The Birth of John



Luke 1:5-25 & 57-67

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Before Christmas comes, we do many things to get ready. Before the Lord was born on earth for the first Christmas, He helped people get ready then, too. The Lord sent someone special to help people get ready for the Lord's birth.

Before the Lord was born, a man named Zacharias was married to Elizabeth. They were both old, and they were good people. They had prayed to the Lord for a child many times, but they had none. It made them sad.

Zacharias was a priest (like a minister), who worked in the temple in Jerusalem. Zacharias's job was taking care of the Lord's house, the temple.

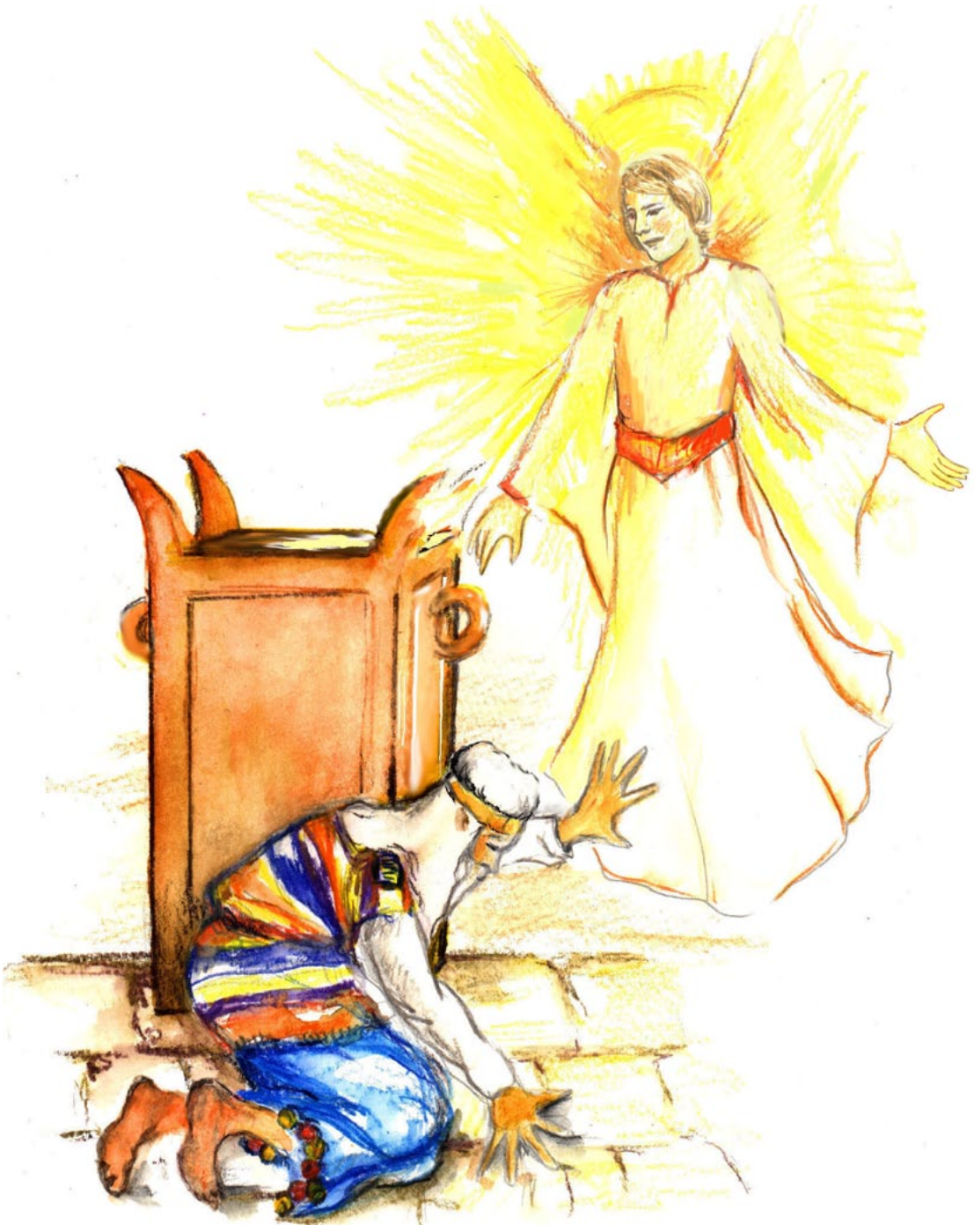
One day, Zacharias was burning incense in the temple. He gently swung a container filled with incense near the altar and said prayers to the Lord. The air was filled with sweet-smelling smoke.



Suddenly Zacharias saw an angel of the Lord. He was afraid, but the angel said, “Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your prayer is heard; and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John.” (Luke 1:13-14).

Zacharias doubted the angel because he and his wife were very old. Very old people don’t usually have babies.

The angel, whose name was Gabriel, was a messenger of the Lord, and he told Zacharias the truth. Zacharias did not believe it, and suddenly he was not able to speak at all! This was Zacharias’s punishment for doubting that the Lord could give him a child. His voice didn’t work any more.



Zacharias and Elizabeth waited for their son to be born, and all the time they waited, Zacharias could not speak a single word.



Lots of relatives and friends came to see the new baby and find out what he would be named. Zacharias asked for a tablet. (A tablet was a block of wood covered with wax that people used to write on instead of paper.) Zacharias used a stylus (a pointed instrument) and wrote, “His name is John” (Luke 1:63) on the wax tablet. As soon as Zacharias had written this, he was able to speak! He praised the Lord for giving him a son.



When John grew to be an adult, he became a messenger for the Lord. John's job was to get people ready to see the Lord on this earth. He told people to be sorry for the wrong things they had done and to follow the Lord's commandments.



Sometimes waiting for Christmas seems hard, but the preparation is important and special, too. One special way for you to prepare for Christmas is to listen to stories from the Word and pray to the Lord. And as you wait, you can think about the Lord's miracle of giving Zacharias and Elizabeth a special child.

