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A Barren Woman (Elisabeth) and Jesus' Birth

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THE PHYSICAL BIRTH OF JESUS CHRIST A BARREN WOMAN (ELISABETH) AND JESUS' BIRTH

THE ELISABETH FILE

STATISTICS ON HER LIFE

Spouse: Zacharias (Luke 1:5)

Son: John the Baptist (Luke 1:57-60)

First mention: Luke 1:5

Final mention: Luke 1:57

Meaning of her name: "God's oath"

Frequency of her name: Referred to nine times

Biblical books mentioning her: One book (Luke)

Important fact about her life: She miraculously gave birth to John in her old age.

STORY OF HER LIFE

- There were two significant events in her life when she offered up special praise to God.
 - A. The first: Thanking Him for her unborn son (Lk. 1:24, 25)
 - B. The second: Thanking Him for His unborn Son (Lk. 1:42)
- The latter transpired during her visit with her cousin, Mary

Never in the history of childbirth did two expectant mothers have more to talk about than these two women.

- A. Here was Elisabeth, well past the childbearing years, but anticipating a baby.
- B. Here was Mary, a young virgin, but now with child. This was the case because "*with God nothing shall be impossible*" (Lk. 1:37).

It should be noted that Elisabeth's unborn child is referred to twice as "*the babe*" (Lk. 1:41, 44), indicating Scripture's position on abortion. From the beginning, John was not looked upon as a developing mass of human tissue or a fetus, but as "the babe."

But what about a therapeutic abortion? Consider the following: A therapeutic abortion occurs when a pregnant woman is persuaded (often by her doctor) that her unborn child presents an emotional or mental threat to her general well-being. Therefore, the most practical and painless solution (for the mother at least) is simply to kill the offending

baby. There are two well-known instances in history in which this attitude toward unborn human life could certainly have been applied.

The first case involved that of an older woman, the wife of a respected religious leader, living in a large southern city. Present-day advice to her would have been: "Do you really feel it wise to complete this birth? Consider your age. The psychological strain upon you will be much greater than it would be on a younger woman. Then too, as an older parent, don't you think you'll have real problems adjusting to this infant? I mean, it might even affect your relationship with your husband. No, all things considered, it would be far better to terminate the potential problem right now."

The second case had to do with a teenage girl, engaged to a struggling young tradesman, living in a small northern town. Here there could be no doubt. A quick abortion would immediately solve the embarrassment and downright hostility which would certainly develop if the unborn baby was not destroyed.

Two simple and clear-cut cases for therapeutic abortion. Not quite. Could even the most calloused present-day abortion mill operator stomach the thought of Elisabeth (the older woman) and Mary (the teenager) with trembling hands and hearts awaiting the sharp instrument of some ancient abortionist?

- Elisabeth and Zacharias were the only biblical couple specifically said to be filled with the Holy Spirit. Furthermore, she was the only named woman to experience this (Lk. 1:41, 67).
- Other future events would include:
 - A. The disciples (Acts 2:4; 4:31; 13:52)
 - B. Peter (Acts 4:8)
 - C. Paul (Acts 9:17; 13:9)
 - D. All believers (Eph. 3:14-19; 5:18)

REFLECTIONS FROM HER LIFE

They wanted to name our child after his father. This was natural, of course, but we both refused. I voiced my objection while my poor husband had to write his. Zacharias had already been chastened by God's special messenger, and he had no intention of letting that happen again. So we told our relatives the baby would be called John, not Zacharias. (Lk. 1:18-20; 59-64)

All our relatives kept wondering what kind of person our little John would be. And I silently agreed. Think of it: He was born of an older, barren woman; named by an angel; predicted to be a Nazarite; controlled by the Spirit while still in the womb; and commissioned to be the Messiah's forerunner. What manner of child indeed! (Lk. 1:7, 13, 15, 17, 41, 66, 76)