

LESSON PLAN

THE BIRTH OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

Luke 1:5-25, 57-80

Lesson Memory Verse: Romans 4:20 - "He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God."

Lesson Aim: We can depend on the promises of God because He is true to His word.

Lesson Plan: Use the KEY – HE – SEE – WE – Be plan (explained in the Introductory Notes).

KEY (for Attention): Begin the lesson by asking the students "Did anyone ever promise to give you a prize, or promise to take you to a special place, if you did something for them?" "Was that person true to his word and gave you what he had promised you?" (Let the students tell their experiences.) Then tell the students that you are going to make a promise to them. Tell them that you will give them a gift at the end of the lesson if they listen carefully to the Bible story. (Your gift can be inexpensive, but it should be something that is worthy of their effort to listen carefully. It could be a couple mini candy bars plus a children's tract. Do not show them what you promise to give them until the end of the lesson.) Then ask the students to raise their hand if they believe that you will keep your promise to them.

HE (for Authority): Our memory verse tells us about a man who believed God's promise to give him a son when he was very old, and God kept His promise. This man was Abraham. Abraham "staggered not at the promise of God." That means Abraham did not quit believing God's promise to him. He did not know how God was going to do it, but he believed God would give him a son. Our memory verse also tells us that Abraham was "strong in faith." This means that he was determined to believe God would keep his promise; he was absolutely certain that he would have a son someday. By not doubting God's promise and by having a strong faith in God, Abraham brought "glory to God." This means that God was honored by those who saw Abraham's faith in Him. After many years, God was true to His word and He gave Abraham a son by his wife, Sarah. He was 100 years old and his wife was 90 years old. Their son was Isaac. We also will bring honor and glory to God when let others know that we believe His promises. This truly pleases God (Heb 11:6).

SEE (for Apperception) and WE (for Application): PLEASE do not read these comments until you have read the Scripture for this lesson. First let the Holy Spirit teach you directly from His Word. In our Bible story today we will see that God promised to give another man a son when he was old and He kept that promise as well.

I. Parents of John the Baptist - Luke 1:5-7

Zacharias and his wife, Elisabeth, were godly people who lived in Israel over two thousand years ago. Zacharias was a priest and his wife was related to Mary, the mother of Jesus. They were believers in God ("righteous before God" – v. 6) and they lived godly lives, which were "blameless" before Him. They obeyed God's rules and commandments and this pleased Him. However, Zacharias and Elisabeth had a problem which they had asked God to solve. In their society, it was a disgrace for a family not to have children. So they had asked God for a son (v. 13). Since God did not answer their prayer while they were young, Zacharias and Elisabeth began to doubt that He would answer their prayer as they grew older. They must have forgotten how God had given a son to Abraham when he was 100 years old. Was God still able to give Zacharias and Elisabeth a son in their old age as He did for Abraham and Sarah? Yes He could, because God does not change.

WE: When we pray and God does not answer our prayer right away, do we doubt that God will keep his promise? Instead of doubting God, it would be better to examine our lives. Maybe He does not answer our prayer, because we know of a sin in our life that we are unwilling to confess and stop doing it. But if we do not know of any sin that we have not confessed, then it is more likely He is testing our faith in Him to answer our prayer at the right time. He will answer our prayers when we live for Him and His words live in us (Jn 15:7). Do you believe God hears your prayer and will answer them? Do you believe He will answer your prayers, even though He does not answer them right away?

II. Promise of John the Baptist - Luke 1:8-17

One day as Zacharias was doing God's work in the temple, he saw someone in the temple with him that he had not seen before this time. He was very troubled by this person in the temple and became afraid.

LESSON PLAN

This person was standing on the right side of the altar of incense. When this person spoke to Zacharias, he understood that he was an angel sent by God to give a promise to Zacharias in answer to the prayers of him and his wife, Elisabeth. The angel told him that he and Elisabeth would have a son. The angel told Zacharias that he was to give his son the name John. The angel told Zacharias that the birth of their son would bring them gladness and many would rejoice with them. He also promised that their son would be great in the eyes of the Lord; he would direct many people in Israel to turn to the Lord. He would be used by God to prepare people to follow the Lord Jesus Christ. He would be known as John the Baptist and some of his disciples would become the disciples of Jesus.

WE: We also have been given many promises by God that are found in the Bible. He has given us the promise of answered prayer (Jn 15:7); the promise of victory over sin (Gal 5:16-17; 1 Cor 10:13); and the promise of eternal life (1 Pet 1:5-9; 1 Jn 5:11-13). We should be happy that God has blessed us with these promises and many, many more.

III. Doubt about John the Baptist - Luke 1:18-25.

Even though Zacharias was a priest of God and served in the temple of God, he doubted the promise of God. When he heard the angel tell him that God promised to give him and Elisabeth a son, he did not believe it. He believed that they were too old to have a son born to them. Gabriel, the angel that God had sent to Zacharias, told Zacharias that because he had not believed the promise of God, he would not be able to speak until the promise was given to them. When Zacharias came out of the temple, he could not speak to the people who were waiting to see him. They realized that he had seen a vision in the temple. Just as Gabriel had said, Zacharias did not speak until Elisabeth gave birth to their son.

WE: We need to learn a lesson from Zacharias: do not doubt God's promises. We can depend on His promises; they are always true. Therefore, we must believe His promises. This is what pleases the Lord (Heb 11:6). Do you believe God answered your prayer when you called on Him to save you by His Son, Jesus Christ (Rom 10:13)? If you received Jesus as your Savior (Jn 1:12), God says you can know that you have eternal life (1 Jn 5:11-13). Do not doubt God's promises. We will have joy when we believe what He has promised to us.

IV. Birth of John the Baptist - Luke 1:57-80

Shortly after God's promise to Zacharias, Elisabeth began to show that she would have a baby. When she gave birth to her baby boy, her friends and relatives came to see the child they named him Zacharias. It was the custom in those days to name the first baby boy after the father. However, Elisabeth said that the baby boy should be called "John" according to the command given to them from God by the angel. Zacharias still could not speak, but when they asked him about the child's name, he wrote on a tablet, "His name shall be John." After this, Zacharias could speak once again just as God had promised (1: 20). Now that Zacharias could speak, he praised and thanked God for keeping His promise. Zacharias and Elisabeth were now very happy.

WE: We need to learn from this lesson that God always keeps His promises. Just as God kept His promise to Zacharias and Elisabeth, He will keep all the promises that are given to us in the Bible. This should make us very happy, too, and we must remember to thank God for being faithfulness.

BE (for Action): In our story today, you have heard how God made several promises to Zacharias and Elisabeth. What was the main promise? (He would give them a son, even when they were old) What were some of the promises that God made regarding their son? (He would bring them gladness; he would be great in the eyes of the Lord; he would turn many Israelites to the Lord; he would prepare the way for the Lord Jesus Christ) God kept His promises to Zacharias. He will keep His promises to you, too. He promises to make you His child and give you eternal life, if you receive Jesus as your Savior (Jn 1:12; 1 Jn 5:11-13). You can believe God's promise today and I will be glad to help you understand exactly what you should do if you want accept His promise after our class is over. If you are saved but you have sin in your life that you have not confessed to the Lord, I urge you to believe God's promise to cleanse your heart when you confess your sin to Him (quote 1 Jn 1:9 to them) and be forgiven of your sin. (Now ask the students if they remember what you promised them. Then keep your promise to them and give them your gift.) God will keep His promises, too. Believe His promises and you will be happy and thankful for every one of them. Let's pray right now and thank God that all of His promises are true.