

God Promised Zacharias a Son

Key Verses: *“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. And thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth.”*
—**Luke 1:13,14**

Selected Scripture:
Luke 1:5-23

LUKE BEGINS THIS account by mentioning Zacharias, a priest of Israel, and his wife Elisabeth, who would become the parents of John the Baptist. At this time they were childless and both well advanced in age. On one occasion, while performing his priestly duties in the Temple, an angel of the Lord appeared to Zacharias, who became fearful by this sudden visit.—**Luke 1:5-12**

Our Key Verse reveals the angel’s mission, as he informed Zacharias that his prayers had been heard and that Elisabeth would bear a son. He was to be named John, and his birth would bring them and many others great joy.

The angel continued to speak concerning their future son and his mission: “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 Spirit, even from his mother’s womb. And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God. 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.”—vss. 15-17

The seeming impossibility of this promise being fulfilled, because both his wife and he were elderly, caused Zacharias to be skeptical. The angel, who identified himself as Gabriel, informed him that because of a lack of faith he would be unable to speak again until the child was born.—vss. 18-22

After Elisabeth gave birth and her son was circumcised on the eighth day, Zacharias indicated the child should be named John. Zacharias was immediately able to speak again. Freed from his unbelief, and filled with the Holy Spirit through his prophetic utterance, Zacharias praised God, recognizing that he would shortly raise up a “horn of salvation”—the Messiah—who would bring deliverance to Israel from all its enemies as well as provide salvation and remission of sins. As his forerunner, John would be privileged to announce Christ’s presence when his earthly ministry commenced.—vss. 57-79

In our own experiences as followers of Christ, on occasion doubts may creep into our minds concerning God’s promises. At such times we should seek to draw more closely to the Lord by praying for increased faith. After having made such petitions, we need to exercise ourselves in ways that are pleasing to God through fellowship, study, and careful scrutiny of our thoughts, that we may prove to be acceptable.

True faith implies a conviction of the things which God has revealed about himself and then acting in accordance with those beliefs. The faithfulness of Old Testament holy ones such as those recorded in Hebrews 11 should inspire us to act in accordance with our professions. We are to bear in mind that those who ultimately will be united in helping to bless all the families of the earth with our exalted King of kings, are “called, and chosen, and faithful.”—Rev. 17:14 ■