

Surprised by God!

December 9th & 10th, 2017

Luke 1:5-25

- ❖ Zechariah was a priest and a descendent of Aaron, as was his wife Elizabeth.
- ❖ Zechariah and his wife were both advanced in years with no children – there was no retirement age for priests who were descendants of Aaron.
 - Levitical priests retired at 50 years of age. *Numbers 8:23-25*
- ❖ Zechariah, while going about his ordinary priestly duties, was chosen by lot to burn incense in the Holy Place in the Temple!

“There were many priests and not enough sacred duties for them all, so lots were cast to see who would perform each function. The offering of incense was regarded as a great privilege. A priest could not offer incense more than once in his entire lifetime (Mishnah, *Tamid* 5:2), and some priests never did receive the privilege. Thus the time when Zechariah offered the incense was the most important moment in his whole life.”¹
- ❖ Zechariah was surprised by an angel of God while simply doing his job!

Surprise: “To strike with wonder or astonishment by something sudden, unexpected or remarkable, ...”²

 - It had been 700 years since Isaiah’s prophecy that a virgin would conceive the Messiah!
 - There had been 400 years of silence since Malachi’s prophecy that a prophet would make a way for the Son of God!
- ❖ God has a time set for everything He does (*Ecclesiastes 3*), and His timing in fulfilling His purposes always come as a surprise to us ...
 - ... God calls Abram ... *Genesis 12*
 - Abraham’s life now has purpose and direction set by God!
 - ... God calls to Moses out of the burning bush ... *Exodus 3*
 - Moses lives the last 40 years of his life led by God!
 - ... An angel of God releases Peter from jail while the church is praying for him ... *Acts 12*
 - Nothing could stop God’s plan for Peter’s life!
 - ... Jesus appears in the Upper Room following His resurrection ... *Luke 24:36-37*
 - Jesus gave His disciples direction on how their lives would be lived to fulfill God’s plan and purpose through them!
 - ... God calls Joseph and Mary ...

Galatians 4:4 “*But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of woman...*”

 - Joseph and Mary’s lives were redirected according to God’s plan!
- ❖ Zechariah’s disbelief did not hinder the plan of God for his life!

Luke 1:18-20 “*...because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their time.*”
- ❖ Zechariah had a son and called him John, the forerunner of Christ!

This Christmas, many will be surprised by God!

“Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for He has visited and redeemed His people.”

Joy to the world, the Lord has come!

Endnotes:

¹ Morris, Leon. *The Gospel according to St. Luke: an introduction and commentary*. Grand Rapids : Eerdmans, 1974.
(Tyndale New Testament Commentaries)

² Webster, Noah. *American Dictionary of the English Language (1828 Facsimile Edition)*. San Francisco: Foundation for American Christian Education, 1989.

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