

Zechariah [Father of John the Baptist]

Zechariah the father of John the Baptist was told before anyone else that God was setting in motion His own visit to earth.

Zechariah and his wife Elizabeth were well-known for their personal holiness, and were well-suited to do a special work for the Creator God.

Zechariah was a priest in the Temple at Jerusalem, [Luke 1:5] and his wife Elizabeth was also a descendent of the high priest Aaron.

Both Elizabeth and Zechariah shared the pain of not having any children, and in Jewish culture this was considered as not having God's blessing. Both were old and had stopped even asking God for children, [Luke 1:7].

One trip to the Temple in Jerusalem included a very special blessing.

Luke 1:8-17 [New King James] *“So it was, that while he was serving as priest before God in the order of his division, according to the custom of the priesthood, his lot fell to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord. And the whole multitude of the people was praying outside at the hour of incense. Then an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing on the right side of the altar of incense. And when Zacharias saw him, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him. But the angel said to him, ‘Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your prayer is heard; and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John. And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth. For he will be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink. He will also be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother’s womb. And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God. He will also go before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, “to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children,” and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.”*

The angel's message was too good to be true for Zechariah, but because Zechariah did **not** respond to the news of the coming Saviour being introduced through a son whom he could **not** believe he could have at his age, his ability to speak and tell of this good news would be taken from him until the day that his son would be born, [Luke 1:18-20].

From Zechariah's human perspective, his doubts were understandable, but with the Creator God anything is possible.

When tempted to think that one of God's promises is impossible for you, remember His work through the history of humanity as recorded in His Word, the Christian Bible.

The example of Zechariah and Elizabeth is one example that confirms that God's power is not confined by narrow limitations or perspectives; trust Him completely.

The fulfilment of God's promises may not be the next day, but they will be “at the proper time” as Zechariah was told by the angel Gabriel.

Luke 1:21 [New King James] *“And the people waited for Zacharias, and marvelled that he lingered so long in the temple.”*

The people were waiting outside the Temple for Zechariah to come out and pronounce the customary blessing on them, [Numbers 6:24-26].

When Zechariah came out they realised that he had experienced something special but he could not speak, [Luke 1:22-23].

Luke 1:23-25 [New King James] *“So it was, as soon as the days of his service were completed, that he departed to his own house. Now after those days his wife Elizabeth conceived; and she hid herself five months, saying, ‘Thus the Lord has dealt with me, in the days when He looked on me, to take away my reproach among people.’”*

Some Jews at that time followed the teaching of the Sadducees that there was no physical resurrection of the dead, [**Matthew 22:23; Acts 23:8**]. So their only hope of immortality was through their children. Also children cared for their parents in their old age and added to the family’s financial security and social status.

The record of Zechariah’s prayer [Luke 1:67-79] is our last glimpse of Zechariah. Like so many of God’s most faithful servants, he passed quietly from the recorded history once his part in God’s plan was done.

Zechariah becomes a great example for us when we doubt the word of the Creator God, yet are willing to obey Him. We also gain hope from Zechariah’s life as much as is recorded, that God can do great things through anyone who makes their life available to Him.

Both Zechariah and Elizabeth were *“upright in the sight of God”* [**Luke 1:6**]. This means that they were obedient to the Creator God in their mind and human spirit, that is their motivation, **not** like the religious leaders whom Jesus Christ called hypocrites, [**Matthew 23:13-15, 23, 25, 27**] who only acted out a façade of righteousness to be considered righteous by other people.

God judges the motivation of our hearts and minds [Jeremiah 17:10] which only He can fully see and understand, [Psalms 139:1-16].

We need to live our lives with this understanding foremost in all we think, say or do.