



APC Advent Devotional – December 21st, 2020

“How can I be sure of this?”

Today’s Scripture: Luke 1:68-79

When the angel Gabriel announced to Zechariah that his prayer had been heard and that his wife Elizabeth was to bear him a son, Zechariah answered in disbelief, “How can I be sure of this? I am an old man and my wife is well along in years.” Though a priest, Zechariah may not then have remembered other instances recorded in Scripture of old couples having children, like Abraham and Sarah or the parents of the prophet Samuel. The angel struck Zechariah dumb until his son was born, because he had not believed Gabriel’s words.

It gave Zechariah time to think about what the angel had told him about his son, whom he was to name John. He had the final proof that what the angel had spoken was true when his son was born. He remembered what the angel had told him; and he named his newborn son John (which means, “God has been gracious”), contrary to the expectations of everyone else. As soon as Zechariah had thus shown **acceptance of the will of God**, he himself was filled with the Holy Spirit, his mouth was opened, and he began to speak, praising God.

What has God promised you? What task has he assigned you? Do you know? Do you remember? In some way, the pandemic strikes us dumb, in the sense that we are much more by ourselves, much less interacting with other people. Does this not give us an opportunity to spend more time to ponder these questions, and to remember to **spend more time with God**, this Advent Season and beyond? Rather than feeling deprived by the pandemic, seize the opportunity and extra time it offers to identify, think and act on things that do really matter, that are truly important. Let us ask God’s help by praying with Psalm 119:37 “Turn my eyes from looking at worthless things; and give me life in your ways.” Moreover, do not be surprised if God should open your mouth!

By Bernd W. Urban