



“Taking the Long View”

December 5

Discussion Questions

1. Read Luke 1:5-25. What happens to Zechariah? What does the angel say his son is going to be and do? Based on this, why is John the Baptist important?
2. Imagine being Zechariah or Elizabeth. What would it feel like to be pregnant at an old age? What do you think that Zechariah thought about in those nine months of silence?
3. What do you think “blessed” means in our common usage? What does it mean in verse 67 and why is it important that this is how Zechariah begins?
4. The sermon referred to multiple events in Israel’s history that are alluded to in Zechariah’s song. What are those events and how do they relate to what Zechariah is experiencing? What is the point in linking John the Baptist and Jesus to Israel’s history?
5. How does your story change if you “take the long view” and understand your story as a small part of the story of God’s faithfulness and love?

Luke 1: 57-64, 67-79

The birth of John the Baptist

⁵⁷ When it was time for Elizabeth to have her baby, she gave birth to a son. ⁵⁸ Her neighbours and relatives heard that the Lord had shown her great mercy, and they shared her joy.

⁵⁹ On the eighth day they came to circumcise the child, and they were going to name him after his father Zechariah, ⁶⁰ but his mother spoke up and said, 'No! He is to be called John.'

⁶¹ They said to her, 'There is no one among your relatives who has that name.'

⁶² Then they made signs to his father, to find out what he would like to name the child. ⁶³ He asked for a writing tablet, and to everyone's astonishment he wrote, 'His name is John.' ⁶⁴ Immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue set free, and he began to speak, praising God.

Zechariah's song

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^[a] 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.

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.'