



LEADER TIPS

Supplemental Texts

Malachi 4:5-6; Luke 11:1-12

Study Summary

Israel has not heard from the Lord in 400 years. All of that begins to change the moment the lot fell on Zechariah, selecting him to enter the sanctuary of the Lord and burn incense.

The prayers of God's people have not ceased being offered though they have not yet been answered. Specifically, Israel has been yearning and praying for the Messianic age to be ushered in for they have been suffering for too long under the disgrace of Roman occupation. They continue to live without the promises of God being fulfilled.

Israel's shared struggle is illustrated in Zechariah and Elizabeth's personal struggle. Despite being devoted to the Lord, they remain childless and have moved beyond child-bearing years. Their prayers for a child have not been answered. But now that will all change. For the Lord will not only give them a child, but this child will also serve God's saving purpose by ushering in the Messianic age.

By removing Elizabeth's disgrace, the Lord is working to remove the disgrace of His people. The promised Messiah is on His way!

Teaching Tip

The Study Primer may be best utilized as a bridge between the Examination and Intersection sections this week.

STUDY PRIMER

What God does in the lives of Zechariah and Elizabeth is for their joy, His glory, and others good. Do you realize that what God does in your life is not just for you but for the benefit and blessing of others? In what ways is God working in your life right now? How might that translate into blessing for others?

EXAMINATION: WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

"A STORY FOR US" LUKE 1:1-4

Big Idea: Grace removes disgrace.

- ⇒ Devotion and Desires (vv. 5-7)
 - How are Zechariah and Elizabeth described in v. 6?
 - What is the source of their disgrace in v. 7?
- ⇒ Prayer and Provision (vv. 8-17)
 - What was the role of the priesthood? (v. 9)
 - How did Zechariah respond to the angel of the Lord? (v. 12)
 - What role will John the Baptist fulfill in salvation history?
- ⇒ Silence and Signs (vv. 18-23)
 - Why was Zechariah struck silent? (v. 20)
 - What did Zechariah's silence tell the people (v. 22)
- ⇒ Grace and Disgrace (vv. 24-25)
 - What does Elizabeth declare in v. 25?

INTERSECTION: How does the text intersect with our lives?

- What are some examples of good, godly desires that people have but may not yet be realized or fulfilled? Do you find it difficult to maintain devotion when such desires remain unfulfilled in your life? How might you stay devoted to the Lord despite good, godly desires being unfulfilled?
- The presence of incense rising the temple reminds us that God welcomes and wants His people to pray. Our prayers reach him as a pleasant aroma. Do you believe that God welcomes and wants His children to pray to him?
- God's answers to our prayer may be yes, no, or later. How does having a category for "later" encourage you to persist in prayer? How do you discern God's "no" from God's "later" as an answer to a request?
- What sources of disgrace are people struggling with today?
- How does God's grace remove our disgrace? Is there a particular source of area of disgrace that the Lord has removed for you personally that you would be comfortable sharing with the group?

REPLICABLE QUESTIONS

Read Luke 1:1-4 and explore together what the passages reveal about:

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| 1) The character and purposes of God? | 4) Our identity in Christ? |
| 2) The fallen human condition? | 5) Our obedience to Christ? |
| 3) The gospel of Jesus Christ? | 6) Our relationship to others? |

APPLICATION: "So, what now?"

Have each participant identify a personal take-away in light of this study. Is there . . .

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| • a command to obey? | • a beauty to behold? | • a mission to fulfill? |
| • a promise to claim? | • a truth to believe? | • an example to follow? |
| • a sin to repent of? | • a service to render? | • a person to tell? |