

Luke 1:8-20 (NLT)

8 One day Zechariah was serving God in the Temple, for his order was on duty that week. **9** As was the custom of the priests, he was chosen by lot to enter the sanctuary of the Lord and burn incense.

10 While the incense was being burned, a great crowd stood outside, praying.

11 While Zechariah was in the sanctuary, an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing to the right of the incense altar. **12** Zechariah was shaken and overwhelmed with fear when he saw him. **13** But the angel said, "Don't be afraid, Zechariah! God has heard your prayer. Your wife, Elizabeth, will give you a son, and you are to name him John. **14** You will have great joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth, **15** for he will be great in the eyes of the Lord. He must never touch wine or other alcoholic drinks. He will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even before his birth.[a] **16** And he will turn many Israelites to the Lord their God. **17** He will be a man with the spirit and power of Elijah. He will prepare the people for the coming of the Lord. He will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children,[b] and he will cause those who are rebellious to accept the wisdom of the godly."

18 Zechariah said to the angel, "How can I be sure this will happen? I'm an old man now, and my wife is also well along in years."

19 Then the angel said, "I am Gabriel! I stand in the very presence of God. It was he who sent me to bring you this good news! **20** But now, since you didn't believe what I said, you will be silent and unable to speak until the child is born. For my words will certainly be fulfilled at the proper time."

Footnotes:

a. 1:15 Or *even from birth*.

b. 1:17 See Mal 4:5-6.

Luke 1:57-64 (NIV)

The Birth of John the Baptist

57 When it was time for Elizabeth to have her baby, she gave birth to a son. **58** Her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had shown her great mercy, and they shared her joy.

59 On the eighth day they came to circumcise the child, and they were going to name him after his father Zechariah, **60** but his mother spoke up and said, “No! He is to be called John.”

61 They said to her, “There is no one among your relatives who has that name.”

62 Then they made signs to his father, to find out what he would like to name the child.

63 He asked for a writing tablet, and to everyone’s astonishment he wrote, “His name is John.” **64** Immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue set free, and he began to speak, praising God.