

Luke 1:5-25 **Miraculous Conception of John the Baptist**

Introduction of Zacharias and Elizabeth – Priest of the Division of Abijah

5 There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the division of Abijah. His wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. 6 And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. 7 But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and they were both well advanced in years.

Zachariah Ministered as priest whose service was appointed by lot

8 So it was, that while he was serving as priest before God in the order of his division, 9 according to the custom of the priesthood, his lot fell to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord. 10 And the whole multitude of the people was praying outside at the hour of incense.

Angel Appeared in the Temple

11 Then an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing on the right side of the altar of incense. 12 And when Zacharias saw him, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him. 13 But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your prayer is heard; and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John. 14 And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth. 15 For he will be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink. He will also be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb. 16 And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God. 17 He will also go before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, '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."

Zachariah requested a Sign

18 And Zacharias said to the angel, "How shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife is well advanced in years." 19 And the angel answered and said to him, "I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God, and was sent to speak to you and bring you these glad tidings. 20 But behold, you will be mute and not able to speak until the day these things take place, because you did not believe my words which will be fulfilled in their own time."

Zachariah mute – People discern he saw a vision

21 And the people waited for Zacharias, and marveled that he lingered so long in the temple. 22 But when he came out, he could not speak to them; and they perceived that he had seen a vision in the temple, for he beckoned to them and remained speechless.

Elizabeth conceived and hid for five months

23 And so it was, as soon as the days of his service were completed, that he departed to his own house. 24 Now after those days his wife Elizabeth conceived; and she hid herself five months, saying, 25 "Thus the Lord has dealt with me, in the days when He looked on me, to take away my reproach among people." NKJV

Facts Revealed:

Introduction of Zacharias and Elizabeth – Priest of the Division of Abijah

✠ The historical time was while Herod the great was king of Judea. [\[Luke 1:5\]](#)

✠ Zacharias the father of John the Baptist was a priest of the division of Abijah. [\[Luke 1:5\]](#)

- ✧ There are 12 months to a year, and 24 divisions of the priests, so each division of the priests served for 2 weeks.
- ✧ The first month of the year was established by God as the month of Nisan which is the same as the month of Abib which is the month Israel departed from Egypt. [Exodus 12:1-2]
- ✧ The division of Abijah was the eighth division, and scheduled to serve as priests the last two weeks of Tammuz (the fourth month of the Jewish Calendar), as appointed by David with Zadok and Ahimelech [1 Chron 24:3-19]
- ✧ Zacharias and Elizabeth his wife were both righteous before God walking in all the commandments of the Lord blamelessly. [Luke 1:5-6]
 - ✧ Elizabeth was barren, they had no children and were well advanced in years. [Luke 1:7]
 - ✧ It is interesting how God makes miraculous the conception of people who are special tools of God for special purposes of the Divine.

Zachariah Ministered as priest whose service was appointed by lot

- ✧ The specific ministry to be done by the priest was chosen by casting lots. [Luke 1:8-9]
 - ✧ Zacharias' lot fell to burn incense on the altar of incense.
 - ✧ The people were outside praying at the hour of incense. [Luke 1:10]

Angel Appeared in the Temple

- ✧ Then an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing on the right side of the altar of incense. And when Zacharias saw him, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him. [Luke 1:11-12]
 - ✧ It was forbidden for anyone except the priests to be in the Holy Place at the altar of incense. [Numbers 3:10, 16:40, 18:7]
 - ✧ When the angel of the Lord appeared at the right side of the altar of incense, it is most understandable that Zacharias was troubled when he saw the angel.
- ✧ But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your prayer is heard; and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John. And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth. For he will be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink. He will also be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb. And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God. He will also go before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, '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." [Luke 1:13-17]
 - ✧ The angel spoke of his fear and said "Fear not"
 - ✧ Zacharias and Elizabeth have remained childless to their old age.
 - ✧ Zacharias has prayed for a son.
 - ✧ The angel promised a positive answer to the prayer of Zacharias, that Elizabeth will conceive and bear a son whom they are to name John, giving joy to many.
 - ✧ The angel then described the purpose of this specific child.
 - ✧ He will be great in the sight of Yehowah.
 - ✧ He will be a Nazarite from conception, so he will drink neither wine nor strong drink.
 - ✧ He will be filled with the Holy Spirit from conception.
 - ✧ He will go before Yehowah in the spirit and power of Elijah. [Malachi 3:1, 4:4-6]

(John the Baptist was the forerunner who went before Jesus to prepare the people to receive the ministry of Jesus, and introduced Jesus to the people as the Son of God, thus the angel is saying that Jesus is Yehowah of the Old Testament the God of Israel).
 - ✧ He will turn many of the Children of Israel to Yehowah (the sign of a true prophet). [Jeremiah 23:22]

Zachariah requested a Sign

- ✚ Zacharias was a priest with knowledge of all the miracles God has performed for the Children of Israel from the call of Abraham to the present.
 - ✧ Zacharias knew of the miraculous conception of Isaac, Jacob and Esau, Joseph, as well as Samson.
 - ✧ Yet Zacharias asked for a sign, indicating the great influence of the Pharisees of his time on the thinking of the priesthood.
 - ✧ Though Zacharias was living blamelessly in the commandments and ordinances of Yehowah, he still struggled with faith to believe the word of the angel. [Luke 1:6, 18]
- ✚ The angel answered and said to him, "I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God, and was sent to speak to you and bring you these glad tidings. But behold, **you will be mute and not able to speak** until the day these things take place, **because you did not believe my words** which will be fulfilled in their own time." [Luke 1:19-20]
 - ✧ Gabriel is the angel whose position in Heaven is near the presence of God, whom God has sent to deliver messages of Joy and revelation to men. [Daniel 8:16, 9:21, Luke 1:19, 1:26]
 - ✧ The promises and purposes of God will be fulfilled in their own time even when we fail in our faith.

Zachariah mute – People discern he saw a vision

- ✚ As was quite common in the lives of John the Baptist and Jesus the Christ, the people are more discerning than the Priests and religious leaders.
 - ✧ The people waiting for Zacharias to come out of the Temple, marveled that he lingered so long in the Temple.
 - ✧ When Zacharias did come out to them and could not speak, the people perceived he had seen a vision in the Temple. [Luke 1:21-22]

Elizabeth conceived and hid for five months

- ✚ True to the word of the angel of Yehowah, when Zacharias returned home after completing his service in the Temple, Elizabeth did in fact conceive. [Luke 1:23-24]
 - ✧ She hid herself for five months, saying; "Thus the Lord has dealt with me, in the days when He looked on me, to take away my reproach among people."
 - ✧ For a woman of the Children of Israel to be barren was viewed as a reproach. [Luke 1:25, Genesis 30:23]
 - ✧ But with God, nothing is impossible, and God moves for His own purposes and for His own glory. [Genesis 18:14, Luke 1:37, 18:27, Matthew 19:26, Mark 10:27]