

DON'T BE AFRAID

You Can Trust God With Your Fears

**A look at God's message
to those participating in
the birth of our Lord.**

Lesson 1

Mission Arlington • Mission Metroplex Christmas Curriculum • 2010

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Is God Listening?

Luke 1:4-25, 57-80

Zechariah, Your Prayer Has Been Heard

Scriptures

Genesis 3:15
Malachi 3:1

Fear is not something we normally think of at Christmas. It's generally a happy time! The first Christmas, though, was a time of uncertainty and uncertainty can cause fear.

Memory Verse

"Don't be afraid. Just believe."
(Mark 5:36 NIV)

Doctor Luke writes so that we can know the truth (Luke 1:4) Knowing the truth helps conquer, or overcome, our fears. Luke tells us about a married couple who loved and followed God. They were an older couple who had never had children. Their names were Zechariah and Elizabeth. They had been obedient to God; they did what was right.

Both Zechariah and Elizabeth were from a special family. They were both descended from Moses' brother, Aaron. In the Old Testament we read about how Moses led the Hebrew people out of slavery in Egypt to the promised land. His brother Aaron was the first high-priest in the Jewish tabernacle (which would later be the temple).

Just like his ancestor Aaron, Zechariah was also a Jewish priest. It was his turn to serve in the temple. He did this by himself; no one went into the temple with him. In fact, many people gathered outside of the temple and prayed while Zechariah was inside.

Inside the temple, as Zechariah was getting ready to burn incense in his service to God, an angel appeared to him. The angel's name was Gabriel. God sent Gabriel to tell Zechariah something. This was pretty amazing because God hadn't spoken to His people for 400 years! God was now ready to speak to people who were ready to listen.

Gabriel was standing right by the incense altar where Zechariah was serving. "Zechariah was amazed and terrified." (Luke 1:12 NIV) Zechariah had never seen anything like this before and Gabriel told him, "Do not be afraid, Zechariah. Your prayer has been heard." (Luke 1:13a NIV) What did this mean? Sure, Zechariah was afraid when he saw an angel for the first time, but what did his prayers have to do with anything? Surely Zechariah had prayed hundreds, maybe even thousands, of prayers in his lifetime. Which of those had been heard?

Gabriel continued. "Your wife Elizabeth will have a child. It will be a boy, and you must name him John. He will be a joy and delight to you. His birth will make many people very glad. He will be important in the Lord's eyes. . .

Application

For many people, Christmas is a happy time. Maybe Christmas is uncertain for you the way it was for Zechariah many years ago. . . or maybe you're like Zechariah; maybe you have asked God for something and you are still waiting for what seems like an eternity?

Zechariah and Elizabeth obeyed God; they did what was right. Do you obey God? Do you do what is right?

Do you know the truth about God? That truth is that God loved you so much that He sent His one and only Son to take the punishment you deserve for sin in your life.

You won't be fearful when you are trusting in the God and His timing, even though it seems like a long time to you.

He will bring many of Israel's people back to the Lord their God. And he will prepare the way for the Lord." (Luke 1:13b-17a NlrV)

Zechariah may have even wondered over the years if God had been listening, but Gabriel had just confirmed it; God listened. He had heard Zechariah's prayer and He was going to bless Zechariah and Elizabeth with a son! What good news!

This good news wasn't only for Zechariah and Elizabeth, though. Gabriel had said, "His birth will make many people very glad . . . and he will prepare the way for the Lord." (Luke 1:14b, 17a NlrV) John would get people ready for God's Son - the One He had promised since the Garden of Eden when Adam and Eve disobeyed. (Genesis 3:15)

What an exciting way to hear God's message and to find out that you would be personally involved! But Zechariah had some doubts. He wasn't sure Elizabeth could become pregnant. They were old, past the time when most couples had babies. Gabriel assured Zechariah that his words would come true, but, because Zechariah hadn't believed, he would be unable to speak until after John was born!

God's words through the angel Gabriel did come true. Elizabeth became pregnant and gave birth to a son. When the time came to name their son, Zechariah spoke for the first time in nine months! "Everyone who heard this wondered about it. And because the Lord was with John, they asked, 'what is this child going to be?'" (Luke 1:66 NlrV)

Preparing for the next Lesson

Lesson 2

Why Me? - Luke 1:24-56

Activities

- **Memory Verse Activity:** Make a menorah, the seven pronged candlestick used in the Jewish temple, or simply cut out seven candles and flames from construction paper. Write one word of the memory verse on each candle. Be sure to include the reference. Talk about Zechariah's duties in the temple. Talk about the visit from Gabriel and Zechariah's fear.
- Provide pictures, models, coloring pages, etc. of the Jewish Temple during this time, which is usually referred to as Herod's Temple because of the construction he ordered.
- God sent His message to Zechariah through the angel Gabriel. Provide angel crafts and coloring pages for your students.
- Make a diorama of the temple using shoe boxes.
- Write a message the way Zechariah might have. Provide Hebrew letters and write in clay or on parchment paper, from right to left. Or, use the pattern below to write the name Zechariah and Elizabeth were to give their son, John.
ג' ין
- Make tassels with colored yarn. The clothes that priests like Zechariah wore had tassels.
- The high priest, who would have been the priest over all other priests like Zechariah, wore a special breastplate covered with jewels. Recreate the high priest's breastplate.
- **Dig Deeper:** Read over and study through "Zechariah's Song" in Luke 1:67-79.
- **Dig Even Deeper:** The word for fear, or being afraid, that is used here is where we get our word "phobia." The word used by Gabriel in Luke 1:13 is so strong that it means being fearful to the point of running away. Talk about the fears that your students have. The opposite of fear is courage. We can be courageous when we trust in God. Work on replacing those fears with trust in God by sharing applicable Scripture.



**Don't be afraid.
Just believe."**

Mark 5:36

Word Search

d o n o t e f r a i d o d o t
a i y r e l i z t e p l r m e
d l a r p i h e a r d y a r p
i e p r e z t h e w i n e m p
a p o l f a e c h a y z h c e
r n o t g b p e r p a e r w l
f a y a w e h t e r a p e r p
a g b r i t n o o i e l y o m
e r e y a h p n y o e r a f e
b h o j n l e o d i a f r a t
t y o z e c h a r i a h p r e
o h a g f a r b e d m p l e t
n e l a d l a g o e o p l e o
o a p n a g y n r i e l b a g
d r a e b t o d a l g e l p

Zechariah

Elizabeth

Gabriel

Do not be afraid

prayer heard

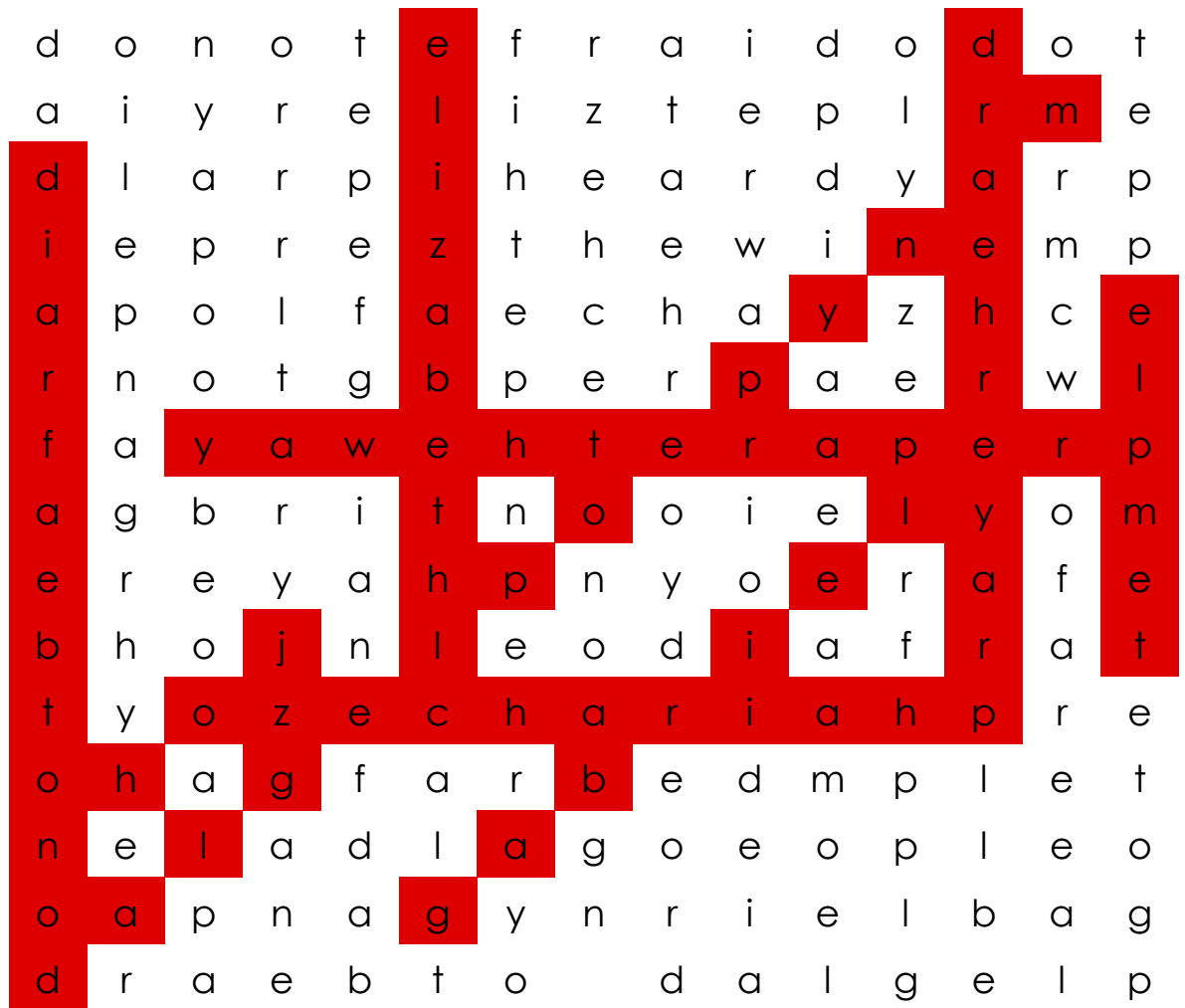
temple

John

many people glad

prepare the way

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y o b e a i d r u y
r a e r y p r a f r
e y o u a r d i e r
h e a r a f r a i d
d o o n t o y u w a
y o u r y p r a e r
t o n o f r a d i a
b a p r a y e r e h
o n o b h e a r d e

do not

be

afraid

your

prayer

heard

Word Search

e r d h d o n o t a
y o b e a i d r u y
r a e r y p r a f r
e y o u a r d i e r
h e a r a f r a i d
d o o n t o y u w a
y o u r y p r a e r
t o n o f r a d i a
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