

Luke 1, 3:23-38

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[0 : 00] and servants of the word. It seemed fitting for me as well, having investigated everything carefully from the beginning, to write it out for you in consecutive order, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may know the exact truth about the things you have been taught.

In the days of Herod, king of Judea, there was a priest named Zacharias of the division of Abijah, and he had a wife from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. They were both righteous in the sight of God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and requirements of the Lord. But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and they were both advanced in years. Now it happened that while he was performing his priestly service before God in the appointed order of his division, according to the custom of the priestly office, he was chosen by lot to enter the temple of the Lord and burn incense. Pay attention to these things.

And the whole multitude of the people were in prayer outside at the hour of the incense offering. And an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing to the right of the altar of incense. Zacharias was troubled when he saw the angel, and fear gripped him. But the angel said to him, Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your petition has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will give him the name John. And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth. For he will be great in the sight of the Lord, and he will drink no wine or liquor, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit while yet in his mother's womb. And he will turn many of the sons of Israel back to the Lord their God.

It is he who will go as a forerunner before him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers back to the children, and the disobedient to the attitude of the righteous, so as to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.

Zacharias said to the angel, How will I know this for certain? For I am an old man, and my wife is advanced in years. The angel answered and said to him, 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.

[1 : 49] And behold, you shall be silent and unable to speak until the day when these things take place, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their proper time. And the people were waiting for Zacharias, and were wondering at his delay in the temple.

But 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. When the days of his priestly service were ended, he went back home. After these days, Elizabeth, his wife, became pregnant, and she 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.

Now in the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph of the descendants of David, and the virgin's name was Mary. And coming in, he said to her, Greetings, favored one. The Lord is with you. But she was very perplexed at this statement, and kept pondering what kind of salutation this was. And the angel said to her, Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb, and bear a son, and you shall name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and his kingdom will have no end. Mary said to the angel, How can this be, since I am a virgin? And the angel answered and said to her, The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. And for that reason, the holy child shall be called the Son of God. And behold, even your relative Elizabeth has also conceived a son in her old age, and she who is called barren is now in her sixth month, for nothing will be impossible with God.

And Mary said, Behold, the bond slave of the Lord, may it be done to me according to your word. And the angel departed from her. Go to the third chapter, please. Pick it up with me.

Let's go on up to verse 23. Not 26, 23. When he began his ministry, Jesus himself was about 30 years of age, being as was supposed the son of Joseph, the son of Eli, the son of Methat, the son of Levi, the son of Melchi, the son of Janiah, the son of Joseph, the son of Metathias, the son of Amos, the son of Nahum, the son of Hesli, the son of Negai, the son of Maith, the son of Matthias, the son of Simeon, the son of Jossek, the son of Joda, the son of Joannan, the son of Ureasi, the son of Zerubbabel, the son of Shelti, the son of Neri, the son of Melchi, the son of Adi, the son of Kazem, the son of Elmadam, the son of Ur, the son of Joshua, the son of Eleazar, the son of Joram, the son of Mathat, the son of Levi, the son of Simeon, the son of Judah, the son of Joseph, the son of Jonan, the son of Itequim, the son of Meleah, the son of Mina, the son of Mathathiah, the son of Nathan, the son of David, the son of Jesse, the son of Obed, the son of Boaz, the son of Salmon, the son of Neshan, the son of Amenadab, the son of Admin, the son of Ram, the son of Hezron, the son of Perez, the son of Judah, the son of Jacob, the son of Isaac, the son of Abraham, the son of Terah, the son of Nahor, the son of Sehold, the son of Ruh, the son of Peleg, the son of Heber, the son of Shelah, the son of Canaan, the son of Arphaxad, the son of Shem, the son of Noah, the son of Lamech, the son of Methuselah, the son of Enoch, the son of Jared, the son of Mahalel, the son of Canaan, the son of Enosh, the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God. Let's pray. Well, we thank you so much for this day.

[5 : 26] God, we thank you for the grand privilege of reading your word. Lord, may you be present. May you open our hearts and minds to understand it with clarity. And may you be glorified through it. And we ask it all in Christ's name. Amen. You may be seated.

Greatly appreciate your patience and your endurance with me as we read together those verses. And hopefully in just a moment, you will see them as they come together. Over the next couple of weeks, we will be looking at the amazement of Christmas.

The amazement of Christmas and just how wondrous it is. Not just as a season, not just as an exchange of bringing families together, but the amazing thing about Christmas as it fits into biblical history.

As it fits into the plans and purposes of God and exactly what God is manifesting then and to us now. And the amazing things about Christmas, how we see what God was doing then and even continuation of what he is doing now, because it is that pivotal point in history.

It is that point in which all of the history of mankind hinges the coming of the Savior. Emmanuel, God with us, who would live the perfect life, die the perfect death, be buried in a borrowed tomb and raised to walk in newness of life.

[6 : 44] Who would be ascended to the Father to sit at his right hand to daily intercede for the saints. Who is the forerunner before us, who opens the veil into the presence of God and to us, and who divides and tears down the dividing wall that was once erected that kept us out.

That wondrous event which took place simply because he came on Christmas. We will look at the amazement of it. We will be concerned about how the things in each part and piece really stand as an amazing testimony.

Because when we open up our scripture, we see it resonating not just in Matthew, Luke, and John. We also see it because, see, Mark has no Christmas event.

You knew that, right? Because Mark has no things. He just immediately, he gets right into public ministry because he was writing to people with a short attention span. He wasn't writing to you and I. We have a great long attention span.

We're good for three or four hours of preaching, right? But he was writing to the Greeks who had a short attention span. And he had to get to them quick. And so he immediately, immediately, immediately, immediately, immediately. But we are like Luke and we are like most excellent Theophilus who want the information.

[7 : 49] And we want it to us in all of its detail because the Christmas account is from Genesis to Revelation. And it is an amazing event. And this morning I want you to see in the amazement of Christmas the unhindered purpose of God.

How amazing this Christmas event shows us that the purposes of God are unhindered. And friend, that is important because God has a plan and purpose for your life.

And it is not to prosper you and to give you an easy life. As a matter of fact, Jesus told many of his disciples that they would suffer harm for following him. That it would be worse because they committed.

But he does have a plan and a purpose for us. God has promises. He's extended to us in his word. If you remember, every New Testament promise that we find that is directed to the people of God is always connected through the church of God.

And it's amazing when we see that. But the purposes of God are important because it is God's purpose to redeem us. And it is part of his purpose that we will be with him someday. And if his purposes can be hindered in any point, then they are susceptible to being hindered in every point. [8 : 56] But if we can look back at Christmas and see how amazing it is that the purpose of God was unhindered, then it gives us confidence moving forward that what he has purposed for us remains unhindered as well.

We will see that if it could not be stopped then, then it cannot be stopped now. We see this in an astounding way as Luke begins his Christmas account and he opens it up for us.

And he does it in the very first chapter. And then we see the continuation of it when we read the genealogy of Christ given to us in the third chapter. It is that genealogy that I want to be concerned with first because we see, number one, the purpose of God is not hindered by the tragedy of man. The purpose of God is not hindered by the tragedy of man. That is, just because we're messed up, we cannot stop it. And you say, oh no, you mean they're messed up.

No, I said it right. Just because we are messed up, we cannot stop it. Because it is not man's purpose, it is not man's plan, it is the purpose of God.

[10 : 03] Luke records for us in the third chapter, the beginning of Christ's public ministry, the genealogy of probably Mary. Matthew records for us in the very beginning chapter the genealogy of Christ as traced through his, as Luke says, supposed father Joseph.

So we have genealogies on both sides, which according to biblical account are very important. We'll get to that later on. Because through the genealogy of Joseph, we have the legal right of Christ to the throne.

Through the genealogy of Mary, we have the spiritual right of Christ to the throne. There is one different person there that really changes everything according to biblical accounts.

And we'll get to that later. But that's not what we want to focus on today. Because we see in this genealogy in which Luke records for us, and he brings it all the way back. Not to David, not to Abraham.

He brings it all the way back to God. Because for Luke, when he's writing, and it's for us as well, Jesus is the son of God. He's not the son of Abraham. He's not just the son of David.

[11 : 07] He is the very son of God. Those things have implications. Stay with me. They matter all the way. And in this encompassing genealogy, Luke also carries every tragedy and every problem that man has ever had.

And shows us that what God has purposed is not hindered by man's tragedy. That is, man's failings, man's sins, man's stumblings, and man's problems. Our problem does not stop his purpose.

And that's good news. When we look at the genealogy, we begin to see how Satan attempts to hinder the purpose of God. And the way he attempts to hinder the purpose of God is through the pinnacle of God's creation, which is mankind.

I love the way Tony Evans says it. Sometimes he tells his congregation, he says, Satan comes into church at times riding on the saints back. That is, some of us bring him in here with us, right? Because he is using us. He is maneuvering through us. He manipulates. Satan is not omnipresent. He is not omniscient. He is not any of these things. But he can influence individuals.

[12 : 11] And the way he is sought to hinder the purposes of God are through humanity. And we see it in this genealogy. Right at the beginning, by the way, this is where I get excited. And I'll try to stay calm.

And I'll try to stay a little bit slow so that you don't get lost in it. But right at the beginning, we are introduced to an individual named Seth. You say, no, pastor, that's at the end. No, he makes his way back. So we need to make our way forward, right?

At the beginning, we meet an individual named Seth. Seth is the son of Adam, who is the son of God. You know why Seth is there, right? You know why Seth is in the lineage of Christ.

You know why Seth stands there. Because he is not the firstborn of Adam and Eve. As a matter of fact, there's two brothers named Cain and Abel. Cain and Abel are there. And the first tragedy of man is this tragedy of jealousy and murder.

Cain kills his brother Abel. The blood of Abel cries out. God seems to have a problem, right? No, he doesn't. There's no problem there. Because God has an answer to the tragedy of man. And that is Seth.

[13:07] All of a sudden, we see that Eve conceives again. And she gives birth to a male child whose name is Seth. This one is my hope. And it is through Seth that we have the lineage of Christ.

So even man's problem there with this offspring of brothers fighting each other, killing one another, it is overcome because we are introduced to Seth. We go a little bit further down the line and we meet a man named Noah.

Noah is a wondrous man because in the days when the hearts of all men were desperately wicked, the hearts of all men were set on nothing but wickedness, God searched to and fro throughout the land to find a righteous man.

And he found one righteous man. And that one righteous man is Noah. And righteous Noah was a preacher of righteousness for 120 years, built an ark when it had never rained, built it in the middle of a desert.

And he was faithful to God. And God preserved the remnant of mankind. Why? Just because the hearts of all men are desperately wicked, the purposes and plans of God are not thwarted.

[14:02] They are not hindered because God always has his man. Here's Noah. Noah has a family. We bring Noah in. All of a sudden, the remnant remains. Noah comes out. Shem is the lineage of Christ.

We see Noah. Then we go on a little bit further. This is where it gets good, right? Genesis 11.

They're building this tower, this ziggurat, this tower of Babel. They're ascending to heaven. Man is building themselves a staircase to go to heaven.

Man has this pride. We want to put ourselves on the pinnacle. We're trying to do what Satan once done. We want to put ourselves on the throne of heaven and say, we are the masters of our own domain. We are the kings of our own world.

God scatters them, divides their tongue. People go everywhere. And then we turn the page. We get into Genesis chapter 12. And we meet Abram from the land of the Ur of the Chaldeans. God called a man named Abram, later changed his name to Abraham, out of a nation of idolatrous worship, called him as an idolater himself, and raised him up to be his own people.

Why? Because God always has his man. These people are not perfect, but God has a grand plan. God has a grand purpose. And we meet Abraham because God brings in Abraham.

[15:06] Even in the descendants of Abraham, we say, oh, well, God's got his man. He's making this great nation. He's going to have all of these children and things are going to go right. And then we meet Judah. We need to pay attention to Judah.

Judah's a good guy when we read scripture, right? Well, not really so much. So stay with me, if you will. Because Judah, we are looking for the lion from the tribe of Judah. When Abraham blesses his children and all these things, Judah is the one that has the scepter given to him.

Judah is the one who... Judah is also the one who has a son that he gives to a daughter, gives to a wife named Tamar. That son dies. So he gives a second son to Tamar. That son dies. And Judah goes, I'm not giving my third son to Tamar because, you know, there's the kiss of death there.

And then Tamar gets a little upset because Judah's not giving her any children. We're not going to tell the whole story. It ends up that Judah has an encounter with his daughter-in-law. Doesn't know it's daughter-in-law. Has an offspring by his daughter-in-law.

Judah doesn't seem like so good of a guy anymore now. But you know who that son is, right? That is Perez. Perez in the lineage of Christ. God still has his person. We keep going on down the line.

[16:06] And all of a sudden, we meet a man named Boaz in the dark day of the judges, right? In the period of the judges when there was no king in the land and every man did what was right in his own eyes. You remember that, right?

It's a theme throughout the book of Judges. In those days, there was no king in the land and every man did what was right in his own eyes. Every man doing what was right in his own eyes. By the way, my friend, we get in trouble when everybody's doing what is right in their own eyes unless that man is Boaz.

Boaz, a wealthy man who meets a Moabitess who was from a foreign land who comes in and he is the kinsman redeemer of this Moabitess named Ruth. And here is Boaz in this dark day that seems to do the righteous thing.

He goes to the nearest kinsman redeemer. He doesn't want anything to do with it. Boaz says, I'll take her on. She's a Moabitess, but I'll take her on. And they do the whole throwing the shoe over the shoulder thing that we don't really understand. But he takes Ruth and he has a child. And that child's name is Obed. You know Obed, right? He's the grandfather of a man. You should pay attention to who is David because God always has his man. We go on and we go on and we go on and we go on.

[17:09] And David, if we meet the genealogy of Christ in the book of Matthew, we meet that David has a child through Bathsheba and that child's name is Solomon.

But we also know that David has a son that is mentioned one time. We'll get to the other, by the way, later, whose name is Nathan. Nathan is absolutely important. This is only the second time in Scripture.

The only second time. He's only mentioned twice in Scripture. But my friend, it is absolutely important that Nathan's mentioned in the Old Testament and it is absolutely important that Nathan is mentioned here because unless we meet Nathan in this genealogy, Christ has no right to the throne according to the kingdom of heaven.

Because there's a man in the genealogy of Matthew named Jeconiah or Coniah. You find him by both names. He's Jeconiah in the New Testament, Coniah in the Old Testament. When you open it up, Coniah.

He is the king of the deportation of the people into Babylon. He's mentioned twice in the book of Matthew. He was king when they were deported. He was king while they were there. He's mentioned twice. Now while he had legal right to the throne, in the Old Testament, he is so wicked that God makes this declaration against Coniah in the Old Testament that no descendant of Coniah were ever set on the throne of David.

[18:20] That's a legal, a spiritual application in heaven. On earth he has a right, but in heaven he has no right. The good news is, that's Joseph's family.

That's not Mary's. And Jesus is the seed of a woman, not the seed of a man. He's no descendant of Coniah. He's a descendant of Nathan. See, friend, listen to me. The tragedy of man doesn't hinder the purpose of God.

And do you know why that's important? Because throughout history, man has attempted to thwart it, change it, and redirect it, but God has stayed his course. When you look around this world and you see man in such tragic circumstances, you see the darkness of the world, you see people pushing against the kingdom of heaven.

Even in your own life, you've failed, you've messed up, you've made mistakes. We live such a tragedy life. We do things that are so unholy, unpleasing, unpleasant to a holy God. We look around the world and we see that everybody seems to be pushing against the things of God.

There is nothing new under the sun. The author of the book of Ecclesiastes said, man has been trying to change it since the beginning of creation. We only have to go back to the garden and see that man has been pushing against the kingdom of God.

[19:29] But then when we read our history, not when we read the history books, but when we read our history of scripture, we see that God always has his man and the purpose of God always comes about. Friend, listen to me. Be encouraged.

Christ came as he was so ordained and God is going to do what he has promised to do in your life because man's tragedy cannot stop God's purpose. For every promise of the second coming of Christ, there are twice as many promises, prophetic words, of the second coming of Christ as there were the first coming of Christ.

That is, if God did everything he said he was going to do the first time, we are doubly assured that he would do it the next time. He is coming again. And he is calling us to himself and gathering us around the wedding supper of the Lamb.

Listen, the tragedy of man cannot hinder the purpose of God. I don't care how bad it gets. You know why scripture is so encouraging? We find names of individuals that God is always moving through and always doing.

It is not because these individuals, listen, Seth, Noah, Abraham, Perez, Boaz, Obed, David, Nathan, these are men with failures just like us.

[20:45] But God does some wondrous things through them and he brings his purposes about. The unhindered purpose of God, it is not hindered by the tragedy of man.

Number two, it is not hindered, now you can go over to the first chapter, by the time that has passed. Sometimes we believe that God is limited to time and space.

Sometimes we are certain that God cannot do things because it's been so long. The author of the book of 1 Peter writes the same thing. He says, do not let the slowness of God be counted as unrighteousness.

Right? Peter says, but it is his patient, enduring, until people would come to the knowledge of him. We read here in the first chapter in verse five, in the days of Herod, king of Judea. So Luke gives us a timetable.

He tells us exactly when these things happen. All we really need to know for our purposes is it has been over 400 years since God has said a word. It's amazing to me. The last word that we have from God is the book of Malachi.

[21 : 45] It just so happens to be the last book in the Old Testament. But if you want to put things in their chronological order, you have the Ezra, Nehemiah, Malachi. That's your last three prophets, right? And you have Nehemiah, Malachi kind of overlapping each other.

And the very last word that God gives us is Malachi chapter four. After Malachi chapter four, God makes this prophetic word through the prophet Malachi, this minor prophet that we don't think much of.

You ought to pay attention to him while you'll see in just a minute. God says something through this minor prophet and then he goes silent. He doesn't say anything. For 400 years, for over 400 years, we have what we call the intertestament time. So when you turn from Malachi chapter four to Matthew chapter one, depending on which kind of Bible you have, usually it's just turning over a page and says the New Testament and you turn that page over and then you just make that transition just like that.

In history, it was 400 plus years. For 400 years, time marched on, for 400 years, religion continued. It's not that they stopped. We know religion continued because where do we find Zechariah?

Zechariah says in the temple, right? Where is Malachi? Malachi is prophesying to the temple. So the same things they were doing back then, they're still doing now. And there's a lot of things that happen at intertestament time. We can go through that, but I know you don't have time to do that.

[22 : 55] Hopefully tonight, our Bible study together, we'll do something totally different. Hopefully we'll just get right into this text and we'll study it with one another because there's a lot of things that happen in that 400 years that really shape and form what goes on among the nation.

We don't have time to do that. As a matter of fact, we see that the rulers and the powers have changed. The Romans have went from being in charge of the Jewish people to the Jewish revolt over 100 plus years to the Romans coming back in and we have Julius Caesar and all these things, you know, Shakespeare wrote about them too.

And the odds of March and all that other stuff that happened, all that stuff happened in that 400 year time and everything has changed. But God, the one thing to stay consistent is God hadn't said anything. There's no recorded word from God.

Some of you go, what about the book of Enoch, first and second? Enoch, what about first and second? Maccabees, all these intertestament periods, those are extra biblical texts. They are not authorized canon texts, okay? I know that you can say, you can read them and there's some weird stuff in some of those and some of them show us accurate history, some of it shows us kind of this religion being lived out thing, so don't look at it as scripture, don't look at it as, oh, this is the authoritative word of God, but what we have is no recorded word of God for over 400 years and that's important.

Henry Blackaby said in his experiencing, God said, experiencing and knowing the will of God, Henry Blackaby said, continue doing the last thing God told you, right? Whatever he told you, do it until he tells you to do something again and so here we go, we turn our pages, in those days we find Zacharias going into the temple, doing the last thing God had told him, going to the temple, going to the temple, the prophet Malachi had said, the priestly order is wrong, we need to change this, people need to repent, the priests are desperately wicked, quit robbing me, bring your offerings to the temple, right?

[24 : 37] Come into the temple and now we find them 400 years later continuing to do the same thing, continuing to do the same thing and Zacharias is going through the same motions, he's doing everything they used to do before, while the religious exercise is happening, the things are just going to and fro, God hadn't said a word and then he breaks the silence, you notice, I mean we

ought to stand up and go, God has spoken and you know who he spoke through, through Gabriel, right?

He sent Gabriel, Gabriel by the way is the same angel that went and spoke to Daniel and told Daniel about these things that was going to happen, it's amazing how consistent scripture is and Gabriel comes and where does he stand? At the right hand, that place of authority, right? He comes with an authoritative word, where does he go? He goes to the temple, why? Because that's the last place God said anything was in the temple, he is there, Zachariah, the prophet Zachariah, when you open that up, he makes this great declaration that the former glory of the temple would be a shadow in comparison to the latter glory, that in the last days of the temple, the glory of God would greatly be manifested, do you know historically what were the last days of the temple?

It is when Jesus Christ stood in the temple and said the glory has departed and he left the temple for the last time and some 40 years later the Romans come in and destroy and there hadn't been a temple there since. The greater glory of the temple was when Jesus Christ was standing there, it was not when Zachariah was there and the angel Gabriel showed up, it wasn't that 400 years of all this stuff going on, it wasn't how we get our festival of Hanukkah, the festival of lights, the fact that history shows that the Jewish people claim that the oil did not run out, the candles continued to burn, that's a really cool story but that's not the greatest glory, the greatest glory was that over 400 years after being silent, God showed back up in his temple and God said guess what, I'm about to do everything I said I was going to do and he just kept saying the same thing he used to say.

Do you want to know why you need to know your Old Testament? It's because the very last thing God said in the Old Testament is that there would be a prophet who would come in the spirit and power of Elijah and he would be a forerunner before the Savior who would turn the hearts of the children back to the fathers and the hearts of the fathers back to the children and he would make ready the way for the Lord.

[26 : 38] That's the very last thing God said and God shut his lips, he got quiet, everybody's like well what does that mean? 400 years later Gabriel shows up, he's in the temple, he tells Zechariah your son is going to be the forerunner who will turn the hearts of the children back to the fathers and the hearts of the fathers back to the children and he will be the forerunner.

If he did not know what God had said 400 years ago it wouldn't have made a hill of beans to him, right? If you don't know what God said in the past you're never going to know what he's saying today in the present. You need to know what God has declared because God does not change his story.

And I'm not saying this in a mean way and a bad way and this is a rejoicing way God always says the same thing, it's such a glorious thing. God is so consistent, he says it like this, I am the same yesterday, today and tomorrow, I do not change.

The character of God does not change. What he had said 400 years prior he just said it again and God was silent by repeating what he had already said and all of a sudden boom the glory shows up, the Shekinah glory is there, Jesus comes.

Why? Because time passing does not hinder the purpose of God. Friend I know that it was over 2,000 years ago that Jesus Christ died on a tree called Calvary. I know that it was over 2,000 years ago he was buried in a borrowed tomb.

[27 : 45] I know that over 2,000 years ago he was raised. I know that over 2,000 years ago he gave the church a great commission and I know that over 2,000 years ago the angel said in the same manner he went he's coming again and I know there's been a lot of time that has passed since then but guess what, that doesn't matter because as the New Testament tells us a thousand years is like a day and a day is like a thousand years.

It doesn't matter. The passing of time does not change the purpose of God. And that's a wondrous thing. God just continued to do the same thing. Third, the purpose of God is not hindered by temporary rule of others.

The purpose of God is not hindered by the temporary rule of others. That is, it doesn't really matter who's in control in the world. When he goes to Mary, and I know this is so much different than how I normally preach but it's okay, you're getting the story, I don't have to read the text to you.

I like when Gabriel goes to Mary, Mary's like, oh man, he gives her, by the way, a very Old Testament greeting, greetings favored one. You find that in the Old Testament. We see the consistency, I wish I had the time to go through how much of this is repetitive from the Old

Testament, from the barren women to the greetings that are given to the fact that Elizabeth, the wife of Zacharias, is according to the order of Aaron.

And by the way, do you remember what Aaron's wife's name was? Oh, it was Elizabeth too, right? Do you remember those things, right? And we see that God's doing everything right, he's doing everything proper, he's doing everything in the right way.

[29 : 11] And yet he goes to Mary and he says, greetings to everyone, the Lord's with you and all this, and she's astounded. And he announces the coming of this child and she's so amazed by the coming of this child. But he makes this promise. This is why, when you have to take it in context, okay?

You have to take this in context. The Maccabean revolt had happened, the Jewish people thought they were going to be free for a while and they had kicked the Romans out. And then in 164 BC, they fell again and then all of a sudden we have the Romans ruling.

And by this time, the Romans are large and in charge, right? The Romans are paving roads everywhere. This is the day, what does it tell us? Luke gives us a notation here in the days of Herod, the king of Judea.

Herod is appointed from the Roman rulers to be king of this land. So Rome is dictating everything. Rome is the one that is in charge. Rome seems to be the superpower of the world.

But what does the angel say to Mary? He says in verse 32, he will be great and will be called. You need to mark this and then you need to go back to the book and the writing of 2 Samuel and you need to see the Davidic covenant because what Gabriel says to Mary here is the same thing God said to David when he made a covenant about this seed of David.

[30 : 21] He says this similar things here. He says he will be great and will be called the son of the most high. What does the Davidic covenant say? Is that the offspring of David will be called the son of God? He will be called the son of the most high and the Lord God.

Look at this. We'll give him his throne. He will give him the throne of his father David and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever and his kingdom will have no end.

Now to us. Right? Yes. Amen. But to the Jewish people at that time that is astounding because the Romans have already told them we're the superpower. We're there. By the way she has him in Bethlehem.

Why? Because the Romans say we're going to take a census. Right? It doesn't really matter who's in charge because God's about to raise up this child who was set on the throne and that throne is going to be a worldwide throne.

We see in the book of Isaiah. And it's a very clear application. It doesn't matter who thinks they're in charge in the world. It doesn't matter what authority may be ruling the world. It doesn't matter what king may be sitting upon the throne.

[31 : 21] It doesn't matter which government may be setting all the affairs of worldwide events. It really matters little who's in charge temporarily because the purposes of God come about just as he declares they will.

Because he holds the heart of the king of all men in the palm of his hand. And he turns them where he wants. The Romans by the way are so instrumental in the spread of the gospel because it was the glory of the Romans that came and paved the roads that Paul walked on to share the gospel of Jesus Christ with.

Thank God for the Romans because they paved roads for the missionaries to use. Right? Thank God that God brought up these other people to do the work so that his people could go spread the news.

It's wonderful. It's wonderful. It matters little who's in charge in time and space when we understand who's in charge over all things and uses the world as its footstool. The purposes of God are not hindered by temporary rule of others.

Fourth and finally, and you've been very patient with me this morning. Fourth and finally, the purposes of God are not hindered by truths forgotten and forsaken. They are not hindered because the great truths of scripture are forgotten and forsaken.

[32 : 28] We go back to Zacharias in the temple. Zacharias is a priest according to the order of Abijah. His wife, Elizabeth, is of the lineage of Aaron.

And he is chosen by lot as was the custom. That's what they did. David set that up so many years ago. And he was chosen to do one thing. It was a high honor. You could only do it one time in your

life.

There were so many priests by the time Christ came and even the birth of John the Baptist that you could only be chosen to do this. It's a once in a lifetime event. Not every priest was chosen. But if you were ever chosen, you can never do it again.

Zacharias was chosen to go into the temple. Where was he going? You can say it out loud. It's okay. They'll hear you on YouTube. It's okay. Where was he going? He was going into the temple. Some of you heard. Okay. So he's going into the temple and he's going to go into the temple to do something very particular.

He was going to the temple at the hour of prayer to burn the incense. Now you remember your Old Testament, right? And you also remember that when Jesus on that Passion Week went into the temple, he overturned the tables.

[33 : 28] Because the temple, the house of God, was to have a name. And Jesus overturned the money changer's table and said, it is written. By the way, pay attention to that. It's the Old Testament. It is written, my house shall be called a house of prayer.

Right. Okay. That's good. That's why you have to pay attention to that. Right? It is written that my house, that is the temple, shall be called a house of prayer. And Zacharias went into the temple at the hour of prayer.

And he went to go burn the incense as a reminder. The incense, the altar of incense, that little altar that was there had to close on it. The incense, if you go back and you read the book of Leviticus, was a testimony to the people of God that their prayers ascended to the father.

Okay. So put all this together. He is in the house of prayer at the time of prayer, offering incense that signified the fact that God heard their prayers. And when the angel Gabriel says, your prayers have been heard, Zacharias didn't believe him.

Let me say it again. He was in the house of prayer at the hour of prayer, offering a sacrifice that symbolized God heard their prayers. And when Gabriel announced to him that God had heard his prayers, he didn't believe him.

[34 : 32] He was astounded. So much so that the angel told him he would be deaf and mute until these things came about. We meet the same thing happening in the book of Acts when Peter's in prison and there's a prayer meeting.

The church having a prayer meeting at the house. Remember that? There's a prayer meeting going over here and they're praying for Peter. They're praying for Peter. They're praying for Peter. They're praying for Peter. Peter's rejoicing in the cell and God wakes him up, leads him out of the prison.

He goes to the very house where they're having a prayer meeting and he knocks on the door and the servant girl hears the voice of Peter and she runs back and tells the church. She interrupts the prayer meeting and says, Peter's at the door. And they said, there's no way he's in prison.

Why? They were praying that he would be released and then they didn't believe that God heard their prayers. The great tragedy is when the people of God forget the truth that God hears our prayers and we doubt the reality that he would respond to our prayers.

But yet we find a priest in a temple at the altar of incense offering up a sacrifice signifying prayers and he forgot that God said he would hear their prayers. But you know what?

[35 : 32] Just because we fail doesn't mean he fails. When the truth of God is forgotten and forsaken, the purpose of God continues on.

We have reason to be in great despair and when we look around our land and we see a multitude and multitude and multitude of churches who seem to have gotten so far away from the truth with a capital T.

They not only have forgotten it, what they knew they have forsaken. They have laid it aside in order to be more popular. They have laid it aside in order to appeal to more people.

They have laid it aside to be more pleasing. They have laid it aside to be more trendy. But just because man does that does not mean God stops. And we shouldn't be surprised because even Zacharias standing in the temple forgot.

It is our responsibility to hold on to the truths of God. To look at them and say he is faithful. And say oh what glory. That just because man fails does not mean that God will.

[36 : 43] The purposes of God are unhindered. And we see it all throughout the Christmas event.

Friend, I don't know what he's saying to you this morning. But I do know this. That God calls us according to his purpose.

And there may be things in your life that says there's no way this is going to happen. What he promised me. It seems to be there's no way. I don't see how he could ever bring it about. If there was one time in history that we could look up and say there's no way God can do what he said he was going to do.

It would have been at this time. He's been silent for 400 years. Even the priest in the temple didn't believe in prayer. Mary, the least likely of all individuals. The family tree is riddled with people that have messed up and failings.

And there's all kinds of really stories in there. There's people referred to. There's a Moabitess. There's a harlot. There's a daughter-in-law. I mean, it's just there's incest. There's all kinds of stuff. It just looks like there's no way these things are going to happen.

What does Luke say? These are the things that have been accomplished among us. God can accomplish them even in the most unlikely of season, even in the most unlikely of times.

[37 : 49] Friend, listen to me. What God has purposed for your life is not hindered. It's not hindered. The only raging question is, will we stand up and say, your will be done, oh God, your will be done.

May I join with you in it. Would you pray with me? Lord, we thank you for this day. I thank you for your word. God, I know there's so much here. There's so much that we can't get into, but God, you speak great truth to us.

Oh, I praise you that you're unhindered. Oh, I praise you there's nothing that could stop you or thwart your plans. So Lord, we say, here we are, oh Lord. Oh Lord, God Almighty, have your way and have it in perfect, perfect peace and perfect purpose for your glory.

We ask it all in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Thank you.