

The Birth of John (mid 3 BC)

Luke 1:57–66

57 Now the time came for Elizabeth to have her baby, and she gave birth to a son.
58 Her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had shown great mercy to her, and they rejoiced with her.
59 On the eighth day they came to circumcise the child, and they wanted to name him Zechariah after his father.
60 But his mother replied, “No! He must be named John.”
61 They said to her, “But none of your relatives bears this name.”
62 So they made signs to the baby’s father, inquiring what he wanted to name his son.
63 He asked for a writing tablet and wrote, “His name is John.” And they were all amazed.
64 Immediately Zechariah’s mouth was opened and his tongue released, and he spoke, blessing God.
65 All their neighbors were filled with fear, and throughout the entire hill country of Judea all these things were talked about.
66 All who heard these things kept them in their hearts, saying, “What then will this child be?” For the Lord’s hand was indeed with him.

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

Luke 1:67–79

67 Then his father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied,
68 “Blessed be the Lord God of Israel,
because he has come to help and has redeemed his people.
69 For he has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David,
70 as he spoke through the mouth of his holy prophets from long ago,
71 that we should be saved from our enemies,
and from the hand of all who hate us.
72 He has done this to show mercy to our ancestors,
and to remember his holy covenant—
73 the oath that he swore to our ancestor Abraham.
This oath grants
74 that we, being rescued from the hand of our enemies,
may serve him without fear,
75 in holiness and righteousness before him for as long as we live.
76 And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High.
For you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways,
77 to give his people knowledge of salvation through the forgiveness of their sins.
78 Because of our God’s tender mercy
the dawn will break upon us from on high
79 to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death,
to guide our feet into the way of peace.”

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