

# Luke 1:18-23. the Unbelief of Zacharias.

by Favell Lee Mortimer

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of trusting in God's power and mercy, even when we do not understand His ways, and the consequences of unbelief.*

**Scripture:** Numbers 6:24, Psalm 107:43, 1 Thessalonians 5:18, James 1:6

**Topics:** "Faith And Doubt", "Gods Sovereignty"

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## Description

Favell Lee Mortimer preaches about the story of Zacharias and the importance of faith over unbelief. Zacharias doubted the angel's message and desired a sign, which was considered sinful as the glorious appearance of the angel should have been proof enough. Unbelief is a great sin and an insult to God's truth, leading to consequences like being speechless. Elizabeth's humble and grateful response to God's mercy in removing her affliction serves as a reminder to acknowledge and thank the Lord for His deliverance from trials.

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## Transcript

Zacharias was so much astonished at the message of the angel, that he wanted to see some sign or miracle to prove that the angel came from God. Why was it wrong in Zacharias to desire a sign? Because he had already had one. The glorious appearance of the angel, which had filled him with fear, was a sufficient sign. God does not wish us to believe things without any proof. If he were to send a prophet to speak to us, he would give us some sign to show us that the prophet really came from him. When Moses spoke to the Israelites in Egypt, he gave them two signs; his rod was turned into a serpent, and his hand was made white with the leprosy, (Exod. 4) God is angry when men will not believe, after he has given them a sign. It was sinful in Zacharias not to believe after he had seen the glorious angel. Thus we find that though he was righteous before God, he was still subject to sin.

Unbelief is a great sin; for it is an insult to the truth of God. The angel rebuked the unbelieving priest, saying, "You shall be speechless." This gentle chastisement would at once remove the doubts of Zacharias, and remind him of his sin. In this way, God deals with his own people, when they forget what a great God He is.

Zacharias at length came out of the temple. It was now expected that he should bless the people in those beautiful words recorded in Numbers 6:24-27, beginning, "May the Lord bless you and keep you;" but he could not speak, and he made signs to show the people what he had seen in the temple.

Each division of priests remained to serve in the temple from one Sabbath to the next; in a few days, therefore, Zacharias returned to his own house among the hills. What a history he had to unfold to Elizabeth! For he was able to inform her in writing. What a proof she beheld of the power of God in the silence of her husband! We should take notice of God's dealings with others. "Whoever is wise, and will observe these things, even he shall understand the loving-kindness of the Lord."--Psalm 107:43.

How humbly and gratefully Elizabeth behaved on this occasion! She acknowledged the goodness of the Lord in having condescended to look upon her affliction; for she had been exposed to much reproach on account of having no child. When troubles are removed, we are apt to overlook the Lord's merciful hand! Perhaps we have been suffering under some trial; the unkindness of a relative, the dread of sickness, or the pressure of poverty--God removes the trial, and we forget how much it weighed us down before, and so we omit to thank the Lord heartily.

A holy minister named Rutherford, in one of his letters, written two hundred years ago, says, that one of the things which most showed him his own wickedness by nature, was his feeling more disposed to call upon the Lord in trouble, than to thank him when delivered. Let us think over the things that troubled us a few years ago, and bless the hand which has lightened our load.

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