

## Why Was Zacharias Punished?

Genesis 15:7-8:

7. **And he said unto him, "I am Jehovah that brought you out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give you this land to inherit it."**

8. **And he said, "O Lord Jehovah, whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it?"**

Genesis 17:17-18:

17. **Then Abraham fell upon his face, and laughed, and said in his heart, "Shall a child be born unto him that is a hundred years old? And shall Sarah, that is ninety years old, bear?"**

18. **And Abraham said unto God, "Oh that Ishmael might live before thee!"**

Judges 6:12-23:

12. **And the angel of Jehovah appeared unto him, and said unto him, "Jehovah is with you, you mighty man of valor."**

13. **And Gideon said unto Him, "Oh, my lord, if Jehovah is with us, why then is all this befallen us? And where are all His wondrous works which our fathers told us of, saying, 'Did not Jehovah bring us up from Egypt?' But now Jehovah has cast us off, and delivered us into the hand of Midian."**

14. **And Jehovah looked upon him, and said, "Go in this your might, and save Israel from the hand of Midian: have not I sent you?"**

15. **And he said unto Him, "Oh, Lord, wherewith shall I save Israel? Behold, my family is the poorest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house."**

16. **And Jehovah said unto him, "Surely I will be with you, and you shall smite the Midianites as one man."**

17. **And he said unto Him, "If now I have found favor in Your sight, then show me a sign that it is You that talks with me. 18. Depart not hence, I pray You, until I come unto You, and bring forth my present, and lay it before You."**

**And He said, "I will tarry until you come again." 19. And Gideon went in, and made ready a kid, and unleavened cakes of an ephah of meal: the flesh he put in a basket, and he put the broth in a pot, and brought it out unto Him under the oak, and presented it.**

20. **And the angel of God said unto him, "Take the flesh and the unleavened cakes, and lay them upon this rock, and pour out the broth." And he did so.**

21. Then the angel of Jehovah put forth the end of the staff that was in his hand, and touched the flesh and the unleavened cakes; and there went up fire out of the rock, and consumed the flesh and the unleavened cakes; and the angel of Jehovah departed out of his sight. 22. And Gideon saw that he was the angel of Jehovah; and Gideon said, "Alas, O Lord Jehovah! Forasmuch as I have seen the angel of Jehovah face to face.

23. And Jehovah said unto him, "Peace be unto you; fear not: you shall not die."

Luke 1:30-35:

30. And the angel said unto her, "Fear not, Mary: for you have found favor with God. 31. And behold, you shall conceive in your womb, and bring forth a son, and shall call His name JESUS. 32. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Most High: and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David: 33. and He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of His kingdom there shall be no end."

34. And Mary said unto the angel, "How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?"

35. And the angel answered and said unto her, "The Holy Spirit shall come upon you, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow you: wherefore also the holy thing which is begotten shall be called the Son of God."

Luke 1:13-20:

13. But the angel said unto him, "Fear not, Zacharias: because your supplication is heard, and your wife Elisabeth shall bear you a son, and you shall call his name John. 14. And you shall have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth. 15. For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and he shall drink no wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb. 16. And many of the children of Israel shall be turned unto the Lord their God. 17. And he shall go before his face in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to walk in the wisdom of the just; to make ready for the Lord a people prepared for Him."

18. And Zacharias said unto the angel, "Whereby shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife well stricken in years."

19. And the angel answering said unto him, "I am Gabriel, that stands in the presence of God; and I was sent to speak unto you, and to bring you these good tidings. 20. And behold, you shall be silent and not able to speak, until the day that these things shall come to pass, because you did not believe my words, which shall be fulfilled in their season."

I know God's word says the following in 1 Timothy 3:15-17:

15. **And that from a babe you have known the sacred writings which are able to make you wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.**
16. **Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness.**
17. **That the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work.**

The same word of God also contains the following in 2 Peter 3:15-16:

15. **And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also, according to the wisdom given to him, wrote unto you;**
16. **as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; wherein are some things hard to be understood, which the ignorant and unsteadfast wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.**

The following questions just may be part of what Peter says are hard to understand. We may not be able to come up with a definitive answer, but let us all do our best to try.

Why is it that in all of these examples from which we read only Zacharias was punished for his questioning? Why wasn't Abraham, Gideon. or Mary?

Some wives I have known would believe that having their husbands silenced for a few months would be a great blessing!

What was Zacharias' profession? He was a priest. In fact, he was acting as High Priest when the vision of Gabriel came to him. Is this important in this discussion?

Could it be that because Zacharias was a priest that God expected him to know about Abraham, Gideon, etc., and that is why Zacharias' case was conducted differently? Remember where Zacharias was when he was approached by the angel Gabriel: He was standing in the Holy of Holies within the Temple of God. There should have been no doubt in his mind that what he was hearing was coming from the Lord Himself. As Gabriel told him, "**I am Gabriel, that stands in the presence of God. . .**" The Holy of Holies was the place of God on Earth, a place where no man could enter except the High Priest.

***Is*** Gabriel's treatment of Zacharias a punishment, or is it merely a sign?

About the land, Abraham asked for a sign and was required to sacrifice to affirm the covenant with God.

About the child of promise, Abraham doubted and his family suffered greatly (still suffers, one might even say).

Gideon asked for a sign and was required to sacrifice to affirm the covenant between him and God.

Mary did **NOT** ask for a sign. She didn't ask, "How will I **KNOW**?" as if God's Word were not enough, but "How will you do this?" When her role was explained, she offered one of the great responses of faith found anywhere within God's word.

Zechariah, on the other hand, asked for a sign, and he was required to sacrifice his voice for nine months.