

Luke 1:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And it came to pass, that while he executed the priest's office before God in the order of his course,

Analysis

Zacharias's priestly service 'before God' occurred 'in the order of his course,' demonstrating God's sovereignty in providential timing. Of 20,000 priests divided into 24 courses, only twice yearly did each division serve. That Zacharias's division was serving precisely when Gabriel would appear shows divine orchestration. Reformed theology recognizes God's absolute control over seemingly random circumstances, ordering history according to His eternal decree for redemptive purposes.

Historical Context

The priestly courses, established by David (1 Chr 24), ensured orderly temple service. Abijah's course served the eighth rotation. Zacharias's presence at this moment was no accident but divine appointment in redemptive history.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Study Questions

1. How does this demonstrate God's sovereignty over seemingly ordinary circumstances?
2. What does faithful service in your assigned role have to do with God's larger purposes?
3. How can you recognize God's providential timing in your own life?

Interlinear Text

Ἐγένετο	δὲ	ἐν	τῷ	ἱερατεύειν	αὐτοῦ	ἐν	τῇ
it came to pass	And	in	G3588	executed the priest's office	he	in	G3588
G1096	G1161	G1722		G2407	G846	G1722	
τάξει	τῆς	ἐφημερίας	αὐτοῦ	ἔναντι	τοῦ	θεοῦ	
the order	G3588	course	he	before	G3588	God	
G5010		G2183	G846	G1725		G2316	

Additional Cross-References

1 Chronicles 24:19 (References God): These were the orderings of them in their service to come into the house of the LORD, according to their manner, under Aaron their father, as the LORD God of Israel had commanded him.

2 Chronicles 8:14 (References God): And he appointed, according to the order of David his father, the courses of the priests to their service, and the Levites to their charges, to praise and minister before the priests, as the duty of every day required: the porters also by their courses at every gate: for so had David the man of God commanded.

2 Chronicles 31:2 (Parallel theme): And Hezekiah appointed the courses of the priests and the Levites after their courses, every man according to his service, the priests and Levites for burnt offerings and for peace offerings, to minister, and to give thanks, and to praise in the gates of the tents of the LORD.

Luke 1:5 (Parallel theme): There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judaea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the course of Abia: and his wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elisabeth.

Exodus 29:9 (Parallel theme): And thou shalt gird them with girdles, Aaron and his sons, and put the bonnets on them: and the priest's office shall be their's for a perpetual statute: and thou shalt consecrate Aaron and his sons.

Exodus 28:1 (Parallel theme): And take thou unto thee Aaron thy brother, and his sons with him, from among the children of Israel, that he may minister unto me in the priest's office, even Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar, Aaron's sons.

Exodus 28:41 (Parallel theme): And thou shalt put them upon Aaron thy brother, and his sons with him; and shalt anoint them, and consecrate them, and sanctify them, that they may minister unto me in the priest's office.

Exodus 29:1 (Parallel theme): And this is the thing that thou shalt do unto them to hallow them, to minister unto me in the priest's office: Take one young bullock, and two rams without blemish,

Exodus 29:44 (Parallel theme): And I will sanctify the tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar: I will sanctify also both Aaron and his sons, to minister to me in the priest's office.

Exodus 30:30 (Parallel theme): And thou shalt anoint Aaron and his sons, and consecrate them, that they may minister unto me in the priest's office.