

## The Name Game

### Scripture Reading — Luke 1:57-66

"He is to be called John."

Luke 1:63b

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For many years in the homes of the Dutch (and in some other nationalities), it wasn't necessary to buy a book of names when a baby was on the way. The name of your child was simply plucked from the family tree. The first son was named after his father's father. The first daughter was named after her mother's mother. Names were handed out according to set patterns that honored those who had gone before. Of course, all those recurring names led to some confusion at times too!

There was a similar tradition in Zechariah's day. Everyone thought a son born in old age should be named after the father. But that would merely reaffirm the past. With this child, something radically new had come, and his name came from the Father in heaven. His name would be John, which means, "God is gracious."

*God is gracious!* Today, in our own lives, this is the message we need to hear. Perhaps you're trying to put your life back together. You know you've disappointed God. You want to move back into a relationship with him. First, though, you want to solve your problems and polish up your reputation. But that's a mistake. God sent out an ambassador whose very name makes clear that God's good will—not your good deeds—is the basis of a relationship with him. Trust God's grace. Discover God's welcome of mercy and love today.

### Prayer

*Lord, we can't clean up our lives by ourselves. Thank you that we don't have to. Help us claim the meaning of John's name and discover the power of your love. Amen.*

**Devotion topics:** [Seasons](#), [Christmas](#)

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