

Christmas Day (2022)

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Preacher: James Schubauer

[0 : 0 0] Good morning. We're going to do a little bit different thing here today.

We're going to go a little bit before Jesus' birth here. So we're going to talk about the two fathers.

We're going to talk about Zechariah and Joseph. And the way that they seen life and the way that they were chosen by God.

So I'm going to start off with a reading of Zechariah's, the start of Zechariah.

So I'm going to be reading in Luke 1, 5 through 25. And we'll kind of get an idea of where Zechariah was at at this time. Okay.

[0 : 5 9] Okay. Okay. In the days of Herod, the king of Judah, there was a priest named Zechariah of the division of Abijah. And he had a wife from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth.

And they were both righteous before God, walking blamelessly in the commandments and statutes of the Lord. But they had no child because Elizabeth was barren, and both were advanced in years.

Now, while he was serving as priest before God, when his division was on duty, according to the custom of the priesthood, he was chosen by law to enter the temple of the Lord and to burn incense.

And the whole multitude of the people were praying outside at the hour of incense. And there appeared to him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense.

And Zechariah was troubled when he saw him, and fear fell upon him. But the angel said to him, Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John.

[2 : 0 6] And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth. For he will be great before the Lord, and he must not drink wine or strong drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb.

And he will turn many of the children of Israel to their God, and he will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, and to make ready for the Lord people prepared.

And Zechariah said to the angel, How shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife is advanced in years. And the angel answered him, I am Gabriel, and I stand in the presence of God, and I was sent to speak to you, to bring you this good news.

And behold, you will be silent and unable to speak until the day that these things take place, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their time.

And the people were waiting for Zechariah, and they were wondering at this delay in the temple. And when he came out, he was unable to speak to them, and they realized that he had seen a vision in the temple.

[3 : 24] And he kept making signs to them, but he remained mute. And when his time of service was ended, he went to his home, and after these days, his wife Elizabeth conceived, and for five months she kept herself hidden, saying, Thus the Lord has done for me in the days when he looked on me, to take my reproach from among people.

Let's pray. Father God, I need you today, Father God. I need you to help me to proclaim your word, to glorify you, Father God, to bring this message that you have given us in your gospel, and to make it clear to those who would listen to it, Father God, to touch the hearts of those who are hearing, and to hear, to open their hearts and their minds to hear what you want them to hear, Father, and to see what you want them to see, and to check things for their self, Father God, to get into your gospel and check the facts that I have come across, because I could surely make a mistake, Father God, because I am just your humble servant.

And I pray that you use me today, Father God, to glorify yourself. In Christ's name I pray. Amen. Amen. Okay, so I want you all to picture yourself.

You're, I guess you're one of the 18,000 priests that are in Israel at this time, and there's so many priests in Israel that they have to divide them up into 24 different groups.

And out of these 24 different groups, each one of these groups would serve in the temple, for two weeks out of the year, one week and then another week.

[5 : 27] And basically, the regular priests, their job was to do all the slaughtering of the animals and to make all the sacrifices. And, you know, it was, this is what their job was.

And so, you know, they were, they did this, and, but there was one special job, and it was chose, so you figure 20 or 18,000 divided by 24, you come up with, I don't know, I'm not good at math, but 800, between 800 and 900 people in each group of priests.

And out of that 800, you drew lots, and whoever drew the lot was the one that got to the privilege of taking the golden censer with the coals from the burnt offering into the temple, into the holy temple, just outside of the holy of holies, and go in there and pour it on the altar of incense and then pour the incense on top, and the incense would rise, and that was the, everybody praying outside, that was their, you know, a sign for their prayers going up to God with a great aroma.

So, you know, this was a very special thing, and out of all those priests, you know, some of the priests never drew that lot. So, you know, this was a very special time for him, and, you know, it was a really big event.

So, when he got in there, and, you know, he's just outside the holy of holies, and, you know, the only thing that's between him and where God was, which was another thing, you know, you know, this is closest to God that you could possibly get if you were a priest, you know, that just, that curtain is the only thing that separated you from the Ark of the Covenant was where God was.

[7 : 36] And, so, he gets in there, and, you know, this angel of the Lord appears before him, and he, first thing he tells him is, your prayers have been heard, your prayers have been, you know, I'm going to answer your prayers.

Well, you think, well, what was his prayers, you know, it was, was his prayers that Christ would come, or was, no, I think because he mentions his wife, Elizabeth, right after he said that his prayers had been answered, he was talking about the prayers that him and his wife had had, praying for God to give them, you know, a child, because in, in those days, when you didn't have the children, you, you were considered cursed, I don't know if that's a good explanation, but you were blessed if you had children, and you were cursed if you didn't have children, so, so, you know, they were, I'm sure they were continually praying, they might have fallen off recently, because, you know, from, from what the, you know, it doesn't really give their ages, but the nearest I could tell, they were in their 60s or 70s, but they were way past any kind of childbearing years, so, you know, so he gets in there, and, and, you know, he had to, being a priest, when he wasn't serving at the temple, he was, he was teaching and preaching to all the people in, in the land, you know, or wherever they were, you know, the gospel, so, you know, he knew the, he knew the words of the prophet Isaiah, he knew the words of Malachi, and, and, and all the, all the prophets, that the Lord would one day come, and, and there, there would be, there would be a man that was born before Christ, that would, that would make way, make the way straight for Christ, and, and bring, as it said, bring, bring the children to God, bring everybody to God, so, make his path straight, you know, bring the people back to God, so, you know, he, he knew all this stuff, and, and when the angel gives him that opportunity, uh, tells him that, you're the one,

I'm gonna give you a child, it's gonna be your child, that's gonna do this, you know, his, his faith failed him, you know, and, and, he, he, he couldn't believe it, well, my wife is beyond child, you know, he knew all the miracles that the Lord had provided already, you know, he parted the Red Sea, he, he, you know, he, I, going to all the miracles, I mean, there, there hadn't been any miracles for quite a while, you know, since, uh, I think the last miracle before this, in the, in the gospel was, uh, was Daniel's miracle in the fiery furnace, where he wasn't, he went into there, well, he went in and, he didn't get burned up, so, I mean, and that was four or five hundred years prior to that, so, um, you know, that's, that was the last miracle, and then, before that, you know,

God hadn't spoken to anybody for, oh, you know, I, I, I think it was Malachi, or, or one of them, it was five hundred years prior to that, where he had told Malachi about the birth of John the Baptist, so, um, uh, and I could be wrong about the names, you know, but, you know, that's, it's, look it up, look it up in the gospel, and then God will use you, me to use you, so, or, to, yeah, but, uh, you know, so, uh, and then, and then when it come, you know, so, now he's leaving, he's leaving the holy temple, and, you know, he's thinking to himself, man, I am so blessed right now, I, I've just got to tell everybody, well, can't tell anybody, because, you know, God, God knew how he was going to react to the whole thing, I mean, it just wasn't no surprise for God, even though, the angel did kind of try to make it sound like it was a surprise, but it wasn't, you know,

God knows everything before it happens, so, you know, he didn't want, and, it doesn't really mention that, he couldn't hear, either, but, if you look, if you look into the, if, uh, I don't know, I can't, I'm getting lost already, but, it does say that, um, when, after, after he was born, and, and, the people were asking his mother what his name was going to be, and it was going to be John, and, oh, well, that's not right, you know, no one in your family's named John, you're going to have to, you're going to have to rethink that, well, we'll go ask his father, and, and, so they had to make hand signals to his father, and, he wasn't blind, he was, you know, he just couldn't talk, so, if they're having to make signals to him, that, that means he can't hear as well, so, I think, you know, even though it's not, it's not clearly stated in there, I think he couldn't see or hear, I mean, couldn't hear or talk, so, you know, it's, um, you know, that would be, that would be so hard, so he goes back to his wife, and he tells her, well, well, writes down, because he can't talk, honey, you're going to have a baby, so, you know, and she's thinking, okay, you can't, you can't talk, you can't hear, you can't hear what I'm trying to tell you,

[13 : 37] I'm too old, and, uh, and, I'm sure that he made it clear to her, that an angel of the Lord came to him, and told her this, so instead of her going out, and telling everybody, hey, I'm going to have a baby, I'm going to, you know, she, she hid herself for, for five months, she kept herself concealed, until she was sure, that this was, was going to happen, so it was, kind of a lack of faith, maybe on her part, she might have had other reasons, and there might have been other reasons, but, when I was looking at this, I thought, why would she hide herself for five months, she's probably going to, she's finally going to be beyond, the reproach of everybody, and everybody's going to, you know, want to talk to her about it, you know, how can you, you're way past childbearing years, you know, I know, I don't know women that well, you know, my wife would tell me, that, but, she would tell you, that, you know, there is a certain time, in a woman's life, when she knows, that she cannot have children anymore, and,

I'm sure that she knew, Elizabeth knew, that she couldn't have children anymore, and yet, so she hid herself away, for five months, until she knew for sure, that she was going to have, a child, now I want to go, I want to, I want to turn to, the book of Matthew, in the, first chapter, and verse 18, and I want to, now go over, Joseph's response, now, I was having a lot of trouble, thinking about this, and, and, you know, in my head, and I was, you know, trying to think up a name, two men, two men and two babies, you know, the life and times of, you know, I couldn't figure it out, but, you know, I thought, what a different response, you know, this, Joseph, Joseph wasn't a, he wasn't a priest, I mean, he was from the lineage of David, and, and, and so was Mary, they were both from, they were actually distant cousins,

I do believe, at least from what I read, so, but he was a carpenter, or a, or a mason, and, you know, most, most people will tell you, if you're a carpenter, you're probably have mason capabilities as well, so he might have been, back in those days, they did a lot of stuff with mud, and, and, for building, and construction, and, so, you know, he was, he was just a simple man, and, this is, but he was, a righteous man, it says that, so, I'd like to read from, from verse 18, through 24, it says, now, now the birth of Jesus, took place in this way, when his mother Mary, had been betrothed to David, before they came together, she was found to be with child, from the Holy Spirit, and her husband Joseph, being a just man, and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly, but has he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him, in a dream, saying,

Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her, is from the Holy Spirit, she will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people, from their sins, and all this took place, to fulfill what the Lord, had spoken by the prophet, behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which means, God with us, when Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord, commanded him, and took his wife, you know, I thought, you know, how did Jesus, and Emmanuel, match up together, well Emmanuel, is, is what Jesus was, and Jesus, is who Jesus was, or, I know, I get that messed up, but, Emmanuel, Emmanuel is who God, who Jesus was, it was God with us, he was fully man, and full of God, and I,

I just thought that was, you know, Joseph was a righteous man, as well as, as, as well as Zachariah, and, the tradition in those days, was, if your wife was found, to be, with another man, before she was married, they were to take her, and to stone her, and, you know, things, things have fell off, a little bit, and, the stoning had fell off, a little bit, so, you know, they had made new rules, and, you know, there was now a rule, that you could do this, all quietly, without, killing the people, or killing, everybody, and, so, you know, he did love her, and he knew her, and, he knew that, he couldn't conceive, and I'm sure, that she told him, when she was pregnant, you know, hey, babe, I'm pregnant, you know, and, you could imagine,

[19 : 08] Joseph's response, you know, it was like, how can that be, you know, what have you done, you know, what, and, and then for her to, start giving explanations, you know, like, I know my wife gives me, explanations all the time, why stuff that, happens that shouldn't happen, but, you know, and, and, and they all seem to make such good sense, but in my head, I'm going, hmm, I don't think so, you know, but Joseph, Joseph, on the other hand, he was, he loved her, and, you know, he, instead of putting her out there to be, you know, stoned to death, you know, he just resolved to, to make this a simple ceremony, and, and just end it all, and, as soon as he got word, which was, probably, you know, melding the two stories together, his wife's story, and, and the Holy Spirit story, were exactly the same,

Joseph, being the man that he was, and the upright man that he was, he, he said, this, this is really happening, this is, this is what the prophet had foretold, in the, in, in 800 years ago, so, you know, it's, you know, that his faith was, was so strong, that he took her, for his wife, and, and, and then, and, had no relations with his wife, for, you know, he took her as his wife, didn't consummate the marriage, waited till, after Jesus was born, and, you know, it's, they have, these two men have such a big part, in the beginning, and they're just two humble men, with simple beginnings, you know, there's, you got, oh, I knew I would go blank, you know, I, I'm so sorry, but, you know,

God uses, the humble, to, he can use anybody he wants, but he, he never used the, he could have used the chief priest, he could have used the, you know, the guy with the bells on his chain, that went through the curtain, you know, and he could have used that guy, but no, he didn't, didn't use that guy, he used one of the common priests, he used Joseph, a carpenter, to, to bear the son, or, his wife, to bear the son of God, and, you know, and, basically, their, their whole parts were just about over, at that time, you know, they, they, you don't find a whole lot more, I know Joseph was taking his family, back and forth out of Egypt, and, you know, to, because of King Herod, and, and trying to kill all the babies, and everything, but, but, you know, he, he was, he really didn't have a part, and Jesus, even when the Holy Spirit would come, to Joseph, he would say, take your, take your family, you know, he wouldn't say, take your wife, and take your son, he would say, take your wife, and go to the land of Egypt, you know, and the son of God, probably didn't need, any kind of protection, you know, he probably didn't need, any guidance, or anything, you know, but he had to experience, he had to experience, what it was like, to be a man, he had to experience, all the trials, that, that men go through, you know, he, we can't have a savior, that don't know, you know, what it's like, to be a human being, and, you know,

I just, there, I get sidetracked, I'm sorry, I, there's so many things, you know, when, when Bill asked me to do this, I, I thought, you know, this is, I'm not going to be able to do this, I'm not going to be able to stand up, in front of everybody, and, and, and speak about the gospel, but, but then, after I got started, or after I, started planning car wrecks, and sicknesses, and, and, and, trying to think of anything I could do, to get out of it, I, I, I thought, it would just be so much easier, just to, just to think about the Lord, and, and, and to think about, him using, a simple, humble guy, like me, to, to preach, about the gospel, and, whew, you know, I, it really, it really, it really, it really impacted me, when I thought of it that way, so, the first thing I started reading, was, you know, how God used, these humble men, to, in such a righteous way, so, and that was their only part, and, you know, they got, they got no credit, you know, and, you know, like Bill said, so, before, you know, we don't say,

Mary, Joseph, and Christmas, you know, you know, or, you know, it's, it's, it's all about Mary, and Mary was there, to the very end, and, you know, and, Elizabeth, don't hear a lot about Elizabeth, but, we know, she came from a, a big line of, of believers, and, I just, it come to me, the, the thought come to me is, do we believe, do, do we believe, when, when, when Christ says, you know, abide in me, and I will abide in you, do we believe that?

[24 : 57] When Christ says, love your brothers, as I have loved you, do we believe that, and do we do that? When Christ says, when Christ says, he's going to come, again, one day, and, he's going to rule, he's going to be our king, he's going to be, our salvation, our, well, he already is our salvation, but, we will be redeemed, and, you know, do we believe all that?

Do we believe that God wants us all, to be, to spread his gospel, to be ministers, to go out in the world, and, and, and bear fruit, and to, and to evangelize, and to sometimes even speak, you know, and so, I was, I was hoping Rick would be here today, because I'd give him a, a shout out for that, because, you know, you, you don't have to, you don't have to be up here, to, to spread the word, or to preach the gospel, or, you know, God wants us to preach the gospel to ourself, each and every day, and, do we believe that?

You know, Jesus is coming, Jesus is our God, and, and he is coming one day, and, I just hope and pray that, we all believe that, and we all, are encouraged by that, and, I want, I wanted to end my message today, I don't know if I went long enough, or not, but, I'm starting to ramble, I'm starting to ramble a little bit, so, I had a prayer for, I, I have a John MacArthur study Bible, and, he had a prayer at the end of a, of a message that, that I read, while I was doing my studying, and, and I kind of wanted to read that prayer to you, because it, it really, it really is profound, and, it really strikes to the heart of, the message that I was, that I was so hard trying to get to you guys, and I hope you heard, so, if,

I'd like to close with it, with this prayer, from John MacArthur. Hold on.

I don't know if it's getting messed up. He gets kind of windy sometimes, so, it's, okay.

[27 : 57] Father, your, your word, is so filled with richness, richness, and particularly, it's just incredible, to study the history of redemption, as revealed in the scripture, and see the remarkable way, in which you use, common people, you are the God of understatement, in so many ways, and the God of small beginnings, you never feel like, you have to prove yourself, you say it, it's enough, you never need a mighty, and the great, you can do your work, through the ignoble, and the weak, and the poor, and the common.

We thank you, oh God, for what you desire, to do through our, to, to, you, we thank you, for what you desire, to do through our lives, as you work, your mighty work, not in the miraculous, physically, but certainly, in the miracle work, of salvation, and sanctification, spiritually.

Use us, Lord, to bring joy, and gladness, to many. Use us, to bring rejoicing, to many, because of the work, you do in us. We thank you, for the clarity, of scripture, we thank you, for the inviolable truth, that is, the story, of your intervention.

This is the gospel, the good news, that the Savior came. We thank you, for the, it's unfolding, and we pray, that we might be, transformingly, enriched, by understanding in it, these days, as you carry us, through this truth.

Use us, Lord, in these simple, understated ways, with small beginnings, to do exceedingly, abundantly, above all we can ask, or think, according to the power, that works in us, to the glory, of Jesus Christ alone, we pray.

[29 : 42] Amen. Amen. Amen. I still had, a whole bunch of notes, but, I didn't realize, that I couldn't, read them.

Jesus. Thank you.