

The Annunciation

Well, annunciations more like. It is fair to say the Angel Gabriel was kept rather busy making important announcements to a soon-to-be expectant mother ...not to mention rather surprised fathers!

The Birth of John the Baptist Is Announced Luke 1: 5-25

⁵ During the time when Herod was king of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah, who belonged to the priestly order of Abijah. His wife's name was Elizabeth; she also belonged to a priestly family.

⁶ They both lived good lives in God's sight and obeyed fully all the Lord's laws and commands. ⁷ They had no children because Elizabeth could not have any, and she and Zechariah were both very old.

⁸ One day Zechariah was doing his work as a priest in the Temple, taking his turn in the daily service. ⁹ According to the custom followed by the priests, he was chosen by lot to burn incense on the altar. So he went into the Temple of the Lord, ¹⁰ while the crowd of people outside prayed during the hour when the incense was burned.

¹¹ An angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing at the right side of the altar where the incense was burned. ¹² When Zechariah saw him, he was alarmed and felt afraid. ¹³ But the angel said to him, "Don't be afraid, Zechariah! God has heard your prayer, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son. You are to name him John.

¹⁴ How glad and happy you will be, and how happy many others will be when he is born! ¹⁵ John will be great in the Lord's sight. He must not drink any wine or strong drink. From his very birth he will

be filled with the Holy Spirit, ¹⁶ and he will bring back many of the people of Israel to the Lord their God.

¹⁷ He will go ahead of the Lord, strong and mighty like the prophet Elijah. He will bring fathers and children together again; he will turn disobedient people back to the way of thinking of the righteous; he will get the Lord's people ready for him."

¹⁸ Zechariah said to the angel, "How shall I know if this is so? I am an old man, and my wife is old also."

¹⁹ "I am Gabriel," the angel answered. "I stand in the presence of God, who sent me to speak to you and tell you this good news.

²⁰ But you have not believed my message, which will come true at the right time. Because you have not believed, you will be unable to speak; you will remain silent until the day my promise to you comes true."

²¹ In the meantime the people were waiting for Zechariah and wondering why he was spending such a long time in the Temple.

²² When he came out, he could not speak to them, and so they knew that he had seen a vision in the Temple. Unable to say a word, he made signs to them with his hands.

²³ When his period of service in the Temple was over, Zechariah went back home. ²⁴ Some time later his wife Elizabeth became pregnant and did not leave the house for five months. ²⁵ "Now at last the Lord has helped me," she said. "He has taken away my public disgrace!"

The Birth of Jesus Is Announced Luke 1: 26-38

²⁶ In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy God sent the angel Gabriel to a town in Galilee named Nazareth. ²⁷ He had a message for a young woman promised in marriage to a man named Joseph,

who was a descendant of King David. Her name was Mary. ²⁸ The angel came to her and said, “Peace be with you! The Lord is with you and has greatly blessed you!”

²⁹ Mary was deeply troubled by the angel’s message, and she wondered what his words meant. ³⁰ The angel said to her, “Don’t be afraid, Mary; God has been gracious to you. ³¹ You will become pregnant and give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus.

³² He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High God. The Lord God will make him a king, as his ancestor David was, ³³ and he will be the king of the descendants of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end!”

³⁴ Mary said to the angel, “I am a virgin. How, then, can this be?”

³⁵ The angel answered, “The Holy Spirit will come on you, and God’s power will rest upon you. For this reason the holy child will be called the Son of God. ³⁶ Remember your relative Elizabeth. It is said that she cannot have children, but she herself is now six months pregnant, even though she is very old. ³⁷ For there is nothing that God cannot do.”

³⁸ “I am the Lord’s servant,” said Mary; “may it happen to me as you have said.” And the angel left her.

Joseph is Reassured by the Angel Matthew 1: 18b-25

¹⁸ His mother Mary was engaged to Joseph, but before they were married, she found out that she was going to have a baby by the Holy Spirit.

¹⁹ Joseph was a man who always did what was right, but he did not want to disgrace Mary publicly; so he made plans to break the engagement privately.

²⁰ While he was thinking about this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph, descendant of David, do not be afraid to take Mary to be your wife. For it is by the Holy Spirit that she has conceived. ²¹ She will have a son, and you will name him Jesus—because he will save his people from their sins.”

²² Now all this happened in order to make come true what the Lord had said through the prophet, ²³ “A virgin will become pregnant and have a son, and he will be called Immanuel” (which means, “God is with us”).

²⁴ So when Joseph woke up, he married Mary, as the angel of the Lord had told him to. ²⁵ But he had no sexual relations with her before she gave birth to her son. And Joseph named him Jesus.