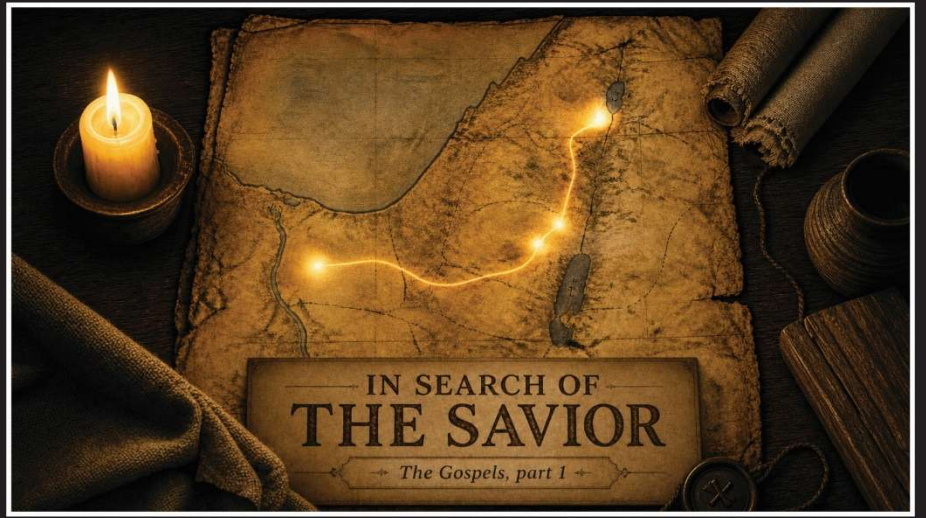


Midweek Study

Dr. Josh Franklin • Senior Pastor



Breaking Tradition to Fulfill God's Plan

Luke 1:57-80

*"The greatest forces in the world are not the earthquakes and the thunderbolts.
The greatest forces in the world are babies." - Dr. E.T. Sullivan¹*

In **Luke 1:57-80**, **three DEMONSTRATIONS** show God's willingness to break human tradition to fulfill His eternal, sovereign plan.

1) The **DELIGHT** of a Community (**Luke 1:57-58**)

*"Now Elizabeth's full time came for her to be delivered, and she brought forth a son. When her neighbors and relatives heard how the Lord had shown great mercy to her, **they rejoiced with her.**"*

- "For Elizabeth, not having a child meant not only disappointment but almost disgrace. Now, at the end of her life, she has a child, and her neighbors rejoice with her, seeing it as the removal of disgrace and, certainly, of so much pain."²

2) The **DIRECTION** of Zechariah (**Luke 1:59-66**)

*"So it was, on the eighth day, that they came to circumcise the child; and they would have called him by the name of his father, Zechariah. His mother answered and said, 'No; he shall be called John.' But they said to her, 'There is no one among your relatives who is called by this name.' So they made signs to his father—what he would have him called. And he asked for a writing tablet, and wrote, saying, **'His name is John.'** So they all marveled. Immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue loosed, and he spoke, praising God."*

- God had commanded through Moses that every newborn male was to be circumcised on the eighth day of life (**Leviticus 12:3**). Over time, this also became the occasion on which a baby's name was formally announced to the community.

What Kind of Child Will He Be? (**v.66**)

1. **Strong in Spirit** - *"And the child grew and became strong in spirit." - Luke 1:80*
2. **Separated to God** - *"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." - Luke 1:15*

¹ As quoted in Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 174–175.

² Paraphrased from D. A. Carson, "A Naming Ceremony, a Prophecy, and Jesus," in *D. A. Carson Sermon Library* (Bellingham, WA: Faithlife, 2016), Lk 1:57–80.

3. **Courageous** - *"Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?" - Matthew 3:7*
4. **Humble** - *"He must increase, but I must decrease." - John 3:30*
5. **A Man of Integrity** - He told others to *"Bring forth fruits worthy of repentance." - Matthew 3:8*
6. **Passionate Preacher** - *"And he went into all the region around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins." - Luke 3:3*
7. **He Will Point Others to Jesus** - *"Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" John 1:29*

3) **The DECLARATION of Zechariah (Luke 1:67-80)**

- Harry Ironside writes, "But now, in a special way He opened the lips of Zechariah, the father of this remarkable child, and enabled him to speak prophetically. ... To prophesy is not only to be able to foretell coming events, but to give the mind of God in relation to the present or future. We see both here."³
- Tradition has given it the title *Benedictus*, taken from the opening word of its Latin translation: *Benedictus Dominus Deus Israel* — "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel." Mary's *Magnificat* was personal in thanksgiving, while Zechariah's *Benedictus* is a praise on behalf of the nation.

What Did Zechariah Praise God For?

1. **God Was Keeping His Promises (David - Luke 1:68-71)**. The promised King and Savior would come through the house of David. *"And has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of His servant David." - Luke 1:69* (see also 2 Samuel 7:11-13; Isaiah 9:6-7)
2. **God Was Remembering His Covenant (Abraham - Luke 1:72-75)**. God promised Abraham that through his offspring, all nations would be blessed. *"To remember His holy covenant, The oath which He swore to our father Abraham." - Luke 1:72-73* (see also Genesis 12:1-3; 22:16-18)
3. **God Was Giving His People the Knowledge of Salvation (John - Luke 1:76-77)** Zechariah knew John's calling was to prepare the way for Christ and *"to give knowledge of salvation to His people By the remission of their sins." - Luke 1:77* (See also Luke 1:76; John 1:11-12; 1 John 5:13)
4. **God Was Bringing Light Into the Darkness (Jesus - Luke 1:78-79)** Christ would shine on those living in darkness and guide them into peace. *"To give light to those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death, To guide our feet into the way of peace." - Luke 1:79* (See also: Malachi 4:2; John 8:12; 2 Peter 1:19; Revelation 22:16)

APPLICATIONS FOR TODAY:

- 1) **We need to obey God, even if it upsets family and friends.** Sometimes God is clear about what He wants us to do, and to disobey the command will displease the Lord.
- 2) **We should respond to God's discipline with praise, not bitterness.** When Zechariah's tongue was finally loosed, his very first words were not complaints about nine months of frustrating silence - they were praise to God. When God corrects us, we should worship and realize how gracious He has been.
- 3) **Like John, we are called to point others to Jesus.** John's entire life - his preparation, his preaching, his ministry - was focused on one mission: to give people the knowledge of salvation and point them to the Lamb of God. Everything in our lives, too, should direct people around us to Christ.

³ H. A. Ironside, *Addresses on the Gospel of Luke*. (Neptune, NJ: Loizeaux Brothers, 1947), 50.