

^{1,1} Many have put their hand to ordering a narrative about the events which have been accomplished among us, ² according to what was handed down to us by the attendants of the word, who saw it all from the beginning for themselves. ³ It occurred to me, having followed everything closely from above, to also write an accurate arrangement for you, mighty friend-of-the-Creator, ⁴ so you may know the certainty of the words with which you were tutored.

⁵ In the days of Herod the Great, ruler of the province of Iudaea, there was a temple-caretaker named Zechariah, from the daily-group of Abijah, and his woman, named Elizabeth, from the daughters of Aaron. ⁶ They were both living-justly in the view of the Creator, blamelessly walking in all the commands and deeds-of-justice of the Lord. ⁷ But they had no children, because Elizabeth was sterile and both were advanced in their days.

⁸ When Zechariah was to be a temple-caretaker in the view of the Creator, with respect to the order of his daily-group, ⁹ he was randomly selected, according to the custom of the temple-caretakers, to be the one to burn incense after entering into the temple-sanctuary of the Lord. ¹⁰ During the hour of incense, the entire multitude of the people was outside praying. ¹¹ A messenger of the Lord was seen by Zechariah, standing to the right of the altar of incense. ¹² Seeing him, Zechariah was agitated and fear fell upon him. ¹³ The messenger said to him,

“Do not fear, Zechariah! For your begging has been heard and your woman, Elizabeth, will give birth to a child for you and you will call his name John. ¹⁴ Joy and gladness will be yours and many will rejoice at his birth, ¹⁵ for he will be great in the sight of the Lord. He must not drink wine or beer and he will be filled with the Divine Breath, even from his mother’s womb. ¹⁶ He will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their Creator. ¹⁷ With the breath and power of Elijah, he will go in the sight of the Lord ‘to turn the hearts of fathers to their children’ and to turn unpersuaded hearts with an understanding of justice—to prepare a people, which has been constructed for the Lord.”

¹⁸ Zechariah said to the messenger,

“By what means will I know this? For I am old and my woman is advanced in her days.”

¹⁹ Replying to him, the messenger said,

“I am Gabriel, the one who stands in the sight of the Creator! I was sent to speak to you and to declare the Gospel of these things to you. ²⁰ Look! You will be silent and not able to speak till the day these things happen, because you did not trust my words—which will be completed in their season.”

²¹ The people were expecting Zechariah and began marveling at his delay in the temple-sanctuary. ²² When he came out, he was not able to speak to them and they recognized that he had seen a vision in the temple-sanctuary. Zechariah was gesturing to them, but remained thoroughly mute. ²³ When the days of his work were fulfilled, he departed to his house. ²⁴ After these days, Elizabeth, his woman, conceived and she began hiding herself for five months, saying,

²⁵ “The Lord has done it for me during these days! He has looked upon me to take away my low status among humanity!”

²⁶ During the sixth month, the messenger Gabriel was sent from the Creator to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, ²⁷ to a young woman promised-for- marriage to a man named Joseph, from the city of David. The young woman’s name was Mary. ²⁸ Entering, he said to her,

“Rejoice, you have received generosity! The Lord is with you!”

²⁹ But she was thoroughly agitated by the word and she began considering what this greeting could be. ³⁰ The messenger said to her,

“Do not fear, Mary! For you found generosity from the Creator. ³¹ Look! You will conceive in your womb and give birth to a child and you will call his name Jesus. ³² He will be great and he will be called a child of the highest. The Lord the Creator will give to him the throne of his father David ³³ and he will rule over the house of Jacob throughout the ages to come—his rule will not end!”

³⁴ But Mary said to the messenger,

“How will this be? For I have not known a man.”

³⁵ Answering, the messenger said to her,

“The Divine Breath will come upon you and the power of the highest one will overshadow you. Therefore, the divine one you give birth to will be called Child of the Creator. ³⁶ Look! Your relative, Elizabeth, the one who is sterile, also conceived a child in her old age and this is her sixth month. ³⁷ No word from the Creator will be powerless!”

³⁸ Mary said,

“Look! I am the slave of the Lord! Let it happen to me according to your word.”

Then the messenger departed from her. ³⁹ In those days, Mary went to the hill country with speed, into a city of Judah. ⁴⁰

She entered into the house of Zechariah and embraced Elizabeth. ⁴¹ As Elizabeth listened to the greeting of Mary, the infant in her womb leaped. Elizabeth was filled with the Divine Breath ⁴² and she spoke up with a great shout and said,

“You are honored among women! The fruit of your womb is honored! ⁴³ How can this be for me, that the mother of my Lord would come to me? ⁴⁴ Look! As the voice of your greeting entered my ears, the infant in my womb leaped with extreme joy! ⁴⁵ Privileged is the one who trusts, because what was spoken to her by the Lord will be completed!”

⁴⁶ Then Mary said,

“My life makes the Lord great! ⁴⁷ My breath rejoices over the Creator, my rescuer, ⁴⁸ for he has looked upon the low status of his slave! Look! From now on, all generations will privilege me, ⁴⁹ because the powerful one has done great things for me! His name is divine ⁵⁰ and his compassion is upon those who fear him from generation to generation.

⁵¹ He does mighty things with his arm. He disperses those of high status through the decisions of their hearts. ⁵² He takes down the powers from their thrones and lifts up those of low status. ⁵³ He fills those who are hungry with good things and those who are wealthy he sends away empty. ⁵⁴ He supports his servant Israel, remembering compassion, ⁵⁵ as he spoke throughout the age to our fathers, to Abraham and his seed.”

⁵⁶ Mary remained with Elizabeth for about three months and then returned to her house.

⁵⁷ When the time was fulfilled, Elizabeth gave birth to a child. ⁵⁸ Her neighbors and relatives heard how the Lord was making his compassion great with her and they began rejoicing with her. ⁵⁹ On the eighth day they went to circumcise the servant-child and began calling him by the name of his father, Zechariah. ⁶⁰ Responding, his mother said,

“No! He will be called John!”

⁶¹ They said to her,

“No one in your family is called by this name!”

⁶² They made motions to his father, to see what he wanted to call the child. ⁶³ After asking for a tablet, Zechariah wrote,

“John is his name.”

They all marveled. ⁶⁴ Immediately, Zechariah’s mouth and tongue were opened and he began speaking and honoring the Creator. ⁶⁵ Fear came upon everyone living nearby and all these things began being discussed throughout the entire hill country of Judea. ⁶⁶ Everyone who heard, put these things in their hearts, saying,

“What will this servant-child be?”

For the hand of the Lord was with John. ⁶⁷ His father, Zechariah, was filled with the Divine Breath and prophesied, saying,

⁶⁸ “The Lord, the Creator of Israel, is honored! He has looked upon and released his people from slavery! ⁶⁹ He has raised a horn of rescue for us from the house of his servant David, ⁷⁰ as he spoke through the mouth of his divine prophets throughout this age. ⁷¹ To rescue us from our enemies and from the hand of everyone who disowns us. ⁷² To be compassionate with our fathers and to remember his divine covenant, ⁷³ to give to us the oath which he swore to our father Abraham. ⁷⁴ So, after being delivered without fear from the hand of our enemies, we would give allegiance to him, ⁷⁵ with piety and justice in his sight, all of our days.

⁷⁶ But you, servant-child, will be called a prophet of the highest one, for you will go in the sight of the Lord to prepare his ways. ⁷⁷ You will give the knowledge of rescue to his people through freedom from their rebellions. ⁷⁸ Because of our Creator’s compassionate empathy about these things, the sunrise will look upon us from on high, ⁷⁹ to appear to those sitting in darkness and the shadow of death, to straighten our feet on the Way of Harmony!”

⁸⁰ The servant-child John was growing and becoming mighty through the Breath and was in the wilderness till the day of his appearance to Israel.