

The SPIRIT of CHRISTMAS

DECEMBER 3RD, 2023

ALIVE IN ADVENT

GLEN BARNES



Zechariah, Elizabeth and the Holy Spirit

Act 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 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.”

~ LUKE 1:5-7 (NIV)

Zechariah and Elizabeth knew the pain of _____.

Zechariah and Elizabeth knew the confusion of _____.

“² I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you, I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. ³ I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.”

~ GENESIS 12:2-3 (NIV)

“¹⁶ Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever.”

~ 2 SAMUEL 7:16 (NIV)

“² ‘But for you who revere my name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its rays. And you will go out and frolic like well-fed calves. ³ Then you will trample on the wicked; they will be ashes under the soles of your feet on the day when I act,’ says the Lord Almighty.”

~ MALACHI 4:2-3 (NIV)

“⁵ See, I will send the prophet Elijah to you before that great and dreadful day of the Lord comes. ⁶ He will turn the hearts of the parents to their children, and the hearts of the children to their parents;”

~ MALACHI 4:5-6a (NIV)

SEARCHING FOR SOLUTIONS

Political ... _____.

National ... _____.

Moral ... _____.

Act 2: Zechariah “chosen by lot” to burn incense in the Temple of the Lord.

“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.”

~ LUKE 1:17 (NIV)

Zechariah’s Response:

_____ which leads to _____.

Gabriel’s Promise:

“³⁷ For no word from God will ever fail.”
~ LUKE 1:37 (NIV)

“ ⁴¹ When Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. ⁴² In a loud voice she exclaimed: ‘Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear!’ ⁴³ But why am I so favored, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? ⁴⁴ As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. ⁴⁵ Blessed is she who has believed that the Lord would fulfill his promises to her!”

~ LUKE 1:41-45 (NIV)

The Spirit of Christmas Lesson One:

The Holy Spirit calls us to take our focus off ourselves and put it on _____ and _____.

SO WHAT?

Who do I see Jesus in this Christmas?

Act 3: Elizabeth and Zechariah name him

“ 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 to his people and redeemed them.
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—
⁷² to show mercy to our ancestors 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.
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.”

~ LUKE 1:67-79 (NIV)

The Spirit of Christmas Lesson Two:

The solution they needed was _____.

“ The heart of the human problem, is the problem of the human heart.”
 ~ MAX LUCADO

RESOURCES USED:

Zechariah’s Song, Rene Schlaepfer | Elizabeth and Zechariah, Alister Begg
 The Characters of Christmas, Daniel Darling

DISCUSSION Questions:

- 1 - What is something you are looking forward to this Christmas? What are you less excited about when you think of Christmas this year?
- 2 - Read Luke 1:5-7. How would you describe Zechariah and Elizabeth from these verses?
- 3 - Read the promises of “the Messiah” listed in your notes from Genesis 12, 2 Samuel 7 and Malachi 4 (add any others you can think of). How do you think people felt when after 2000 years it seemed these promises were unfulfilled? Can you relate? Why or why not?
- 4 - Read Luke 1:8-25. What is the most surprising part of these verses? Can you describe how Zechariah and Elizabeth might have felt? What is your response to these verses?

- 5 - Read Luke 1:39-45. Why do you think Luke includes this story as a part of the Christmas narrative? What is your emotional response to this part of the story?
- 6 - What can we learn from Elizabeth’s response to her relative Mary?
- 7 - Read Luke 1:67-80. What is your favorite line in Zechariah’s song? What line do you need to hold close to you this Christmas?



Impacting the World Around Us

Each year, our church encourages a collective effort to counter the commercialization of Christmas by generously supporting worthy causes for Jesus worldwide. This year’s projects are Light 2 The World in Nepal, Odessa Theological Seminary in Ukraine, and Living Water International a project in Guatemala.

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