

Elizabeth, Mother of John the Baptist

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Elizabeth was chosen by God to be the mother of John the Baptist, who would prepare the way before Jesus! God chose Zacharias and Elizabeth for the special task of rearing and teaching the miracle child He provided. We read about Elizabeth in the book of Luke. John, the Baptist, was the greatest prophet, and his father and mother were instrumental in teaching him in the ways of God. Zacharias, John's father, was a priest of God.

In order to serve as a priest in the temple, one had to be of the tribe of Levi and, more specifically, of the Levitical family of Aaron. And clearly we see that Elizabeth was descendant a daughter of Aaron. "There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the division of Abijah. His wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth" (Luke 1:5).

Elizabeth knew what the angel had previously told Zacharias, "You shall call his name John" (Luke 1:13). John, 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 1:15). He was prophesied to be great in the sight of the Lord, and through his ministry he would turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God. He was to go before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, and to make ready a people prepared for the Lord (Luke 1:16-17).

Elizabeth had never had children and was barren. Zacharias and Elizabeth had faithfully kept the covenant of their God, and they had respectfully upheld God's name. They spoke truth, and they walked in all the commandments of God and were people of virtue. Elizabeth stated her gratitude for God's blessing, "Thus the Lord has dealt with me, in the days when He looked on me, to take away my reproach among people" (Luke 1:25).

Elizabeth and her husband, Zacharias, lived in the hill country of Judah. When Elizabeth was in her sixth month of pregnancy, Mary visited Elizabeth. "Now Mary arose in those days and went into the hill country with haste, to a city of Judah, and entered the house of Zacharias and greeted Elizabeth" (Luke 1:39-40).

Elizabeth believed, and had faith in God that He would fulfill the promises He had made. "Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit" (Luke 1:41). Mary had just conceived in her womb, in a miraculous pregnancy, the Lord Jesus Christ. "Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit" (Luke 1:41).

Elizabeth was led by the Holy Spirit to tell Mary, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! But why is this granted to me, that the mother of my Lord should

come to me? For indeed, as soon as the voice of your greeting sounded in my ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy" (Luke 1:42-44).

Elizabeth gave Mary encouragement with her words, "Blessed is she who believed, for there shall be a fulfillment of those things which were told her from the Lord" (Luke 1:45). Elizabeth is the first person in Luke's Gospel to refer to Jesus as Lord when she spoke to Mary. Elizabeth confirmed that Jesus Christ is Lord!

Now, Elizabeth showed courage and obey God by standing up to relatives when the time came to circumcise John and his father was unable to speak; "So it was, on the eighth day, that they came to circumcise the child; and they would have called him by the name of his father, Zacharias. His mother answered and said, 'No, he shall be called John.' But they said to her, 'There is no one among your relatives who is called by this name (Luke 1:59-61). Then, Zacharias asked for a writing tablet, and wrote, "His name is John" (Luke 1:63).

Zacharias and Elizabeth were faithful to God. These were the kind of parents God chose to instruct John the Baptist. The mothers of leaders in the Bible are often noted for their influence in the rearing and teaching of their sons. "Among those born of women, there is not a greater prophet than John" (Luke 7:28). Elizabeth teaches us to believe what God says He will do even if it seems impossible!