

GOOD NEWS

FOR A CHANGE

WEEK 2 • GOOD NEWS IS HERE

MARK SPURLOCK | DECEMBER 1 & 2

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. Both of them were **righteous** in the sight of God, observing all the Lord's commands and decrees blamelessly. But they were **childless** because Elizabeth **was not able to conceive**, and they were both **very old**. Luke 1:5-7

Once when Zechariah's division was on duty and he was serving as priest before God, he was **chosen by lot**, according to the custom of the priesthood, to go into the temple of the Lord and burn incense. And when the time for the burning of incense came, all the assembled worshipers were praying outside. Luke 1:8-10

Then an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing at the right side of the altar of incense. When Zechariah saw him, he was startled and was gripped with fear. But the angel said to him: "Do not be afraid, Zechariah; **your prayer has been heard**. Luke 1: 11-13a

Your wife Elizabeth **will** bear you a son, and you are to call him John. He **will** be a joy and delight to you, and many **will** rejoice because of his birth, or he **will** be great in the sight of the Lord. He is never to take wine or other fermented drink, and he **will** be filled with the Holy Spirit even before he is born. He **will** bring back many of the people of Israel to the Lord their God. 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 1:13b-17

Zechariah asked the angel, "**How can I be sure of this?** I am an old man and my wife is well along in years." Luke 1:18

The angel said to him, "**I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God**, and I have been sent to speak to you and to tell you this **good news**. And now you will be silent and not able to speak until the day this happens, because you did not believe my words, which **will come true** at their **appointed time**." Luke 1:19-20

Meanwhile, the people were **waiting** for Zechariah and **wondering** why he stayed so long in the temple. When he came out, he could not speak to them. They realized he had seen a vision in the temple, for he kept making signs to them but remained unable to speak. Luke 1:21-22

When his time of service was completed, he returned home. After this his wife Elizabeth became pregnant and for five months **remained in seclusion**. Luke 1:23-24

GOOD NEWS IS HERE EVEN WHEN...

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When it was time for Elizabeth to have her baby, she gave birth to a son. Her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had shown her great mercy, and they shared her joy. Luke 1:57-58

On the eighth day they came to circumcise the child, and they were going to name him after his father Zechariah, but his mother spoke up and said, "No! He is to be called John." They said to her, "There is no one among your relatives who has that name." Luke 1:59-61

Then they made signs to his father, to find out what he would like to name the child. He asked for a writing tablet, and to everyone's astonishment he wrote, "His name is John." Immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue set free, and he began to speak, **praising God**. Luke 1:62-64

I CAN ALWAYS CELEBRATE...

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Then his father, Zechariah, was filled with the Holy Spirit and gave this prophecy: "Praise the Lord, the God of Israel, because he has visited and redeemed his people. **He has sent us a mighty Savior** from the royal line of his servant David, **just as he promised** through his holy prophets long ago. Luke 1:67-70 (NLT)