

THE TALE OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

(NABRE)

Reason for John's coming (John 1)

⁶A man named John was sent from God. ⁷ He came for testimony, to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. ⁸ He was not the light, but came to testify to the light.

Announcement of the Birth of John (Luke 1)

⁵ In the days of Herod, King of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah of the priestly division of Abijah; his wife was from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. ⁶ Both were righteous in the eyes of God, observing all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blamelessly. ⁷ But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren and both were advanced in years. ⁸ Once when he was serving as priest in his division's turn before God, ⁹ according to the practice of the priestly service, he was chosen by lot to enter the sanctuary of the Lord to burn incense. ¹⁰ Then, when the whole assembly of the people was praying outside at the hour of the incense offering, ¹¹ the angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing at the right of the altar of incense. ¹² Zechariah was troubled by what he saw, and fear came upon him. ¹³ But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zechariah, because your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall name him John. ¹⁴ And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth, ¹⁵ for he will be great in the sight of [the] Lord. He will drink neither wine nor strong drink. He will be filled with the holy Spirit even from his mother's womb, ¹⁶ and he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God. ¹⁷ He will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah to turn the hearts of fathers toward children and the disobedient to the understanding of the righteous, to prepare a people fit for the Lord." ¹⁸ Then Zechariah said to the angel, "How shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife is advanced in years." ¹⁹ And the angel said to him in reply, "I am Gabriel, who stand before God. I was sent to speak to you and to announce to you this good news. ²⁰ But now you will be speechless and unable to talk until the day these things take place, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled at their proper time."

²¹ Meanwhile the people were waiting for Zechariah and were amazed that he stayed so long in the sanctuary. ²² But when he came out, he was unable to speak to them, and they realized that he had seen a vision in the sanctuary. He was gesturing to them but remained mute. ²³ Then, when his days of ministry were completed, he went home. ²⁴ After this time his wife Elizabeth conceived, and she went into seclusion for five months, saying, ²⁵ "So has the Lord done for me at a time when he has seen fit to take away my disgrace before others."

The hint about John's arrival in the Announcement of the Birth of Jesus (Luke 1)

(After explaining to Mary how she will conceive by the power of the Holy Spirit, the angel Gabriel then reassuringly pointed out:)

³⁶ And behold, Elizabeth, your relative, has also conceived a son in her old age, and this is the sixth month for her who was called barren; ³⁷ for nothing will be impossible for God." ³⁸ Mary said, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

Mary Visits Elizabeth (Luke 1)

³⁹ During those days Mary set out and traveled to the hill country in haste to a town of Judah, ⁴⁰ where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹ When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the infant leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth, filled with the holy Spirit, ⁴² cried out in a loud voice and said, "Most blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. ⁴³ And how does this happen to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? ⁴⁴ For at the moment the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy. ⁴⁵ Blessed are you who believed that what was spoken to you by the Lord would be fulfilled."

The Birth of John (Luke 1)

⁵⁷ When the time arrived for Elizabeth to have her child she gave birth to a son. ⁵⁸ Her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had shown his great mercy toward her, and they rejoiced with her. ⁵⁹ When they came on the eighth day to circumcise the child, they were going to call him Zechariah after his father, ⁶⁰ but his mother said in reply, "No. He will be called John." ⁶¹ But they answered her, "There is no one among your relatives who has this name." ⁶² So they made signs, asking his father what he wished him to be called. ⁶³ He asked for a tablet and wrote, "John is his name," and all were amazed. ⁶⁴ Immediately his mouth was opened, his tongue freed, and he spoke blessing God. ⁶⁵ Then fear came upon all their neighbors, and all these matters were discussed throughout the hill country of Judea. ⁶⁶ All who heard these things took them to heart, saying, "What, then, will this child be?" For surely the hand of the Lord was with him.

The Canticle of Zechariah (Luke)

⁶⁷ Then Zechariah his father, filled with the holy Spirit, prophesied, saying:

⁶⁸ "Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel,

for he has visited and brought redemption to his people.

⁶⁹ He has raised up a horn for our salvation

within the house of David his servant,

⁷⁰ even as he promised through the mouth of his holy prophets from of old:

⁷¹ salvation from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us,

⁷²to show mercy to our fathers
and to be mindful of his holy covenant
⁷³and of the oath he swore to Abraham our father,
and to grant us that, ⁷⁴rescued from the hand of enemies,
without fear we might worship him ⁷⁵in holiness and righteousness
before him all our days.
⁷⁶And you, child, will be called prophet of the Most High,
for you will go before the Lord^[L] to prepare his ways,
⁷⁷to give his people knowledge of salvation
through the forgiveness of their sins,
⁷⁸because of the tender mercy of our God
by which the daybreak from on high^[L] will visit us
⁷⁹to shine on those who sit in darkness and death's shadow,
to guide our feet into the path of peace.”

⁸⁰The child grew and became strong in spirit, and he was in the desert until the day of his manifestation to Israel.

The Preaching of John the Baptist (Luke 3)

¹In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias was tetrarch of Abilene, ²during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John the son of Zechariah in the desert. ³He went throughout [the] whole region of the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, ⁴as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah:

“A voice of one crying out in the desert:

‘Prepare the way of the Lord,
make straight his paths.

⁵Every valley shall be filled
and every mountain and hill shall be made low.

The winding roads shall be made straight,
and the rough ways made smooth,

⁶and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.”

⁷He said to the crowds who came out to be baptized by him, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? ⁸Produce good fruits as evidence of your repentance; and do not begin to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father,’ for I tell you, God can raise up children to Abraham from these stones. ⁹Even now the ax lies at the root of the trees. Therefore every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.”

¹⁰ And the crowds asked him, “What then should we do?” ¹¹ He said to them in reply, “Whoever has two tunics should share with the person who has none. And whoever has food should do likewise.” ¹² Even tax collectors came to be baptized and they said to him, “Teacher, what should we do?” ¹³ He answered them, “Stop collecting more than what is prescribed.” ¹⁴ Soldiers also asked him, “And what is it that we should do?” He told them, “Do not practice extortion, do not falsely accuse anyone, and be satisfied with your wages.”

The way of life and admonition of John the Baptist (Mark 1)

⁶ John was clothed in camel’s hair, with a leather belt around his waist. ^[d] He fed on locusts and wild honey. ⁷ And this is what he proclaimed: “One mightier than I is coming after me. I am not worthy to stoop and loosen the thongs of his sandals. ⁸ ^[e] I have baptized you with water; he will baptize you with the holy Spirit.”

(Matthew 3)

¹² His winnowing fan is in his hand. He will clear his threshing floor and gather his wheat into his barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.”

The Baptism of Jesus (Matthew 3)

¹³ Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him. ¹⁴ ^[k] John tried to prevent him, saying, “I need to be baptized by you, and yet you are coming to me?” ¹⁵ Jesus said to him in reply, “Allow it now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.” Then he allowed him. ¹⁶ ^[l] After Jesus was baptized, he came up from the water and behold, the heavens were opened [for him], and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove [and] coming upon him. ¹⁷ And a voice came from the heavens, saying, “This is my beloved Son, ^[m] with whom I am well pleased.”

John’s Testimony (Luke 3)

¹⁵ Now the people were filled with expectation, and all were asking in their hearts whether John might be the Messiah. ¹⁶ John answered them all, saying, “I am baptizing you with water, but one mightier than I is coming. I am not worthy to loosen the thongs of his sandals. He will baptize you with the holy Spirit and fire. ¹⁷ His winnowing fan is in his hand to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.” ¹⁸ Exhorting them in many other ways, he preached good news to the people.

John 1

(John testified concerning Jesus) ¹⁶ From his fullness we have all received, grace in place of grace, ¹⁷ because while the law was given through Moses, grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. ¹⁸ No one has ever seen God. The only Son, God, who is at the Father’s side, has revealed him.

John the Baptist's Testimony to Himself (John 1)

. ¹⁹ And this is the testimony of John. When the Jews from Jerusalem sent priests and Levites [to him] to ask him, "Who are you?" ²⁰ he admitted and did not deny it, but admitted, "I am not the Messiah." ²¹ So they asked him, "What are you then? Are you Elijah?" And he said, "I am not." "Are you the Prophet?" He answered, "No." ²² So they said to him, "Who are you, so we can give an answer to those who sent us? What do you have to say for yourself?" ²³ He said:

"I am 'the voice of one crying out in the desert,
"Make straight the way of the Lord,""

as Isaiah the prophet said." ²⁴ Some Pharisees were also sent. ²⁵ They asked him, "Why then do you baptize if you are not the Messiah or Elijah or the Prophet?" ²⁶ John answered them, "I baptize with water; but there is one among you whom you do not recognize, ²⁷ the one who is coming after me, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to untie." ²⁸ This happened in Bethany across the Jordan, where John was baptizing.

John the Baptist's Testimony to Jesus (John 1)

. ²⁹ The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world. ³⁰ He is the one of whom I said, 'A man is coming after me who ranks ahead of me because he existed before me.' ³¹ I did not know him, but the reason why I came baptizing with water was that he might be made known to Israel." ³² John testified further, saying, "I saw the Spirit come down like a dove from the sky and remain upon him. ³³ I did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, 'On whomever you see the Spirit come down and remain, he is the one who will baptize with the holy Spirit.' ³⁴ Now I have seen and testified that he is the Son of God."

The First Disciples (John 1)

³⁵ The next day John was there again with two of his disciples, ³⁶ and as he watched Jesus walk by, he said, "Behold, the Lamb of God." ³⁷ The two disciples heard what he said and followed Jesus.

The Question About Fasting (Mark 2:18-22)

¹⁸ The disciples of John and of the Pharisees were accustomed to fast. People came to him and objected, "Why do the disciples of John and the disciples of the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?" ¹⁹ Jesus answered them, "Can the wedding guests fast while the bridegroom is with them? As long as they have the bridegroom with them they cannot fast. ²⁰ But the days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast on that day. ²¹ No one sews a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old cloak. If he does, its fullness pulls away, the new from the old, and the tear gets worse. ²² Likewise, no one pours

new wine into old wineskins. Otherwise, the wine will burst the skins, and both the wine and the skins are ruined. Rather, new wine is poured into fresh wineskins.”

Imprisonment of John (Luke 3)

¹⁹ Now Herod the tetrarch, who had been censured by him because of Herodias, his brother’s wife, and because of all the evil deeds Herod had committed, ²⁰ added still another to these by [also] putting John in prison.

The Messengers from John the Baptist (Luke 7)

¹⁸ The disciples of John told him about all these things (after Jesus had healed the Centurion’s servant and raised the widow of Nain’s son). John summoned two of his disciples ¹⁹ and sent them to the Lord to ask, “Are you the one who is to come, or should we look for another?” ²⁰ When the men came to him, they said, “John the Baptist has sent us to you to ask, ‘Are you the one who is to come, or should we look for another?’” ²¹ At that time he cured many of their diseases, sufferings, and evil spirits; he also granted sight to many who were blind. ²² And he said to them in reply, “Go and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind regain their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, the poor have the good news proclaimed to them. ²³ And blessed is the one who takes no offense at me.”

Jesus’ Testimony to John (Luke 7)

²⁴ When the messengers of John had left, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John. “What did you go out to the desert to see—a reed swayed by the wind? ²⁵ Then what did you go out to see? Someone dressed in fine garments? Those who dress luxuriously and live sumptuously are found in royal palaces. ²⁶ Then what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. ²⁷ This is the one about whom scripture says:

‘Behold, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,
he will prepare your way before you.’

²⁸ I tell you, among those born of women, no one is greater than John; yet the least in the kingdom of God is greater than he.” ²⁹ (All the people who listened, including the tax collectors, and who were baptized with the baptism of John, acknowledged the righteousness of God; ³⁰ but the Pharisees and scholars of the law, who were not baptized by him, rejected the plan of God for themselves.)

³¹ “Then to what shall I compare the people of this generation? What are they like? ³² They are like children who sit in the marketplace and call to one another,

‘We played the flute for you, but you did not dance.
We sang a dirge, but you did not weep.’

³³ For John the Baptist came neither eating food nor drinking wine, and you said, 'He is possessed by a demon.' ³⁴ The Son of Man came eating and drinking and you said, 'Look, he is a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners.' ³⁵ But wisdom is vindicated by all her children."

(Matthew 11)

¹² From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent are taking it by force. ¹³ All the prophets and the law prophesied up to the time of John. ¹⁴ And if you are willing to accept it, he is Elijah, the one who is to come. ¹⁵ Whoever has ears ought to hear.

The Death of John the Baptist (Mark 6)

¹⁷ Herod was the one who had John arrested and bound in prison on account of Herodias, the wife of his brother Philip, whom he had married. ¹⁸ John had said to Herod, "It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife." ¹⁹ Herodias harbored a grudge against him and wanted to kill him but was unable to do so. ²⁰ Herod feared John, knowing him to be a righteous and holy man, and kept him in custody. When he heard him speak he was very much perplexed, yet he liked to listen to him. ²¹ She had an opportunity one day when Herod, on his birthday, gave a banquet for his courtiers, his military officers, and the leading men of Galilee. ²² Herodias's own daughter came in and performed a dance that delighted Herod and his guests. The king said to the girl, "Ask of me whatever you wish and I will grant it to you." ²³ He even swore [many things] to her, "I will grant you whatever you ask of me, even to half of my kingdom." ²⁴ She went out and said to her mother, "What shall I ask for?" She replied, "The head of John the Baptist." ²⁵ The girl hurried back to the king's presence and made her request, "I want you to give me at once on a platter the head of John the Baptist." ²⁶ The king was deeply distressed, but because of his oaths and the guests he did not wish to break his word to her. ²⁷ So he promptly dispatched an executioner with orders to bring back his head. He went off and beheaded him in the prison. ²⁸ He brought in the head on a platter and gave it to the girl. The girl in turn gave it to her mother. ²⁹ When his disciples heard about it, they came and took his body and laid it in a tomb.

Herod's Puzzle (Mark 6)

¹⁴ King Herod heard about it, for his fame had become widespread, and people were saying, "John the Baptist has been raised from the dead; that is why mighty powers are at work in him." ¹⁵ Others were saying, "He is Elijah"; still others, "He is a prophet like any of the prophets." ¹⁶ But when Herod learned of it, he said, "It is John whom I beheaded. He has been raised up."

The Coming of Elijah (Mark 9)

(After the Transfiguration) ⁹ As they were coming down from the mountain, he charged them not to relate what they had seen to anyone, except when the Son of Man had risen from the dead. ¹⁰ So they kept the matter to themselves, questioning what rising from the dead meant. ¹¹ Then they asked him, “Why do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?” ¹² He told them, “Elijah will indeed come first and restore all things, yet how is it written regarding the Son of Man that he must suffer greatly and be treated with contempt? ¹³ But I tell you that Elijah has come and they did to him whatever they pleased, as it is written of him.”