**The Promise: Our Savior Has Come Series December 12, 2021**

**The Joy of Preparation: Luke 1:5-25**

Herod the Great

* “In the days of Herod, king of Judea”
  + There are several Herod’s in the NT
  + This Herod ruled over Jerusalem and the surrounding area of Judea from 37 BC – 4 BC
  + He was a descendant of **Esau**
  + Known as “**King of the Jews**”
* Prolific builder
* Was extremely **paranoid**

Zacharias and Elizabeth

* Both were from **priestly heritage** (v. 5)
* Both were “righteous” and “blameless” before God
  + Neither were sinless
  + Both lived striving to be obedient to all of God’s laws
* “They had no child”
  + To be barren, in that time, was customarily shameful
  + Many wrongly believed that when you were barren that God was **displeased with you**

Zacharias’ Service

* A priest entered the Holy Place in the Temple twice per day
  + Replenish the coals that burned
  + Add incense to the fire for a pleasing aroma
  + The people came to worship outside while the priest **ministered inside**

Angel of the Lord

* Often a **direct revelation** of God Himself to mankind in various times and places
  + These are often viewed as THE angel of the Lord

Angel of the Lord

* Other times it is one of the innumerable angels send from God as His messenger
  + “AN angel of the Lord” is used here in Luke 1:11
* We know this particular angel is Gabriel (1:19)

Gabriel’s Message

* Zacharias was overcome by fear
* The angel comforted Zacharias with the reason for his presence
  + Elizabeth will have a son to be named John
  + His birth will bring great joy to the family and others
* John will follow an ascetic **lifestyle** as an indication that he was set apart to God
* The Holy Spirit will fill him from the time of his conception
  + This was a special filling for John
* John’s ministry will cause God’s people of Israel to repent and turn to the Lord
* John’s ministry will be as a herald to the coming of the Messiah
  + Fulfilling Micah’s prophecy (3:1, 4:5-6)
* John’s life will cause God’s people to be **joyful and glad**
  + People who are far from God will turn to Him
  + God’s long-awaited promises are about to be fulfilled

Zacharias is Perplexed

* He doubts that he and Elizabeth can **conceive, carry, and bear a child**
  + Gabriel demonstrates delegated authority from the very presence of God to grant the good news
  + Zacharias will need to be silent for the whole pregnancy as a result of lack of belief

Elizabeth Conceives

* Just as Gabriel had predicted, John was conceived despite the age of his parents
  + The **shame** she felt for lack of children was turned to a ministry of grace as God would use their son as promised

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