

THE CHILDLESS CHURCH #2 THE UNEXEPECTANT CHURCH

It is an amazing thing when God does something that you are not expecting.

ILL. Carolyn Dorsey was at District Council this week. While visiting with her I asked if she had ever had a vision. She responded by saying that she had seen two. She had one at a very unusual time; while she was preaching! She was doing what she was supposed to do and it turned into a divine encounter.

The same thing happened to a man named Zachariah. We are like Zachariah! Put yourself in his place for the remainder of the message.

Luke 1 ⁵ In the time of Herod king of Judea there was a priest named Zechariah, who belonged to the priestly division of Abijah; his wife Elizabeth was also a descendant of Aaron. ⁶ Both of them were upright in the sight of God, observing all the Lord's commandments and regulations blamelessly. ⁷ But they had no children, because Elizabeth was barren; and they were both well along in years. NIV

I. UNEXPECTED BARRENESS.

If you were to choose a couple that were candidates for children this would be the couple.

A. They had a great pedigree.

They both were raised in the lineage of the priesthood. They were a devote religious couple.

B. They were pure by God's standards.

⁶ Both of them were upright in the sight of God, observing all the Lord's commandments and regulations blamelessly.

C. They were progressively aging.

Of course, the older we are the less likely it is to conceive.

D. They could not produce children.

⁷ But they had no children.....

No children – no heritage.

No children- no lineage.

No children- nothing is passed on to the next generation.

Zechariah means “God has remembered”

Elizabeth means “God of the oath”

Why can't these two people have a child?

It was a time of great oppression. Israel was **slaves** to the Roman Empire. **Herod** was a vicious and cruel king. It is difficult to produce when you are being oppressed.

II. AN UNEXPECTED VISITATION

⁸ Once when Zechariah's division was on duty and he was serving as priest before God, ⁹ he was chosen by lot, according to the custom of the priesthood, to go into the temple of the Lord and burn incense. ¹⁰ And when the time for the burning of incense came, all the assembled worshipers were praying outside. NIV

An angel appears while he is serving in the temple.

This is big.

- A. The likely hood that Zacharias would never serve in the temple was highly likely.

The temple priesthood was organized into 24 divisions
Because of the large number of priests, most would never be
chosen for such a duty, and no one was permitted to serve
in this capacity twice. Ex. 30:7, 8; 2 Chr. 29:11

B. The providence of God

⁹ he was chosen by lot, according to the custom of the
priesthood

It was not by chance that Zechariah was chosen on this day.
It was providential. He was doing his duty. He was burning
incense. That represents praise and worship.

C. The people are praying.

¹⁰ And when the time for the burning of incense came, all the
assembled worshipers were praying outside.

Commentators believe it was a Sabbath because worshipers
were outside the temple. Oh God, on this Sabbath (first day
of the week) day of worship do something unusual.

III. AN UNEXPECTED WORD FROM THE LORD

¹³ But the angel said to him: "Do not be afraid, Zechariah;
your prayer has been heard.

A. Your prayer has been heard

B. You will experience the birth of a son.

V 13 ...Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you are
to give him the name John.

A move of God is to be birthed.

John means Grace. John was to be the forerunner of Christ.

He is the one who announces and points out “the Lamb of God”. No was knows Jesus without John (grace) revealing who Jesus is.

We are the generation of the coming Messiah.

C. He is told the nature of his son, John.

What is the church to be producing before Jesus comes?

1. We are to bring joy and delight to our Father.
¹⁴ He will be a joy and delight to you,

2. Others rejoice because of us.
V 14....and many will rejoice because of his birth,

3. We are great in God's sight
¹⁵ for he will be great in the sight of the Lord.

4. We are to be filled with the Spirit

V15... and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit even from birth.

5. We are to be a separated people.
V15... He is never to take wine or other fermented drink,

6. We are to bring back the backsliders of the church.

¹⁶ Many of the people of Israel will he bring back to the Lord their God.

7. We are to get people ready for the appearing of the Lord.

¹⁷ And he will go on before the Lord, in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous—to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.” NIV

Before Jesus comes there must be a generation of proclaimers. What are they proclaiming? “Jesus is coming!”

IV. AN UNEXPECTED SIGN

A. The sign is “no speech”.

¹⁹ The angel answered, “I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to tell you this good news. ²⁰ And now you will be silent and not able to speak until the day this happens, because you did not believe my words, which will come true at their proper time.” NIV

B. The sign is “the tongue is loosed after he writes the name God gave him, John”

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 was loosed, and he began to speak, praising God. ⁶⁵ The neighbors were all filled with awe, and throughout the hill country of Judea people were talking about all these things. ⁶⁶ Everyone who heard this wondered about it, asking, “What then is this child going to be?” For the Lord’s hand was with him. NIV

The church will be silenced with doubt until it agrees with the promise of God. When John is born (the move of God before the coming of Christ) and people accept who He is, then Zechariah's tongue is loosed.