

# GOD REMEMBERS

**Introduction:** Are you getting frazzled with Christmas shopping?

- Joke – who started Christmas anyway?
- What was stirring 2000 years ago?

**Luke 1:5-20** *When Herod was king of Judea, there was a Jewish priest named Zechariah. He was a member of the priestly order of Abijah, and his wife, Elizabeth, was also from the priestly line of Aaron. Zechariah and Elizabeth were righteous in God's eyes, careful to obey all of the Lord's commandments and regulations. They had no children because Elizabeth was unable to conceive, and they were both very old.*

*One day Zechariah was serving God in the Temple, for his order was on duty that week. As was the custom of the priests, he was chosen by lot to enter the sanctuary of the Lord and burn incense. While the incense was being burned, a great crowd stood outside, praying.*

*While Zechariah was in the sanctuary, an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing to the right of the incense altar. Zechariah was shaken and overwhelmed with fear when he saw him. But the angel said, "Don't be afraid, Zechariah! God has heard your prayer. Your wife, Elizabeth, will give you a son, and you are to name him John. You will 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 fathers to their children, and he will cause those who are rebellious to accept the wisdom of the godly."*

*Zechariah said to the angel, "How can I be sure this will happen? I'm an old man now, and my wife is also well along in years."*

*Then the angel said, "I am Gabriel! I stand in the very presence of God. It was he who sent me to bring you this good news! But now, since you didn't believe what I said, you will be silent and unable to speak until the child is born. For my words will certainly be fulfilled at the proper time."*

## 1. Why Me?

- Zechariah probably asked “Why me?”
- He was part of a priestly line stretching back to David’s time
  - Served on a rotation basis (24 divisions).
  - Did not live in Jerusalem, but went there twice a year to minister for one week.
- This occasion was special and unique for Zechariah
  - chosen by lot.
- His name says it all about God’s sovereignty “God Remembers”.

## 2. Don’t Despise Your Heritage.

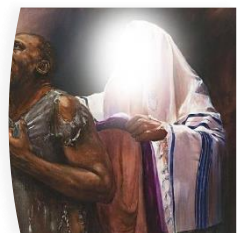
- Zechariah’s Heritage:

**2 Chronicles 24:20** *Then the Spirit of God came upon Zechariah son of Jehoiada the priest. He stood before the people and said, “This is what God says: Why do you disobey the LORD’s commands and keep yourselves from prospering? You have abandoned the LORD, and now he has abandoned you!”*

- The king had been warned again and again.
- Zechariah was the son of Judah’s most respected priest.

**2 Chronicles 24:22b** *Zechariah’s last words as he died were, “May the LORD see what they are doing and avenge my death!”*

- God remembers.
  - Zechariah’s ancestor the prophet in the Bible has the most frequent prophecies about Jesus next to Isaiah.
- Angel’s revelation to Zechariah the prophet- Zechariah 3:1-9
  - Priest standing before the Lord.
  - Satan’s accusing
  - Joshua the priest in filthy garments
  - Filthy clothes removed and new one put on.
    - “See, I have taken away your sin...”
    - This is symbolic of what is to come.
  - “My servant the branch will remove all sin in a single day.”



**Zechariah 9:9** *Rejoice, O people of Zion. Shout in triumph, O people of Jerusalem! Look, your king is coming to you. He is righteous and victorious, yet he is humble, riding on a donkey—riding on a donkey's colt.*

Zechariah 11:13 – sold for 30 pieces of silver.

Zechariah 12:10 – look on Him whom they pierced.

Zechariah 12:14 - Lord's second coming.

- I can imagine Zechariah reflecting on his ancestor's revelation many times.
- God remembers.

### **3. More than Expected.**

- Your answers may be more than you expect.
  - I wonder – did Zechariah wonder what the words “*Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit says the Lord*” (Zechariah 4:6) meant?

**Luke 1:12-13** *Zechariah was shaken and overwhelmed with fear when he saw him. But the angel said, “Don't be afraid, Zechariah! God has heard your prayer. Your wife, Elizabeth, will give you a son, and you are to name him John.*

- Do not be afraid.
- Your prayer has been heard.
  - Implies that the answer is here, or on the way.
- God remembers your prayers even when you have given up.

**Luke 1:14-15a** *You will have great joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth, for he will be great in the eyes of the Lord.*

- A joy and delight to you
- Many will rejoice.
- Great in the Lord's sight.

**Luke 1: 15b** . *He must never touch wine or other alcoholic drinks. He will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even before his birth.*

- No mixing of spirits – artificial or real.

**Luke 1:17** *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 fathers to their children, and he will cause those who are rebellious to accept the wisdom of the godly.”*

- Power of Elijah
  - Reconciliation of families
  - Wisdom
  - Prepare people for the Lord.
- God Remembers.

#### **4. Do you Believe?**

- Zechariah’s response: How can I be sure?
  - Unbelief binds up.
- Zechariah unable to speak.
  - Belief frees up..

**Luke 2:76-77** *“And you, my little son, will be called the prophet of the Most High, because you will prepare the way for the Lord. You will tell his people how to find salvation through forgiveness of their sins.*

- My son will prepare the way for the Lord to bring salvation and forgiveness.

#### **Conclusion:**

- What is being birthed in us?
- What potential for 2024?
  - How do we prepare the way for the Lord to do what He wants in 2024?