

"Along Came John!"

Luke 1:5-13

Luke 1:5-13 *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. 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. 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."*

The name John is a Hebrew name and it means 'favored by Jehovah'.

Luke 1:15-17 *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."*

Zacharias responds to his encounter with the mighty angel Gabriel two ways.

1. Fear.

Luke 1:12 *..., and fear fell upon him.*

2. Unbelief.

Luke 1:18 *..., "How shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife is well advanced in years."*

Luke 1:13 *..., "Do not be afraid,"*

Luke 1:18-20 *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." And the angel answered and said to him, "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."*

Heb 11:6 *But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.*

Luke 1:13 *..., "Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your prayer is heard;"*

In order to receive an answer from God, there are three attitudes that I need.

I. I must let God answer in His own time.

Luke 1:6 *And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.*

Luke 1:7 *But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and they were both well advanced in years.*

When it comes to getting an answer from God, I should realize that:

- A. Sometimes the Lord will say no.
- B. Sometimes the Lord will say grow.
- C. Sometimes the Lord will say whoa.
- D. Sometimes the Lord will say go.

I should pray until:

- 1. I get an answer.
- 2. I get assurance.

II. I must let God answer in His own way.

III. I must let God answer for His own purpose.

There is a threefold purpose when it comes to prayer.

- A. The first purpose of prayer is God's glory.
 - 1. I see His glory in the creation.

Ps 19:1 *The heavens declare the glory of God; And the firmament shows His handiwork.*

- 2. I see His glory in the incarnation.
- 3. I see His glory in my salvation.
- 4. I will see His glory in my transformation.

Rom 8:30 *Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.*

Matt 6:9-10 *Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven.*

Matt 6:13 *For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.*

B. The second purpose of prayer is spiritual growth.

II Peter 3:18 *but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.*

Matt 6:6 *But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.*

Isa 6:5 *So I said: "Woe is me, for I am undone! Because I am a man of unclean lips, And I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; For my eyes have seen the King, The LORD of hosts."*

Isa 64:6 *But we are all like an unclean thing, And all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags;*

C. The third purpose of prayer is human need

Matt 6:11 *Give us this day our daily bread.*

Matt 6:12 *And forgive us our debts,*

Rom 3:23 *... all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,*

Matt 6:12 *And forgive us our debts, As we forgive our debtors.*

Matt 6:13 *And do not lead us into temptation,*

Matt 6:13 *..., But deliver us from evil*

The Lord of Heaven is a prayer hearing and a prayer answering God.