

The Birth of John (mid 3 BC)

Luke 1:57–66

57 Now the time had come for Elizabeth to give birth, and she gave birth to a son.
 58 Her neighbors and her relatives heard that the Lord had displayed His great mercy toward her; and they were rejoicing with her.
 59 And it happened that on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child, and they were going to call him Zacharias, after his father.
 60 But his mother answered and said, “No indeed; but he shall be called John.”
 61 And they said to her, “There is no one among your relatives who is called by that name.”
 62 And they made signs to his father, as to what he wanted him called.
 63 And he asked for a tablet and wrote as follows, “His name is John.” And they were all astonished.
 64 And at once his mouth was opened and his tongue *loosed*, and he *began* to speak in praise of God.
 65 Fear came on all those living around them; and all these matters were being talked about in all the hill country of Judea.
 66 All who heard them kept them in mind, saying, “What then will this child *turn out to be*?” For the hand of the Lord was certainly with him.

Zacharias' Song of Praise—The *Benedictus* (mid 3 BC)

Luke 1:67–79

67 And his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Spirit, and prophesied, saying:

68 “Blessed *be* the Lord God of Israel,
 For He has visited us and accomplished redemption for His people,
 69 And has raised up a horn of salvation for us
 In the house of David His servant—
 70 As He spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from of old—
 71 Salvation FROM OUR ENEMIES,
 And FROM THE HAND OF ALL WHO HATE US;
 72 To show mercy toward our fathers,
 And to remember His holy covenant,
 73 The oath which He swore to Abraham our father,
 74 To grant us that we, being rescued from the hand of our enemies,
 Might serve Him without fear,
 75 In holiness and righteousness before Him all our days.
 76 “And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High;
 For you will go on BEFORE THE LORD TO PREPARE HIS WAYS;
 77 To give to His people *the* knowledge of salvation
 By the forgiveness of their sins,
 78 Because of the tender mercy of our God,
 With which the Sunrise from on high will visit us,
 79 TO SHINE UPON THOSE WHO SIT IN DARKNESS AND THE SHADOW OF DEATH,
 To guide our feet into the way of peace.”