

John's Birth Foretold to Zacharias (c. 5/4 BC)

Luke 1:5–23

5 During the reign of Herod king of Judea, there lived a priest named Zechariah who belonged to the priestly division of Abijah, and he had a wife named Elizabeth, who was a descendant of Aaron. [cf. [1 Chr 24:1–19](#)]

6 They were both righteous in the sight of God, following all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blamelessly.

7 But they did not have a child, because Elizabeth was barren, and they were both very old.

8 Now while Zechariah was serving as priest before God when his division was on duty,

9 he was chosen by lot, according to the custom of the priesthood, to enter the holy place of the Lord and burn incense.

10 Now the whole crowd of people were praying outside at the hour of the incense offering.

11 An angel of the Lord, standing on the right side of the altar of incense, appeared to him.

12 And Zechariah, visibly shaken when he saw the angel, was seized with fear.

13 But the angel said to him, “Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son; you will name him John.

14 Joy and gladness will come to you, and many will rejoice at his birth,

15 for he will be great in the sight of the Lord. He must never drink wine or strong drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even before his birth.

16 He will turn many of the people of Israel to the Lord their God.

17 And he will go as forerunner before the Lord in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers back to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready for the Lord a people prepared for him.” [[Mal 4:5–6](#)]

18 Zechariah said to the angel, “How can I be sure of this? For I am an old man, and my wife is old as well.”

19 The angel answered him, “I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God, and I was sent to speak to you and to bring you this good news.

20 And now, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their time, you will be silent, unable to speak, until the day these things take place.”

21 Now the people were waiting for Zechariah, and they began to wonder why he was delayed in the holy place.

22 When he came out, he was not able to speak to them. They realized that he had seen a vision in the holy place, because he was making signs to them and remained unable to speak.

23 When his time of service was over, he went to his home.

John's Conception (4 BC)

Luke 1:24–25

24 After some time his wife Elizabeth became pregnant, and for five months she kept herself in seclusion. She said,

25 “This is what the Lord has done for me at the time when he has been gracious to me, to take away my disgrace among people.”

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