

=ZACHARIAS=

Luke 1:5-24

**Introduction:** There is not much spoken of the life of Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist. Much of what we know about him must be taken from these few verses in the Gospel of Luke. The name Zacharias means **remembered of Jehovah**. This we find out through the story is a very appropriate name for this man. The Bible tells us that he was a priest of the course of Abia. David the king established this division of the priesthood many years previously. During the time in which Zacharias practiced the priesthood, the days were evil. It was not the popular thing to follow God, but he still followed God. In our story we see Zacharias in the temple at the time the incense was to be burnt. His job was to burn the incense. One day while he was burning the incense he saw an angel. This angel told him that his prayer had been answered. His wife was going to have a baby. Zacharias was an old man, and his wife, Elisabeth, was a lady now up in years, and Zacharias knew that the probability of this occurring was slim; so he asked for a sign from this angel. The sign was not really what he had imagined. The angel told him that he would not speak until the child was born. When Zacharias came out of the Temple and could not talk, the people were confounded. This combined with the fact that he had been in the Temple for a very long time led the people to believe that he had truly seen a vision from God. Zacharias completed his time at the Temple, and then he went home to his wife. The Bible then tells us that his wife Elisabeth became pregnant. Elisabeth hid herself for five months to make sure that her reproach or barrenness was truly gone. At the birth of the child the women around desired to name the child Zacharias after his father as the custom of that day was. When Elisabeth rejected this notion and insisted that his name be John the women were appalled. They went to the still silent Zacharias and asked him. He found something to write on and stated that the child's name would be John. At this point he was given back his ability to talk and instantly began praising God. God used this man to rear the forerunner to the Savior of all mankind. He truly must have been a great man.

**I. Zacharias was a priest.** In Luke 1:5, the Bible tells us that Zacharias was a priest of the course of Abia. During the days of David the king it became necessary for the jobs inside the House of God to be done. David decided to separate these jobs to specific people to insure that they were being completed. (I Chronicles 24:3) Abia is believed to be one of these divisions. At this time scholars believe that the priests worked on a rotating basis. It is important to note that Zacharias was where he was supposed to be performing the job he was supposed to perform when the angel of God came to him with further instructions. It must be important to God for us to be doing the part of God's will that we know while waiting for God to reveal more of His will to us. Do you suppose if Zacharias had been at home the day he was supposed to be at God's House that God would still have used him.

**II. Zacharias was a righteous man.** In Luke 1:6, the Bible calls Zacharias a righteous man before God. The word righteous means just, or that he treated all men fairly. God records in His Word for all mankind to see that He felt that Zacharias was a righteous man. Zacharias must truly have been a great man for God to say this about him.

**III. Zacharias was an obedient man.** The Bible says in Luke 1:6, that this man Zacharias walked in commandments and ordinances of the Lord. He chose to follow every part of God's law as soon as he found it out. Sometimes we may not know what God wants from us in a given situation, but as soon as we know what God says about anything, we should then conform our lives to what God wants.

**IV. Zacharias was a blameless man.** Luke 1:6, says that Zacharias was a blameless man. This word blameless refers to his behavior in front of man. No man could or even would bring an accusation against this man because they knew that it would not stick.

**V. Zacharias was a praying man.** In Luke 1:13, the angel sent to Zacharias to foretell of the birth of John made this statement, "thy prayer is heard." This statement tells us much about the man Zacharias. It tells us that he talked to God and it was his prayer that God was answering. This man had a prayer life that saw results.

**VI. Zacharias was human – he doubted God.** In Luke 1:18-20, the Bible says that Zacharias asked the angel how he would know that this would come true. It seemed so unbelievable! The angel, Gabriel, maybe a little surprised that Zacharias could not be convinced by the fact that God had sent an angel to give him this news, agreed to give him a sign. Zacharias, like many of us, had a hard time trusting God. Zacharias' sign from God was the inability to talk, a sign that he would have rather done without. Sometimes our doubting gets us into trouble.

**VII. Zacharias praised God.** Luke 1:64 tells us that after Zacharias insisted that his son's name be John, his tongue was loosened. As soon as his tongue was loosened he began praising God. Let's not forget to praise God for what He does for us.

**VIII. Zacharias was filled with the Holy Ghost.** The Bible says that Zacharias was filled with the Holy Ghost. In Luke 1:67-79 we find what Zacharias used this Holy Ghost power to do -- tell others about the coming Savior. This is further evidence that the power of the Holy Spirit is for the spreading of the Gospel.

**Conclusion:** The man Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist, can teach the Christian how God can take an average man and use him in an above-average cause.