

“The Other Unusual Birth In The Christmas Story”

Luke 1:57-80

Sermon Series: “The Christmas Story”

Introduction: At Christmas, we hopefully focus on the virgin birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ. It was a unique, one of a kind birth because Jesus was unique and one of a kind, the God-Man.

However, there was another unusual birth that was a part of the Christmas story, the birth of John (often known as John the Baptist), who was related to Jesus through their mothers. His birth was a miracle because his parents were past childbearing age (it was a confirming sign for Mary regarding the virgin birth), because he was filled with the Holy Spirit from the womb (v. 15), and because he was appointed to be the forerunner of the Messiah. So, his birth was unique, but I think it is also instructive to us. **What made his birth so special and what are the lessons we can learn from it?**

1. His birth was an answered prayer that was part of the sovereign plan of God (v. 57-66, 11-17). The lesson for us is that God answers prayers according to His sovereign plan.

Sovereignty means that God is in control and is working out His plans, that He rules and reigns, and that nothing happens that He does not cause or allow to happen. Here are some practical applications for us:

A. Although our births are not as unusual as John the Baptizer’s, they are still planned by God (Acts 17:26).

B. Answered prayer takes place when our requests and God’s sovereign plan intersect with one another (1 John 5:14-15).

C. Seemingly unanswered prayer may mean the time is not right yet or it may mean that it is not in God’s sovereign plan, but we can trust that God is always doing what is best for us (Romans 8:28).

D. God’s sovereignty is greater than our unbelief.

E. God has a plan for our lives, but that does not mean that we do not need to prepare ourselves to accomplish what He has prepared for us (Luke 1:80).

F. A major priority for us as parents should be attempting to discern and help prepare our kids for the fulfillment of God’s plan for their lives.

2. John’s birth was not about him, but it was really about Jesus (v. 67-79). The lesson for us is that we exist for Jesus instead of ourselves (Colossians 1:15-18). His father, Zacharias, prophesied regarding him, “And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Highest; for you will go before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways” (v. 76). This was a fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy (Isaiah 40:3), and it was what John obediently did with his life (John 1:8-29, 3:22-36). We are called to make much of Jesus with our lives. We are called to trust Him for salvation and then live for His glory. Jesus came to save us, and John was born to testify of this salvation. John’s motto for his life, which was “He must increase, but I must decrease” should be our motto as well. **Will you trust Jesus for your salvation and live your life for Him?** Zacharias’s prophecy referenced John, but it was primarily about Jesus coming to earth to save us. Here are four beautiful pictures of salvation from the words of Zacharias:

A. Redemption (v. 68): Warren Wiersbe has written that “the word redeem means to set free by paying a price. It can refer to the releasing of a prisoner or the liberating of a slave.”

B. Victory (v. 69-75): A horn speaks of strength, victory, and power in Scripture. Jesus defeated Satan and liberated us from his kingdom (Colossians 1:13-14).

C. The Cancellation Of Our Sin Debt (v. 77): Jesus paid the debt we owed God on the cross so we can be forgiven (Colossians 2:14).

D. The Dawning Of A New Day (v. 78-79): Jesus makes all things new and gives us light and peace.