

# Elisabeth and Zachariah

“Loyal Followers”



*“But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zachariah: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John.”*  
Luke 1:13 KJV

It seems that sometimes God waits until we are a little older to let us know about a specific task He wants us to do -- some after retirement, some when very young. When we put ourselves in God's hands, we have to be prepared for whatever comes. Elisabeth and Zachariah were given a specific task in their later years of life. Elisabeth and Zachariah were very good people and honored God. Zachariah served as a priest and Elisabeth was a cousin of Mary who would become the mother of Jesus. They had never been able to have children and so they felt the stares from others who had. As it is often today, other people seem to feel it is their duty to make sure that all

couples have children. But often, the outsider does not know if the couple wants children or if they are able to bear children. This attitude from the outsider can be very hurtful to the couple regardless of their desires.

One day while Zachariah was doing his duties as a priest, an angel, Gabriel, appeared to him and told him that his wife Elisabeth was going to have a child. Furthermore, they were to name this child John and he would be filled with the Holy Spirit and be a delight to many people. Zachariah could not believe this. He said, "Do you expect me to believe this? I'm an old man and my wife is an old woman." The people in the sanctuary were waiting for Zachariah to return and continue the service. When he finally came out, he could not speak. The people knew he had seen a vision. From then on until his son was born he could only communicate using sign language. It might seem that Zachariah was being punished for doubting that he would become a father after all these years.



After a short time, Elisabeth got pregnant. She reacted by going off by herself. Perhaps she was just so happy that she wanted to be alone and relish this joy that she had never had before. Perhaps she needed to be alone to learn to accept what was happening to her at her age. In the sixth month of Elisabeth's pregnancy, the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a little village of Nazareth to a young virgin named Mary. She also would become a new mother, but in a much different way. Elisabeth's son would prepare the way for Mary's son. After Mary was with child, she went to see her cousin, Elisabeth, and Zachariah. When Elisabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby in her womb leaped. These two women had a blessing that no one else would ever have.

In due time, Elisabeth bore a son. At the appointed time as was the law then, Elisabeth and Zachariah went to the temple to circumcise the baby. The people wanted to name him Zachariah after his father, but Elisabeth said his name was to be John. They didn't accept her answer and asked Zachariah. He wrote "His name is to be John." Then Zachariah's mouth was opened, his tongue loosened, and he was talking, praising God! That son would become John the Baptist. John was blessed to be the one to tell of the Christ to come. He was the one who baptized Christ at the river Jordan and told the people that this was the Messiah they had been waiting for and he was not even worthy to untie his sandals.

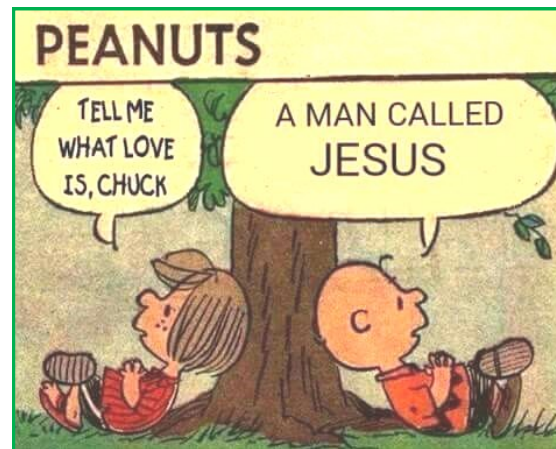
Sometimes we get blessings and we don't even recognize them we are so accustomed to getting them daily. Sometimes we look too hard and don't take time to listen. There is a beautiful song entitled "I See God" by Raymond Leveen. The lyrics are:

*"No mortal man could ever plan the wonders I behold,  
The things I see inspire me with reverence untold:  
I see God in ev'ry scented rose, I see God in ev'rything that grows,  
I see God in gentle falling rain, In the snow that falls upon the plain,  
I see God at sunrise ev'ry day, In the smiles of children as they play,  
High above as birds are on the wing, I see God, Oh, God is ev'ry thing!  
I see God in ev'ry brook that flows, I see God in poetry and prose,  
I see God on ev'ry mountain peak, in the breeze caressing ev'ry cheek,  
I see God in starlit evening skies, in the love that fills a mother's eyes,  
Standing by to help when troubles fall, I see God, I know that God is all!"*

*"To believe in the things you can see and touch is no belief at all, but to believe in the unseen is a triumph and a blessing."*

*Abraham Lincoln.*

I wonder how often we take these simple blessings for granted, the rose, the rain, and the sunrise. I know I take so much for granted and then once in a while I stop to smell the roses, and know that God is still with me every day and He is in charge.



I find that so often, I seem to think that I am in charge of something, and then the sudden reality comes that I can do nothing by myself. It is like the man who wants to build something from scratch and then becomes aware of the fact that "the scratch" was created by God and it is only possible with God's help.

Zachariah and Elisabeth had a wonderful blessing, but the important thing was their obedience and faith that God would take care of them just as He will always take care of us, but on His time, not ours.

Prayer: You are an awesome God, a God who loves us as we are, and trusts us to do Your will. Help us to see that You know what is best for us and help us to be willing to follow wherever You lead us regardless of our age, our financial situation, or our own personal wishes. Amen

1. How do townspeople today react when they hear something that they think could not be true? Do they go to the source and question, or do they just gossip?
2. Why did God take speech away from Zachariah?
3. How do you think Elisabeth felt about the situation? How did Mary's visit help her?
4. What is the significance of this story for our lives today?

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**"Why wish upon a star when you can talk with the one who created it."**