

ZACHARIAH'S HEART

During December, our Wednesday Christmas study is entitled, Turning Hearts. It is taken from Gabriel's message to the priest Zachariah regarding the ministry of his son, John, to the nation of Israel.

- Dec.5 Turning the Nation's Heart Back to the Lord (Luke 1:16)
- Dec.12 Turning Fathers Hearts Back to Children (Luke 1:17a)
- Dec.19 Turning Disobedient Hearts Back to Divine Wisdom (Luke 1:17b)
- **Dec.26 Turning Zachariah's Heart Back to Faith (Luke 1:20)**

When Gabriel showed-up standing at the right side of the altar of incense in front of the Holy of Holies with a prepared messianic message from God to Zachariah, who was busy at work, Zachariah went from being startled and fearful to doubt and unbelief (Luke 1:11-17).

This lesson will study five aspects of Zachariah's heart turning back to faith.

1. Let me begin by proposing a thought-provoking question related to our lesson and Zachariah:

“How often do we pray for something offered to us in the Plan of God, yet when we get it we don't have the faith to welcome and embrace it as a gift based on the Character of God?”

Zachariah and Elizabeth had prayed for years for a child without an answer other than NO. But was saying “NO” or “NOT YET”? Then again, whose decision was it anyway?

Promise in the Plan of God

“And God blessed them; and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.” (Gen.1:28) [Categorical Bible Doctrine]

Procreation in the Plan of God

“Am I in the place of God, who has withheld from you the fruit of the womb?” (Gen.30:2) [Jacob to Rachel]

Let me return to my point

“How often to do we pray for something yet when we receive it we don't welcome or embrace it by faith as a gift from the essence of God and not from us?” (Acts 12:11-17)

2. If you have the capacity to pray according to the will of God and God answers that prayer, you have the capacity of faith to celebrate and to handle whatever is involved with its fulfillment.

“And this is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him.” (1 John 5:14-15).

Let's examine three different cases:

- (1 Sam.1:5-8, 13-18) [Hannah and Elkanah]
- (Gen.17:5-6, 15-19; 18:10-15) [Sarah and Abraham]
- (Luke 1:13, 18-20) [Elizabeth and Zachariah]

3. Zachariah is a spiritually mature Believer in the middle of one of the greatest ministries of his life when he gets this great news.

Look at his response to it: “How shall I know this for certain? For I am an old man, and my wife is advanced in years?” (Luke 1:18)

Actually his problem is not that he is an OLD MAN in age, but rather he is OLD MAN COSMOS DIABOLICUS in his thinking (Eph.4:22-24; Rom.12:2).

Because of his spiritual capacity, he was being pushed to the maximum side of his spiritual growth maturity.

But when Zachariah was challenged to go beyond his known spiritual capacity or comfort zone, he wouldn't.

When challenged to climb the proverbial tree and to go out on that limb and put the saw in the right hand and cut it off by faith, he wouldn't. WHY? Why wouldn't he go to positive thinking of NMDV? “And Zachariah was troubled when he saw him, and fear gripped him.” (Luke 1:12)

Where did this negativity come from towards the Word of God? Probably some would say it was due to years of waiting for the promise and accepting to believe that disappointment is part of having a relationship with God? However this is OMCD thinking (2 Cor.5:7).

4. Let me ask you a few important questions this Christmas:

“Can God still do the impossible in a Believer's life to fulfil His Word?” **The answer is a definite YES!** “For nothing will be impossible with God.” (Luke 1:37)

Let me ask you another question this Christmas: “Does fulfillment of the Word of God depend upon you or God?” **The answer is definitely GOD!** “And being fully assured that what He had promised, He was able to perform.” (Rom.4:21)

How does this work in the Believer's life? The answer is the **faith cycle**.

Hearing (Rom.10:17)

Completing (James 2:22)

Believing (Heb.4:2)

Applying (2 Cor.5:7)

5. Because Zachariah failed at the believing side of the faith cycle, his ability to express the joy of the reason of the season to others was postponed for 9 months.

His ability to speak as a priest was taken away from him until the birth of John. “And behold, you shall be silent and unable to speak until the day when these things take place, because you did not believe my words, which shall be fulfilled in their proper time.” (Luke 1:20; 60-66)

It was a reminder to him of the importance of obedience to the plan of God. “Behold the bond-slave of the Lord; be it done to me according to your word.” (Luke 1:38)

This happened in order to turn Zachariah's heart back to faith in the Word of God and the faith cycle.