

Luke 1:5-17 ,26-37, 2:8-14, Matthew 1:18-23

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[0 : 00] K because I think at times we get so wrapped up in the big picture that we don't slow down to see the small details and God is a God of details and God of orders which means every small part has a reason for being there. So this morning we'll look at passages in the gospel of Luke and the gospel of Matthew. I'll go ahead and let you mark them if you so want. When you turn to the gospel of Luke chapter 1 you can kind of leave that one there. So we'll look at Luke 1 verses 5 through 17 and also 26 through 37. Then we'll go to Matthew 1. That's where you may want to put something.

Matthew 1 we'll look at verses 18 through 23 and then we'll go back to Luke chapter 2 and we'll look at verses 8 through 14. If any of you are familiar with this portion of scripture you know that we are looking in particular at the interruption of history the announcement of heaven. Those passages which I have just told you are when the angels speak. So the first thing we will see in the interruption of history is the announcement of heaven that the angels had something to say. We're going to look at what the angels said and we'll look and see what happened or what took place when the angels spoke and we're going to leave it there. We're not going to focus so much on what man how man responds to that. We'll see that later on but we're just going to look and see the announcement of heaven and what it is God declares and hopefully we'll understand why that's so important. So if you are physically able and desire to do so would you join with me as we stand together and I'm going to read all those portions in one time so there'll be some page turning and we can we can get into that. I have to be a little bit more still in my reading but we're going to read. We'll start in the gospel of Luke in the first chapter. We'll start verse 5 reading down to verse 17 and then we'll go to the end of that first chapter or towards the middle actually over to verse 26 but I'll let you know. Starting in verse 5. In the days of Herod king of Judea there was a priest named Zechariah 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 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. Zechariah was troubled when he saw the angel and fear gripped him but the angel said to him do not be afraid Zechariah for your petition has been heard and your wife

Elizabeth will bear you a son and you will give him the name John. 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.

[3 : 25] Turn with me if you will to verse 26 of that same chapter. Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city in Galilee named 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 and 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 was called barren is now in her sixth month for nothing will be impossible with God. Go with me to the gospel of Matthew. Matthew chapter 1. Mark your place in Luke we're going back starting in verse 18. Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows when his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph before they came together as she was and she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit and Joseph her husband being a righteous man and not wanting to disgrace her planned to send her away secretly but when he had considered this behold an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream saying Joseph son of David do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife for the child who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit for she will bear a son and you shall call his name

Jesus and he will save his people from their sins. Now all this took place to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet behold the virgin shall be with child and shall bear a son and they shall call his name Emmanuel which translates which translates translated means God with us. Back to the gospel of Luke. Luke chapter 2. This is our last one. Luke chapter 2 starting in verse 8. In the same region there were some shepherds staying out in the fields and keeping watch over their flock by night and an angel of the Lord suddenly stood before them and the glory of the Lord shone around them and they were terribly frightened but the angel said to them do not be afraid for behold I bring you good news of great joy which will be for all the people for today in the city of David there has been born for you a savior who is Christ the Lord this will be a sign for you you will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger and suddenly there appeared with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying glory to God in the highest and on earth peace among men with whom he is pleased let's pray. Lord we thank you for this day we thank you for your faithfulness to us and Lord the opportunity we have of reading your word together. God we pray now that you would speak to our hearts and minds and that it would be your word that we hear not the opinion or the thought of man and but

Lord that you would speak to us with power and purpose and we ask it all in Jesus name. Amen. You may be seated. What we have just read together is the chronological order of the announcement of heaven.

[7:19] If we were to continue on in this chronological series of events we would get to the coming of the Magi and Joseph having another dream in which the angel warns him and tells him to take the child and leave because Herod is searching for him. We know historically that that probably happens much later than the birth possibly up to as much as two years after the birth of Christ. I know that we have a hard time with that sometimes because we always like for the wise men to be present in our nativity scene but the reality is is when they come in the gospel of Matthew they are already in a home and Herod anticipating this ask how long they had seen the star and it orders the execution of children two years and under according to the age which he determined from the wise men. That's how we get that order of events. So we have restricted ourselves to a very small window of history. Some nine plus six, fifteen months, okay? Some fifteen months in human history. You say, well how do you get that?

Well, the angel appeared to Zechariah in a temple. Six months later he appeared to Mary and then after Mary gave birth which normally is nine months, right? I'm not really good at math but I'm at fifteen. Fifteen months of history.

Just a little over a year. We have these announcements being declared. That God has something to say and he sends the angels. The word angel means messenger. He sends the messengers of heaven to make these announcements to man. That when God interrupted history he had something to say.

And maybe for some of you this is the first time you have ever read them in order. That we try to see how the picture puts itself together. And hopefully we'll stand and wonder in all of these announcements and the reality that they even took place.

And hopefully we'll see the application that it has to us that when God has something to say what does that mean to us? Now to put ourselves in the proper context we need to understand that by the time Zechariah stood in the temple burning incense at the altar of incense he did not go into the holy of holies. He went into the inner part of the, not to the inner part of the temple but into the inner chamber where not everyone was welcome. So he had walked into the temple into the first door

and when he went into the first door before you get to the second door, the holy of holies where only one man one time a year could go and that was the high priest and that was not Zechariah. So before the holy of holies there's this small altar of incense that is built and it is there and they're offering the incense and the smoke ascends into heaven.

[10:00] Now you need to understand these things because it really puts the announcement in context. Incense when it was burned was to put off smoke and a soothing aroma which was to be a reminder because everybody was outside praying. Remember that? Which was to be a reminder to the Jewish people that God heard their prayers.

It was to remind them that when they prayed God heard their prayers, that their prayers ascended to heaven much like the smoke from the incense ascended to the roof of the temple.

That when Zechariah went in and burned the incense on the altar of incense God had been silent for over 400 years. That is, nobody had heard a word from God in over 400 years.

As a matter of fact, the last thing God had declared to his people is recorded for you in the English Bible. It is the last book of the Old Testament in your Bibles.

It is the book of Malachi. That is the last thing God said. We enter into what is called the intertestament period. And the intertestament period, it spans roughly 400 years.

[11:11] It is about 430 years. But roughly about 400 years. And for those 400 years, there was no prophet, there was no prophecy, and there was no declared word of God.

Now you have intertestament books. Some of you have seen scriptures that include them. They are not canonical. That is, they are not necessarily approved by the early church to be portions of God's word.

And they don't even declare to have the authoritative word of God. They are historical. They have some historical writings in them. But they are not biblical in the sense that they declare that they are speaking the word of God.

They serve as kind of the history of the Jewish people. But for 400 years, God had been silent. For 400 years, no one has heard a word from God.

No declaration, no message, no prophets. And yet, in a span of 15 months, heaven can't be quiet.

[12:18] God begins to speak. Now, if someone has been silent for 400 years, and all of a sudden they begin to talk, we probably should pay attention. All of a sudden, they have a lot to say.

We should stand up and listen, but also receive what it is we hear. So hopefully, as we see the announcement of heaven, we will be amazed at exactly what it is God says and how it comes after so long of being silent.

Because this is something that literally interrupts history. 400 years, in 400 years' time, a lot has transpired in the nation of Israel.

When Malachi delivered his message that we have recorded for us in the Old Testament, the nation of Israel had just come out of Babylonian captivity.

And having come out of Babylonian captivity, they had reconstructed a temple. It was not necessarily the temple that they wanted, but it was a temple nonetheless. We see that in the book of Ezra and the book of Nehemiah.

[13:26] As a matter of fact, in the book of Ezra, the people who had seen the former temple weep because the new temple was so small. And they're just brokenhearted because it doesn't seem to even measure up to the temple that was destroyed when King Nebuchadnezzar came in.

And they are coming out of Babylonian captivity. Worship has been restored. And yet, Malachi comes with this message that, you want to offer to me the lame and the hurting and the broken? Why don't you give those to your governor?

So we see their worship is not even what they're supposed to be. And we understand these things. Malachi, they're coming out of Babylonian captivity. Well, after the Babylonian captivity, you have these people called the Greeks that move in.

Alexander the Great. He does this great rampage and he goes through all this land. History is important because history matters. I'm going to put yourself in the right part. Let's say this right.

Accurate history is important because accurate history matters, not just any history.

So Alexander the Great comes in and he swoops in and he conquers all these lands. And he spares Jerusalem. The reason he spares Jerusalem is because when he gets into Jerusalem, the Jewish people show him the book of Daniel.

[14 : 30] And in the book of Daniel, he sees the visions that Daniel has of this soon coming king. And he says, hey, that's me. And he was absolutely right. He says, since that's me and the people have been waiting on me, I'm going to spare them.

And he leaves them there. And Alexander forgot to read the rest of the story in Daniel where it says that that king who come would come to a very sudden end. Because just a little bit after he spared Jerusalem, he went on his campaign.

He's conquering all his land. And at a very young age, in his early 30s, he just falls over dead. He just dies. And when he falls over dead and dies, he had not planned his successors. So it divides up among his four generals.

You see that in Daniel's vision, by the way. And you say, how does this all have to do with the announcement? Stay with me. Okay, so it's divided up among his four generals. Those four generals kind of start fighting each other. And there's all this bickering and fighting.

And the nation of Israel is tossed back and forth between two of these generals over and over and over again. Between the Egyptian general, which I think is referred to as the Seleucids. And then there's another general that I can't remember his name.

[15 : 27] You'll just have to go back and forth. And they're fighting. And in the midst of this, the nation of Israel is just kind of tossed back and forth, back and forth. Until eventually, one realm of that kingdom rises to power.

We know that it's a Roman Empire. And a Roman Empire seems to rise to power. And the Roman Empire comes in and they take a hold of the land of Israel. The people of Israel says, we don't want anything to do with that. So they have a revolt.

And in about the year 160 or 150 BC, they have this revolt. And they set themselves up as an independent nation. And they are their own people. Intertestament period, right?

400 years. A lot of things take place in 400 years. You read about that in 1 and 2 Maccabees. The historical writings and things like that. Judas Maccabees. And this is where the festival of Hanukkah starts. So they set up this independent nation.

Well, Rome finally has enough of that. You can read, I mean, Shakespeare wrote poems about it. You know, Julius Caesar is his play that he wrote about these events. So when Julius Caesar finally rises to power, he says, I've had enough of that.

[16 : 24] And he goes on and he takes over Rome. I mean, the Roman Empire takes over Jerusalem once again. So now they went from being Babylonian captives to being free to being held captives of the Egyptians to going into the Roman Empire to being free to back to the Roman Empire.

And now they are enslaved. And all of a sudden, God says something to say. He speaks. It's really a lot has transpired. Right? So what does he say and why does he say it?

Now we'll get to the meat of how it applies to us. Number one, when God has something to say and he makes this announcement from heaven, number one, it is a prophetic word.

Here, in all of these verses, is a prophetic word. That is simply a good way of saying that he is not declaring something new to them.

This is why I gave you all the history. God is not going to declare something new. He is actually still saying the same thing he's already said. He comes with a prophetic word and speaks of the reality.

[17 : 33] Let all of this happen in your mind. But the very last thing God said in the book of Malachi, you've read it, right? You remember what the very last thing God said in the book of Malachi?

Behold, I will send him in the spirit of Elijah to go before me to prepare the hearts of my people.

That's the very last thing God says. That there will be a forerunner coming.

All of that takes place in history 400 years later, standing in the temple, which, by the way, Malachi is writing to people whose temple worship is not what it should be.

And the last thing God says is, I'm going to send a forerunner to prepare the people to worship me. And the very next thing God says is, hey, Zechariah, the forerunner's coming.

Have you ever known someone that you were carrying on a conversation with them, and that conversation gets interrupted, and all of a sudden you don't get to finish the conversation. You walk away from one another. But the very next time you see them, it's like they pick up without missing a beat exactly where they were at.

[18 : 37] This is what happens. But it had been 400 years since God had said that. 400 years earlier, God has said there is a forerunner coming, standing in the temple when the angel Gabriel

shows up, Zechariah hears, through you, the forerunner's coming.

See, God came with a prophetic word. When he, the angel Gabriel, goes and visits Mary in Galilee, in the city of Nazareth.

Oh, you of Nazareth, they're too small to be counted, worthy among any, but out of you shall shine a great light. Anybody know where that's? That's in the Old Testament. That's in the books of prophecy, right? There should be one who will come from you.

And then you have Isaiah 7, 14, and the virgin shall conceive and give birth to a child, and you shall call him Emmanuel. All this thing. What he does is reiterates the prophecy which God had already declared.

When he sends the angel to declare to Joseph that he can take her from the family and lineage of David, it is just fulfilling the prophecy.

[19 : 45] When the shepherds that are in the field, it says that he will be sent to the outcasts and to the broken, and he will be sent to those that are rejected. He is just fulfilling prophecy.

See, what God says is a prophetic word because it continues the message which he has already declared. What God says is just a continuation of what he has already promised, and that is important because we do not have to wonder what it is God's going to say when he finally speaks if we know what he has already said in the past.

See, the Bible tells us that we are not looking for a new word from God. We are looking for God to continue to declare the same word from God.

He will continue to do that which he has already said, and he will bring about that which he has already declared. Do you know that pertaining to the second coming of Christ, there are twice as many prophecies which pertain to the second coming of Christ as which pertain to the first coming of Christ?

Which means that God has already said twice as much about his second coming than he ever did about his first coming. So when we are looking for God to declare a word to us, what we are looking for is for him to continue declaring the message which he has already said.

[21 : 04] He may say it in a new way, but he is not saying a new thing. It is the same message, the same prophetic word, and I hope you understand that.

God does not come up with something new because in him it is eternally always new. It is the same message, the things that he had decided to do before the foundation of the world were laid, the things which he had been saying ever since the Garden of Eden.

He continues to say the same things. It is a prophetic word. One of the great things that we need to understand as his people. Today we are simply looking for God to fulfill and to continue the message which he has already declared.

We don't need God to tell us something new. What we need him to do is to continue reminding us of what he is doing and for him to fulfill what he has already promised.

If God will simply fulfill everything he has declared in here, we won't need anything else. We need a prophetic word from God. We don't need new prophets because as the book of Hebrews says, in former days God spoke in various manners and in various ways, but in these latter days, he has spoken to us through his son, Jesus Christ.

[22 : 29] Jesus is the final word of God. And if we can just hinge on everything that we hear from him, through him, to us, then we can see how God breaks the silence of history and the announcements that he has to man.

It is a prophetic word. Number two, here is a powerful word. Here is a powerful word. The word of God always comes with power.

The word of God does not come in meekness and mildness. Meekness is strength under control. Christ is meek. Moses is meek, but the word of God comes with power and authority.

It does not come to necessarily break apart and destroy, but it comes with authoritative response.

We see here that the word has the power, as we continue reading over the weeks, the word has the power to make Zechariah mute until the word is fulfilled.

The word has the power to overcome a Virgin Mary with the Holy Spirit of God to allow her to conceive in the womb something that is unimaginable and unthinkable so that she can bear the Son of God.

[23 : 43] The word has the power to convince Joseph, contrary to his nature, righteous though he may be, it doesn't make sense for someone to break the vows of betrothal and show up pregnant.

And that just doesn't make sense because nature doesn't testify to the reality of what she is declaring to him. All that he has ever seen and all that he has ever heard is there ain't but one way to make babies and what she is saying ain't it.

But the word comes with power to convince him otherwise for him to stay the course and to continue on. The word comes with power to announce to the outcasts of the shepherds, those which no one trusted and no one liked and everyone avoided and everyone stayed away because, I mean, let's just be honest, they smell like sheep, right?

They hang out with sheep, they live with sheep and that's all they know is sheep. And no one wants anything to do with them because they're just a bunch of shepherds. But it has the power to take the ones that no one wants and to invite them in where not everyone can go.

See, the word came with power. And it has the power to the unimaginable, it has the power to the unthinkable, and it has the power to transform everything.

[24 : 50] Not many people heard the announcements of heaven, not many. But yet what God said in that 15-month window changed the course of human history. We can go further than that.

What God said in that 15-month span of announcement changed the course of our eternity. See, when God speaks, he speaks with power. And what he said through the angels, which are just his messengers, in a span of 15 months, has the power to change your life and to change mine, not just for a few days, but for all of eternity.

Because if he had never declared it, and therefore he had never done it, then we would have no hope. We would be as Paul declared, we would be of all men most to be pitied.

Because all of eternity, for our sake, those who are trusting in Christ, listen, these are big rock issues, right? The virgin birth of Christ is a big rock issue.

As a matter of fact, that's one of those things that we will make or break our fellowship with one another. If you say, well, I don't believe in the virgin birth of Christ, and I'm gonna tell you, you don't believe the Bible.

[26 : 05] And I'm gonna say, if you don't believe the Bible, then I don't believe you're saved.

Because the virgin birth of Christ is absolutely a big rock issue. It is something that we cannot waver from, we cannot balk at, and we cannot walk away from.

Because the sin of man is passed along through the seed of man. And since Jesus is the seed of a woman, which makes no sense biologically speaking, but it makes all the sense in the world when she's overcome by the spirit of God, he no longer bears the seed of man.

And since he does not have the seed of man, therefore it is not an inheritor of the sin of man. And that makes him a sinless, perfect sacrifice for man. And see, if the angel had never declared such things, they never would have happened.

It came with power. The word of God always comes with power. When God speaks to us in our lives, he should speak to us with power and authority.

That is, whatever it is that God is declaring to us should come with an equal amount of power. And oh, how wrong it is that when we hear God speak, we walk away as if nothing happened.

[27 : 15] Because see, the word comes with power. You hold in your hand 66 books. 66 books combined into one large volume called the Bible.

Those 66 books are the word of God. As printed, it is just paper and ink.

But as declared by him, it is the very word of God which speaks with power and authority into our lives, which means that this should be the most transformational thing that we come about. This should have more impact on our hearts and on our minds, on how we live our lives, than any other thing.

This one book, one word from God, because it is just one great word. We don't have words of God. We have the word of God, right? And this word of God should have more power in our life than any other thing. I wonder, what's the most powerful force in your life?

[28 : 25] We don't have to wonder about it because we can ask ourselves, what dictates my day more than anything else? What determines what I do tomorrow? What determines what I do when I leave here?

What dictates my time, my energies, and my days more than anything else? Whatever that is, friend, that's the thing with the most power in your life. That's a question I have to ask myself.

We understand that when we come together, our time together as a church is very small, compared to the rest of time. I believe I am alone in this statement.

I spend more time in this building during the week than I spend at my own home. If you take out the sleeping time, okay? When I'm sleeping, yeah, that's fine.

But waking hours, I spend more waking hours here in this building. I'm the only one, I think, that does that. And that's okay, because this is my job. It's my occupation. I have to build those disciplines in. And I don't expect us to do that, but I'm not here with the church.

[29 : 25] I'm here at a building. Because I only get to spend time with the church a couple days a week. Because it's only when we're gathered together as a church, am I with the church.

The majority of our week is spent outside of church. Every one of us. But whatever dictates the majority of our life and how we live our life and the decisions we make, that is the thing that has the most power over us.

The word of God has power. And we see it when he makes these declarations over 15 months. Number three, here is a purposeful word.

That is, the word comes with purpose. The word comes with purpose. One of the characteristics of my personality, and God redeemed it, I can say that.

For some of you, I know this would be a shocker. I like to talk. I know that just amazes you. You can't believe that. You'd be really amazed how many pastors don't like to talk, by the way. A lot of pastors are not. I don't like public speaking.

[30 : 37] I really don't. It was a fear of mine and nothing I ever aspired to do. And when I took speech in college, I hated it. And the very first speech I ever gave, public speech I gave in college was how to change an oil in a 1967 Mustang.

That's the only thing I knew to talk about, right? So I gave that one and I did okay on that. But I didn't know how to do a lot of public speaking. I didn't like speaking to, I still to this day don't like speaking at drive up windows.

For one, because most of the time I get called a lady. They say yes ma'am to me. So I try to talk in my deep voice and, you know, avoid that. I think there's something in those speakers there that I'm, you know, anyway.

I never really liked ordering things. I didn't like walking up to counters. I just didn't do those things. I didn't like public speaking. But one thing my personality always says, I don't like silence. Some people say silence is okay.

Some people say it's blessed peacefulness. To me, it's just not right. When a group of people are together, you're not supposed to be silent. It makes me uncomfortable. It makes me awkward. And I just don't like silence.

[31 : 40] So a lot of times I will talk even when I'm uncomfortable. I've had to learn the discipline of being silent. I've had to learn that. I'm not just being honest with you. I've had to learn it's okay not to talk.

I've had to learn it's okay for me because I've had some loving people tell me that just because it's silent doesn't mean somebody's not trying to say something. You're just not giving them an opportunity to say something.

So maybe you need to be quiet. So I've learned to, at least I'm trying to learn even the biblical thing that a multitude of words leads to sin. Boy, I can testify to that, right?

But have you ever met those who, like me, that when it's silent, they just have to speak, just for speaking sake, just have to say something, even if it doesn't matter?

Well, God went 400 years without saying anything. And when the angels spoke, they didn't just speak to be heard. They didn't have a right to come down here and say whatever they wanted to say.

[32 : 40] They couldn't come and show up in the temple or in Nazareth or in the home of Joseph or in the field with the shepherds. There was no small talk.

There was no needless words. See, an angel can only declare that which God has told them to declare. And if they don't, then they are no longer true angels.

They're fallen angels. We refer to them as demons. True angels, heavenly messengers, can only declare that which God tells them to declare and that alone. That is, that's why we pay attention to when the angels speak.

They don't come with an opinion. They don't come with preconceived notions. They come to declare what God has said. And we need to understand this, that when God speaks, he always speaks with purpose.

I didn't say when he spoke. I said when he speaks. He always speaks with purpose. When Zechariah went in to burn incense, he didn't expect to hear a word from God, but God had something he had to say.

[33 : 45] And when God had something to say, he had a purpose behind saying it. When we read the text, it says it just so happens by chance that Zechariah's lot was chosen and Zechariah got to do a once in a lifetime event.

I mean, literally, it's once in a, if your lot, it was a big if, if your lot was chosen to burn incense, you never got an opportunity to do that again in your life because there were so many Levitical priests that not every Levitical priest had the opportunity to do such things.

But it just so happens that six months before it is time for Mary to conceive a child that Zechariah, who so happens to be an older gentleman whose wife is advanced in years and barren and of the right family in the Levitical tribe, just so happens to be the one that is chosen by lot, that is by chance, to be the one standing where God has something to say.

And God has a purpose in saying it. He didn't go to Zechariah. I said, Zechariah, this is a pretty cool thing, right? You get this opportunity. He says, Zechariah, your prayers have been answered. Now, I'm amazed at this because he says, Zechariah, your prayers have been answered, right?

He didn't say Elizabeth's prayers. He didn't say the prayers of the people. He said, your prayers have been, but when we continue reading, we'll see in just a minute that Zechariah thinks, there's no way. We don't know how long ago Zechariah prayed that. He could have prayed that 30 years prior or 20 years prior to this event.

[35 : 06] Surely by now he had forgotten about that prayer, but listen, friend, God never forgets. And he had a purpose to declare what he was saying right there. He says, now, today, this is the day your prayers have been answered.

When Gabriel was sent to Mary, he had a purpose for calling her highly favored one, for offering shalom or peace be with you to her and declaring to her, there's a purpose for my coming. Something's going to happen. When Joseph is asleep and the angel appears to him in a dream, there's a purpose for what the angel has to say. Something Joseph has to do. When the angels are coming to the shepherds that are in their field, there's a purpose that they came to the shepherds. God's word comes with purpose. It doesn't just happen to be making sounds and wanting to resonate and just to make a little noise because God is disturbed by the quietness. He's not. We forget that God existed in eternity past before anything else did. Silence is not a problem with God.

[36 : 11] He is eternal and the Godhead existed in eternal form. I know this will blow your mind. Before the universe and before the world was ever created because it says in the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.

Well, that beginning is the beginning of this creation. That's not the beginning of God. If we could go back to in the beginning and stand at the beginning, that point when everything was created and we could look out in eternity past, in eternity past, God is still there.

God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit is still there. fullness within themselves, coexistent with one another, fully satisfied with one another, and has no problem without anything else.

That's what we call self-existent God. He doesn't need us. So, when He chooses to interrupt our history and say something to us, there's a purpose behind it. that is to say, that when God speaks to you through His Word, sometimes He speaks to us through other people, sometimes He speaks to us through our circumstances, that when God speaks, there's a purpose behind it.

There's something He's wanting to do. There's something He wants us to do. And, friend, listen to me, since the Word is prophetic and that it is not new, if we don't know what God has always been doing, we will not know to what purpose He is speaking to us to do.

[37 : 37] Because, just like He's not going to give you a new Word, He's not going to call you, it may be new to you, but what He calls us to do through His Word is consistent with His purposes and plans throughout history.

He's always going to be doing the same thing. By understanding how God acts and understanding what God does and understanding the purposes of God and the plans of God, then we get a little bit clearer understanding of when He speaks to us, this must be what He's asking me to do.

Because God will never ask me to do anything contrary to His purpose. Okay? The cult life, and I'll give you some examples, I know I'm going a little bit long, but the cult life, I remember one cult in particular said, God has told us that we all need to get together in a room and drink His special Kool-Aid and we'll go meet Him in the sky, that is, we'll all die, right?

Let's all gather together, drink this special Kool-Aid and we're going to be raptured to Him. That is not consistent with the purposes of God because when God calls people to Himself, He declares that they will be witnesses to a watching and waiting world.

Right? God said, I'll come get you when it's time, but until it's time, you stay and be a witness for me. So see, understanding how God from Adam and Eve in the garden all the way to the church in the book of Revelations, God's purposes are that His people will be a billboard to a watching world and whenever I find someone telling me God has said we need to do something contrary to that, I can say, oh, no.

[39 : 04] That's not consistent with the purpose of God, therefore He is not a God of inconsistencies and He must not be saying that to me. There may be a lowercase g God saying that who likes to put on a front that looks like a God and we refer to Him as Satan or the devil.

See, God speaks with purpose and we need to understand that purpose. Fourth and finally, and I'm done, I promise, and this one is short, not only is here a prophetic word, here is a powerful word, here is a purposeful word.

friend, look at this. Here is a personal word. Here is a personal word. Did you notice that after 400 years of silence, by the time Christ comes into Jerusalem on Passion Week, by the time Christ comes into Jerusalem on Passion Week, I know that's where we've been, right, in the book of Matthew, there are probably three to five million Jews gathered in Jerusalem during that week to celebrate the Passover.

You have a thing called the Diaspora, that is, the Jewish people are dispersed among the Roman slash Greek Empire. They're all over the place. God's people are everywhere.

You know, when we read in the book of 1 Corinthians 15, Paul writes to the church at Corinth that God is absolutely capable of standing in the heavens and making such a declaration to all the world we hear.

[40 : 38] As a matter of fact, God says, he can send an angel to blow a trumpet that everybody on earth is going to hear from all corners of the earth. But yet, when God broke the silence of 400 years, God did not stand in the heavenlies and let all the world hear.

He went to individuals or small groups of individuals. He had a personal word. Zechariah is the only one who heard what God said in the temple.

Mary is the only one who heard what God said at Nazareth. Joseph is the only one who heard that God said in his dream. The shepherds were the only ones who heard what God said in the fields. Even though God can say it so that everyone will hear it, he does not often do so. He says it where his people whom he is intending to speak to will hear it. It is a personal word.

The reason Joseph needed a word from God is because Joseph couldn't stand on the word that Mary heard. He needed a personal word. And the reason shepherds needed a word from God is because no one would believe them even if Mary and Joseph walked by them and told them about it.

[41 : 49] They needed to know that they were invited. They needed a personal word. It's a personal word. See, the problem in our churches is that so many people are standing on a word that God said to someone else. You don't need to know what God has said to me.

You need to know what God has said to you. It's a personal word. When God speaks to his people, he always speaks to them as individuals and personally.

He meets them where they're at and has a word for them where they're at so that he can do with them what he's intending to do. He has the power to do it. He has a purpose for doing it.

What he's looking for is the people who he can speak to. God's word is a personal word. May we be those people who say, see, there are people who say, I just want to hear a word from God.

I just want to hear. What you're looking for is a validation that God exists. If you are looking for God to prove to you that he exists, Jesus says it is a wicked and perverse generation that seeks after a sign.

[42 : 58] You can stare up into the heavens and the heavens declare his existence. You can walk outside and look at creation and creation testifies to his existence.

You can study science and even though the scientists may argue with you, science testifies to his existence. He doesn't need to tell you he exists. He's already declared it all over the place.

May we be those people who say, I want a word from God that has the power to do what he asked me to do according to his purpose. God's got a personal word for each of us.

Lord, I want that word. I want to know what it is you want me to do according to your purposes. I want that word. Then, just then, God may interrupt the history of our lives and turn it into his story for his glory as he has an announcement from heaven for each one of us.

Let's pray. Lord, I thank you. I thank you for this day and I thank you for our time together. Lord, we do pray, oh God, that you would continue to speak to your people for your glory, for your purposes and your plans.

[44 : 23] May we as your people stand ready and willing to hear. And God, may you get the honor from how we respond. We ask it all in Jesus' name.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[46 : 34] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[49 : 04] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.