29

## **Are We Prepared to Meet God?** (Amos 4:12)

- Are YOU one of God's special people? (Short Gospel presentation)
- Do YOU love God as Zacharias and Elizabeth?
- Are YOU concerned that we are living in "dark ages" or are YOU comfortable in the darkness and do not want to come to the light?
  - ★ MANY, MANY missed Christ's first advent; MANY, MANY will miss His second advent. MANY sincere religious people!!
- The Gospel is a COMMAND, not an invitation, to REPENT and BELIEVE! (Mark 1:14-15; 1 John 3:23; Matthew 11:28-30; Acts 16:31; 17:30)
  - ★ God commands men everywhere to continually repent of their sins! (Acts 17:30) Do YOU confess and repent of our sins? (1 John 1:9; Proverbs 28:13; Acts 26:20)
- Barren, yet praying. Persistent prayer is an essential element in God's eternal plan. (1 Thess 5:17-18; Col 4:2; Luke 18:1)
- The LORD reigns! Let the people tremble. God will accomplish His plan despite our unbelief! (Psalm 99:1)
- Are YOU ready to meet God? (Amos 4:12; Matthew 24:36; 25:13)