

Sermon Text Discussion 12/4/2016

Luke 1:1-25 – “Make Ready a People” by Eric Bobbitt

Overview

The Old Testament ends with the words of Malachi 4:5-6, where the Lord tells his people that he will send the prophet Elijah so that “...he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers...” The people of God are left with a sense of anticipation as they wonder, “When will Elijah return?” The narrative of the first 25 verses of Luke pick up on this sense of anticipation as shown in the lives of Zechariah and Elizabeth. In these verses, we see:

- 1) An introduction (v.1-4)
- 2) Zechariah & Elizabeth (v.5-7)
- 3) The angel’s visit with Zechariah (v.8-12)
- 4) John’s birth and life (v.13-17)
- 5) Zechariah’s response (v.18-23)
- 6) Elizabeth’s response (v.24-25)
- 7) Our response

The name Zechariah means “God remembers.” This text in Luke 1 highlights the clear truth that God has not forgotten his words in Malachi 4:5-6.

Quotations

“People create in their own minds a picture of what God will do, but what God actually does is always astounding.” -Eric Bobbitt

“Both John and Jesus were related, both met Herod, and both were killed (directly or indirectly) by Herod. What must Herod have thought of this family?!” -Eric Bobbitt

Understanding & Application

- 1) Is there something that you anticipated in your life that never came to pass? A dream? A goal? A longing that has to this point gone unfulfilled?
- 2) Though the people of God were (or should have been) anticipating Elijah’s return according to Malachi 4:5-6, most (including Zechariah and Elizabeth) people were caught off guard by what God was doing through the births and lives of both John and Jesus. When you consider the main characters of the advent texts, what characters’ reactions (Zechariah, Elizabeth, Mary, Joseph, wise men, shepherds etc.) stand out to you and why?
- 3) When you consider the incarnation, that the Son of God left heaven to come to earth as an infant and ultimately to save God’s people, what is stirred up in you? What thoughts or feelings *should* be stirred up in you more strongly?
- 4) Why does Jesus say in Luke 7:28 that among those born of women there is none that are greater than John?
- 5) Compare and contrast Zechariah’s and Elizabeth’s responses to the news of the angel.
- 6) What would Zechariah and Elizabeth say to us to do or to be in order to be prepared for the coming of the Messiah? In the remainder of the advent season, what will you commit to do in order to be prepared?