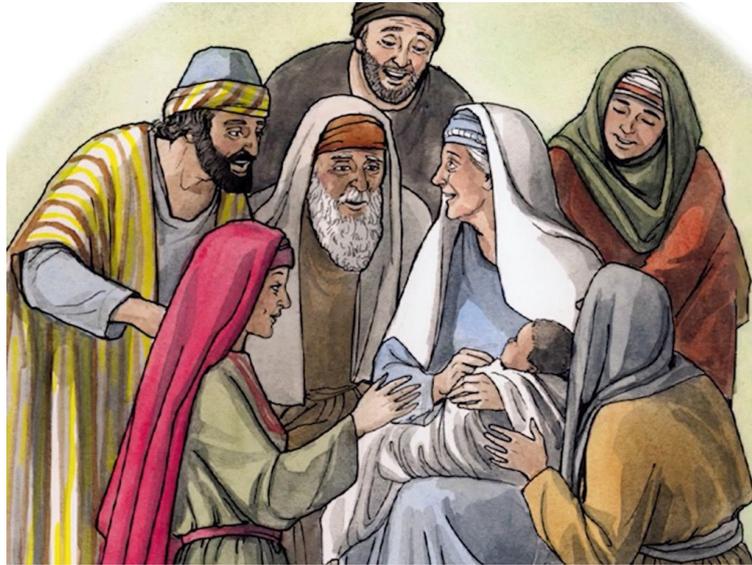


From Luke's Gospel in the Bible

Luke 1, verses 6-14, 18-25 (International Children's Bible)



⁶ Zechariah and Elizabeth truly did what God said was good. They did everything the Lord commanded and told people to do. They were without fault in keeping his law. ⁷ But Zechariah and Elizabeth had no children. Elizabeth could not have a baby; and both of them were very old.

⁸ Zechariah was serving as a priest before God for his group. It was his group's time to serve. ⁹ According to the custom of the priests, he was chosen to go into the Temple of the Lord and burn incense. ¹⁰ There were a great many people outside praying at the time the incense was offered. ¹¹ Then, on the right side of the incense table, an angel of the Lord came and stood before Zechariah. ¹² When he saw the angel, Zechariah was confused and frightened. ¹³ But the angel said to him, "Zechariah, don't be afraid. Your prayer has been heard by God. Your wife, Elizabeth, will give birth to a son. You will name him John. ¹⁴ You will be very happy. Many people will be happy because of his birth.

¹⁸ Zechariah said to the angel, "How can I know that what you say is true? I am an old man, and my wife is old, too."

¹⁹ The angel answered him, "I am Gabriel. I stand before God. God sent me to talk to you and to tell you this good news. ²⁰ Now, listen! You will not be able to talk until the day these things happen. You will lose your speech because you did not believe what I told you. But these things will really happen."

²¹ Outside, the people were still waiting for Zechariah. They were surprised that he was staying so long in the Temple. ²² Then Zechariah came outside, but he could not speak to them. So they knew that he had seen a vision in the Temple. Zechariah could not speak. He could only make signs to them. ²³ When his time of service as a priest was finished, he went home.

²⁴ Later, Zechariah's wife, Elizabeth, became pregnant. She did not go out of her house for five months. Elizabeth said, ²⁵ "Look what the Lord has done for me! My people were ashamed of me, but now the Lord has taken away that shame."