

Christmas Part 1: “The Promise”

Luke 1

The Promise of Zechariah

“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 righteous in the sight of God, observing all the Lord’s commands and decrees blamelessly. 7 But they were childless because Elizabeth was not able to conceive, and they were both very old.

DEBILITATED by the FEAR.

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. 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 call him John. 14 He will be a joy and delight to you, and many will rejoice because of his birth, 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 before he is born. 16 He will bring back many of the people of Israel 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 parents to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous—to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.”

DISTRACTED by the DETAILS.

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.”

DOUBT the PROMISE.

19 The angel said to him, “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 appointed time.”

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.

DELIGHT in its COMPLETION.

23 When his time of service was completed, he returned home. 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.”

The Promise: Mary

26 In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, 27 to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. 28 The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you."

DEBILITATED by the FEAR.

29 Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. 30 But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. 31 You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. 32 He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, 33 and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end."

DISTRACTED by the DETAILS.

34 "How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?"

REFOCUS on the PROMISE.

35 The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called [b] the Son of God. 36 Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be unable to conceive is in her sixth month. 37 For no word from God will ever fail."

TRUST the PROMISE.

38 "I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May your word to me be fulfilled." Then the angel left her.

Christmas Part 2: “Moving Into the Barrio”

1. Your Intended Place: CARED For, CROWNED and Un-SUBJECTED.

“But there is a place where someone has testified: “What is mankind that you are mindful of them, a son of man that you care for him? ⁷ You made them a little lower than the angels; you crowned them with glory and honor ⁸ and put everything under their feet.” In putting everything under them, God left nothing that is not subject to them.” Hebrews 2:6-8a

2. The BARRIO Life: Living on the Outside.

“Yet at present we do not see everything subject to them.” Heb. 2:8b

3. The INCARNATION: Jesus Moves In to the Barrio.

“But we do see Jesus, who was made lower than the angels for a little while, now crowned with glory and honor because he suffered death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.” Heb. 2:9

“The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory...” John 1:14

“The Word became flesh and blood, and moved into the neighborhood.” John 1:14 MSG

“Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might break the power of him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil— ¹⁵ and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.” Heb. 2:14-15

4. Salvation: Part of the FAMILIA.

¹⁰ In bringing many sons and daughters to glory, it was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through what he suffered. ¹¹ ... So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters. ... ¹⁷ For this reason he had to be made like them, fully human in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people.” Heb. 2:10, 11, 17

“He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. ¹¹ He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. ¹² Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God— ¹³ children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband’s will, but born of God.” John 1:10-13