

## Readings from the Word of God

### Sunday, 20 December 2020

#### **Luke 1:57-80**

Now Elizabeth's full time came for her to be delivered, and she brought forth a son. When her neighbours and relatives heard how the Lord had shown great mercy to her, they rejoiced with her.

So it was, on the eighth day, that they came to circumcise the child; and they would have called him by the name of his father, Zacharias. His mother answered and said, "No; he shall be called John."

But they said to her, "There is no one among your relatives who is called by this name." So they made signs to his father—what he would have him called.

And he asked for a writing tablet, and wrote, saying, "His name is John." So they all marvelled. Immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue loosed, and he spoke, praising God. Then fear came on all who dwelt around them; and all these sayings were discussed throughout all the hill country of Judea. And all those who heard them kept them in their hearts, saying, "What kind of child will this be?" And the hand of the Lord was with him.

Now his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Spirit, and prophesied, saying:

"Blessed is the Lord God of Israel,  
For He has visited and redeemed His people,  
And has raised up a horn of salvation for us  
In the house of His servant David,  
As He spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets,  
Who have been since the world began,  
That we should be saved from our enemies  
And from the hand of all who hate us,  
To perform the mercy promised to our fathers  
And to remember His holy covenant,  
The oath which He swore to our father Abraham:  
To grant us that we,  
Being delivered from the hand of our enemies,  
Might serve Him without fear,  
In holiness and righteousness before Him all the days of our life.  
"And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Highest;  
For you will go before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways,  
To give knowledge of salvation to His people  
By the remission of their sins,  
Through the tender mercy of our God,  
With which the Dayspring from on high has visited us;  
To give light to those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death,  
To guide our feet into the way of peace."

So the child grew and became strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his manifestation to Israel.

#### ***Secrets of Heaven §1661***

When a person's state is such that he imagines that good and truth originate in himself and that the power to resist is his own, the goods and truths from which he fights against evils and falsities are not really goods and truths, however much they

appear to be so, for they have that which is his own within them, and he places self-merit in victory, boasting as though it were he that had overcome evil and falsity, when in fact it is the Lord alone who fights and overcomes. That this is indeed so none can know except those who are being regenerated by means of temptations.

### ***The Doctrine of Life §21***

It is plainly evident from all this that to whatever extent a person shuns evils, to that same extent he is with the Lord and in the Lord; and that to whatever extent he is in the Lord, to that same extent he does what is good, not from himself, but from the Lord. From this comes the general law: that to whatever extent a person shuns evils, to that same extent he does what is good.