

## Weekly Bible Study Schedule

**Tuesday, April 21 7:00 AM in HHR #5**

(breakfast provided)

**Tuesday, April 21, 8:30 PM in Office #225**

(Sen. Wayne Wallingford's office)

## INTRODUCTION

Naming one's baby is exciting. When my wife, Christine, was pregnant with our daughter, Alaina, we asked the question: "What shall we name our daughter?" Some parents know the name immediately. Perhaps a family name, or one the mother has planned for years to name their child, and now is that time. Still others delay naming the baby until after the birth. We did read through a baby name book, considered my mother's name, Agatha, and my wife's mother's name, Constance. Eventually we settled on Alaina. The bottom line is each name has meaning. In the day, the name of a child told a story, and in many cases it's the same today.

We begin with the Son of Zechariah and Elizabeth.

**1:57 Now the time came for Elizabeth to give birth, and she bore a son.** Certainly, the word time refers back to 1:13 where the Angel Gabriel appeared to Zechariah in the Temple and said:

*"...your prayer has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John."*

"Time" also refers back to 1000 years earlier when the prophet Isaiah spoke about a forefunner to the coming redeemer.

Zechariah and Elizabeth had not been able to conceive a child in their 60-70 years of life...until now. I love the "now" in the Bible. It points to a time, implies anticipation, and demonstrates God's faithfulness to answer prayers. God does what He says He will do. What unanswered prayer have you uttered? **There is a difference between a passive waiting with traces of doubt and a convinced patience that God will answer your prayer.** It's not a matter of "if," it's a matter of "when." God has a "now" reserved for you. What's your "now?" Declare "when," not "if," for your pending

"now." God is faithful to bring about what He's promised.

**God's promises will keep your faith alive.** Your faith will set you up for receiving your "now." What God places into your heart will come to pass, and what God said in this book will happen, will happen.

Luke is writing to his friend, Theophilus (cf. 1:3-4), ultimately to all readers, so that we might know for certain what the Bible says is true. When you read the Bible, God will reveal himself to you. The Holy Spirit will make the words jump off the page. When they do, hold on to them. It's the revealed Scripture that gives you perspective.

**1:58 And her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had shown great mercy to her, and they rejoiced with her.** The birth of a baby is met with great joy and rejoicing. In the day, it was especially true when a boy was born. Musicians would be hired, songs sung, and dancing with the starts...well, at least dancing. It was a festive event.

**1:59 And on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child. And they would have called him Zechariah after his father...**the command of circumcision derives from Genesis 15 and 17 where God makes a covenant with Abraham that he would be the father of many nations. God's covenant is to Abraham and to all his offspring. While circumcision has the benefits of good hygiene, it is **a sign and symbol of covenant relationship between God and Abraham and his descendants.** On the eighth day, John was circumcised.

Romans Chapter 2 informs Christ-followers that circumcision is a matter of the heart.

*It's no longer about cutting away of the foreskin of a male child it's about the cutting away of sin in our life.*

**60 but his mother answered, "No; he shall be called John." 61 And they said to her, "None of your relatives is called by this name." 62 And they made signs to his father, inquiring what he wanted him to be called. 63 And he asked for a writing tablet and wrote, "His name is John." And they all wondered.**

Adamant about her child's name, Elizabeth told the group that wanted to name the babe after his father, Zechariah, **"No; he shall be called John,"** as though to not even let them say any name out loud. Why did God care what his name was? God didn't name most names in the Bible. Choice was usually left up to the parents.

They turned away from Elizabeth, making signs to Zechariah for what he wanted to call his son. He asked for a writing tablet (the only time mentioned in the New Testament.) Most likely, a thin piece of wood smeared with wax and a stick as a stylus. Zechariah wrote: **"his name is John."**

The name John means, **God is gracious.** The naming of John is God's revelation of his purpose: to pour out His grace on the world. Zechariah's name means: God remembers, and Elizabeth's name means: God is faithful. A new chapter in history has emerged in the arrival of God, the Father's son, Jesus: meaning Jehovah saves.

**1:64 And immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue loosed, and he spoke, blessing God. 1:65 And fear came on all their neighbors. And all these things were talked about through all the hill country of Judea...**

For nine months he's not been able to hear or speak. Instantly God opens his mouth, looses his tongue, and unstops his ears. Notice the integration of God's power and purpose.

#### **God releases His power to fuel His purpose.**

Silence has a way of slowing us down to draw us closer to God. The Sabbath is God's gift to us. It creates an environment to refocus spiritually, to reengage with God's plan, and to restore our voice.

- **In what way do you need to refocus spiritually?**
- **What do you need to disengage from so you can reengage with God's plan?**
- **What values need to be restored to empower your voice for His purposes?**

The crowd was filled with awe because of the power of God. Going forward we observe numerous events where the people saw the mighty works of God, leaving them in awe.

**1:66 and all who heard them laid them up in their hearts, saying, "What then will this child be?" For the hand of the Lord was with him. 67 And his father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied, saying...**Zechariah's voice began to praise God and prophesy about God.

- Mary and Zechariah's praise are for the coming of the Messiah. Notice they speak in past tense as though the Messiah has already come and already done what is promised.
- Whenever God promises something, it is as if it's already been done. It's as good as done, because nothing is impossible for Him.

In both Mary and Zechariah's praise, an intended blessing of God is given. The word mercy appears four times: v. 50, His mercy, v. 54, He's merciful, v. 72, show us mercy, and v. 78, mercy is given. **What is mercy? It is God's love to undeserving people.** God is a good God. God gives us mercy, not wrath. Any wrath we experience is brought by our actions, not God's. He simply allows us to reap what we sow.

#### **Mercy is God's love to undeserving people.**

The devil wants you to think you don't deserve mercy. You're in a difficult place, a real struggle, asking for God's help when Satan wants you to think you don't deserve help because of what you did. He wants you to believe that God won't answer that prayer. He wants to discourage you from going to God. If he can keep you from going to God, he can separate you from the one thing that can change your life. God is a good God. He is merciful. He does good things for people who don't deserve it.

When you pray, refocus your mind. God is a good God. He wants to be good to you.

- **Psalm 25, Good and upright is the Lord**
- **Psalm 38, Taste and see the Lord is good**
- **Psalm 107, Give thanks to the Lord for he is good**

If you're waiting until you have everything squared away before you can call on God, you may never call on God. You would miss out on the help God wants to give you.

John Battaglia, D. Min. • PO Box 891 • Jefferson City, MO • 65016 • 573-355-4161 • [john.battaglia@capitolcom.org](mailto:john.battaglia@capitolcom.org) • [@johnabattaglia](https://twitter.com/johnabattaglia)

**1:68-80** “Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has visited and redeemed his people and has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David, as he spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets from of old, that we should be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us; to show the mercy promised to our fathers and to remember his holy covenant, the oath that he swore to our father Abraham, to grant us that we, being delivered from the hand of our enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him all our days. And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways, to give knowledge of salvation to his people in the forgiveness of their sins, because of the tender mercy of our God, whereby the sunrise shall visit us from on high to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.” And the child grew and became strong in spirit, and he was in the wilderness until the day of his public appearance to Israel.

say to God you can say it. **All the forgiveness anyone of us needs for our sin is available to us.** His response to you will be one of grace and mercy and to help you.

*“Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.” (Hebrews 4:16)*

#### Prophetic themes:

- God keeps His Covenant promises:
  - Adamic, Genesis 3:14-19
  - Abrahamic, Genesis 15:18-21
  - Noachian, Genesis 6-9
  - Davidic, 2 Samuel 7
- God has sent his redeemer, when he died on Calvary’s cross for all of our sin to do for us what we could never do for ourselves
- The Holy Spirit works in your heart through prayer and the Scripture. When God gives you a message, don’t discount His word to you
- In the day, the horns refer metaphorically to kings. It represents strength and power. The horn of salvation represents Jesus, the powerful king, our leader and defender
- Christ-followers serve the Lord without fear. In the Old Testament, one would only approach the Monarch at his request, and would enter with fear and trembling. The person didn’t know if they would be accepted or rejected

It’s not like that with God. Our God, king of the Universe says you can come boldly to Him. Whatever you want to