

## December 9

Character: Zechariah (His Prophecy)

Setting: Zechariah was the first “character of Christmas” we discussed in this advent series. After 400 years of silence from heaven, an angel of the Lord named Gabriel appeared to Zechariah and gave him a message. The message was that he and his barren wife, Elizabeth, were going to have a son in their old age. Gabriel told Zechariah what to name his son, and also several details about his son’s ministry, and the incredible impact his life would have on the entire world. When Zechariah heard these prophetic words spoken, he struggled to believe them to be true. Because he didn’t believe Gabriel’s message, he was told he would be silent until the child was born. And that is where our story begins today. That baby, John, is eight days old in this scene. Following Jewish tradition, his parents are having a circumcision ceremony to celebrate John’s birth and to declare his name. Zechariah had been unable to speak the entire duration of Elizabeth’s pregnancy, and now the people want to know what this baby’s name is. Elizabeth tells the crowd that his name is John. The people are confused because “John” is not a family name, so they turn to Zechariah for clarification about the name, and immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue was loosed. These are the first words he spoke when God unsealed his lips and allowed his tongue to work again. They are found in the book of Luke, chapter 1 verses 67-79.

Scripture: Luke 1:67-79 (Read)

Application: Zechariah’s initial response when he heard a message from the Lord was unbelief. The thought of he and his wife having a child in their old age seemed impossible to him, and he wanted proof that Gabriel’s words were true. The Bible doesn’t tell us about the thoughts or convictions Zechariah had during his months of silence. But it does tell us the words he spoke prophesying about his child’s life once his silence ended. In these verses he boldly praised God for fulfilling the prophecies of ages past, and spoke his own words of prophecy about his child, which echoed what Gabriel told him. Take some time today to discuss with your family what you think Zechariah learned from the silencing of his lips. Write the verses in Luke 1:76-79 in your advent journal, as a reminder that God’s promises always come to pass, even the ones that seem to be impossible to us.

Prayer: Praise God that His word is true and He always keeps His promises. Thank God for this example of prophecy fulfilled in the life of John the Baptist, and for the mercy He extends to us even in

our doubts or unbelief. Ask God to help us believe His words and always remember that nothing is impossible with God.