

*When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go over to Bethlehem and SEE this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us.” And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. **And when they saw it, they MADE KNOWN the saying that had been told them concerning this child.** Luke 2:15–17 (ESV)*

Behold, I send my messenger, and he will prepare the way before me. And the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple; and the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight, behold, he is coming, says the Lord of hosts. Malachi 3:1 (ESV)

“Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome day of the Lord comes. Malachi 4:5 (ESV)

Background

In the days of Herod, king of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah, of the division of Abijah. And he had a wife from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. And they were both righteous before God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and statutes of the Lord. But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and both were advanced in years. Luke 1:5–7 (ESV)

Who is Herod the Great?

- He was brilliant.
- He was evil.
- He was insane.

What was it like in Jerusalem at the Temple?

The king's heart is a stream of water in the hand of the Lord; he turns it wherever he will. Proverbs 21:1 (ESV)

Who are Zechariah and Elizabeth?

Zechariah means God remembers

Elizabeth means God keeps his promise

The Day Everything Changed

Now while he was serving as priest before God when his division was on duty, according to the custom of the priesthood, he was chosen by lot to enter the temple of the Lord and burn incense. And the whole multitude of the people were praying outside at the hour of incense. And there appeared to him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense. And Zechariah was troubled when he saw him, and fear fell upon him. But the angel said to him, “Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John. And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth, for he will be great before the Lord. And he must not drink wine or strong drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb. And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God, and he will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready for the Lord a people prepared.” Luke 1:8–17 (ESV)

The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the Lord. Proverbs 16:33 (ESV)

John was a boy set apart to the Lord.

for he will be great before the Lord.... Luke 1:15 (ESV)

Should I avoid alcohol?

And he must not drink wine or strong drink, Luke 1:15 (ESV)

“All things are lawful for me,” but not all things are helpful. “All things are lawful for me,” but I will not be dominated by anything. 1 Corinthians 6:12 (ESV)

1. If I don't drink I can't get drunk.
2. Almost all examples of drunkenness in the Bible end in disaster.

3. I have never seen a benefit of drinking, only disaster from drinking.
4. As a leader, I don't want to influence someone toward drinking.

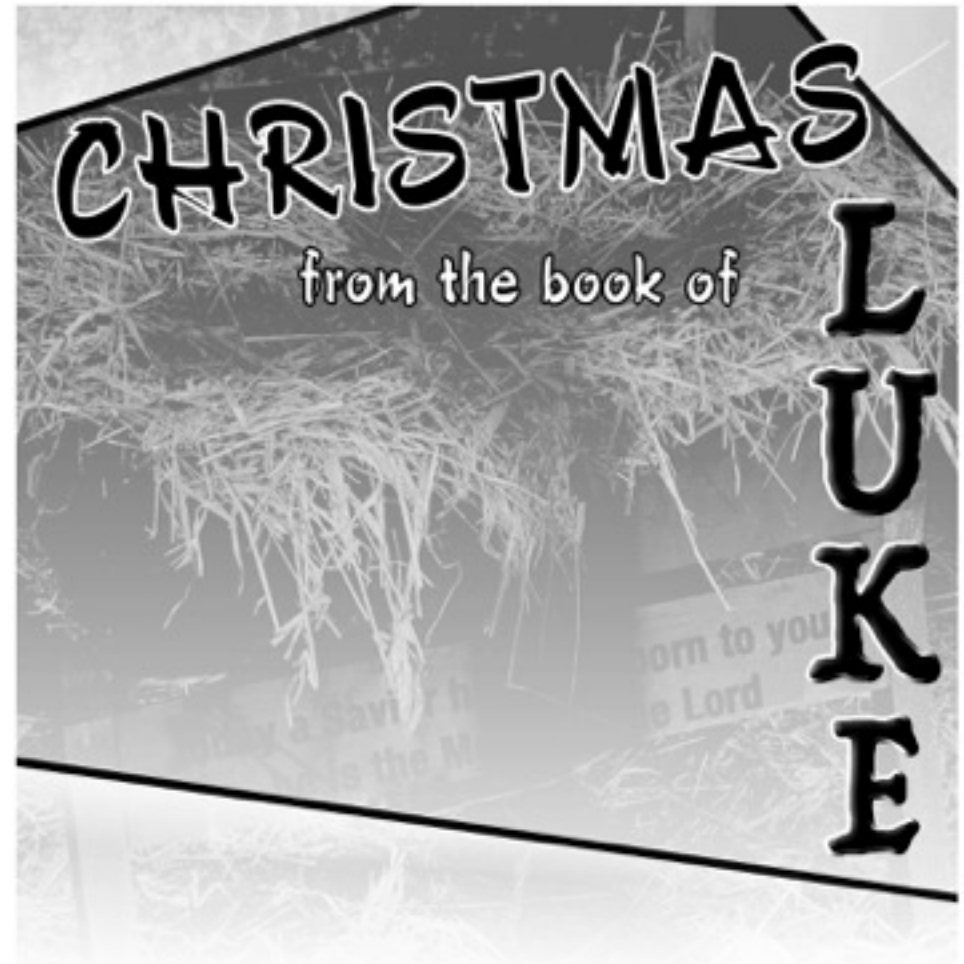
Is God Pro-Life?

*and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb.
Luke 1:15 (ESV)*

How To Mess Up The Best Day Of Your Life.

And Zechariah said to the angel, "How shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife is advanced in years." And the angel answered him, "I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I was sent to speak to you and to bring you this good news. And behold, you will be silent and unable to speak until the day that these things take place, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their time." And the people were waiting for Zechariah, and they were wondering at his delay in the temple. And when he came out, he was unable to speak to them, and they realized that he had seen a vision in the temple. And he kept making signs to them and remained mute. And when his time of service was ended, he went to his home. After these days his wife Elizabeth conceived, and for five months she kept herself hidden, saying, "Thus the Lord has done for me in the days when he looked on me, to take away my reproach among people." Luke 1:18–25 (ESV)

1. What matters is what God thinks of me, not what everyone else thinks of me.
2. When it comes to answering the prayers of our heart, trust God's timing.
3. Don't become spiritually stiff and refuse to believe God answers prayer.



Zechariah — Do I Believe God Answers Prayer?



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