

Look, He's Speechless!

Luke 1:5-23, 57-80; *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 97-100

Have you ever seen your pastor try to preach without a voice? If he couldn't speak because of a cold, what would he probably do? Yes, he would ask someone else to preach. Our Bible story is about a temple priest who had a message from God. But he couldn't speak, because he had lost his voice.

In the hill country of Judea lived a priest named Zechariah and his wife, Elizabeth. They loved God very, very much. Their biggest wish was to have a child of their own. But they had never had any children. And now they were too old.

When it was his turn, Zechariah went to the temple to serve as priest for the day. He was in the temple burning incense and praying for the people of Israel. Many people were outside in the courtyard praying at the same time. Suddenly an angel came and stood beside the incense altar!

At first Zechariah was confused and frightened. But the angel said, "Zechariah, don't be afraid. Your prayer has been heard by God. Your wife, Elizabeth, will give birth to a son. You will name him John. . . . Many people will be happy because of his

birth. . . . He will help many people . . . return to the Lord" (Luke 1:13-16, ICB).

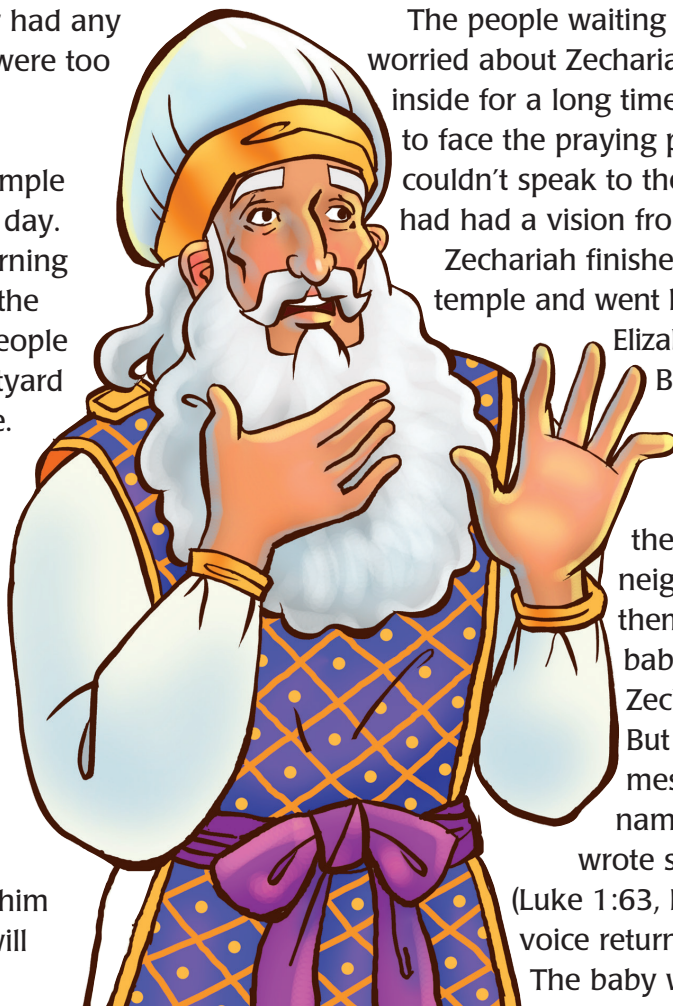
"How can I know that what you say is true? I am an old man, and my wife is old, too," Zechariah questioned the angel (Luke 1:18, ICB).

The angel answered, "God sent me to talk to you and to tell you this good news. . . . You will lose your speech because you did not believe what I told you. But these things will really happen." (Luke 1:19, 20, ICB). Then the angel disappeared.

The people waiting in the courtyard worried about Zechariah. He had been inside for a long time. Finally he went out to face the praying people. When he couldn't speak to them, they knew that He had had a vision from God.

Zechariah finished his work at the temple and went home. He tried to tell Elizabeth all that happened. But it wasn't easy, because he couldn't talk.

Several months later their baby was born. The neighbors rejoiced with them. Some thought the baby should be named Zechariah after his father. But Zechariah had a message for them. "His name is John," Zechariah wrote so they could read it (Luke 1:63, ICB). Immediately, his voice returned and he praised God. The baby was named John, just



The Message

I worship God when I tell others about His goodness and love.

Memory Verse

"Praise be to the Lord because he has come to his people and redeemed them"
(Luke 1:68, NIV).

as the angel had said. Then Zechariah praised God so much that all the neighbors talked about it!

This is the song of praise that Zechariah sang to tell his neighbors about this special child:

"Let us thank the Lord, the God of Israel.

"God has come to help his people and has given them freedom.

"God has given us a powerful Savior from the family of God's servant David.

"God said that he would do this. He said it through his holy prophets who lived long ago.

"God will save us from our enemies and from the power of all those who hate us.

"God said he would give mercy to our ancestors. And he remembered his holy promise.

"God promised Abraham, our father, that he would free us from the power of our enemies, so that we could serve him without fear.

"We will be righteous and holy before God as long as we live.

"Now you, child, will be called a prophet of the Most High God.

"You will go first before the Lord to prepare the people for his coming.

"You will make his people know that they will be saved. They will be saved by having their sins forgiven.

"With the loving mercy of our God, a new day from heaven will shine upon us.

"God will help those who live in darkness, in the fear of death.

"He will guide us into the path that goes toward peace." (Luke 1:68-79, ICB).

Zechariah shared his praise and his love for God with his neighbors. We too can

tell others about God's wonderful goodness and love. That is one way to worship Him.



S A B B A T H

DO Take a nature walk with your family. Listen for bird songs and enjoy their praise to God. Try to identify the birds you hear.

READ Read your Bible lesson story together. Sing "Sing Praises to the Lord" (*Sing for Joy*, no. 2).

PRAY Praise God for someone in your family. Tell Him what they mean to you. Tell them what you appreciate about them.

READ Read and discuss Luke 1:68 with your family.

S U N D A Y

READ During family worship, read and discuss Luke 1:5-10. Ask a mother how old she was when her first child was born. About how old do you think Elizabeth was?

DO Draw a large heart and write the memory verse on it. Around the edge of the heart, write things for which you want to praise God. Say the memory verse together. Sing a praise song before prayer. Thank God for your family.

M O N D A Y

READ Together with your family, read and discuss Luke 1:11-19. Who was Gabriel? (verse 19). Draw a picture of what you think Gabriel looked like. Read about two people to whom Gabriel brought messages from God: Daniel 9:21, 22; Luke 1:26-28. Write their names.

_____ and _____

THINK Does God still send messages to His people today? How do you know?

DO Say your memory verse before prayer.

T U E S D A Y

READ Read Luke 1:20-25 for family worship. For two minutes, don't say anything out loud to your family. You may move your lips, use hand gestures, or write notes. But you must not make a sound. What will your next words be when you speak again?

DO Tell what you were thinking during the silent two minutes. Thank God for the gift of speech.

DO Say your memory verse together before prayer.

W E D N E S D A Y

SHARE With your family, read and discuss Luke 1:57-66. Apparently Zechariah was also deaf. How do you know? (See verse 62.) Using hand signals, try to ask, "What is his name?" Write Zechariah's answer (verse 63). _____

DO When he could speak again, Zechariah's first words were praises to God. Sing a praise song. Then say out loud two things for which you praise God. Thank God for the gift of hearing.

DO Say your memory verse without help.

As a grown-up John was called John the Baptist. He baptized Jesus.



T H U R S D A Y

READ Read and discuss Luke 1:67-75 for family worship. Who helped Zechariah to praise God? (verse 67)

DO Make some instruments from cups containing dry beans. Seal with plastic wrap. Also use spoons and pans, plastic bottles, etc.

DO Make up a tune for your memory verse and sing it. Then, sing it again as you play your instruments. Thank God for the gift of music.



F R I D A Y

DO Mime this week's Bible story. Hold the baby "John" (a doll) as you and your family read Luke 1:76-80 out loud. What do these verses mean to you? What do you want to be when you grow up?

DO Start (or continue) a "Blessing Book" for your family. Add pictures of what God has done for your family.










SING Sing "Bless His Holy Name" (*Sing for Joy*, no. 9). Then, thank God for His blessings.

Look, He's Speechless!

PUZZLE

Directions: Zechariah had to write out messages until his son was born. Match the letters with the symbols to find out what he wrote just before his ability to speak was restored.



 A	 E	 H
 I	 J	 M
 N	 O	 S