



TIME OF GRACE®

Gracenotes

guides for personal Bible study

Heroes of Christmas: Zechariah

Luke 1:57-66: ⁵⁷“When it was time for Elizabeth to have her baby, she gave birth to a son. ⁵⁸Her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had shown her great mercy, and they shared her joy. ⁵⁹On the eighth day they came to circumcise the child, and they were going to name him after his father Zechariah, ⁶⁰but his mother spoke up and said, ‘No! He is to be called John.’ ⁶¹They said to her, ‘There is no one among your relatives who has that name.’ ⁶²Then they made signs to his father, to find out what he would like to name the child. ⁶³He asked for a writing tablet, and to everyone’s astonishment he wrote, ‘His name is John.’ ⁶⁴Immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue set free, and he began to speak, praising God. ⁶⁵All the neighbors were filled with awe, and throughout the hill country of Judea people were talking about all these things. ⁶⁶Everyone who heard this wondered about it, asking, ‘What then is this child going to be?’ For the Lord’s hand was with him.”

Points to Ponder

1. Why do you think that several times in the Bible God used older couples to have babies of significance to his salvation plan?
2. Why did God give Zechariah a “spiritual time-out” by making him unable to hear or speak?
3. **Read Luke 1:63.** Why is it significant that the baby was named John, which was not a traditional name in Zechariah’s family?

4. **Read Luke 1:64.** When Zechariah was able to communicate again, what were the first things out of his mouth? What did he finally realize during his time-out?

5. Has God ever given you a time-out? How did that time refine you and make you more useful to his plan for you?

Zechariah didn't immediately believe that he and Elizabeth would have a child meant to be the forerunner of Christ. But after his time of being deaf and mute, he praised God, realizing that the entire rescue of the human race is about believing the word of a God we can't see. Lost sinners are reconnected with their Savior by believing in God's promises. God works through broken people, and when we have struggles, they refine us and make us more useful to him.

What else does God say?

Isaiah 40:1: A voice of one [is] calling: "In the wilderness prepare the way for the LORD; make straight in the desert a highway for our God."

1 Peter 1:7: These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.