

# Luke 1:18

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And Zacharias said unto the angel, Whereby shall I know this?  
for I am an old man, and my wife well stricken in years.

## Analysis

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Zacharias's question 'Whereby shall I know this?' echoes Abraham's question (Gen 15:8) but lacks Abraham's faith. Despite angelic visitation and clear promise, Zacharias demands a sign, revealing doubt where there should be trust. His appeal to natural impossibility ('I am an old man') shows reliance on human reason over divine power. This stands in stark contrast to Mary's submissive faith (v38). Zacharias's unbelief, though understandable humanly, demonstrates how even the righteous can falter in faith when confronted with God's impossible promises.

## Historical Context

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Zacharias had witnessed miraculous temple service and received direct angelic revelation, yet his rational mind struggled with biological impossibility. His doubt reflects the common human tension between faith and sight, promise and present reality.

## Related Passages

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**Ephesians 2:8** — Salvation by grace through faith

**John 3:16** — God's love and salvation

**Romans 1:17** — The righteous shall live by faith

**Hebrews 11:1** — Definition of faith

## Study Questions

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1. How can even faithful believers struggle with doubt when God's promises seem impossible?
2. What is the difference between asking for understanding and demanding proof?
3. How does Zacharias's doubt contrast with Mary's faith in responding to God's word?

## Interlinear Text

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καὶ	εἶπεν	Ζαχαρίας	πρὸς	τὸν	ἄγγελον	Κατὰ	τί	
And	said	Zacharias	unto	G3588	the angel	Whereby	G5101	
G2532	G2036	G2197	G4314		G32	G2596		
γνώσομαι	τοῦτο	ἐγὼ	γάρ	εἰμι	πρεσβύτης	καὶ	ἡ	γυνή
shall I know	this	I	for	am	an old man	And	G3588	wife
G1097	G5124	G1473	G1063	G1510	G4246	G2532		G1135
μου	προβεβηκυῖα	ἐν	ταῖς	ἡμέραις	αὐτῆς			
my	well stricken	in	G3588	years	G846			
G3450	G4260	G1722		G2250				

## Additional Cross-References

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**Genesis 17:17** (Parallel theme): Then Abraham fell upon his face, and laughed, and said in his heart, Shall a child be born unto him that is an hundred years old? and shall Sarah, that is ninety years old, bear?

**Genesis 15:8** (Parallel theme): And he said, Lord GOD, whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it?

**Luke 1:34** (Parallel theme): Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?

**2 Kings 7:2** (Parallel theme): Then a lord on whose hand the king leaned answered the man of God, and said, Behold, if the LORD would make windows in

heaven, might this thing be? And he said, Behold, thou shalt see it with thine eyes, but shalt not eat thereof.

**Isaiah 38:22** (Parallel theme): Hezekiah also had said, What is the sign that I shall go up to the house of the LORD?

**Genesis 18:12** (Parallel theme): Therefore Sarah laughed within herself, saying, After I am waxed old shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?

**Luke 1:7** (Parallel theme): And they had no child, because that Elisabeth was barren, and they both were now well stricken in years.

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