

## Life lessons from Elizabeth

Various Scriptures

*Elizabeth gave a glad cry and exclaimed to Mary, 'God has blessed you above all women, and your child is blessed. Why am I so honored, that the mother of my Lord should visit me? When I heard your greeting, the baby in my womb jumped for joy.*

*You are blessed because you believed that the Lord would do what He said." -Luke 1:42-45*

We know God loves us and is faithful in fulfilling His promises, but if we're honest we all have experienced moments of anxiety when it comes to waiting on His timing. It has been said, "To us, waiting is wasting. To God, waiting is working." As we continue our study of women in the Bible, we now make the transition from the Old Testament to the New Testament and examine the life of Elizabeth. Do you feel like God has forgotten about you? Are you questioning His timing? My prayer is that you would be inspired and encouraged through the testimony of Elizabeth.

### Did you know?

- \*Elizabeth was originally spelled Elisabeth
- \*Her personal name means "My God is \_\_\_\_\_"
- \*She was a descendant of the priestly line of Aaron
- \*She was the wife of \_\_\_\_\_ who was also a priest
- \*She was a relative of \_\_\_\_\_
- \*Initially she was unable to conceive children but later on became the mother of \_\_\_\_\_
- \*Her story is told in Luke 1:5-80

### Where are we in the historical context of Israel?

When we get to the New Testament it has been over 500 years since the Israelites have heard a word from God. The last event was recorded in Nehemiah 13:4-30 and the last prophecy recorded in the Old Testament came from the book of \_\_\_\_\_. Although the voice of God was silent, the hand of God was actively directing the course of events during these centuries. During this time of silence there were four periods to take note of:

**#Persian period (539-336 B.C. 203 years)** King Cyrus freed the Israelites from captivity; rebuilt the temple; Jews began gathering in local synagogues where the focus was on studying the law. Israelites came in conflict with Samaritans; Samaritans intermarry with \_\_\_\_\_ and adopt customs. While Jews rebuilt temple in Jerusalem, Samaritans built a rival temple in the north creating constant strife.

**#Hellenistic period (336-165 B.C. 171 years)** Alexander the Great and the Greek empire defeats Persia; initially Jews still had freedom to worship the Lord God. However, \_\_\_\_\_ influence began rise in every aspect of their way of life, language, culture and religion. The Syrian section of the empire began to stamp out Judaism completely. Desecrated the temple, forbade sacrifices to Yahweh,

outlawed circumcision, forced Jews to eat pork and canceled Sabbaths and celebrations. Jews become divided, Pharisees and Sadducees form.

**#Maccabean period (165-63 B.C. 102 years)** Maccabees ruled, supported by Sadducees division continued, Pharisees insist that a true king could only be a descendant of David and a priest could only be a descendant of Aaron. Jews continued to revolt and have conflict; Alexander Janneas killed 6,000 Jews after they rejected him as their priest.

**#Roman period (63 B.C.-135 A.D.)** Jews are now under Roman rule. They have freedom of worship and limited authority in overseeing their own affairs. However, they long for more. They long for the days when Israel will once again rule like they did under King David. Nevertheless, they struggle to survive under Rome. As they wait and anticipate a conquering warrior God breaks His silence and sends an angel to announce that two unexpected women will conceive and give birth. One son will make a way for the Messiah and the other will be the Messiah. The Messiah is not a warrior, but a babe wrapped in cloth to become a sacrifice for the sins of humanity.

**What would you say your biggest struggle is when it comes to waiting on God to answer your prayers?**

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**How do you respond when God doesn't answer the way you would like him to?**

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**Elisabeth's Circumstance: Luke 1:5-7**

How does Luke describe this couple?

\* \_\_\_\_\_ in God's eyes      \*Careful to \_\_\_\_\_ all of the Lord's commands and regulations.

Although Zechariah and Elisabeth were faithfully committed to the Lord, they still struggled with not being able to have children and all of the negativity that goes along with it. This text should be a reminder that just because our lives are pleasing to God it does not mean our lives will be picture perfect and everything will go as planned.

What were some challenges they may have endured?

\* \_\_\_\_\_      \* \_\_\_\_\_      \* \_\_\_\_\_

Despite their challenges, Zechariah and Elizabeth remained faithful to the Lord continued serving Him. On one particular day it was Zechariah's turn to fulfill his priestly duties by burning \_\_\_\_\_. Luke 1:7-10

While inside the sanctuary the angel Gabriel appeared to him and told him, the Lord \_\_\_\_\_ his prayer, his wife would conceive a son and they were to name him John. He goes on to say, They would have great joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth for he will be great in the eyes of the Lord. He must never touch wine or other alcoholic drinks. He will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even before his birth and he will turn many Israelites to the Lord their God. He will be a man with the spirit and power of Elijah. He will prepare the people for the coming of the Lord. He will turn the hearts of the father of their children and he will cause those who are rebellious to accept the wisdom of the godly. Luke 1:11-17

**How did Zechariah respond when the angel shared the good news? What causes us to doubt when God sends a long awaited answer to prayer? How does this help you in your circumstance?**

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As a result of Zechariah's doubt, he was \_\_\_\_\_ for the duration of Elisabeth's pregnancy as a sign that Gabriel's announcement was true.

**Elisabeth's Conception: Luke 1:23-25**

Even when they were advanced in age and past the time of giving birth, the Lord blessed them to conceive a child. At just the right time Elisabeth became pregnant with a child and suddenly their sadness was replaced with \_\_\_\_\_. The Bible says she went into seclusion and hid herself. Some writers suggest this was an act of devotion, out of deep gratitude to the Lord. Instead of going out bragging and showing off, she stayed inside spending quiet time with the Lord, meditating, and praying about how to take care of the child. Not only did she stay inside but she also celebrated the kindness of the Lord.

**As you look over your life today, can you recall a time when you thought it was too late for God to bless you? What happen when He showed up?**

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**Do you think there is a right or wrong way to respond to the Lord's blessing? What should we do when the Lord showers us with unique blessings and extraordinary favor?**

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One month later Gabriel also appeared to Mary and told her she too would conceive and give birth to a son. Who else did Gabriel appear to?

**Elisabeth's Confirmation: Luke 1:39-45;57-66**

After Mary arrives at Elisabeth's home and greets her, she may have had some questions such as how all those things would take place but notice how God confirmed His will through Elisabeth: (39-45)

\*Her baby leaps in her womb for joy.

\*She was filled with the \_\_\_\_\_.

\*She tells her, "God has blessed you above all women and your child is blessed."

\*She calls her "The mother of my Lord"

**Have you ever received a word of confirmation from someone about something you were having a hard time trying to figure out? How did it make you feel when you heard a timely word?**

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Not only does she confirm Mary's miraculous conception by the Holy Spirit, but we also see the confirmation of God's grace in the naming their son, John the Baptist. (57-66)

After a male child was born it was customary for Jews to be circumcised on the 8<sup>th</sup> day. On this day, everyone came out in support of Elisabeth and Zechariah for this very special circumcision ceremony. The Bible says, They wanted to name him Zechariah, after his father, but Elisabeth said No. He will be called John.

How do you think Zechariah's family responded?

\* \_\_\_\_\_ \* \_\_\_\_\_ \*

They motion for Zechariah to ask him what he wanted to name the child, but he was still unable speak so he wrote on a tablet "His name is John."

John's personal name means "The Lord is gracious"

**In a world where so many are stuck on human tradition, rituals, and legalism, how intentional are you about pointing them to God's grace? What can we do to lead others to hear more about grace?**

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**As you reflect on this study, what is one lesson that you are willing to share with someone else?**

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**He Himself said, "I will never leave you or abandon you."  
-Hebrews 13:5**