

SONG 1

Thy Prayer Is Heard – Zacharias

Read: Luke 1:5–25

HYMN Song + film · premieres Sunday, November 15

CAROL Song · releases Sunday, November 15

KNOW THE SETTING

Luke places the story "in the days of Herod, the king of Judaea" (Luke 1:5). Zacharias was a priest "of the course of Abia" (Luke 1:5), one of the priestly divisions listed in 1 Chronicles 24:10 (spelled Abijah there). His wife Elisabeth was "of the daughters of Aaron" (Luke 1:5).

Both were "righteous before God" (Luke 1:6), yet "they had no child, because that Elisabeth was barren, and they both were now well stricken in years" (Luke 1:7).

Zacharias was chosen by lot to burn incense in the temple, while "the whole multitude of the people were praying without" (Luke 1:10).

WHO SPEAKS

- The angel Gabriel, who names himself in verse 19
- Zacharias (verse 18)
- Elisabeth (verse 25)

LOOK CLOSER

- Luke never tells us exactly what Zacharias had prayed for. The angel says "thy prayer is heard" (Luke 1:13) and then promises a son. *Reflection:* many readers connect the prayer to the couple's long hope for a child, but the text leaves the prayer itself unstated.
- Compare two questions. Zacharias asks, "Whereby shall I know this?" (Luke 1:18) Mary later asks, "How shall this be" (Luke 1:34) Gabriel gives the reason Zacharias was made silent: "because thou believest not my words" (Luke 1:20).
- The silence had an end built into it: "until the day that these things shall be performed" (Luke 1:20). Watch for its fulfillment in Song 3.

CONNECT THE SCRIPTURES

- **Genesis 18:14:** Another aged couple received a promised son: "Is any thing too hard for the LORD?" (Genesis 18:14)
- **Malachi 4:5–6:** The angel says John will come "in the spirit and power of Elias" (Luke 1:17), echoing Malachi's promise that Elijah would "turn the heart of the fathers to the children" (Malachi 4:6).
- **Daniel 9:21:** Gabriel appeared earlier to Daniel, who called him "the man Gabriel" (Daniel 9:21).

What this reveals about God. God hears the prayers of His people, even prayers offered for many years. His words "shall be fulfilled in their season" (Luke 1:20).

PONDER

1. Zacharias and Elisabeth were faithful and still waited a long time. What does their story teach about faithfulness during long waiting?
2. The people "marvelled that he tarried so long in the temple" (Luke 1:21). What might it have been like to carry news you could not speak?
3. Elisabeth said the Lord "looked on me" (Luke 1:25). When have you felt noticed by God?

TALK ABOUT IT

Share a time a prayer was answered in a way or at a time you did not expect.

SING THE VERSE

"Fear not, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard" (Luke 1:13)

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