

"LIFE THROUGH THE LENS"



IS CHRISTMAS ONLY – PT.1

MARY AND ELIZABETH

The Christmas story starts with God and an old lady called Elizabeth. Actually, it started a long time before that. You see, God (well, most people don't SEE God, but through the years, he told people what happened, they told others, and then others wrote it all down so we could read and learn what happened) Any way, God made two people. They were to be his particular friends, and He was to be their special friend – forever. Sadly they said, "No! We don't need a "special friend" – we don't need God – ever!" And that was that – or so they thought. God had other ideas. He still loved them and wanted to be their friend, but He let them go. Despite their turning Him down, God did make a promise that one day He would send His Son (and people would call him "JESUS") to make a way for people and God to be friends again.



Now! This is where Elizabeth comes into God's plan. Elizabeth and her husband Zechariah (His mates probably called him "Zeck") didn't have any kids and never would. They were old, old, old! Too old to have children, and they and they were sad about this. They did pray and talk to God about it. At the same time, like everyone else in their country, they kept waiting and wondering when God would keep His promise to send His Son, so they could again be God's special friends. However, one day, suddenly, there was an angel. WOW! Imagine how scared Zeck felt. To his surprise, the angel said, "Don't be scared. God has heard your prayers! Elizabeth will have a baby boy. Call him John. God has got a most important job for him. When he grows up, he is to tell people all over the country to get themselves ready to make God's Son welcome." Guess what? No surprise! God kept His promise, and Elizabeth became pregnant.

Mary, who lived in another town, Nazareth, was a very young cousin of Elizabeth. Being very young, Mary was not married but was engaged to the local carpenter, Joseph. One day when she was busy in her house, she looked up and standing right there was a stranger. She was scared witless! The stranger said, "Hey! No need to be scared. I'm the angel Gabriel with a message from God. He has "blessed you" ("blessed" is like God giving you an extra special lot of His love) He has picked you to be the mother of His Son. When He grows up He will make a way for people to be friends with God". Mary wasn't sure about this, so the angel explained, "God has it all worked out." Mary got down on her knees and said, "Well, I don't get it, but if that is what God wants,



OK!" Then she went to visit her cousin Elizabeth and tell her about the message from the angel.

Here a strange thing happened. When Mary got to Elizabeth's house, before she could tell Elizabeth about the angel, Elizabeth said, "I know! I know! Just as you got here, my baby inside me jumped around as if he knew your baby was special" (I don't know how the baby inside Elizabeth knew that. Probably God let him know.)

See Pt. 2 next week.