



From doubting to confessing.



STUDY 3

Zechariah was unable to speak throughout Elizabeth's pregnancy. It wasn't until it came to naming the child, that finally Zechariah's tongue was loosened, and he was able to speak again. The moment Zechariah confirmed what Elizabeth said the child's name was to be, Zechariah's mouth was opened, and what was his first response? He began to praise God.

Read Luke 1:67-75

Zechariah is confessing three truths about God and His people:

- God remembered His covenant to save His people
- God swore an oath to bless them
- God showed grace to rescue them.

From our previous study, do you remember what the names of this little family unit mean?

- Zechariah means: 'The Lord remembers'
- Elizabeth means: 'the oath of God'
- John means: 'the favour or grace of God'

Just a few verses later, we read of an ordinary, young girl Mary and her personal encounter and her response to God's promise. – **Read Luke 1:34-38 (NIV)**

From confessing God's truths to prophesying.

In the following verses we read how Zechariah prophesied over his son. **Read v76-80.**

'...and you, my child..' how powerful these first few words. What was not, what was impossible, Zechariah was now holding and witnessing firsthand how good and mighty and faithful God was. Zechariah then spoke and prophesied over his son, speaking faith and God's promises over his child's life.

As we all know, John went on to become a great prophet, known as John the Baptist, the one Isaiah prophesied concerning **(Isaiah 40:3)** – who was to come to prepare the way for Jesus Christ.

The story of this little family unit can give hope for all our families. Zechariah and Elizabeth lived in immensely difficult times. The people of God were under oppression, yet this family remained close to God. God's Word and Spirit sustained them. When you and your family or loved ones are going through difficult times and face battles, uncertainties, threats, and impossibilities, do what Zechariah did: confess the promises of God over yourself, over your family, over your circumstances.

Be encouraged today with these two truths:

- As God saw Zechariah and Elizabeth's struggle and heartbreak, He sees yours.
- As God answered Zechariah's prayers, He will answer yours.

God delights in doing the impossible. What God did for them, He can do for you too.



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Questions

- Zechariah's prophecy (**Luke 1:68-79**) fulfilled several Old Testament prophetic promises (**Genesis 22:16-18, Isaiah 9:2, Jeremiah 23:5, Micah 7:20, Malachi 3:1, Malachi 4:2**). How do you think the people who heard it might have responded?
- Zechariah and Elizabeth discovered that God's timing was perfect and yet different to theirs. What have you learned about God's timing and what does submission to God's timing look like in your life?
- What has been your main takeaway from this month's studies? What lessons have you learned that you can apply to your life today?

A final advice – Jesus and us

What final advice would Zechariah and Elizabeth give us today? Most likely what they would tell us is that God has His own timeframe, and that we should and can trust Him. After many years of seemingly unanswered prayers, they finally received their miracle. Their son John arrived just at the right time.

When we read about their story, maybe some of us can relate and see ourselves in it, with our own doubts and dreams, our own faith, and our own flaws. If there is one thing that Zechariah and Elizabeth would tell us today, it could be this:

- Learn to trust God
- Praise God
- Prophecy over your promises

The story of Zechariah teaches us that God uses the most unlikely of people, and that He has good news for each one of us. And this good news extends to our whole family and beyond what we could ever ask or imagine.

Pray

Take a moment to praise Him. Pray together to learn to trust Jesus and His plans for our lives, and the part we play within the larger family narrative.