

The Mouth of a Skeptic Opened

Luke 1:57-66

Though this text is about the birth of John, there seems to be an emphasis on the rebirth of Zacharias. When Gabriel met Zacharias in the Temple and told the elderly man that his wife Elizabeth would bear him a son, Zacharias did not believe God. *“Because Zacharias did not believe”* he became a mute (1:20). *“At once his mouth was opened and his tongue loosed, and he began to speak in praise of God”* (v. 64). When did this “at once” take place? After *“He asked for a tablet and wrote ‘His name is John.’”* (v. 63).

I. There are a few negative things that occur during periods of unbelief.

The Scripture says “The righteous will live by faith” or “by faith the righteous live.” What if there’s no faith? Zacharias had no faith in God’s promise of a son. What happened to him will happen to us.

(A). Without faith it is impossible to enjoy God.

Zacharias was mute *and* deaf. The greatest pleasure in our life is listening. A far greater joy than speaking. Some might say, “No, I enjoy speaking!” I would propose you enjoy the applause and praise that arises from your speaking. When you don’t hear such, there’s a tendency to be quiet. The shofar horn, the Temple music, the priest’s prayers, and the public readings fell on deaf ears.

(B). Without faith it is impossible to please God.

God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in Him. Without faith you can’t hear His promises and be ravished by Him. The New Covenant is built on God’s unconditional promises! Without faith in the goodness and faithfulness of God in Christ, it is IMPOSSIBLE to please God. This is precisely the teaching of the writer of Hebrews in Chapter 11 and “The Hall of Faith.”

(C). Without faith, it is impossible to serve God.

At circumcision, ten Jews were required to be present and the father gave the verbal blessing: “Blessed are you, O Lord our God, the King of the world, who has sanctified us by your precepts, and has commanded us to enter him into the covenant of Abraham.” This blessing was not given if the father was not present, or in Zacharias’ case, was unable to speak the blessing over John.

II. God will never leave His child in an unbelieving state

“If we are faithless, He remains faithful” (II Timothy 2:13). How does He graciously restore our faith?

(A). Circumstances will change around us.

Zacharias saw the boy. Must you see? “Blessed are they who do not see, yet believe” (Jn. 20:29).

(B). Someone will stand in love beside us.

Elizabeth stood by her husband when he was deaf and mute. I would suppose that change really occurs when somebody is impacted by the unconditional love of a human in periods of unbelief.

(C). God will directly intervene within us.

John Donne wrote Holy Sonnet 14 in the midst of personal struggle. Listen to this powerful line: *“Except you enthrall me, I never shall be free, nor ever chaste, except you ravish me.”*

III. When God brings you to a state of belief, your entire environment changes.

Four things happened when Zacharias’ wrote on the tablet “His name is John” and finally believed!

(A). Zacharias began to praise God (v. 64).

You will always talk about that which you treasure; Zacharias’ greatest gift was God himself!

(B). The people began to ‘fear’ God (v. 65).

This means God became more important than man - because of Zacharias, and that’s wisdom!

(C). The world began to experience God (v. 66)

“For the hand of the Lord was upon him.” John became the man who shook the world for Christ.