



St. James Presbyterian Church

12.05.2021



We are open for in-person worship at
240 Leland Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94134
Tel. 415-921-9291 | www.stjamespcsf.org

Life Lessons from the Christmas Story #1

Zechariah & Elizabeth
Joseph & Mary

Luke 1
Matthew 1



A bright star with a lens flare effect is positioned in the upper left quadrant of a dark blue, star-filled night sky. Below the sky, the silhouette of a city skyline is visible, including a prominent building with a pointed spire. In the lower left foreground, the silhouette of a stable or manger is shown, with figures of Mary and Joseph and a baby in the center.

Christmas Story #1...
Life lessons from the
experiences of:

Zechariah & Elizabeth

Joseph & Mary

Luke 1:11-20,23-25, NIV

Then an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing at the right side of the altar of incense. When Zechariah saw him, he was startled and was gripped with fear. But the angel said to him: “Do not be afraid, Zechariah; your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you are to call him John. He will be a joy and delight to you, and many will rejoice because of his birth, for he will be great in the sight of the Lord. He is never to take wine or other fermented drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit even before he is born.



Luke 1:11-20,23-25, NIV

He will bring back many of the people of Israel to the Lord their God. And he will go on before the Lord, in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the parents to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous—to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.”

Zechariah asked the angel, “How can I be sure of this? I am an old man and my wife is well along in years.”

The angel said to him, “I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to tell you this good news.



Luke 1:11-20,23-25 NIV

And now you will be silent and not able to speak until the day this happens, because you did not believe my words, which will come true at their appointed time.”

When his time of service was completed, he returned home. After this his wife Elizabeth became pregnant and for five months remained in seclusion. “The Lord has done this for me,” she said. “In these days he has shown his favor and taken away my disgrace among the people.”



Luke 1:57-58,64-66 NIV

When it was time for Elizabeth to have her baby, she gave birth to a son. Her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had shown her great mercy, and they shared her joy.

***(Zechariah...)* Immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue set free, and he began to speak, praising God. All the neighbors were filled with awe, and throughout the hill country of Judea people were talking about all these things.**

Everyone who heard this wondered about it, asking, “What then is this child going to be?” For the Lord’s hand was with him.

Lessons from Zechariah & Elizabeth:

- **Both loved and served God**
- **Both prayed for a child to end their disgrace**
- **Zechariah did not believe angel's words; with old age as excuse**
- **But Elizabeth believed God made her very late pregnancy possible!**
- **God showed favor to both of them**
- **Towards the end, both believed and praised God!**



Luke 1:28-38 NIV -- MARY

The angel went to her and said, “Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you.”

Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be.

But the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over Jacob’s descendants forever; his kingdom will never end.”



Luke 1:28-38 NIV -- MARY

“How will this be,” Mary asked the angel, “since I am a virgin?” The angel answered, “The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be unable to conceive is in her sixth month. For no word from God will ever fail.”

“I am the Lord’s servant,” Mary answered. “May your word to me be fulfilled.” Then the angel left her.



Matthew 1:18-24, NIV -- JOSEPH

This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit. Because Joseph her husband was faithful to the law, and yet did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.



Matthew 1:18-24, NIV -- JOSEPH

All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: “The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel” (which means “God with us”).

Isaiah 7:14

When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. But he did not consummate their marriage until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus.



Matthew 1:18-24, NIV -- JOSEPH

But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.”

Lessons from Mary & Joseph:

- As a teenage girl, she wondered what the angel's words meant!
- Not doubted but asked innocently how could she be pregnant??
- Mary believed the angel's words
- Joseph, a righteous man, did not want Mary to be disgraced
- God used a dream to instruct him
- Joseph did everything what he was told by an angel, by God



Lessons from Zechariah-Elizabeth & Joseph-Mary:

All of them were “given favor” by God

Each had reasons not to believe God’s words

God dealt with each of them differently

**In the end, they all obeyed, praised,
and believed God**

God’s purpose was fulfilled!

**Be willing to do God’s purpose
in your life!**



But I'm not Zechariah, or Elizabeth, or Joseph, not even Mary. Things happened in my life already.

What's for me now?



Romans 8:28-30, TLB

And we know that all that happens to us is working for our good if we love God and are fitting into his plans.

For from the very beginning God decided that those who came to him—and all along he knew who would—should become like his Son, so that his Son would be the First, with many brothers. And having chosen us, he called us to come to him; and when we came, he declared us “not guilty,” filled us with Christ’s goodness, gave us right standing with himself, and promised us his glory.



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SEE YOU
NEXT WEEK

God Bless You

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