

Promised Babies

Luke 1:5-38; Matthew 1:18-21; *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 97-101

Has your mom or dad ever promised you something special? something that you have wanted for a long time? How did you feel when it happened? That might have been how Zechariah felt when God sent Gabriel to give him a promise.

Zechariah, a priest, was serving in the temple. The priests took turns, and it was his week to serve. Every day that week he was to enter the holy place. There he would burn incense and lift up the prayers of the people to God. One day he entered the holy

place as usual. But this was not to be a “usual” day. A strange and wonderful thing happened.

Zechariah was standing before the golden altar. The cloud of incense was rising up before God. Suddenly an angel appeared on the right side of the altar. Zechariah was startled and filled with fear. Then the angel spoke. “Don’t be afraid, Zechariah. God has heard your prayers. Your wife will have a baby boy. You are to name him John. The Holy Spirit will be with him. He will lead many people to change their lives, to be ready to meet the Lord.”

Zechariah couldn’t believe what he was hearing. He and his wife, Elizabeth, did not have any children. For many years they had prayed for a child. But they were too old now. People of their age did not have children.

“How do I know that what you say is true?” he asked. “My wife and I are old, too old to have a baby.”

The angel replied, “I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God. God sent me with this special message for you. Because you did not believe, you will not speak until your son is born. That will be the sign that what I have said is true.” Then the angel disappeared.

People in the temple courtyard were wondering what had happened to Zechariah.



The Message

God's gifts of love fill
me with hope and joy.

Memory Verse

**"The Mighty One
has done great
things for me—
holy is his name"**
(Luke 1:49, NIV).

When he left the holy place, he tried to tell the people what he had seen. But just as the angel had said, he could not speak. He could only write and try to use sign language.

Soon after the angel's visit, Elizabeth became pregnant. God had kept His promise. And when the baby was born, everybody wanted to name the boy after his father, but Zechariah could speak again. "His name shall be John," he told their friends and neighbors.

Six months after visiting Zechariah, Gabriel brought good news to another person, Elizabeth's young cousin Mary.

"Rejoice, God is with you," Gabriel said to the young woman.

Mary was startled. She wondered about this stranger. Why did he say, "God is with you"? She felt nervous and a bit afraid.

Gabriel continued. "Don't be afraid. God is going to give you a son. You must name Him Jesus. He will be known as the Son of God. And He will reign over a kingdom that will never end!"

Mary was very young, and she wondered how this could be. How could she have a baby?

"Your child will be

created by God," Gabriel said. "Your cousin Elizabeth is also having a baby. Nothing is impossible for God."

Mary believed Gabriel. "I am God's servant," she said. "Let it be as you have said."

Gabriel then went to visit Joseph, the man Mary was to marry. He told Joseph that Mary would have a baby—the Son of God. And Joseph believed his message. He would be the earthly father of the Son of God.

This is grace—a promise that God gives for something that seems impossible.

He promised a son to Zechariah and Elizabeth. And He kept His word.

He promised a son to Mary and Joseph. And He kept His word. God has promised to send Jesus to us again, that we might live with Him forever.

God keeps His promises. Jesus will come again!



S A B B A T H

DO If possible, go for a walk or ride. Count the churches you see. How are they different from the temple in Jesus' day? How are they different from your church?

SHARE Share your lesson story with your family. Write your memory verse on a long strip of paper. Be sure to include the reference. Roll both ends toward the middle to make a scroll. Use it to teach the verse to your family.

ASK Ask your family: How many gifts can you think of that begin with the letters in the word *angel*? (For example: A—animals, aunt, apple.)

SING Sing songs of praise, then thank God for His many gifts and a place to worship.

S U N D A Y

READ For family worship, read and discuss Luke 1:5-25. Why couldn't Zechariah speak? How did he communicate with the people? with Elizabeth?

ASK Ask your family not to speak during one meal today. How will you ask people to pass something to you?

THINK How many ways can you send a message to a friend you can't talk with?

PRAY Thank God that you can speak.

M O N D A Y

READ Read and discuss Luke 1:57-66 during family worship. Did God's promise to Zechariah come true? What did Zechariah tell their friends and neighbors? Why? To learn more about John, read Matthew 3:1-16; Mark 1:1-12; or Luke 3:1-18.

ASK Ask your parents to show you your baby pictures and talk about when you were a baby. Plan today to visit someone who has a baby or toddler. Do something to help care for that child.

PRAY Thank God for Jesus and John.

READ For family worship today, read and discuss Luke 1:67-80. What did Zechariah say his son would be called? What would he do with his life?

DO Write or sing your own song of praise. Ask each family member to begin by saying, "I praise God for . . ." Put their sentences together to make a psalm of praise.

SING Sing some praise songs, then offer prayers of thanksgiving.

T H U R S D A Y

DO Ask if you can help make angel-shaped cookies today. Share them during supper.

READ Read and discuss Luke 1:39-56 with your family. What did Elizabeth say about Mary? What did Mary say about herself? about the Lord? Who is "the Mighty One"?

ASK Ask your family: "What has the Mighty One done for us?" Make a list, then thank God for His wonderful gifts.

W E D N E S D A Y

READ For family worship today, read and discuss Luke 1:26-38 and Matthew 1:18-24. What did you learn about Mary? about Jesus? about Joseph? What is the meaning of "his kingdom shall never end"?

SING What does it mean to be "the Lord's servant"? How can you use your voice to be the Lord's servant? Sing songs about serving God; then thank Him for helping you do so.



Mary and Joseph both came from King David's family.



F R I D A Y

DO Act out your Bible lesson during family worship. Who will be the angel Gabriel? Zechariah? Elizabeth? Mary? Joseph?

ASK Ask each person to name their favorite Bible promise and tell why. Find and read each one. Does God keep His promises? How do you know?

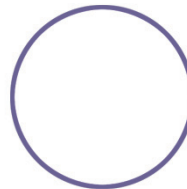
SING Sing praise songs; then thank God for keeping His promises. Tell Him how you feel about living in heaven with Him. And ask Him to send Jesus soon.

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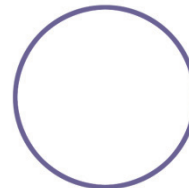
PUZZLE

Directions: Unscramble the names and then draw a happy or sad face according to their reaction to God's messenger.

AyrM _____



HairahceZ _____



SpoJhe _____

