

Fear Not! There's HOPE !

Luke 1:5-25

East Berlin Community Church

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Introduction

- The uncertain times in which we live!
- Fears projected in the future breeds hopelessness.
- Uncertain times of Zechariah and Elizabeth
 - Luke 1:5-7--*"There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the division of Abijah. His wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and they were both well advanced in years."*
 - 1) Herod the Great was in power in Judea.
 - 2) Zechariah and Elisabeth both had names reflecting the faithfulness of God.
 - Leviticus 21:14-- *"A widow or a divorced woman or a defiled woman or a harlot—these he shall not marry; but he shall take a virgin of his own people as wife."*
 - 2) Together they followed the Lord.
 - 3) One problem-- no children
 - Luke 1:7-- *"But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and they were both well advanced in years."*
 - a) Elizabeth was barren
 - Deuteronomy 7:14-- *"You shall be blessed above all peoples; there shall not be a male or female barren among you or among your livestock."*
 - b) Biological clocks had stopped!
- Zechariah "Once in a lifetime" experience!
 - Luke 1:8-10--*"So it was, that while he was serving as priest before God in the order of his division, according to the custom of the priesthood, his lot fell to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord. And the whole multitude of the people was praying outside at the hour of incense."*
 - Proverbs 16:33--*"The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the Lord."*
 - Luke 1:11-17-- *"Then an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing on the right side of the altar of incense. And when Zacharias saw him, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him. But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your prayer is heard; and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John. And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth. For he will be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink. He will also be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb. And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God. He will also go before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, "to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children," and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."*

Fear Not ! There's HOPE !

A. God hears and answers our Prayers!-- vv. 13a

- Luke 1:13-- *"But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your prayer is heard; and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John."*
- 1. Zechariah's prayer for peace of Jerusalem, the coming of the Messiah, or for a son, an heir?
- 2. Our Confidence—1 John 5:14-15
 - 1 John 5:14-15-- *"Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him."*

B. God has a Plan! He is in control!-- vv. 13b-22

1. God's plan for John's life.
 - a. He will be great in the sight of the Lord. Matt. 11:11

- Matthew 11:11-- *"Among those born of women there has not arise anyone greater than John the Baptist."*
 - b. He will not drink wine or fermented beverages.
 - c. He will be "filled with the Spirit" from the womb.
 - d. He will go before the Lord in the "spirit and power of Elijah"
 - Malachi 3:1-- *"Behold, I send My messenger, and he will prepare the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek will suddenly come to His temple, even the Messenger of the covenant, in whom you delight. Behold, He is coming, 'says the LORD of hosts'".*
2. God has a plan for you and I. Therefore, we can face our future with confidence.
 - Romans 8:28-- *"We know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose!"*
 3. God has a plan for this world and our nation.
 4. But knowing that God has a plan, and then trusting God are two different things. Zechariah's lack of confidence and consequences.
 - Luke 1:18-- *"And Zacharias said to the angel, 'How shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife is well advanced in years.'"*
 - Luke 1:19-20-- *"I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God, and was sent to speak to you and bring you these glad tidings. But behold, you will be mute and not able to speak until the day these things take place, because you did not believe my words which will be fulfilled in their own time."*

C. God keeps His Promises!-- vv. 23-25

- Luke 1:23-25-- *"So it was, as soon as the days of his service were completed, that he departed to his own house. Now after those days his wife Elizabeth conceived; and she hid herself five months, saying, "Thus the Lord has dealt with me, in the days when He looked on me, to take away my reproach among people."*
1. Politicians "pie crust" promises produce anger and hopelessness!
 2. Our sovereign God is faithful to His promises.
 - a. Promises already fulfilled by God
 - 1) To Zechariah and Elisabeth
 - 2) To us
 - Isaiah 9:2, 6-- *"people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawn.... For unto us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."*
 - Isaiah 53:5-6-- *"pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities' the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed... for the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all."*
 - b. Promises yet to be fulfilled! We can trust Him!