

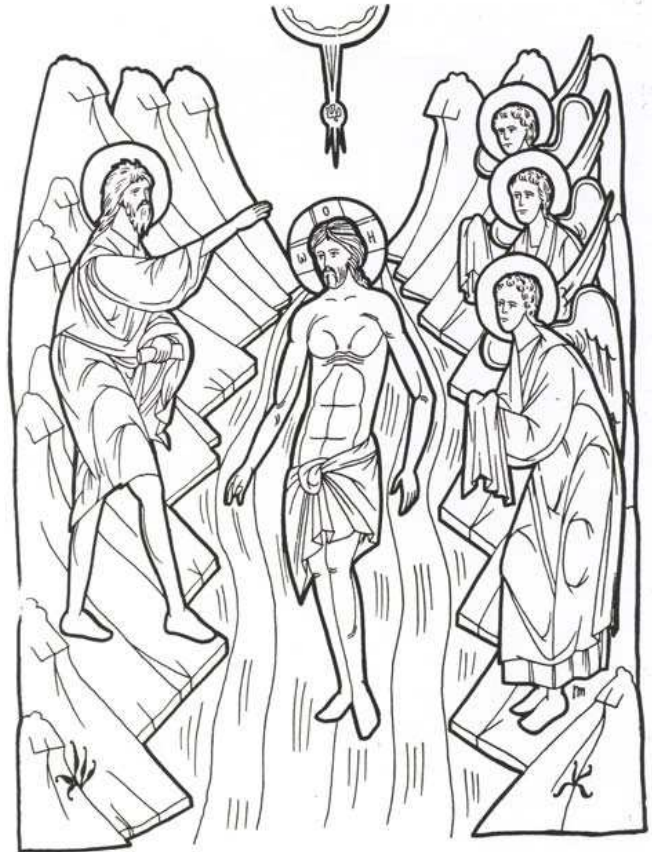
# JOHN THE BAPTIST IS BORN

**At that time**, the priest serving in the Temple was Zachariah. His wife was Elizabeth. For many years, they prayed that God would send them a child. Now they were both very old. One day an angel visited Zachariah.

The angel said, “Don’t be afraid, Zachariah, for the Lord has heard your prayer. Your wife will conceive a child. You shall name him, John. He will help many people find God. He will prepare everyone for the Lord.”

Zachariah asked, “I don’t think this can happen. My wife and I are very old.” The angel replied, “I am Gabriel; God sent me to tell you this. Now you will not be able to talk until the child’s birth.”

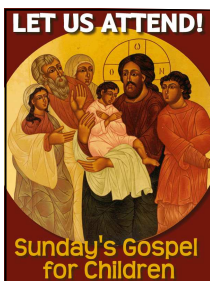
When the child was born, the family wondered what name he should have. Elizabeth said, “He is to be named, John.” The family wanted to name him, Zachariah after his father. They told Zachariah what they wanted to do, and he asked for a writing tablet. He write, “His name is John.” At that moment, Zachariah could speak again. He said, “Blessed be the Lord, God!” The boy grew up to be John the Baptist, the cousin of Jesus.



Icon courtesy of Iconographics ([www.theologic.com](http://www.theologic.com))

## WHAT DO YOU THINK?

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2. What did the angel come to tell Zachariah?
3. Zachariah didn’t think this would happen. What did the angel do next?
4. When the child was born, what name did the family want to give him?
5. What did Zachariah say the boy’s name should be?
6. What happened after he wrote the word, John?
7. Who did the boy grow up to be?
8. Angels bring messages from God to his people. What was the name of the angel in this story?



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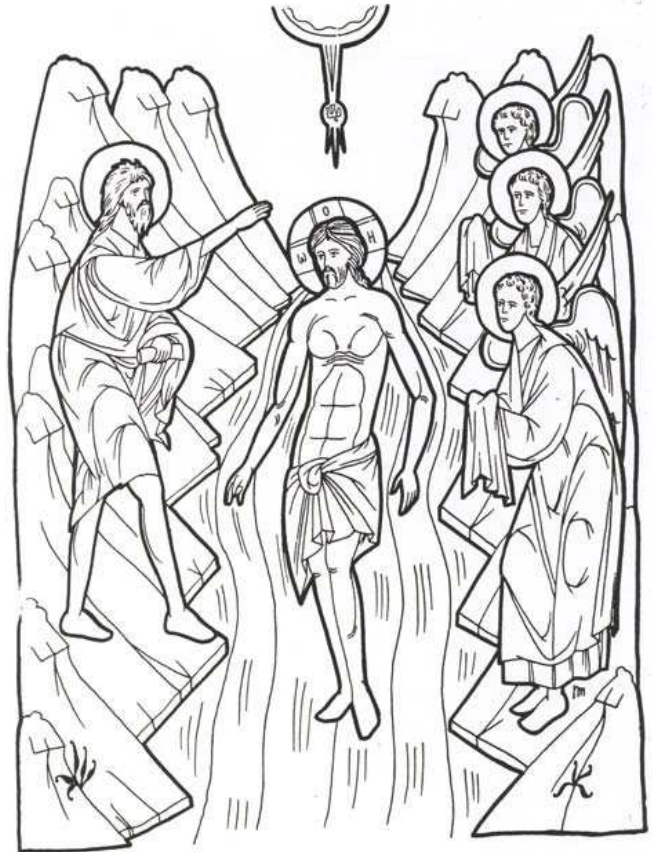
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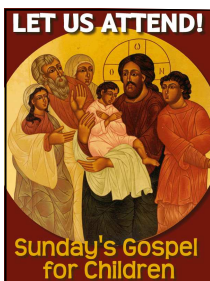
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And the whole multitude of the people were praying outside at the hour of incense. And there appeared to him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense. And Zachariah was troubled when he saw him, and fear fell upon him.

But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zachariah, for your prayer is heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John. And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth; for he will be great before the Lord, and he shall drink no wine nor strong drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb.

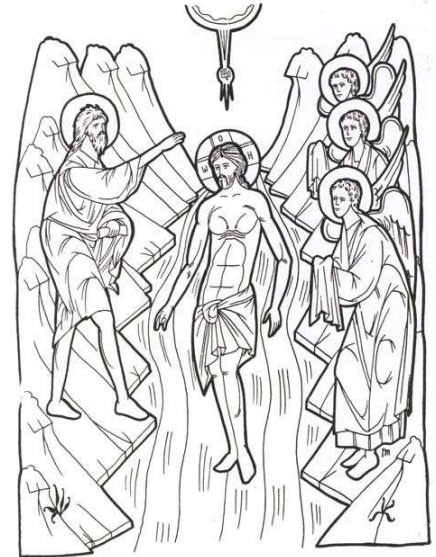
And he will turn many of the sons of Israel to the Lord their God, and he will go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom

of the just, to make ready for the Lord a people prepared."

And Zachariah said to the angel, "How shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife is advanced in years?" And the angel answered him, "I am Gabriel, who stand in the presence of God; and I was sent to speak to you, and to bring you this good news. And behold, you will be silent and unable to speak until the day that these things come to pass, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their time." And the people were waiting for Zachariah and they wondered at his delay in the temple. And when he came out, he could not speak to them, and they perceived that he had seen a vision in the temple; and he made signs to them and remained dumb. And when his time of service was ended, he went to his home.

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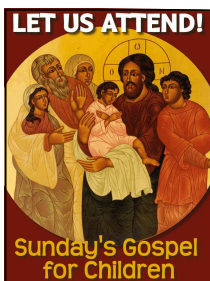
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And his father Zachariah was filled with the Holy Spirit, and prophesied, saying, "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has visited and redeemed his people. And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways. And the child grew and became strong in spirit, and he was in the wilderness till the day of his manifestation to Israel.

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# WHO WILL THIS CHILD BE?

Characters: Narrator, Gabriel, Zachariah, Elizabeth, People

Narrator: Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile a narrative of the things which have been accomplished among us, just as they were delivered to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word, it seemed good to me also, having followed all things closely for some time past, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, that you may know the truth concerning the things of which you have been informed.

In the days of Herod, king of Judea, there was a priest named Zachariah, of the division of Abijah; and he had a wife of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and both were advanced in years.

Now while he was serving as priest before God when his division was on duty, according to the custom of the priesthood, it fell to him by lot to enter the temple of the Lord and burn incense.

And the whole multitude of the people were praying outside at the hour of incense. And there appeared to him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense. And Zachariah was troubled when he saw him, and fear fell upon him.

But the angel said to him,

Gabriel: Do not be afraid, Zachariah, for your prayer is heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John. And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth; for he will be great before the Lord, and he shall drink no wine nor strong drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb.

And he will turn many of the sons of Israel to the Lord their God, and he will go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready for the Lord a people prepared.

Narrator: And Zachariah said to the angel,

Zachariah: How shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife is advanced in years?

Narrator: And the angel answered him,

Gabriel: I am Gabriel, who stand in the presence of God; and I was sent to speak to you, and to bring you this good news. And behold, you will be silent and unable to speak until the day that these things come to pass, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their time.

Narrator: And the people were waiting for Zachariah and they wondered at his delay in the temple. And when he came out, he could not speak to them, and they perceived that he had seen a vision in the temple; and he made signs to them and remained dumb. And when his time of service was ended, he went to his home.

After these days his wife Elizabeth conceived, and for five months she hid herself, saying,

Elizabeth: Thus the Lord has done to me in the days when he looked on me, to take away my reproach among men.

Narrator: Now the time came for Elizabeth to be delivered, and she gave birth to a son. And her neighbors and kinsfolk heard that the Lord had shown great mercy to her, and they rejoiced with her. And on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child; and they would have named him Zachariah after his father, but his mother said,

Elizabeth: Not so; he shall be called John.

Narrator: And they said to her,

People: None of your kindred is called by this name.

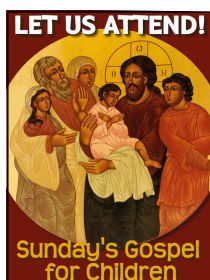
Narrator: And they made signs to his father, inquiring what he would have him called. And he asked for a writing tablet, and wrote, "His name is John." And they all marveled.

And immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue loosed, and he spoke, blessing God. And fear came on all their neighbors. And all these things were talked about through all the hill country of Judea; and all who heard them laid them up in their hearts, saying,

People: What then will this child be?

Narrator: For the hand of the Lord was with him. And his father Zachariah was filled with the Holy Spirit, and prophesied, saying,

Zechariah: Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has visited and redeemed his people. And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways. And the child grew and became strong in spirit, and he was in the wilderness till the day of his manifestation to Israel.



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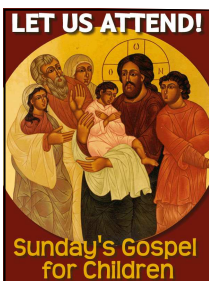
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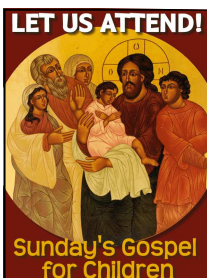
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