



## AN ADVENT MEDITATION

December 8, 2021

### LUKE 1 : 5 - 20 - BLAMELESS BUT FAITHLESS

#### NOTES :

- > **Zechariah, meaning 'God remembers', was a priest of the division of Abijah – the eighth division out of 24 divisions according to I Chr 24:10.**
- > **The name Elizabeth means 'God is my oath.'**
- > **The name John means 'God has been gracious.'**
- > **Incense was to be burned on the altar of incense in the morning and the evening when the lamps were tended and lit (Exodus 30:7-8). The incense contained frankincense (Ex 30:34-35).**
- > **The altar of incense was in front of the curtain that divided the Holy of Holies from the Holy Place.**
- > **The Levites were commissioned by David to thank and praise God every morning and evening (I Chr 23:28-31).**
- > **Mal 3:1 "See, I will send my messenger, who will prepare the way before me. Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come," says the Lord Almighty. NIV**

In the 800 years before Jesus' birth, Israel was ruled by Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece, Syria and Rome – to name a few. It was like the days of the Judges. Israel became slaves to the various people around them. In King Saul's time, the Philistines controlled much of Israel. When Samuel was young, there was no king and Eli was the priest. At that time, God declared that there would be a change in the priesthood. Later in Samuel's life, God had him anoint David as king of Israel. Israel reached a peak during the reigns of David and Solomon. Zadok became priest during that time which was the change of priesthood foretold to Samuel. The last book of the Old Testament, Malachi, mentions a messenger (Elijah) who prepares the way for the Lord. After the messenger is sent, the Messiah appears, the one Israel seeks. At the turn of time, Israel needed a new king and a new high priest to return them to their former glory or to lead them into greater glory under the reign of the Messiah. Herod was the king of Israel at the time. He did not represent God or the people of Israel. He was a puppet of Rome. Zechariah was a priest who ministered in the temple, but

he exhibited characteristics similar to Eli the priest. The angel's message to Zechariah was clear. Zechariah's son would be the one to prepare the way for the Messiah. The Messiah was coming soon!

Read Luke 1:5-7.

What was the lineage of Zechariah? What was the lineage of Elizabeth?

Verse 6 says that Zechariah and Elizabeth were both blameless. What does that mean? Were they perfect?

The Old Testament law proclaimed that if the people of Israel followed God's laws, then they would be blessed. If Israel disobeyed God, then they would be cursed. Do you think that Zechariah and Elizabeth felt that they had done something wrong since they were childless? Why would God deny these good people a child?

Read Luke 1:8-17.

What was Zechariah's job? What were some of his duties?

What did the offering of incense in the temple signify?

What frightened Zechariah when he was in the Holy Place?

What did Gabriel say to Zechariah in verse 13?

From verse 13 we can conclude that Zechariah had prayed for a child. How long do you think Zechariah prayed this prayer? Do you think that Zechariah gave up on this prayer and thought that it was not God's will?

How long should we pray for something before we stop?

What does the name "John" mean?

What was going to be unique about John?

What was unique about John's ministry?

What is the significance of John ministering in the spirit and power of Elijah?

How would you respond if an angel came to you and told you that God had answered your prayer?

Read Luke 1:18-20.

How did Zechariah respond to the angel's good news?

Why did Zechariah disbelieve the angel?

What was his punishment?

Do you think that Zechariah gave up on God?

Have you ever given up praying for something? Is there an appropriate time when we should stop praying for something?

SAMUEL ( I SAMUEL 1 - 16 )	JOHN THE BAPTIST ( LUKE 1 - 3 )
His mother Hannah was barren (1:5)	His mother Elizabeth was barren (1:7)
Hannah desired a child for a long time (1:6-7)	Zechariah prayed a long time for a child (1:13, 18)
Hannah's request was 'answered' at the temple (1:9-20)	Zechariah's request was 'answered' in the temple (1:8-22)
Samuel was dedicated to God's service as a child (1:11, 24-28)	John was filled with the Holy Spirit from his birth (1:15)
No razor was to touch his head (1:11; part of the Nazarite vow - Numbers 6:1-8)	He was not to drink wine or strong drink (1:15; part of the Nazarite vow - Numbers 6:1-8)
Was a Levite who served as a priest (I Chr 6:33-38, I Sam 2:18, 3:3, 10:8, 13:7-14)	Was from the priestly line (1:5, 57-60)
Was a prophet who rebuked Saul (3:19-20, 13:7-14)	Was a prophet who rebuked Herod (7:24-28, 3:19-20)
Died just before there was a change in the priesthood (2:27-36, 3:11-14, I Kings 2:26-27)	Died just before there was a change in the priesthood (Hebrews 7:11-19)
Had a son named Abijah (8:1-3, I Chr 6:22-28)	His father was from the priestly division of Abijah (1:5)
Anointed David as king (16:1-13)	Baptized Jesus and introduced him to Israel (3:16, 21-22, Matthew 3:13-15)