

Luke 1:5

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judaea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the course of Abia: and his wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elisabeth.

Analysis

Zechariah and Elisabeth are introduced as righteous before God, walking blamelessly in all commandments. The Greek 'dikaioi' (δίκαιοι, righteous) indicates their justified standing and moral uprightness. Their blamelessness in observing the law demonstrates that even perfect external obedience cannot guarantee answered prayer—Elisabeth remained barren despite their righteousness. This sets up the theme that God's timing and purposes transcend human merit, and His miraculous intervention comes by grace, not works.

Historical Context

Zechariah served in the priestly division of Abijah (one of 24 divisions rotating temple service). Priests married within Levitical families, and Elisabeth's Aaronic descent doubly qualified their son for prophetic ministry. Barrenness was considered a divine curse in Jewish culture (Genesis 30:23), making Elisabeth's situation particularly painful for a righteous priestly couple. This echoes the patriarchal narratives (Sarah, Rebekah, Rachel, Hannah) where God opened barren wombs to accomplish His purposes.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. How does the contrast between Zechariah and Elisabeth's righteousness and their barrenness challenge merit-based thinking about God's blessings?
2. What does God's choice of elderly, childless parents for John the Baptist teach about His sovereign timing and methods?

Interlinear Text

Ἐγένετο	ἐν	ταῖς	ἡμέραις	Ἡρώδου	τοῦ	βασιλέως	τῆς
There was	in	G3588	the days	of Herod	G3588	the king	G3588
G1096	G1722		G2250	G2264		G935	
Ἰουδαίας	ἱερεὺς	τις	ὄνομα	Ζαχαρίας	ἐκ	ἐφημερίας	
of Judaea	priest	a certain	name	Zacharias	of	the course	
G2449	G2409	G5100	G3686	G2197	G1537	G2183	
Ἀβιά	καὶ	ἡ	γυνὴ	αὐτῆς	ἐκ	τῶν	θυγατέρων
of Abia	and	G3588	wife	her	of	G3588	the daughters
G7	G2532		G1135	G846	G1537		G2364
							of Aaron
							G2
καὶ	τὸ	ὄνομα	αὐτῆς	Ἐλισάβετ			
and	G3588	name	her	was Elisabeth			
G2532		G3686	G846	G1665			

Additional Cross-References

1 Chronicles 24:10 (Parallel theme): The seventh to Hakkoz, the eighth to Abijah,
Matthew 2:1 (Kingdom): Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem,
1 Chronicles 24:19 (Parallel theme): These were the orderings of them in their service to come into the house of the LORD, according to their manner, under Aaron their father, as the LORD God of Israel had commanded him.

Nehemiah 12:17 (Parallel theme): Of Abijah, Zichri; of Miniamin, of Moadiah, Piltai;

Nehemiah 12:4 (Parallel theme): Iddo, Ginnetho, Abijah,

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