

Series: Luke 2024

Title: Zacharius and Elizabeth

Text: Luke 1: 5-7

Date: Jan 5, 2025

Place: SGBC, NJ

This is the first Sunday of the new year. Brother Larry Criss sent his bulletin and it had this quote from Augustus Toplady, New Years 1767. “Upon review of the past year, I wish to confess that my unfruitfulness has been exceeding great, my sins still greater, and God’s mercies greater than both.” Every believer here can say, “Amen.” God’s saints never rise above that so long as we have a sin-nature.

In Luke 1, we will begin to see our Lord Jesus in what he worked for the parents of John the Baptist. Today we will only cover verses 5-7.

Luke 1: 5: There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judaea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the course of Abia: and his wife *was* of the daughters of Aaron, and her name *was* Elisabeth. 6: And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. 7: And they had no child, because that Elisabeth was barren, and they both were *now* well stricken in years.

BEHOLD CHRIST THE KING

Luke 1: 5: There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judaea...

How do we see Christ the King in that bit of information? Herod was not a Jew, not a child of Judah. He was a Gentile set up as king by the Roman government. In those days, Herod had taken over Judea and made it a part of the Roman empire. The royal sceptre—the power, the government of the kingdom—had departed from Judah. That means it is time for Christ the King to come into the world.

Genesis 49:10: The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him *shall* the gathering of the people *be*.

Shiloh is a name of Christ. It is from a root word that means “Rest, Tranquility.” The word means “he whose it is.” The throne and the glory is Christ’s—“*the government shall be on his shoulder...and his kingdom is a kingdom of peace.*” (Is 9: 6).

Brethren, if we lived in Judah at this time, all the liberties we enjoy as a free nation would be gone. We would be under Roman rule. But even if that be the case, it is for Christ’s glory. We would really be under Christ’s rule. Even in that day, the government was on his shoulder. He was working peace and rest for his people. Knowing him and knowing he is our salvation is rest and peace.

GOD’S COVENANT PROMISES FULFILLED

Luke 1: 5...a certain priest named Zacharias, of the course of Abia: and his wife *was* of the daughters of Aaron, and her name *was* Elisabeth.

When we find the word “certain” referring to a person, it usually means God’s elect. It certainly does here: Zacharias and Elisabeth were chosen of God from before the foundation of the world. Everyone God saves was chosen by God in Christ before he made the world.

Zacharias means “remembered of Jehovah.” God chose his people in Christ. Therefore all of God’s elect are *remembered of Jehovah* for the sake of Christ our Righteousness.

Psalm 136: 21: Who remembered us in our low estate: for his mercy *endureth* for ever:

Elizabeth means “oath of God” or “my God hath sworn.” That is why God remembers us because of his covenant, ordered and sure in Christ.

Psalm 105: 8: He hath remembered his covenant for ever, the word *which* he commanded to a thousand generations.

Exodus 2: 24: And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob.

We see it here. God remembered his covenant word that he promised in Malachi. Down in verse 17 is God’s covenant promise from:

Malachi 4: 5 Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD: 6 And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.

That was God’s promise. Over 400 years past with no word from the Lord. But now the Lord is fulfilling his covenant promise by sending John the Baptist. He is Elijah. God remembered his covenant word. He sent John the Baptist to prepare the way of the Lord Jesus.

Now notice, *Zacharias, of the course of Abia: and his wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elisabeth.* Abia was Zacharias’ great, great, great grandfather from way back in 1 Chronicles 23-24. They divided the priests into courses. So they took turns serving in the temple. But the thing to get here is both Zacharias and Elizabeth were of the tribe of Aaron. So John the Baptist was of the tribe of the *great high priest Aaron.* Also, John the Baptist was himself *a Prophet.* We know Christ was of the house of David *the king, the house of Judah, the kingly tribe.* John came first then our Lord Jesus.

Here is the point. Christ had to first fulfill his priestly office by putting away the sin of his people and entering the Holy place on our behalf. Then he fulfills his prophetic office by sending this good news to his people and giving us faith in him. Then he takes over as King of our hearts. Brethren, our Prophet, Priest and King fulfills every covenant promise for us.

2 Corinthians 1:20 For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us.

THE LORD REMEMBERS HIS PEOPLE

He remembered Zacharias and Elizabeth. God ordained that they would be the parents of John the Baptist. This was a particular blessing to them because as verse 7 says “*They had no child because that Elizabeth was barren.*” This would be a miracle of God’s grace because as verse 7 says Zacharias and Elizabeth, “*both were now well stricken in years.*”

Not being able to have a child would have made Zacharias and Elizabeth very sorrowful. Since the Lord promised Christ was coming through a woman—“the Seed of woman”—all the women hoped to be that woman. So not having children would cause Elizabeth much sorrow.

Also, since God put special importance on the firstborn son, to typify, Christ Jesus “*the Firstborn among many brethren,*” it would have caused them sorrow that they did not have a son.

Not only that, but barrenness was a stigma among the children of Israel. It was the sort of thing that would make folks avoid them. Or people would whisper that God must be punishing them because of some secret sin.

But that was not the case them. It certain they came into this world sinners. And it is certain their sin-nature was nothing but sin. But verse 6 says “*They were both righteous before God.*” Get that. “*Before God*”—before the law of God—before the all-knowing eye of God—they were righteous in Christ.

Christ is the Righteousness of his people even before he laid down his life. He was the Surety and Righteousness of God’s elect before he came. The Spirit of God had given them life and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ their Righteousness. They were believers waiting for Christ to come the first time.

The fruit of the Spirit, is that through faith in Christ, motivated by God’s love to them, they were verse 6: “*walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.*” This was not their righteousness. No man is justified by the works of the law in the sight of God.

Nor was it that they were without sin. If you had asked them, they would have said they were sinners in themselves. God saints see our own sins. God keeps us humble before him.

We can be sure, as all God’s saints do, they loved the law and endeavored to keep it best they could. We can be sure they saw Christ foreshadowed in the ordinances—the high priest, the lamb, the ark and mercy seat. We can be sure they endeavored to live blameless before men. But the Holy Spirit does not say they did their best—he declares “*they were both righteous BEFORE GOD, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.*”

There are several Greek words translated blameless that have to do with character but this is not one of them. This is the word Christ used when he said,

Matthew 12:7: But if ye had known what *this* meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned THE GUILTLESS.

As they walked, endeavoring to keep God’s law and ordinances, though sin was mixed with everything they did, before God they were guiltless, blameless, justified by the righteousness of Christ so they were without fault before God. That is true of all God’s saints.

Without a doubt, they were sanctified by the Spirit of Christ dwelling in them so that their hearts were holy. They walked by faith in the Lord Jesus. We know they did all constrained [motivated] by God’s love for them. They wanted God their Father and our Lord Jesus Christ to have all the glory. But that is not what made them blameless before God. They were blameless in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Brethren, none of God’s saints are under the law, we are under grace. But in our new man we love the law—it taught us our sin—the law is holy just and good. We endeavor to keep the law as far as we can. But we do all in faith to Christ, motivated by his love for us—we want him to have the glory. Yet, we know he is our only righteousness. We are only blameless in Christ!

But hearing how the Spirit of God records in God's word that they were *blameless before God*, we see this *barrenness* was not a punishment due to sin. Let's learn from that, brethren. When brethren suffer a trial do not presume it is due to sin. There have been many children in scripture born after their mother had been barren a long time: Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Samson, Samuel, here John the Baptist. Remember, God produced Isaac for Abraham and Sarah even after they had committed great sin in producing Ishmael. When brethren suffer a trial do not presume it is due to sin.

If God gives *you* a trial, examine yourself. It *could be* due to sin—he chastens those he loves to keep us partaking of his holiness. If so, ask God for grace to repent and put it away. When you do, give God the glory for chastening you, for drawing you to him and for granting you repentance.

But also remember God gives trials to draw us nearer to Christ. Sometimes that is the only reason for the trial. We are going to find Zacharias in the Lord's house praying at his throne of grace. The trial is always to bring us to Christ's feet to find grace to help in time of need.

Here is one last thing. They were well stricken in years. They probably figured by now that they would never have a child. Then verse **13: But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John. 14: And thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth. 15: For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb. 16 And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God. 17 And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.**

God not only gave them a child, he gave them John the Baptist and used John to make ready a people prepared for the Lord. God may make his child wait a long time then pour out mercy in a double portion. He does it so that our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. So keep drawing near to Christ at his throne of grace trusting our Lord.

Amen!