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MADE FOR THE TRUTH

GOSPEL PEARLS

Listening leads to Obedience

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*In the days of Herod, King of Judea,
there was a priest named Zechariah
of the priestly division of Abijah;
his wife was from the daughters of Aaron,
and her name was Elizabeth.
Both were righteous in the eyes of God,
observing all the commandments
and ordinances of the Lord blamelessly.
But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren
and both were advanced in years.*

*Once when he was serving as priest
in his division's turn before God,
according to the practice of the priestly service,
he was chosen by lot
to enter the sanctuary of the Lord to burn incense.
Then, when the whole assembly of the people was praying outside
at the hour of the incense offering,
the angel of the Lord appeared to him,
standing at the right of the altar of incense.
Zechariah was troubled by what he saw, and fear came upon him.*

*But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zechariah,
because your prayer has been heard.
Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son,
and you shall name him John.
And you will have joy and gladness,
and many will rejoice at his birth,
for he will be great in the sight of the Lord.
He will drink neither wine nor strong drink.
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.
He will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah
to turn the hearts of fathers toward children
and the disobedient to the understanding of the righteous,
to prepare a people fit for the Lord."*

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

to take away my disgrace before others." (Lk 1: 5-25)

Zechariah and Saint John the Baptist are among the very few, if not the only ones, of those belonging to the priestly class who are saved by Jesus from among their contemporaries, as recorded in the New Testament. The priests were in fact almost all Sadducees, who did not believe in the resurrection of the body. The Lord grants a son to Zechariah, but afflicts him with the chastisement of being mute until the birth of Saint John the Baptist, who fulfills the promise made by the Archangel Gabriel to Mary. The one who is mute must listen, and listening, if one's heart is faithful, leads to obedience. The faith of Zechariah is confirmed by his desire to give his son the name foretold by Gabriel, instead of his own name. Following the example of Zechariah, we too should never forget to thank the Lord for the undeserved gifts which he gives us, beginning with the gift of life that will never end.