

More About BENEDICTUS

Benedictus is one of three canticles from the opening chapters of the Gospel of Luke which are sung at prayer services known as the **Lauds** or **Liturgy of the Hours**. **Benedictus** is the morning office (Matins), while **Magnificat** is evening office (Vespers) and **Nunc Dimittus** is night office (Compline).

Also known as the Canticum of Zechariah, **Benedictus** is a hymn of praise found in the Gospel of Luke 1:68-79. Zechariah, a Jewish priest, sings the canticle after the birth of his son, John the Baptist.

The Latin name comes from its opening words, "Benedictus Dominus Deus Israel" (Blessed be the Lord God of Israel). It expresses Zechariah's thanksgiving for God's fulfillment of promises through a mighty savior, likely referring to Jesus. The canticle also highlights the role of John as the forerunner who will prepare the way for the Messiah.

Vulgate text (Luke 1:68-79):

Benedictus Dominus Deus Israel;
quia visitavit et fecit redemptionem plebi suae
Et erexit cornu salutis nobis,
in domo David pueri sui,
Sicut locutus est per os sanctorum,
qui a saeculo sunt, prophetarum eius,
Salutem ex inimicis nostris,
et de manu omnium, qui oderunt nos;
Ad faciendam misericordiam cum patribus nostris,
et memorari testamenti sui sancti,
Iusiurandum, quod iuravit ad Abraham patrem nostrum,
daturum se nobis,
Ut sine timore, de manu inimicorum nostrorum liberati,
serviamus illi
In sanctitate et iustitia coram ipso
omnibus diebus nostris.
Et tu, puer, propheta Altissimi vocaberis:
praeibis enim ante faciem Domini parare vias eius,
Ad dandam scientiam salutis plebi eius
in remissionem peccatorum eorum,
Per viscera misericordiae Dei nostri,
in quibus visitabit nos oriens ex alto,
Illuminare his, qui in tenebris et in umbra mortis sedent,
ad dirigendos pedes nostros in viam pacis.

English translation:

Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel;
he has come to his people and set them free.
He has raised up for us a mighty savior,
born of the house of his servant David.
Through his holy prophets he promised of old
that he would save us from our enemies,
from the hands of all who hate us.
He promised to show mercy to our fathers
and to remember his holy covenant.
This was the oath he swore to our father Abraham:
to set us free from the hands of our enemies,
free to worship him without fear,
holy and righteous in his sight all the days of our life.
You, my child, shall be called the prophet of the Most High;
for you will go before the Lord to prepare his way,
to give his people knowledge of salvation
by the forgiveness of their sins.
In the tender compassion of our God
the dawn from on high shall break upon us,
to shine on those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death,
and to guide our feet into the way of peace.

Benedictus has been recorded for commercial release by the Kühn Choir of Prague and is available on their album **Celestial Voices Vol. II** from Navona Records. See the Discography page on my website for more information.