

# **Brown Community Group**

## Be the Light: On Them the Light Shined December 13th, 2020

### I. Starter Questions:

1. What types of light can you name? How are these different in purpose?
2. What difference would it make in these situations if there was no light. What difference would it make if you were not that light?
3. Do you like surprises? God often uses surprise in his plans. Why?

### II. Discussion of Scripture

#### A. **Luke 1: 5-12; 18-20; 57-64; 76-79**

**5** 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.

**6** And they were both righteous before God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and statutes of the Lord.

**7** But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and both were advanced in years.

**8** Now while he was serving as priest before God when his division was on duty,

**9** according to the custom of the priesthood, he was chosen by lot to enter the temple of the Lord and burn incense.

**10** And the whole multitude of the people were praying outside at the hour of incense.

**11** And there appeared to him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense.

**12** And Zechariah was troubled when he saw him, and fear fell upon him.

**13** 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.

.....

**18** And Zechariah said to the angel, "How shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife is advanced in years."

**19** 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.

**20** 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."

.....

**57** Now the time came for Elizabeth to give birth, and she bore a son.

**58** And her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had shown great mercy to her, and they rejoiced with her.

59 And on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child. And they would have called him Zechariah after his father,  
60 but his mother answered, "No; he shall be called John."  
61 And they said to her, "None of your relatives is called by this name."  
62 And they made signs to his father, inquiring what he wanted him to be called.  
63 And he asked for a writing tablet and wrote, "His name is John." And they all wondered.  
64 And immediately his mouth was opened, and his tongue loosed, and he spoke, blessing God.

.....  
76 And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways,  
77 to give knowledge of salvation to his people in the forgiveness of their sins,  
78 because of the tender mercy of our God, whereby the sunrise shall visit us from on high  
79 to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace."  
80 And the child grew and became strong in spirit, and he was in the wilderness until the day of his public appearance to Israel.

**For Discussion:**

1. Who was Herod? How were the Jewish people in a time a darkness when Jesus was born?
2. What division of Abijah mean?
3. How would you respond to an angel standing next to you?
4. In verse 18 when Zechariah was told Elizabeth would bear a son, he responded "How shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife is advanced in years?" In Luke 1:34 Mary was told she would have a baby she responded, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?"  
Zechariah was mute until the birth of John for his unbelief, while Mary went on with her trip to see her relative, Elizabeth. What is the difference in each response and how was each treated?
5. What would your first words be if you had been mute for many months?
6. How do you recognize those who "sit in darkness and in the shadow of death" and what do you do after you see them? -verse 79

**B.**

**C. Luke 2:22-32**

<sup>22</sup> And when the time came for their purification according to the Law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord <sup>23</sup> (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, "Every male who first opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord") <sup>24</sup> and to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the Law of the Lord, "a pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons."<sup>25</sup> Now there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon, and this man was righteous and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. <sup>26</sup> And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. <sup>27</sup> And he came in the Spirit into the temple, and when the

parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him according to the custom of the Law, <sup>28</sup> he took him up in his arms and blessed God and said,

<sup>29</sup> “Lord, now you are letting your servant<sup>[a]</sup> depart in peace,  
according to your word;

<sup>30</sup> for my eyes have seen your salvation

<sup>31</sup> that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples,

<sup>32</sup> a light for revelation to the Gentiles,  
and for glory to your people Israel.”

**For Discussion:**

1. How is Simeon described in verse 25? What is he waiting for? What is the “consolation of Israel”? How does this point to God’s faithfulness?
2. Look at Simeon’s “song” in verses 29-32. What does it mean that his eyes have seen God’s “salvation”?
3. If this “light of revelation” that Jesus will bring is for the Gentiles, and also for the glory of Israel, what is Simeon saying about the revelation of Jesus?

**D. Isaiah 9:1-7**

**9** <sup>[a]</sup> But there will be no gloom for her who was in anguish. In the former time he brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time he has made glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations. <sup>[b]</sup>

<sup>2</sup> <sup>[c]</sup> The people who walked in darkness

have seen a great light;

those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness,

on them has light shone.

<sup>3</sup> You have multiplied the nation;

you have increased its joy;

they rejoice before you

as with joy at the harvest,

as they are glad when they divide the spoil.

<sup>4</sup> For the yoke of his burden,

and the staff for his shoulder,

the rod of his oppressor,

you have broken as on the day of Midian.

<sup>5</sup> For every boot of the tramping warrior in battle tumult

and every garment rolled in blood

will be burned as fuel for the fire.

<sup>6</sup> For to us a child is born,

to us a son is given;

and the government shall be upon his shoulder,

and his name shall be called

Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,  
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

<sup>7</sup> Of the increase of his government and of peace  
there will be no end,  
on the throne of David and over his kingdom,  
to establish it and to uphold it  
with justice and with righteousness  
from this time forth and forevermore.  
The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

**For Discussion:**

1. What does it mean to say that Jesus is the light of the world?
2. Read Isaiah 9:6. These are prophecies about Jesus. What do you learn about Jesus from v6?
3. Why is prophesy in the old testament that is fulfilled in the new Testament important?
4. How are you familiar with the words in verses 6?

*This Christmas season be intent on where can you let the light of Jesus shine through you to a large group or to an individual?*

**Bonus**

As I was reading through the various passages relating to the birth of Jesus, I was struck how often we have allowed traditions to become part of the story.

Do we celebrate tradition or facts of Christmas, (as best we know)?

1. Did a star lead the Magi to Jerusalem?
2. Did the star that went before the Magi go east, west, north or south from Jerusalem to Bethlehem?
3. Where were the Magi from?
4. Most likely what did the Magi ride camels, horses, or elephants?
5. Were the Magi kings?
6. How many Magi were there?
7. Was Jesus born in December, March, or September?
8. A typical manger scene consists for a stable, Jesus, Mary, Joseph, shepherds, and wisemen. Which of these is out of place?
9. Were the angels male or female?
10. Where did the Magi find Jesus, in a house or a stable?
11. According to Matthew did the Magi present their gifts to Jesus, Mary and Joseph?
12. How old was Jesus when he was circumcised? Who usually did the circumcision?
13. Where did Mary, Joseph and Jesus go after leaving Bethlehem?
14. What did the angel of the Lord and the heavenly hosts sing when told of the birth of a savior who is Christ the Lord?
15. When was the time of purification for Mary? What were her restrictions?
16. Was the purification done in Bethlehem?