

I. How does God respond to His people's prayers?

- A. Silence—so we'd better take care of ourselves?
- B. Static—so we can take away what we want to hear?
- C. Voice—so we can receive what God wants to say to us and do with our lives?

II. Background on the Gospel of Luke:

- A. Written after Mark, probably after Matthew, before John.
- B. Contains most of the information in Mark, shares common material with Matthew.
- C. Apparently written by Luke (Colossians 4:14; 2 Timothy 4:11; Philemon 24)
- D. Written for an educated audience in the Greek-speaking Roman Empire.
- E. An invitation to a new understanding of God's purposes in the world.

III. The promise of John's birth

- A. Time marker: in the days of Herod, king of Judea.
- B. A priest and his wife, both righteous people, but barren.
- C. Zacharias serves in the temple:
- D. An angel of the Lord appears, and he is filled with fear
- E. What prayer has been heard? Both Zacharias' prayer for a child and his prayer for redemption for Israel.
- F. John's mission
- G. Zacharias' reaction
- H. The angel's response
- I. Zacharias goes home, full of good news that he cannot utter.

IV. The big picture

- A. Last week we talked about the coming one who would crush the head of the serpent.
- B. Zacharias and Elizabeth represent the best there was before the promised Son came: righteous and admirable but barren, nearing death.

V. God's response to His people's prayer is:

- A. In keeping with His grace
- B. Not only for the individual's good
- C. To be received with faith, even when they're not what (or when) we expect.
- D. Against all odds
- E. Powerful, real, tangible.
- F. At the right time.
- G. Focused on Jesus Christ