

Renewal of Faith

Zechariah the priest:

Nine months from doubt

To

Spirit empowered prophet

Luke 1:5-25 and 56-79

Blameless, Childless Priest

- Luke 1:5 In the time of Herod king of Judea there was a priest named Zechariah, who belonged to the priestly division of Abijah; his wife Elizabeth was also a descendant of Aaron.
- 6 Both of them were upright in the sight of God, observing all the Lord's commandments and regulations blamelessly.
- 7 But they had no children, because Elizabeth was barren; and they were both well along in years.

Caught off Guard and Scared

8 Once when Zechariah's division was on duty and he was serving as priest before God, 9 he was chosen by lot, according to the custom of the priesthood, to go into the temple of the Lord and burn incense. 10 And when the time for the burning of incense came, all the assembled worshipers were praying outside. 11 Then an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing at the right side of the altar of incense.

12 When Zechariah saw him, he was startled and was gripped with fear.

Promise and Instruction

- 13 But the angel said to him: "Do not be afraid, Zechariah; your prayer has been heard.
- Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you are to give him the name John.
- 14 He will be a joy and delight to you, and many will rejoice because of his birth,

Life of Promise

- 15 for he will be great in the sight of the Lord.
- He is never to take wine or other fermented drink,
- and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit even from his mother's womb.

Prophecy to be Fulfilled

- 16 Many of the people of Israel will he bring back to the Lord their God.
- 17 And he will go on before the Lord, in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous—
- to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."

Unimaginable Unbelief?

- 18 Zechariah asked the angel, "How can I be sure of this? I am an old man and my wife is well along in years."
- 19 The angel answered, "I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to tell you this good news. 20 And now you will be silent and not able to speak until the day this happens, because you did not believe my words, which will come true at their proper time."

The People miss the Good News

- 21 Meanwhile, the people were waiting for Zechariah and wondering why he stayed so long in the temple.
- 22 When he came out, he could not speak to them. They realized he had seen a vision in the temple, for he kept making signs to them but remained unable to speak.
- 23 When his time of service was completed, he returned home.

Elizabeth's Joyful Praise

- 24 After this his wife Elizabeth became pregnant and for five months remained in seclusion.
- 25 "The Lord has done this for me," she said. "In these days he has shown his favor and taken away my disgrace among the people."

Zechariah follows Abraham

- Genesis 15: 4 Then the word of the LORD came to him: "This man will not be your heir, but a son coming from your own body will be your heir."
- 5 He took him outside and said, "Look up at the heavens and count the stars-- if indeed you can count them." Then he said to him, "So shall your offspring be."
- 6 **Abram believed the LORD, and he credited it to him as righteousness.**

What Zechariah Didn't Do

- NIV Genesis 16:1 Now Sarai, Abram's wife, had borne him no children. But she had an Egyptian maidservant named Hagar; 2 so she said to Abram, "The LORD has kept me from having children. Go, sleep with my maidservant; perhaps I can build a family through her."
- Abram agreed to what Sarai said.

Circumcision: Covenant Signpost

- NIV Genesis 17:1 When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to him and said, "I am God Almighty; walk before me and be blameless. 2 I will confirm my covenant between me and you and will greatly increase your numbers."
- 3 Abram fell facedown, and God said to him, 4 "As for me, this is my covenant with you: You will be the father of many nations. 5 No longer will you be called Abram; your name will be Abraham, for I have made you a father of many nations."

That was No Joke Abraham

- Genesis 17: 15 God also said to Abraham, "As for Sarai your wife, you are no longer to call her Sarai; her name will be Sarah.
- **16 I will bless her and will surely give you a son by her.** I will bless her so that she will be the mother of nations; kings of peoples will come from her."
- **17 Abraham fell facedown; he laughed and said to himself,** "Will a son be born to a man a hundred years old? Will Sarah bear a child at the age of ninety?"

Named for unbeliever?

- Luke 1:57 When it was time for Elizabeth to have her baby, she gave birth to a son.
- 58 Her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had shown her great mercy, and they shared her joy.
- 59 On the eighth day they came to circumcise the child, and they were going to name him after his father Zechariah,

Obedience

- Luke 1:60 but his mother spoke up and said, "No! He is to be called John." 61 They said to her, "There is no one among your relatives who has that name."
- 62 Then they made signs to his father, to find out what he would like to name the child. 63 He asked for a writing tablet, and to everyone's astonishment he wrote, "His name is John."

Confirmation of the Promise

- Luke 1: 64 Immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue was loosed, and he began to speak, praising God.
- 65 The neighbors were all filled with awe, and throughout the hill country of Judea people were talking about all these things. 66 Everyone who heard this wondered about it, asking, "What then is this child going to be?" For the Lord's hand was with him.

Priest Renewed by Holy Spirit

- Luke 1:67 His father **Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied:**
- 68 "Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, because he has come and has redeemed his people. 69 He has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David 70 (as he said through his holy prophets of long ago), 71 salvation from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us--

Fearless Holy Living

- Luke 1: 72 to show mercy to our fathers and to remember his holy covenant,
- 73 the oath he swore to our father Abraham:
- 74 to rescue us from the hand of our enemies, and **to enable us to serve him without fear 75 in holiness and righteousness before him all our days.**

Salvation Through Forgiveness

- 76 And you, my child, will be called a prophet of the Most High; for you will go on before the Lord to prepare the way for him,
- **77 to give his people the knowledge of salvation through the forgiveness of their sins,**
- 78 because of the tender mercy of our God, by which the rising sun will come to us from heaven
79 to shine on those living in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the path of peace."