

January 4 Answers

- Zechariah and Elizabeth lived in a city of **Judah** in the hill country. According to tradition, that city was the modern day Ein Kerem, a village to the southwest of Jerusalem.
- **Unbelief** robbed Zechariah of some of the most precious **sounds** of his life. If we don't trust God, we can miss out on some of the most important moments of our lives.
- Elizabeth kept insisting that the child's name was **John**, even though none of their relatives was called by that name. What Elizabeth did *was an act of faith!* How so? Because anytime we respond in obedience to the word of God, it is an act of faith, for **obedience** is the perfection of faith.
- Zechariah praised God, and what he said is called "the **Benedictus**," which is from the Latin of the first word: "Blessed." And what does Zechariah say? He praised God for raising up a **Redeemer** and a **Savior** for Israel. And that of course is Jesus.
- Zechariah goes on to say that the Redeemer would be of the house of **David**, which, of course, invokes the idea of Messiah, for Isaiah and Jeremiah, the holy prophets from of old, both prophesied that God would raise up a descendant of David to be a Savior-king.
- Zechariah then praises God that they would be saved from "our enemies, and from the hand of all who hate us." This is talking about more than the defeat of physical enemies. Israel's redemption is going to be first and foremost, a **spiritual** redemption.
- Zechariah then goes on to make a connection between Jesus the Redeemer and the **promise** that God swore to Abraham. Paul wanted the Galatians to understand that Jesus was the **promised offspring** of Abraham, in whom all the nations would be blessed. The blessing that was promised to the nations was the blessing of being **saved** from their sins!
- Zechariah concludes this section about Jesus with a reminder of why God saves us from our sins—so that we may live lives of **holiness** and righteousness! Jesus didn't come to save us and leave us the way we were; he came to **transform** us, to take us from death to life, and to enable us to live godly lives in the midst of the world's wickedness.
- Zechariah then speaks about his newborn son John, and he says that John would be called the **prophet** of the Most High. He would go before the Lord to **prepare** his ways—this is talking about a spiritual preparation, a call of **repentance** which would prepare the people's hearts to receive Jesus, the Son of God.
- Think about where Zechariah's words came from. Luke tells us that Zechariah was filled with the **Holy Spirit** and prophesied. That means what he said was straight from the heart and mind of God.