



# TEEN TREE OF LIFE GOD DOES HIS BEST WORK IN IMPOSSIBLE SITUATIONS

Part 5

September 6, 2020

**Before you begin, ask yourself a very important question: Do you believe that Jesus Christ died on The Cross for all of your sins? If you answered yes, you will need to be sure that you are filled with The Holy Spirit. How do you do this? You name your sins to God The Father in His Son's Name. This is called Rebound. As a Christian, you must rebound any time you sin. This is taught in 1 JOH 1:9: *If we confess [name] our sins [directly to God], He [God] is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.* Now, if you have never believed that Jesus Christ died on The Cross for all of your sins, all you have to do is say to yourself that you believe in Him and you are saved! The Bible verse which teaches us this is ACTS 16:31: *"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved."***

As last week's Teen Tree came to a close, we were at the point at which Zacharias had become **"paralyzed in fear"** because the angel Gabriel had come to him with an important message. **LUK 1:13-14 (The Message Bible)** tells us what happened next: ***But the angel reassured him, "Don't fear, Zacharias. Your prayer has been heard. Elizabeth, your wife, will bear a son by you. You are to name him John."***

As we learned, Zacharias was an obedient believer with strong faith. We also learned that, although he was extremely frightened, he kept his thoughts on God. Because of this, Zacharias was able to stand firm in his faith, despite the shock he experienced! You and I will never be visited by an angel. Our messages come from God, through His Word, which we learn as students from prepared pastor-teachers. The study of Bible doctrine should be our life's work. And if, like Zacharias, we become mature believers because of our faithfulness to God's Word, we won't be surprised when God does something great and unexpected in our lives.

Do you remember back in part one of this study that the story of Zacharias and Elizabeth is first mentioned in the Old Testament? The prophet Malachi wrote: ***"I [God] will send the prophet Elijah to you. He will come before the day of the Lord arrives. It will be a great and terrifying day. Elijah will bring peace between parents and their children. He will also bring peace between children and their parents. If that does not***

**happen, I will come. And I will completely destroy the land.” (MAL 4:5-6 New International Reader’s Version)** So, now, standing in the Holy of Holies, the angel Gabriel was essentially saying to Zacharias – “Malachi told the truth! What he had prophesied is going to come true!”

Gabriel continued: **“You’re going to leap like a gazelle for joy, and not only you—many will delight in his birth. He’ll achieve great stature with God. “He’ll drink neither wine nor beer. He’ll be filled with the Holy Spirit from the moment he leaves his mother’s womb. He will turn many sons and daughters of Israel back to their God. He will herald God’s arrival in the style and strength of Elijah, soften the hearts of parents to children, and kindle devout understanding among hardened skeptics—he’ll get the people ready for God.” (LUK 1:15-17 The Message Bible)**

Do you not find the statement that Zacharias and Elizabeth’s baby will **“be filled with the Holy Spirit from the moment he leaves his mother’s womb”** fascinating?? To better understand this verse, let’s go back to the original language of the text. The Greek word for “filled” here is not **“pleroo”** which is the word for the Filling of The Spirit. In this verse, the Greek word is **“pletho”** which means supplied, accomplished, or furnished. This was not the Filling of The Spirit of the Church-Age which is the filling **within** the believer. **“Pletho”** literally means the Filling of The Spirit **upon** the believer – not within. So, the baby who will become John the Baptist is supplied or furnished with the Filling of The Spirit while in the womb.

Can you imagine what an honor it must have been for Elizabeth and Zacharias to be the parents of the forerunner of The Messiah? But when Zacharias is told the incredible news, he responds in a strange way. He gets hung up on the statement, **“Elizabeth, your wife, will bear a son by you.” (LUK 1:13-14 The Message Bible)** This is where Zacharias stops listening and begins to focus on the horizontal rather than the vertical. He focuses on his and his wife’s age. He gives in to doubts and distrust. He takes his thoughts off God.

Certain situations, in which find ourselves, will always shift our focus to the negative aspects. When this happens, we have to learn to focus on God’s Faithfulness and Omnipotence! Zacharias doesn’t come right out and say, “I don’t believe you Gabriel!” He is much more subtle. Instead, he says: **“Do you expect me to believe this? I’m an old man and my wife is an old woman.” (LUK 1:18 The Message Bible)**

The **New American Standard Bible**’s translation of Gabriel’s response to Zacharias is fantastic! The angel is prepared for Zacharias’ negativity and knows just what to say: **“I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to bring you this good news.” (LUK 1:19)** Do you think Gabriel’s statement that he stands **“in the presence of God”** would convince you??

Think about the many centuries Gabriel had been around and the things he had experienced as a result of his relationship with God. He had first-hand knowledge of so many miracles. So, it’s unacceptable to Gabriel to have Zacharias question God’s power, even by implication. So he responds with words of judgment, but also of mercy, when he states: **“But because you won’t believe me, you’ll be unable to say a word**

**until the day of your son's birth. Every word I've spoken to you will come true on time—God's time.” (LUK 1:20 The Message Bible)**

Now, picture this. The people are still outside the temple waiting for Zacharias and wondering where he is. No doubt, they were wondering if he profaned the altar of incense and had gotten into trouble, or even received the penalty of death because of this! The story continues in **LUK 1:21-22 (The Message Bible): *Meanwhile, the congregation waiting for Zacharias was getting restless, wondering what was keeping him so long in the sanctuary. When he came out and couldn't speak, they knew he had seen a vision. He continued speechless and had to use sign language with the people.***

Can you even imagine what he was going through??! Zacharias had just received the greatest news of his life – a message directly from God, delivered by the angel Gabriel! He had to announce the news and all he was able to do was go out and shake his head and move his arms and hands!!! This man had had such a great experience, but he was unable to share what happened. And he will eventually learn a lesson in this silence that he never learned when he could speak. He will learn that when God gives you a promise, you can count on Him keeping it. To think that an “ordinary” couple would be the means by which God brings forth the forerunner of the Messiah! What a contribution to the world! They were no different than we are and God used them for this amazing task. And He can use us in a similar way.

What happens as the story moves forward is even more amazing: ***When the days of his priestly service were ended, he went back home. After these days Elizabeth his wife became pregnant, and she [was hidden] kept herself in seclusion for five months, saying, “This is the way the Lord has dealt with me in the days when He looked with favor upon me, to take away my disgrace among men.” (LUK 1:23-25)*** Elizabeth received the news as God's blessing for her continued faith during the time when she was considered an outcast because she was unable to have a child. Remember that back then, according to the Jewish Rabbis of that time, there were seven kinds of people who were excommunicated from God and their list began: “A Jew who has no wife, or a Jew who has a wife and who has no child.” Unlike his wife, Zacharias shows a lesser faith with his remark - ***“Do you expect me to believe this?”***

{to be continued}