

**Biblical Hope Despite the Fleas**  
**The Heart of Christmas – Hope = Biblical (When) vs Worldly (If)**  
**What is God Communicating in His word, to me and to others?**

Welcome & Prayer

**Isiah 40:31** – “...but those who HOPE in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles, they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.”

**FLEAS** – Sisters were faithful through the fleas.

**LUKE** – Paul’s Personal Physician and as a result was an eyewitness to Paul’s life.

- Ref. in **Colossians 4:14** “Dear Friend Luke, The Doctor” NIV ➡ “Beloved Physician”
- \* Articulate, Highly Educated & Literate Scholar, Precise, Detail Oriented, Careful Historian
- \* Took great Pride in Accuracy
- Luke 1:3-4** “...I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning... so that you may know with certainty of the things you have been taught.”
- \* Wrote based on personal interviews with eyewitnesses, researched written documents and compared and investigated claims.
- \* Called the “joyful apostle” for his often-referenced scripture as joy, joyous, joy-filled, rejoice.
- \* Luke wrote 2 books, about 27.5% of NT (Paul 13 Books, 23.5% / John 5 Books, 20%) = 71%
- \* Written about 60 AD (27 Years after Jesus’ Crucifixion & Resurrection)
- AD = Anno Domini “The Year of Our Lord” (BCE / CE to remove Christ, but centers on Jesus)

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**Associated with Jesus’ Birth** = Jesus, Mary, Joseph, Angels (Gabriel), Shepherds, King Herod, Wisemen (Not Just 3) – 3 Gifts Gold, Frankincense and Myrr (RCC 12/15/2024 @ 39:00)

**Less Mentioned** = Zechariah / Elizabeth (JTB Parents), John the Baptist, Simeon, Anna

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**1) Zechariah & Elizabeth** – Parents of John the Baptist **Luke 1:5-25** (Read)  
**Re: Luke 1:9 - Proverbs 16:33** “The lot is cast into the lap, but the decision is from The Lord.”  
(God Communicating – *God controls outcomes*)

**\*\* Luke 1:25** – The Lord has done this for me, she said, in these days He has shown His favor and taken away my **disgrace**...” (Elizabeth saw herself as disgrace but God was working.)

**\*\* God communicates in this scripture** ... TRUST in His plan and timing. **Zech/Elizabeth’s Fleas**

**- Matt 11:11** “Among those born of women, there has not arisen anyone greater than JTB.”

Don’t miss this, Elizabeth, descendant of Aaron, whom Luke described as righteous” viewed herself as disgraced. That was her humility and her perseverance in her trust of God produced JTB in His perfect time. (*Communicated to Me/All – Humility, Trust, Perseverance, Timing*)

**- Jeremiah 29:11** “For I have plans for you declares The Lord, plans to prosper and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.” Their son, JTB is not just another child, but “THE GREATEST prophet who ever lived” (*God’s Communicating – God is for us*)

**\*\* Why not just have Zech/Liz born earlier?**

Younger parents may not have developed enough spiritually to raise a JTB

- **James 1:2-4** “Consider it pure joy my brothers and sisters whenever you face trials of any kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. *Let perseverance finish its work* so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. (To Us All)

**Greek Perseverance** = Enduring patience, steadfastness in the face of challenges until the purpose is fulfilled.

So, geriatric Elizabeth is 6 months pregnant when Angel Gabriel tells teenage Mary that she will have a child despite being a virgin.

**Luke 1:37 Gabriel Says to Mary, “For no Word from God will **EVER** Fail !!!”**

(Communicated to all that *He won't fail... He CANNOT fail.*)

**Luke 1:41-44** Mary visits Elizabeth and when JTB hears Mary's voice the Holy Spirit entered him and he LEPT in the womb for the joy of being in the presence of the fetus Baby Jesus.

\*\* Fetus JTB lept in the presence of fetus Jesus.

**Luke 1:57-64** Meanwhile poor Zechariah is still mute (and deaf?)

JTB was born, Zechariah wrote on a chalk board “His Name is John.”

Speech returned and Zechariah praised God with song. (Called Benedictus) **Luke 2:67-80**

\*\*\* ... and that's all that's written of Zechariah/Elizabeth (God Speaks Purpose to Us) 1 JOB!

Nothing more is written about Zechariah/Elizabeth – **They had one primary purpose on earth.**

**Zechariah & Elizabeth were faithful through the fleas with expectant, biblical hope.**

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**2) Simeon** – Meanwhile Jesus is born, JTB is now 6 months old. Luke writes of a “righteous & devout” man named Simeon. **Luke 2:25-29** (Read)

- Mosaic Law = Mary/Joseph to be purified (for 40 days) post-partum & offering (Pigeons)
- Joseph/Mary, 8 days post-partum went to Jerusalem for this and Jesus' circumcision.
- First Son presented to God - 1 month after birth.

\*\* Enter Simeon, a man who mastered the art of watching & waiting (**fleas**). (**Biblical Hope**)

- Holy Spirit was on him & said he would not die before seeing the Messiah. (**Luke 2:26**)  
(Imagine the reaction to Simeon when he shared this story)

**Luke 2:27** “Moved by the Holy Spirit he went to the Temple Courts” Simeon felt a nudge. (Have you ever felt that? A Name... Need to Pause, Pray, Reach Out...) No Coincidences

Simeon had **Biblical hope**... **Greek hope (Elpis) translated as wait.**

**Wait = Confident Expectation**

**Biblical Hope** = “Confident Expectation”

**Biblical Hope** = remain alert because **Biblical Hope** pays attention what hasn't occurred **YET**.

**Biblical Hope** carries expectation and is focused on **WHEN**

**Worldly hope** lacks expectation and focuses on **IF**

(**Luke 2:27 Communicates Biblical vs Worldly Hope**) The Holy Spirit in Simeon said, “**it's time.**”

**Biblical Hope is The Heart of Christmas**

### **Biblical Hope produces the greatest joy.**

- YOU have experienced **Biblical Hope!**
- Have you ever waited for a visit from someone. (You have experienced **Biblical Hope**)
- You knew they were coming; you haven't seen them in a long while. There was no doubt.
- That moment they arrived... The Joy! The Hope Fulfilled! The Immense Happiness!!
- What's one of the first things you do? Take a Photo, you want that moment forever.

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- Close your eyes... Pause and imagine the moment Simeon met Jesus, His Joy His Hope Fulfilled His Immense Happiness
- **Luke 2:28-32** "Simeon took Him in his arms and praised God saying, Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you may now dismiss your servant in peace. For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the sight of all nations: a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of your people Israel."

### **3) Anna – Luke 2:36-38** (Read) A prophetess and very close to God. Tuned In..

- Luke describes Anna as "very old." This was a compliment.
- In those times, age was associated with wisdom and so their words carried extra weight, unlike today where youth is valued over wisdom and the contributions of our elders are too often ignored.
- As Christians we should reverse those values where we can and seek their wisdom and ENCOURAGE those who are "very old" to share their knowledge and experience.
- Anna was married only 7 years then widowed and was now 84.
- Anna NEVER left the Temple, but worshipped day and night, fasting & praying. (Anna was Tuned in to God) God was not something she did, God was her life!
- When she saw Jesus, the Spirit surely opened her eyes, and she was unable to contain her excitement. She expressed *fervent* thanks and praise to the Lord and proclaimed the child to all who would hear (**v. 2:38**). **Greek Fervent = Zeo' (Intense Zeal)**
- When Anna recognizes Jesus as The Messiah, it meant that He was The Messiah.

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### **Biblical Hope – Confident Expectation – When not If**

Patience may have been the fleas that caused them to bail out.

But they remained faithful through the fleas

All Three Stories = Expectant Patience from Biblical Hope

**Close** – Merchant John, learned to sail from his father. Grew experienced but undisciplined, lacking morals and mocking the religious and ruined a promising naval career. Instead Captained a slave ship (Greyhound) for the lucrative return it provided.

One night he found himself in a storm that took him to the ship's water pumps for 9 hours, all night fighting to keep from sinking. Exhausted and without hope of survival John threw himself on the deck of *The Greyhound* and pleaded for mercy for himself and his crew.

He didn't deserve it but received it. Being an experienced sailor, he knew that they should have all died that night. John never forgot the grace he received. Upon return left the slave trade and became a composer and pastor for the next 50 years. John Newton, Captain of a slave ship, composed one of the greatest worship hymns ever written... sing along with Jake if you know it.

*None are beyond hope.*

### **What are your fleas?**

Addiction, finances, relationships, sadness, grief, anger, loss, illness, injury, impatience, apathy... maybe your fleas are actual fleas like sisters

### **There is hope... Hope is not a practice Hope is a person. His name is Jesus**

Hope is the confident expectation of Jesus.

Jesus says when not if

Jesus says let persistence finish its work.

Jesus is the **Biblical Hope** and patience of Simeon before he was peacefully dismissed.

Jesus is the **Biblical Hope** of Anna who prayed without ceasing.

Jesus is the **Biblical Hope** and patient trust of Zechariah & Elizabeth

Jesus is the faithful preparation of way from JTB the greatest among those ever born to woman.

Jesus is the **Hope** for the lost in a slave ship Captain turned composer and pastor.

No one is hopeless with Jesus; no fleas are too many with Jesus.

Your fleas are God's paths to His purpose. Let perseverance finish its work in Biblical Hope that focuses on when, not if.

I invite you to celebrate the stories of these people surrounding the birth of our Lord, Savior and Messiah Jesus Christ; Zechariah, Elizabeth, Simeon, Anna, John Newton, with us in the final song today.

I invite you to give your burdens (fleas) to Christ today. Incite Him to be your Savior if you never have.

I invite you to come, at this time, to God's alter.

Sticky Statement = "For I have plans for you declares The Lord, plans to prosper and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." (Jeremiah 29:11)

GTKY = Share a time that you anxiously awaited a visit to or from someone and describe the moment you saw them.