

## BIRTH NARRATIVES

### Luke 1—John the Baptizer

#### *Prophetic Priest*

#### PROPHECY & BIRTH

**Luke 1:5** In the days of King Herod of Judea, there was a priest of Abijah's division named Zechariah. His wife was from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. **6** Both were righteous in God's sight, living without blame according to all the commands and requirements of the Lord. **7** But they had no children because Elizabeth could not conceive, and both of them were well along in years.

**Luke 1:8** When his division was on duty and he was serving as priest before God, **9** it happened that he was chosen by lot, according to the custom of the priesthood, to enter the sanctuary of the Lord and burn incense. **10** At the hour of incense the whole assembly of the people was praying outside. **11** An angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing to the right of the altar of incense. **12** When Zechariah saw him, he was startled and overcome with fear. **13** 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 will name him John. **14** There will be joy and delight for you, and many will rejoice at his birth. **15** For he will be great in the sight of the Lord and will never drink wine or beer. He will be filled with the Holy Spirit while still in his mother's womb. **16** He will turn many of the sons of Israel to the Lord their God. **17** And he will go before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of fathers to their children, and the disobedient to the understanding of the righteous, to make ready for the Lord a prepared people.

#### **Malachi 4.5-6**

**Luke 1:18** "How can I know this?" Zechariah asked the angel. "For I am an old man, and my wife is well along in years." **19** The angel answered him, "I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God, and I was sent to speak to you and tell you this good news. **20** Now listen! You will become silent and unable to speak until the day these things take place, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their proper time."

**21** Meanwhile, the people were waiting for Zechariah, amazed that he stayed so long in the sanctuary. **22** When he did come out, he could not speak to them. Then they realized that he had seen a vision in the sanctuary. He kept making signs to them and remained speechless. **23** When the days of his ministry were completed, he went back home. **24** After these days his wife Elizabeth conceived and kept herself in seclusion for five months. She said, **25** "The Lord has done this for me. He has looked with favor in these days to take away my disgrace among the people."

#### MEETING MARY

**Luke 1:36** And consider your relative Elizabeth—even she has conceived a son in her old age, and this is the sixth month for her who was called childless. **37** For nothing will be impossible with God." **38** "I am the Lord's "slave," said Mary. "May it be done to me according to your word." Then the angel left her. **39** In those days Mary set out and hurried to a town in the hill country of Judah **40** where she entered Zechariah's house and greeted Elizabeth. **41** When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped inside her, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. **42** Then she exclaimed with a loud cry: "You are the most blessed of women, and your child will be blessed! **43** How could this happen to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? **44** For you see, when the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby leaped for joy inside me! **45** She who has believed is blessed because what was spoken to her by the Lord will be fulfilled!"

#### JOHN'S MINISTRY

**Mark 1:2** As it is written in Isaiah the prophet:

**Look, I am sending My messenger ahead of You, who will prepare Your way. Malachi 3.1**

**3 A voice of one crying out in the wilderness: Prepare the way for the Lord; make His paths straight! Isaiah 40.3**

**Mark 1:4** John came baptizing in the wilderness and preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. **5** The whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were flocking to him, and they were baptized by him in the Jordan River as they confessed their sins. **6** John wore a camel-hair garment with a leather belt around his waist and ate locusts and wild honey. **7** He was preaching: "Someone more powerful than I will come after me. I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the strap of His sandals. **8** I have baptized you with water, but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

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#### JOHN'S TESTIMONY

**John 1:19** This is John's testimony when the Jews from Jerusalem sent priests and Levites to ask him, "Who are you?" **20** He did not refuse to answer, but he declared: "I am not the 'Messiah.'" **21** "What then?" they asked him. "Are you Elijah?" "I am not," he said. "Are you the Prophet?" "No," he answered. **22** "Who are you, then?" they asked. "We need to give an answer to those who sent us. What can you tell us about yourself?" **23** He said, "I am a **voice of one crying out in the wilderness: Make straight the way of the Lord**—just as Isaiah the prophet said." **24** Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. **25** So they asked him, "Why then do you baptize if you aren't the Messiah, or Elijah, or the Prophet?" **26** "I baptize with water," John answered them. "Someone stands among you, but you don't know Him. **27** He is the One coming after me, whose sandal strap I'm not worthy to untie."

**John 1:28** All this happened in Bethany across the Jordan, where John was baptizing. **29** The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Here is the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" **30** This is the One I told you about: 'After me comes a man who has surpassed me, because He existed before me.' **31** I didn't know Him, but I came baptizing with water so He might be revealed to Israel." **32** And John testified, "I watched the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and He rested on Him. **33** I didn't know Him, but He who sent me to baptize with water told me, 'The One you see the Spirit descending and resting on—He is the One who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.' **34** I have seen and testified that He is the Son of God!"

#### DEATH

**Luke 3:19** But Herod the tetrarch, being rebuked by him about Herodias, his brother's wife, and about all the evil things Herod had done, **20** added this to everything else—he locked John up in prison.

#### JESUS' WORDS

**Matt. 11:7** As these men went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed swaying in the wind? **8** What then did you go out to see? A man dressed in soft clothes? Look, those who wear soft clothes are in kings' palaces. **9** But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and far more than a prophet. **11:9** But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and far more than a prophet. **10** This is the one it is written about: Look, I am sending My messenger ahead of You; he will prepare Your way before You. **11** "I assure you: Among those born of women no one greater than John the Baptist has appeared, but the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

#### JOHN'S LEGACY

**Mark 9:11** Then they began to question Him, "Why do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?" **12** "Elijah does come first and restores everything," He replied. "How then is it written about the Son of Man that He must suffer many things and be treated with contempt? **13** But I tell you that Elijah really has come, and they did whatever they pleased to him, just as it is written about him."