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Zechariah's Visitation

Series: The Angels' Advent

Rev. Andrew Hawkins, Ph.D.

The Village Church

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I. An Avalanche of Angels

- A. The English language has its share of peculiarities
 - 1. One of them, which I don't know exists in other languages, is a set of collective nouns for groups of animals
- B. Those collective nouns are unique to particular animals
 - 1. And are often expressive of their characteristics or qualities
 - a. Indeed, frequently with a humorous, even mischievous, bent
- C. Examples
 - 1. Sloth of bears
 - a. One can imagine them taking the winter off
 - 2. Caravan of camels
 - a. Often these collective nouns are alliterations
 - b. And in this case, your mind's eye can easily envision the nomadic journey across the desert with the camel as the most identifiable figure
 - 3. There is the skulk of foxes
 - a. Imagine these little creatures sneaking around farmyards looking for contraband
 - 4. And how about a conspiracy of lemurs
 - a. With their reflective, ghost-like eyes, these monkey-like primates seem to communicate that they may be up to something nefarious
 - 5. And then there's the scurry of squirrels
 - a. Which seems appropriate to their incessant activity
 - 6. Of course there is the famous exultation of lark
 - a. Which appearance speaks of an intense feeling of exhilaration when you encounter a flock of those birds
- D. None of those kinds of descriptors, to my knowledge, has been applied to that other order of creature in God's universe
 - 1. That of angels
 - 2. Now to be sure, groups of angels are identified as such by a variety of terms
 - a. A choir of angels
 - b. A host of angels
 - c. A flight of angels
 - d. A legion of angels
 - e. Even a pinion of angels – representing the winged variety

3. But no one name has stuck for angels in the way collective nouns have been adopted for the animal kingdom
- E. So, as a service to the English language, I would like to propose one
 1. That is, to propose a collective noun for, at least, the good angels to which we are introduced in spades in the New Testament
 2. How about an **Avalanche of Angels**
- F. I have a couple of reasons for proposing avalanche
 1. One is that an avalanche is white
 - a. And the angels that I have in mind are the good guys
 - b. They are distinguishable from the fallen, wicked angels – the demons which are the minions of the enemy of our souls, Satan
 - c. No – these are good angels
 2. The other reason I would propose avalanche is that they appear on the pages of the NT in a way that dominates and overwhelms the narrative
 - a. It's impossible to enter the Advent and Christmas seasons without thinking of angels
 - b. They are integral to the story
 3. Just think of the hymns and carols that we sing during the holiday season
 - a. Angels We Have Heard on High
 - b. Hark the Herald Angels Sing
 - c. O Come, All Ye Faithful speaks of choirs of angels, singing in exultation
 - d. The First Noel – the angels did say, was to certain poor shepherds...
 - e. It Came Upon the Midnight Clear with the angel's message of "peace on earth, goodwill to men"
 - f. Angels from the Realms of Glory
 - g. O Holy Night – "Fall on your knees, O hear the angel's voices..."
 - h. While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks
 - i. And on and on
- G. So as our hymnody reflects, the gospels provide us with a veritable avalanche of angels
 1. They seem to be everywhere
 - a. Especially as the advent of Christ is recounted
 2. So I thought, why not explore the messages of the angels as the Advent series
 - a. So our series in these four weeks of Advent is The Angels' Advent

II. **What, or Who, are Angels?**

- A. Well, that's an interesting – and important question – as we consider what angels have to tell us about Advent
- B. Essentially, angels are spiritual beings, created hierarchically above humans and the lower elements of creation
 1. We are said to be made "a little lower than the angels" (**Psalm 8.5**)
 2. And yet, we are above angels in one respect

- a. We humans are said to be made in the image of God
- C. First, the word angel in the Gk means messenger
 - 1. **Aggelos (Gk) = messenger**
 - 2. They are, then, essentially ambassadors for God
 - a. They have a message to deliver
 - b. And as they deliver the message, they bear the authority of God Himself
 - 3. Our word for the good news of Jesus Christ is, of course, gospel
 - a. The Greek word behind the word gospel is
 - b. **Euaggelion (Gk) = gospel**
 - c. You can see the root of aggelos in the word euaggelion
 - d. Eu = good; we use it in the word eulogy, which is a good word
 - e. Euaggelion is thus a good message
 - 4. Of course, not all angels deliver good news
 - a. Some angels, especially in the OT, deliver bad news
 - b. As when the angels appeared to Abraham and told him about the impending destruction of Sodom, as a warning to get his nephew Lot out of harm's way
 - 5. But in the gospels – especially in the early portions focused on the birth of Jesus, the news of the angels is good news
 - a. Glorious news, in fact
- D. We should also point out that, while angels seem to be everywhere in the birth narratives of Jesus, the appearance of angels is really relatively rare
 - 1. They are not on every page of the NT or the OT
 - 2. But you do find angels showing up at key points in redemptive history
 - 3. And there are few key points in redemptive history more important than the incarnation of the Son of God
 - 4. And of course, angels show up quite prominently in the resurrection as well
 - 5. So it is important to point out that since we see angels so prolific in the birth narratives, we should recognize the critical importance of what is about to take place
 - 6. Advent and Christmas is a big deal
 - a. Certainly it's a big deal in our materialistic culture in America – so much of our economy is fueled by consumer activity
 - b. But we must never forget that it's a much bigger deal for Christians as we celebrate the real reason for the season – the incarnation of the Son of God
- E. Now, in addition to the significance of angels in the incarnation story, and to their being messengers as their basic function, it is important to point out that there are different kinds of angels
 - 1. Sometimes angels appear rather ordinary – like humans
 - a. That was the case with the three angels who visited Abraham to tell him and Sarah that they would have a child

- b. To be sure, one of them seemed to designated as Lord – so he may have been distinguishable
 - c. But as a group, Abraham treated them as other humans, offering them hospitality
 - 2. And there is the NT reference about the prospect of entertaining “angels unawares” (**Hebrews 13.2**)
 - a. So you may have – and probably have – encountered angels without even knowing it
 - b. Some of you have testimonies of such encounters
 - 3. But sometimes, angels are extraordinary creatures
 - 4. There are the **Seraphim of Isaiah 6**
 - a. With six wings, with only two of them used for flying, and the other four covering themselves in humility in the presence of Almighty God
 - b. Whose sole function seems to be singing Holy, Holy, Holy!
 - 5. There are the **Cherubim of Ezekiel**
 - a. Who seem to be a different sort of angel altogether
 - b. Whose wings seemed like the voice of Almighty God
 - c. These cherubim were tasked as well to hover over the ark of the covenant in the temple
 - d. And one would presume, in the true temple, in heaven
 - 6. There are angels who are representatives of the churches in **Revelation**
 - 7. There are **mighty angels**
 - 8. And there are angels who appear in multitudes – myriads and myriads, and thousands of thousands
 - 9. And finally, there are angels who perform various tasks
 - a. Like angels who restrain evil in geographical regions as in **Daniel**
 - b. Or angels who execute judgment of various kinds in Revelation
 - 10. So sometimes you don’t know when you’ve encountered an angel
 - a. And sometimes they are unmistakable
 - 11. In the case of the gospel accounts of Jesus’ birth, the angels are very easily identifiable
 - a. There is one in particular – he is one of the few with a name
 - b. He is Gabriel
 - c. Gabriel appears to Zechariah, and he appears to Mary
 - d. But he long predates the NT – he also appeared to Daniel in the OT
 - e. And it’s possible that he is the same angel who appeared to Joseph, though he’s not named in that instance
- F. But in the case of good angels, they all have a function
 - 1. A very redemptive function
 - a. Which the author of Hebrews recounts for us beautifully in one verse as he distinguishes Jesus from the angels
 - 2. **Hebrews 1:14** (ESV) —
 - a. 14 Are they not all ministering spirits sent out to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation?

3. So the good angels have our best interest at heart
 - a. They are for us!

III. **“Do I Have Your Attention Yet?”**

- A. Let me ask you a question
 1. What did your mother or father have to do to really get your attention?
 - a. If you’re parents were anything like mine, stating my full name would often be used to get my attention
 - b. “Andrew Haines Hawkins” come here!
 - c. I knew I was in trouble
 2. Probably my earliest recollection of such an encounter was not with my parents at all, but with my great-grandmother
 - a. She died when I was about 6 or 7 years old, so my earliest memory was probably when I was 5 or so
 - b. We were in the family home, a large farmhouse-like building on the same property where they ran a general store and a feed warehouse
 - c. At least it seemed large to me as a 5 year old
 - d. And my great-grandmother was the family matriarch, to be sure
 - e. She owned the general store – N.E. Hawkins and Company; N stood for Nettie
 - f. And she literally ruled the roost
 - g. I remember her screaming once, “Andre, Stevie, Dougie – come here!”
 - h. Stevie was my older brother; Dougie was a cousin
 - i. We were obviously getting into something we shouldn’t have in that big house and we were caught
 - j. I don’t know why she called me “Andre” – probably because she was too angry at us to pronounce our names right
 - k. But I remember it – it got my attention
- B. Most of you know Sunny Torres – our former Director of Spiritual Services
 1. But most of you don’t know her real name
 - a. She has always been Sunny, from the earliest time she could remember
 - b. But that was not her given name
 2. But her mother had a good way of getting her attention
 - a. She wouldn’t call her Sunny
 - b. She would say, “Now listen, Linda!”
 3. That’s right – her real name is Linda
 - a. I knew that because I was her boss, and we have to know those things!
 - b. But her Mom was a creative sort and used alliteration to get her attention
 - c. And according to Sunny, it usually worked

- C. I think that in the Bible, if God wanted to get your attention, He often sent an angel
 - 1. And that's what He did in the incarnation stories
 - a. He didn't want you to miss out on the significance of the event
 - b. And there was no mistaking the messengers
- D. That was certainly the case with Zechariah
 - 1. And that's the story we'll examine this morning as we begin the Advent series
 - 2. Zechariah's encounter with an angel is the first encounter and it kicks off the incarnation narrative
 - 3. But Zechariah's encounter is not to tell him about Jesus
 - a. It's to tell him about the one who would prepare the way for Jesus
 - 4. God sent an angel to prepare Zechariah for the coming of the preparer
 - 5. And there are certainly a number of lessons for us as we prepare our hearts for the coming of Messiah Jesus
 - a. So let's make sure God has our attention as we begin to unpack this passage

IV. Preparing for the Preparer

A. Zechariah's Character

- 1. Luke 1:5-7 (ESV) —
 - a. 5 In the days of Herod, king of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah, of the division of Abijah.
 - b. And he had a wife from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth.
 - c. 6 And they were both righteous before God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and statutes of the Lord.
 - d. 7 But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and both were advanced in years.
- 2. Zechariah is presented here in contrasted with Herod – King of Judea
 - a. This was Herod the Great, who was appointed by Rome as the Governor of Judea
 - b. He was given an army and a bit of land
 - c. And he was given the prerogative of expanding his little domain by conquest
 - d. And he used the army to do just that
- 3. Herod the Great was known for establishing his dominion by both administrative skill and cruel execution
 - a. He's not the same Herod as his son – Herod the tetrarch – who was king during the days of Jesus' adult ministry
 - b. But he was the Herod who brokered no rival to his kingship
 - c. He was the Herod who had the children under 2 murdered after the Magi left, fearing that a new King of the Jews might be born
 - d. He was that wicked
- 4. But Zechariah was the opposite

- a. He was, first of all, a priest
 - b. Now not all priests in Judah over the centuries were good; some were quite evil
 - c. But not Zechariah
 - d. Zechariah was exactly the kind of priest you would want to represent you before God
5. He had taken a wife from the daughters of Aaron
- a. In other words, she was the daughter of a priest
 - b. That was not required for priests to marry offspring of priests; they were required only to marry other Jews
 - c. But Zechariah had gone above and beyond and married a woman who would understand his life and ministry, his calling
 - d. And who would support him in it
6. In fact, both Zechariah and Elizabeth are noted for their character
- a. They were both “righteous before God”
 - b. They walked “blamelessly in all the commandments and statutes of the Lord.”
 - c. Now that doesn’t mean they were both perfect and without any sin at all
 - d. No! But it does mean that they were believers
 - e. Believers like Abraham, who “believed God and it was counted to him as righteousness”
 - f. In other words, both Zechariah and Elizabeth had been saved by grace through faith in the promises of God
7. But here’s what happens with true believers
- a. They do, in fact, to the best of their abilities, follow the commands of God
 - b. They do what Ephesians 2 indicates
8. **Ephesians 2:8–10** (ESV) —
- a. 8 For by grace you have been saved through faith.
 - b. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God,
 - c. 9 not a result of works, so that no one may boast.
 - d. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.
9. Walking in good works is what genuine believers do
- a. Not perfectly
 - b. But as a pattern of life
10. So the first lesson we should learn in our Advent preparation is to make sure we are genuine believers in Jesus
- a. That we are following the Lord, listening to His voice
 - b. Obeying His commands as much as we become aware of them
 - c. That helps put us in a position to prepare for an encounter with the incarnate Son of God

B. **Zechariah’s Ministry**

1. Now look at Zechariah's ministry as a priest
2. He was of the priestly division of Abijah
 - a. Back in the days of David the priesthood was divided into 12 groups; one of the groups was one of the descendants of Aaron named Abijah
 - b. Following the exile, not all the groups returned, but the priesthood was again organized into 12 groups named after the original 12 groups
3. And the responsibilities were then rotated between the groups
4. **Luke 1:8-9** (ESV) —
 - a. 8 Now while he was serving as priest before God when his division was on duty,
 - b. 9 according to the custom of the priesthood, he was chosen by lot to enter the temple of the Lord and burn incense.
5. So at this time, Zechariah's group – the Abijah team, as it were, were carrying out the priestly responsibilities in the temple; it was their turn
 - a. And Zechariah received a very special honor
 - b. Through the casting of lots, he was given the responsibility to burn incense in the sanctuary
 - c. The burning of incense represented the prayers of the priests on behalf of the people
6. Now the sanctuary included the Holy Place, as well as the Holy of Holies
 - a. His entry into the temple proper – these inner sanctums – was a unique and special privilege
 - b. In fact, it was probably a once-in-a-lifetime privilege
7. The altar of incense was in the Holy Place right up against the dividing curtain to the Holy of Holies where the ark of the covenant was located
 - a. On the Day of Atonement the priest would sprinkle blood, both on the altar of incense, and on the mercy seat which covered the Ark of the Covenant
 - b. When the priest – as Zechariah would have done – burned the incense, the fragrant aroma was waft its way over the curtain and into the Holy of Holies where the presence of God was said to reside
 - c. So that the prayers would be delivered into the very throne room of God
 - d. Of course, in the 2nd Temple period, this was symbolic of the priestly prayers being delivered to God Himself in the heavenly sanctuary
 - e. So you can imagine the gravity of this ministry
8. On this particular occasion Zechariah would have left the congregation outside the sanctuary, and entered along with two assistants
 - a. One assistant would carry coals from the altar of burnt offering
 - b. The other would carry in the incense, crushed as it was from the fragrant leaves

- c. The one assistant would place the coals on the altar; the other would place the incense on the altar; then they would both leave
- d. That would leave Zechariah by himself to offer the prayers of the priests on behalf of the people; burning the incense as a representation of that sacred act
- e. So once outside, Zechariah would have offered his prayers, then taken the incense and spread it on the coals
- f. Whereupon the cloud of fragrant incense would rise into the air and disperse into the Holy of Holies
- g. What a meaningful act for this faithful, obedient priest in this once-in-a-lifetime experience!

C. **Zechariah's Fear**

1. **Luke 1:10** (ESV) —
 - a. 10 And the whole multitude of the people were praying outside at the hour of incense.
2. **Luke 1:21** (ESV) —
 - a. 21 And the people were waiting for Zechariah, and they were wondering at his delay in the temple.
3. So while Zechariah was ministering – praying, burning the incense – the people waited and prayed outside the sanctuary
 - a. And they waited; and waited; and waited
 - b. What was taking him so long?
4. Well, that's when God was getting Zechariah's attention
5. **Luke 1:11-12** (ESV) —
 - a. 11 And there appeared to him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense.
 - b. 12 And Zechariah was troubled when he saw him, and fear fell upon him.
6. Truth be told – Zechariah was spooked
 - a. Now this was once-in-a-lifetime experience for a priest
 - b. But I'm sure Zechariah had heard the reports from the other priests who had done the deed before him
 - c. And no one had ever told him that they encountered an angel!
7. So when Zechariah burned the incense, there he was! An angel of the Lord!
 - a. And Zechariah's response was probably what yours and mine would have been
 - b. He was terrified!
 - c. He was "troubled"
 - d. And "fear fell upon him"
 - e. It was overwhelming, to be sure!
8. I think God had his attention

D. **Zechariah's Prayer**

1. **Luke 1:13** (ESV) —

- a. 13 But the angel said to him, “Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John.
2. First, we can’t pass over the angel’s first admonition
 - a. “Do not be afraid!”
 - b. One of the most encouraging things about the gospels is that the most frequent command in the gospel – whether it comes from the mouth of angels or from Jesus Himself – is “Do not be afraid!”
 - c. There is always this wonderful tension between the fear of the Lord and the comforting touch of the Savior
 - d. And we see it here between the angel and Zechariah
3. It’s natural that Zechariah would be afraid upon the visitation of this angel
 - a. But it’s also a delightful encouragement that the angel calms the spirit of this godly priest
 - b. And the more you get to know the Savior, you’ll find that, even when you encounter the unexpected, even the astonishing and fear-inducing – you will hear the Savior’s voice
 - c. “Do not be afraid!”
4. But then, look at the basis for the angel’s exhortation
5. “Your prayer has been heard”
6. Now in a sense, that would be what you might expect an angel to say to a priest who is offering incense and is praying on behalf of the people
 - a. “Yes, Zechariah, I have heard your prayers”
7. But I don’t think that’s what the angel has in mind
 - a. Because he immediately tells Zechariah what the prayer’s answer is
 - b. And it’s likely that the prayer the angel has in mind is not the prayers Zechariah has been offering as part of his priestly duties
8. “... your prayer has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John.”
9. The prayer the angel has in mind is Zechariah’s prayer that his wife will bear a child!
10. Now we need to back up a second and make some observations
11. First, this prayer must have been offered for years – decades even
 - a. Remember, Elizabeth was barren and they both were advanced in years!
 - b. They were both beyond the age of child-bearing
12. I’m sure they prayed for Elizabeth to have a child for years
 - a. It was one of the great disappointments – indeed, great shame – for a Hebrew woman to be unable to have a child
 - b. The scriptures display numerous examples of the shame of childless mothers
 - c. Remember Hannah who was shamed by Penninah
 - d. Remember the animosity between Sarah and Hagar
13. But after all these years, after they were beyond the childbearing age – wouldn’t they have given up praying for a child?

- a. Would you have given up?
- 14. But no! God didn't give up on them
 - a. Even their prayers of the past, God hears
 - b. And answers them
 - c. In His own time!
- 15. Don't stop praying!
 - a. And whatever you do, don't stop believing that God hears your prayers
 - b. Even if He doesn't answer them in your timing
 - c. God's timing is perfect
- 16. And God's timing was perfect in this case
 - a. He answered it in an extraordinary way
 - b. To prepare the way for Messiah!

E. **Zechariah's Promise**

- 1. Which brings us to the promise
- 2. **Luke 1:14-17** (ESV) —
 - a. 14 “And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth,
 - b. 15 for he will be great before the Lord.
 - c. And he must not drink wine or strong drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb.
 - d. 16 And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God,
 - e. 17 and he will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready for the Lord a people prepared.”
- 3. What a promise!
 - a. Talk about high expectations!
- 4. He will be great before the Lord!
 - a. Remember what Jesus said about John the Baptist
 - b. **Luke 7:28** (ESV) — 28 I tell you, among those born of women none is greater than John. ...
- 5. He would have the power of Elijah
 - a. And he will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children
 - b. In other words, broken families will be brought together as they repent of their sin
 - c. And he will turn the disobedient to the wisdom of the just
 - d. Many who have lived meaningless, even profligate lifestyles, would be brought to repentance and converted
- 6. And there would be a people ready for the Lord to come!
 - a. A welcoming party for the incarnate Son of God, the Savior!
 - b. And John would be the instrument of those prepared!
- 7. Are you the fruit of John's ministry?
 - a. Are you prepared for Messiah Jesus?

F. **Zechariah's Doubt**

1. It would be a good story if it just stopped right there
 - a. But not so fast...
 - b. This is a human story – human stories have twists and turns
2. **Luke 1:18** (ESV) —
 - a. 18 And Zechariah said to the angel, “How shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife is advanced in years.”
3. So Zechariah pulls a John McEnroe: “You can’t be serious!”
 - a. He says, “I’m not just getting old; I am old”
 - b. “And so is my wife, in case you haven’t noticed!”
4. This is an indication that Zechariah had stopped praying for a child years ago
 - a. He had given up
 - b. And even when an angel shows up – a terrifying angel – he can’t really believe God will do it!
5. So doubt – really, unbelief – has invaded the psyche of this godly priest
 - a. He’s like the man later in the gospels who said, “Lord, I believe; help my unbelief”
 - b. But Zechariah can’t even quite bring himself to say that!
6. So Zechariah doubts; and his doubt is sinful; it’s unbelief

G. **Zechariah's Chastisement**

1. The reason we know that is because of what the angel does next
2. **Luke 1:19–20** (ESV) —
 - a. 19 And the angel answered him, “I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I was sent to speak to you and to bring you this good news.
 - b. 20 And behold, you will be silent and unable to speak until the day that these things take place, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their time.”
3. This is Zechariah’s chastisement – the price he will pay for his unbelief
4. “I am Gabriel”
 - a. Surely Zechariah has heard of Gabriel
 - b. Remember – Gabriel has appeared to Daniel; Zechariah knew the prophecy of Daniel
 - c. Not only that, Gabriel stands in the presence of God!
 - d. Not just any angel ranks high enough to do that
 - e. **Revelation 7.8** says that there are seven angels who stand in the presence of God; Gabriel is one of them
5. Now, you should believe any angel you’re sure is from God
 - a. But if Gabe showed up – you really should trust him!
6. So God rendered Zechariah mute until the fulfillment of the promise
 - a. Actually, it’s likely that he was both unable to speak and unable to hear
 - b. Later in the chapter it indicates that the people were making signs to Zechariah, not just Zechariah making signs to the people

- c. So it's like that he could neither speak nor hear!
- 7. Unbelief always has a cost
 - a. Zechariah had his
 - b. Don't be surprised if yours has a cost as well!

H. **Zechariah's Grace**

- 1. But then there is Zechariah's grace
- 2. Gabriel – and God – doesn't cast Zechariah on the ash heap of history
 - a. That in his unbelief Zechariah will no longer be able to minister
- 3. No! Zechariah will still be God's instrument
 - a. He just won't be able to enjoy it like he might have if he could hear and speak!
- 4. God will fulfill His promise to Zechariah and Elizabeth
 - a. And his promise to us to have a preparer for Messiah
- 5. And He will use both Zechariah and Elizabeth
- 6. This is the wonderful grace of God – His amazing grace!

V. **Conclusion**

- A. So Zechariah has had the encounter of a lifetime
 - 1. His decades old prayer will be answered
 - a. In a more abundant and more significant way than he and Elizabeth could ever have imagined!
 - 2. They would have – not just a child – but a great child
 - a. A child who would be the fulcrum of history
 - b. The personage who would pivot the people of God from the Old Testament to the New Testament; the Old Covenant to the New Covenant
- B. It would be costly
 - 1. His unbelief would throw a wrench in the works, to be sure
 - 2. But God's purposes will not be thwarted
- C. **Luke 1:21–23** (ESV) —
 - 1. 21 And the people were waiting for Zechariah, and they were wondering at his delay in the temple.
 - 2. 22 And when he came out, he was unable to speak to them, and they realized that he had seen a vision in the temple. And he kept making signs to them and remained mute.
 - 3. 23 And when his time of service was ended, he went to his home.
- D. I'll bet he went to his home
 - 1. But he was not the same person who came from his home!
- E. When Elizabeth gave birth to John, they were going to call him Zechariah, after his father
 - 1. But Elizabeth told them “No, his name is John”
 - 2. They protested; so they inquired of Zechariah
 - 3. He wrote on a tablet, “His name is John”
- F. That's when Zechariah's mouth was opened
 - 1. And he worshiped and praised God

- G. And that's when all the people feared the Lord!
- H. **Luke 1:65-66** (ESV) —
 - 1. 65 And fear came on all their neighbors.
 - 2. And all these things were talked about through all the hill country of Judea,
 - 3. 66 and all who heard them laid them up in their hearts, saying, "What then will this child be?"
 - 4. For the hand of the Lord was with him.
- I. Do you also believe?