

## Story 27



## John the Baptist and Jesus' Birth 🎵

Matthew 1:18-2:12; Matthew 3:1-12; Mark 1:1-8; Luke 1:1-2:20; John 1

**The Bridge:** Four hundred years passed after the prophet Malachi said that God would send the prophet Elijah before the great and awesome day of the Lord (Malachi 4:4-6). Jesus would later say that John the Baptist was the Elijah who was to come (Matthew 17:11-13).

### The Story:

- There was a priest named Zachariah. He and his wife, Elizabeth had been praying that they would have a child. While performing his priestly duties, Zachariah was chosen to enter the Temple of the Lord to burn incense (Luke 1:8-9).
- When Zachariah entered the temple, “...an angel of the Lord [named Gabriel] appeared to him, standing to the right of the altar of incense.<sup>12</sup> Zacharias was troubled when he saw *the angel*, and fear gripped him.<sup>13</sup> But the angel said to him, “Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your petition has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will give him the name John;<sup>16</sup>” “And he will turn many of the sons of Israel back to the Lord their God.<sup>17</sup>” “It is he who will go as a forerunner before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, TO TURN THE HEARTS OF THE FATHERS BACK TO THE CHILDREN, and the disobedient to the attitude of the righteous, so as to make ready a people prepared for the Lord” (Luke 1:11-13, 16-17).
- A few months before John’s birth, the angel Gabriel appeared to a virgin named Mary, who was related to Elizabeth, and told her that she was chosen to be the mother of the Son of God. It was going to be a miracle, because the Holy Spirit would put the baby inside her. Mary humbly agreed (Luke 1:26-38).
- At that time, Mary was engaged to Joseph. Since Joseph would not understand this situation, the angel appeared to Joseph and explained to him that Mary was a virgin and the baby inside her was the Son of God. God told Joseph to become her husband but not to sleep with her until after the baby was born and to name the baby Jesus. This means “God always saves us” (Matthew 1:18-25).
- True to His word, Zachariah and his wife Elizabeth had a baby. They named him John, just as the Lord had instructed (Luke 1:57-60).

- Before the baby was born, the government told everyone to go to their family's hometown to pay taxes and be counted. Mary and Joseph were descendants of King David, so they went to Bethlehem, David's hometown (Luke 2:1-5).
- There was no place to stay because there were so many people in the town. They stayed in a stable where the baby was born, and they laid him in the cow's manger (Luke 2:6-7).
- There were shepherds watching their animals at night when angels appeared to them and told them that the Savior had been born in Bethlehem and they should go see Him. They found Him in Bethlehem, made known what the angels told them, and all who heard them were astonished. Then the shepherds went home rejoicing and praising God (Luke 2:8-19).
- Sometime later wise men from the East noticed a new star in the sky, which meant that a new King had been born. They followed the star and found Jesus in His home. When they saw Him with His mother, they fell down and worshipped Him. They gave Him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh (Matthew 2:7-12). They knew He was a special gift from God.



*What are some of the prophecies that were fulfilled when Jesus was born?*

♪ "Away in a Manger" is suggested with this story. (See [www.Historycloth.com](http://www.Historycloth.com) "downloads" for lyrics and chords.)