

Staff Work

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Advent: Strike Me Dumb, God

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Advent: Strike Me Dumb, God

Abstract

"Was Zechariah's silent expecting, his wordless anticipation, an even more powerful mix of torment and excitement, a more fertile ground for the Spirit to fill him and convict him of God's plan, of his power, of his love?"

Posting about silent waiting from *In All Things* - an online hub committed to the claim that the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ has implications for the entire world.

<http://inallthings.org/advent-strike-me-dumb-god/>

Keywords

In All Things, Advent, waiting, expectation

Disciplines

Christianity

Comments

In All Things is a publication of the [Andreas Center for Reformed Scholarship and Service at Dordt College](#).

Advent: Strike me Dumb, God

 [all in allthings.org/advent-strike-me-dumb-god/](https://allinallthings.org/advent-strike-me-dumb-god/)

John Baas

Read: [Luke 1:5-25](#)

Really?

Sure, I heard you say it:

“Your prayer has been heard.”

“Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son.”

“Many will rejoice and many will be brought back to the Lord their God.”

“He will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of God.”

I want to believe you, Gabriel,—but at our age? Us? How could this be possible? How can I be sure?

Zechariah was a priest. He worked in the temple. He received God’s message in person—face to face—from the angel Gabriel. And he doubted.

Gabriel struck him dumb until the day the miracle child was circumcised and named John. A holy scolding? Maybe not.

Undistracted by his own speech, perhaps Zechariah found extraordinary sensory delight observing the physical changes in Elizabeth as the promised new life grew within her. The radiance of his expectant wife, the thrill of their baby’s movements in the womb, the wonder and reassurance that Gabriel’s words were indeed coming to be—maybe he experienced all of it more intensely, more profoundly, more intimately because he was more attuned to fully observe in wonder.

Was Zechariah’s silent expecting, his wordless anticipation, an even more powerful mix of torment and excitement, a more fertile ground for the Spirit to fill him and convict him of God’s plan, of his power, of his love?

Really?

Sure, I’ve read it and heard it:

“A new heaven and a new earth”

“The dwelling of God with men”

“No more death or mourning or crying or pain”

“The healing of the nations”

I want to believe that—but God, it’s not easy. To so many people this gospel is foolishness. I profess to believe but sometimes I wonder. Look at this world in chaos. Look at me! How can I be sure?

Few of us have knowingly conversed with an angel. God's message and promise are revealed in his Word and his world and confirmed by his Spirit working in our hearts. And we, too, have our moments—or hours, or weeks, or years—of doubt. What if it's not true? Are you there God? Are you paying attention? Do you care?

When our faith feels weak—in our wilderness journeys, our spiritual hunger, our fear, our despair—we might ask God to strike us dumb.

“Be still and know that I am God.”

“The Lord is in his holy temple. Let all the earth keep silence before him.”

The still small voice to Elijah.

God tells us he values silence.

New fallen snow, a winter night sky, a child's voice, a soul-haunting song, tears of compassion, a hungry family fed, a comforting embrace, an aching heart, a selfless response of love...

Glimpses of the coming kingdom.

Be still. Can you feel the Spirit's breath?

Watch. What is he doing around you? In you? With you? Through you?

Listen! Can you hear him?

“Behold, I am coming soon!”

Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.