

“Christmas Characters” – Zacharias & Elizabeth

INTRODUCTION: Elizabeth & Mary had lots in common.

Luke 1:5-6 – They served God faithfully in hard times.

1:7 – Elizabeth was ... a Priest’s wife (**1:5**) ... old ... barren (**1:25**).

- “barren” ... thought to be a punishment ... grounds for divorce.

1:8-10 – He got his once-in-a-lifetime turn to serve in the Temple.

- He was to “burn incense” and offer prayers in the Holy Place.

1:11-12 – Zacharias had a surprise “visitor” – **2:9**

- Angels were thought to bring “messages” of impending **DOOM**.

1:13 – Zacharias had prayed for a son, and for the Messiah to come.

- **1:17** – **BOTH** prayers of Zacharias had been answered!

1:14 – **JOY** would be extended to **ALL** the world, through John.

- Do you “bottle up” all the **JOY**, or spread it around?

1:15 – John the Baptizer came with **INSTRUCTIONS!**

1:16 – John’s message was “**repentance**”, necessary for salvation –

Acts 3:19 – seeing your sin the way God sees it ... **SICKENING!**

1:17 – A fulfillment of **Malachi 4:5-6** ... last 2 verses in Old Testament.

1:18 – Zacharias **DOUBTED** ... asks for a “sign” – **1:19-20**

1:21-22 – God still answers his prayer ... He’s full of grace & mercy.

1:23-25 – Elizabeth knew people would doubt her pregnancy.

1:26-27 – Mary also gets “good news/bad news” from Gabriel.

1:36-37 – Elizabeth didn’t know Mary was also pregnant.

1:41 – Note the reaction of “unborn” John, in Elizabeth’s womb.

1:42 – Elizabeth gives a “prophecy” about Mary & Jesus.

1:42-43 – You either **NEED** encouragement, or **NEED TO** encourage.

1:44-45 – God is faithful, and will never desert you.

1:57-58 – God’s “mercy” is always a reason to “rejoice”.

1:59 – **CUSTOM** ... to name the baby when circumcised ... named

AFTER the father, **BY** the father – **1:60-61, 62**

1:63 - Zacharias wouldn’t disobey **AGAIN** – **1:13**

1:64 – Zacharias’ first words, were words of **PRAISE**.

- God’s discipline is always for our own good.

1:65 – “**fear**” = ‘reverential awe and respect’ for God.

1:66 – Like John, you and I are **SPECIAL** to God.

CONCLUSION: Christmas is all about “miracles”.

- God wants to do a “miracle” in **YOUR LIFE**.