

God Loves Using Nobodies From Nowhere

There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judea, a certain priest named Zechariah, of the division of Abijah. And his wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. They were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blamelessly. But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and they both were now well advanced in years (Luke 1:5-7).

Flash forward from the time of Malachi to the days of Herod the Great. History reports he was a brilliant but evil ruler, best known for reconstructing the Jewish temple in Jerusalem. The temple was a landmark of monumental significance for the people of God and the setting scene for Luke's narrative.

We meet two very ordinary people named Zechariah and Elizabeth. Elizabeth is from the priestly line of Aaron, so she comes from generations of ministers. Zechariah is a priest, the equivalent in those days of a rural pastor.

What else do we know about this couple? One, they're old, which in that day meant anything beyond age 50. Two, they are barren—they can't have any children, and they depended on their children to look after them in their old age. Three, they are grieved. In their day, to be old and childless was not only emotionally devastating, but also financially dangerous. Without hospice care or government aid, they depended on their children to look after them in their old age. Four, Zechariah and Elizabeth are also poor. Zechariah is a simple priest out in the middle of nowhere—according to the world's wrong view, he was a nobody who lived nowhere with nothing. Furthermore, many people who were childless wondered if God had cursed them with barrenness rather than blessing

them with a baby. As a great example to us, this old couple was simple and sad but still steadfast.

There were reportedly 18,000 priests assigned to one of 24 divisions, with 750 men in each division. Each division would travel to Jerusalem for one week, two times a year, to minister at the temple.

All 750 priests would convene and then roll dice to see who got to do the big job: Enter the temple, throw some incense on the coals and say a prayer. That was it. Once you got to do it, you were done for life. They declared you holy and blessed, and you never got to do it again.

Proverbs says, “We may throw the dice, but the Lord determines how they fall” (Prov. 16:33, NLT). For years—even decades—Zechariah would travel all the way to Jerusalem but was never chosen because the dice never fell in his favor. Even the meaning of Zechariah and Elizabeth’s names gives us a hint that God is up to something. Elizabeth means “God’s oath,” and Zechariah means “the Lord remembers.” Sure enough, Zechariah’s big day finally arrived, and it is much bigger than he could have ever imagined.

Looking back at your life, can you name three ways God has miraculously provided for you? {eoa}

Mark Driscoll is a Jesus-following, mission-leading, church-serving, people-loving, Bible-preaching pastor and the author of many books, including *Spirit-Filled Jesus*, which you can order [here](#). He currently pastors *The Trinity Church* in Scottsdale, Arizona, with his family. For all of pastor Mark Driscoll’s Bible teaching, please visit or download the app. You can download a free devotional e-book from pastor Mark [here](#).