

PRAYING In The Bible

Zachariah's Prayer

Isaiah 55:11 *“so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.”*

Zachariah received the word of the Lord. Yet, for some reason, the angel Gabriel decided to mute this man for not accepting the words outright. It is an interesting thing that happened to this man. Yet, in time, Zachariah's mouth was opened and he was able to confirm what God had said. I feel that he grew that day. His faith became stronger because God came first. This prayer (song) of Zachariah is an ode to God.

Sometimes we pray for things. Other times people cry out in pain to the Lord. Zachariah is exalting the Lord. That is why the Spirit of the Lord came upon him and he prophesied. This prayer is God's word calling out to the world that the Lord is preparing the way as he said thought the prophet Isaiah all those years before. Isaiah 40:3 *“A voice of one calling: “In the wilderness prepare the way for the LORD; make straight in the desert a highway for our God.”* This Prayer is connected to Isaiah.

Isaiah 40:1-2” *Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and proclaim to her that her hard service has been completed, that her sin has been paid for, that she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins.”*

Zachariah begins with a hearty praise that the Lord has redeemed His people. The word “horn” shows up again and it means victory. He is saying that our salvation has arrived.

Zachariah names David for a reason. God made David a promise in 2 Samuel 7:8-11. A promise to raise up a savior and build him a kingdom. Zachariah says so in verse 70 by stating that the prophets declared this. Yes, to David and yes, to Isaiah.

He then goes on to send Gods promise back to Him. In a way it is ingenious writing. The word goes out to Nathan the Prophet and to David. The word also goes out through Isaiah the prophet. Then hundreds of years later it goes out through the Angel Gabriel as well. Now in this prayer we have Zachariah returning the word to the Lord. I am just amazed to see Gods word doing what it set out to do. Even if there is a large gulf of time in-between.

Finally, we have Zachariah stating the second part of the promise. In a way it is (yet again) unfulfilled prophesy. His son John the Baptist and Jesus have not fulfilled Gods promise yet. However, this prayer is declaring that Gods plan is in action, not because the actions of John and Jesus “have” saved, but “will” save. This is so powerful because Zachariah has truly grown. He is now not questioning Gods actions but declaring them fulfilled before they have even been completed.

He then goes on to mirror much of the promises of God to David and Isaiah. That their enemies will be defeated. That the mercies of God are upon His people. In many ways this prayer is a praise report. God said He would save us and now He is doing it. Luke 1:74 *“to rescue us from the hand of our enemies, and to enable us to serve him without fear.”* This is powerful stuff. Zachariah then adds Abraham to the mix. Why? It is because God promised Abraham the same thing. Genesis 12:1-3 *“And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”*

Zachariah finally attaches these promises to his son John. Did he think that John was the coming of Elijah? Yet, clearly, he is connecting prophesy to John. We see the words salvation, forgiveness, and sins. These words are all connected to Jesus. John baptized with water to repent of sin. Jesus baptizes with the Spirit for the forgiveness of sin. Luke 1:78-79 *“because of the tender mercy of our God, by which the rising sun will come to us from heaven to shine on those living in darkness and in the shadow of death.”* That Shadow of death shows up in Psalm (23) and Matthew 4. We all walk under the shadow of Death. The judgment of God. Yet, through the savior we are spared. This is such a powerful and amazing ending to this prayer of Zachariah.

Like I said, this is an ode to God. God makes declarations and promises and He fulfills them. His word goes out all over the pages of scripture. The New Testament is mainly the answer to those promises. I suspect Zachariah had heard of them. He had read them and memorized the scripture. It is so important that Luke 1 ends with this prayer. It is a declaration that the Lord is coming. That the way of the Lord has been born just as God foretold His prophets. Luke 2: it begins with the birth of Jesus. Luke 3: (almost twenty years later) we have John declaring that Jesus is coming. He is preparing the way for the Lord. Zachariah’s song (prayer) glorifies God and glorifies Gods word and promises.