

## Chapter 2 \* Prelude to Glory

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### Luke's Good News

#### Chapter 1, verses 1-7

#### How important is God to this story?

First, those who were eyewitnesses and servants of the Meaning went to the trouble to pull together a record of what was fulfilled here in our presence. And they delivered those records to us. Luke says, I too have researched all this to give a good, coherent record to you, dear God-lover. I have done this so that you can be sure of what you were led to understand.

When Herod was king of Judea, a priest named Zechariah, from the tribe of Abijah, had a wife named Elizabeth.

Names had meaning in that culture. Zechariah means "God remembers." Abijah means "God is my Father." Elizabeth means "God is my promise." The names themselves are introducing us to the kind of God who is making Himself known through this story. *God remembers*: He is the Lord who created us and made promises to us long before this. *God is my Father*: He is in a unique relationship with the Meaning who is central to the story now. He is in a Father relationship to all who are receptive to the Meaning. *God is my promise*: that which He has promised is on the way. He was present and at work for our good in the past; He is present and at work for our good in the present time; and He is on the way with the fulfillment of all this in the future. That is the kind of God He is.

Zechariah and Elizabeth were both descendants of Aaron, the first Hebrew priest, and both of them were in good standing with God, faithful to His Word and His ways. And yet they had not been able to have a child, and now both of them were too old . . . which brings to mind Abraham and Sarah, the parents of the whole family of God's Chosen People. (Their story is in Genesis, the first book of the Bible.)

Many centuries before Zechariah, God had said to Abraham, "Through your family I will bless all nations." But when God first said this, Abraham and Sarah were barren. God's salvation story began with a man and a woman who had not been able to have a child, and were now hopelessly too old. And the story of the Savior would begin also with a man and a woman who had not been able to bear a child and were now hopelessly too old. Both times, God would do what only God could do.

That reality is central to the whole story. For us to be saved, we depend on God to do what only God can do. None of this makes sense if you push God into a minor role. To understand the story, you have to see that it is about God making himself known.