

ANTICIPATION: A SENSE OF HOPE

ZECHARIAH

“Then an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing at the right side of the altar of incense. When Zechariah saw him, he was startled and was gripped with fear. But the angel said to him: ‘Do not be afraid Zechariah; your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you are to call him John. He will be a joy and delight to you, and many will rejoice because of his birth, for he will be great in the sight of the Lord’” (Luke 1:11-15 NIV).

“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. Because of God’s tender mercy, the morning light from heaven is about to break upon us, to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, and to guide us to the path of peace” (Luke 1:76-79 NLT).

MARY

“The angel answered, ‘The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be unable to conceive is in her sixth month. For no word of God will ever fail’” (Luke 1:35-37 NIV).

“I am the Lord’s servant” (Luke 1:38 NIV).

ELIZABETH

“When Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, the baby moved within her. Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit, and spoke in a loud voice. ‘You are the most blessed of all women; and blessed is the child you will bear! Why should this great thing happen to me, that my Lord’s mother comes to visit me? For as soon as I heard your greeting, the baby within me jumped with gladness. How happy are you to believe that the Lord’s message to you will come true!’” (Luke 1:41-45 GN).

SIMEON

“Now there was a man living in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon. He was a good and God-fearing man, and was waiting for Israel to be saved. The Holy Spirit was with him, and he had been assured by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord’s promised Messiah. Led by the Spirit, Simeon went into the temple. When the parents brought the Child Jesus into the temple to do for Him what the Law required, Simeon took the Child in his arms, and gave thanks to God:

“‘Now, Lord, You have kept Your promise, and You may let Your servant go in peace. With my own eyes I have seen Your salvation, which You have prepared in the presence of all peoples: A light to reveal Your way to the Gentiles, and bring glory to Your people Israel!’” (Luke 2:25-32 GN).

ANNA

“Anna, a prophet, was also there in the Temple...she was very old. Her husband died when they had been married only seven years. Then she lived as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the Temple but stayed there day and night, worshiping God with fasting and prayer. She came along just as Simeon was talking with Mary and Joseph, and she began praising God. She talked about the Child to everyone who had been waiting expectantly for God to rescue Jerusalem” (Luke 2:36-38 NLT).

“How beautiful on the mountain are the feet of the messenger bringing good news, breaking the news that all’s well, proclaiming good times announcing salvation, telling Zion, ‘Your God reigns!’ Voices! Listen! Your scouts are shouting, thunderclap shouts, shouting in joyful unison... God has rolled up His sleeves. All the nations can see His holy, muscled arm. Everyone, from one end of the earth to the other, sees Him at work, doing His salvation work!” (Isaiah 52:7-10 MSG).