

John- The Cousin of Jesus  
(Seek your purpose)  
I wrote

Last week, we learned about the birth of Jesus, our Lord and Savior; but a week or two ago, we learned about the birth of his cousin John.

Now, before we hear more about the birth of Jesus, we are going to back up a little bit and learn more about John.

John was the son of Zachariah and Elizabeth, Mary's Cousin.

Now is the day when John was born, parents would name their children after someone in their family. But John was not a name that was found in Zachariah's family line.

Can anyone tell me HOW John received his name?

The angel Gabriel brought a message from God to Zachariah and his wife Elizabeth. That

message was that they would have a son and they were to name him John. So, John was a name chosen by God.

Now, Zachariah had lost his ability to speak because he doubted what the angel Gabriel had told him.

Zachariah told the angel that he and Elizabeth were too old to have a child and he asked Gabriel how he to know for sure that this thing would happen.

This made Gabriel angry so; because of his unbelief, God took Zachariah's ability to speak away from him.

Now eight days after John was born, the people wanted to name him Zachariah after his father, but his mother said, "No! He will be named John."

The people said to Elizabeth, "But no one In your family has this name." Then they used sign language to speak with Zachariah.

Zachariah asked for a writing tablet and wrote,  
“His name is John.” When they read what  
Zachariah had written they were very surprised.  
They couldn’t believe what they were seeing.  
But Zachariah stood by what he had written, and  
the baby was named John.

Because Zachariah obeyed God, the minute he  
wrote on the tablet, his ability to speak normally  
returned to Zachariah.

And when his speech returned, Zachariah  
immediately began praising God.

Zachariah was filled with the Holy Spirit, and he  
began to prophesy. “Let us praise the Lord, the  
God of Israel, because he has come to help his  
people and has given them freedom.

Zachariah knew that God had fulfilled his  
promise. A promise that he had made through  
his holy prophets long ago.

You see, God promised Abraham, that he would  
send a savior. A savior that would save us from

the power of our enemies so we could serve him without fear, being holy and good before God as long as we live.

Zachariah also knew that John had been chosen by God to go before Jesus and prepare the people for His arrival.

Zachariah spoke to John and said, “Now you, child, will be called a prophet of the Most High God.”

John was to go out and let the people know that a savior was on the way, and when the savior arrived, He would have the ability to forgive them of their sins, and to prepare a way for them to one day, enter heaven and be with him throughout all eternity.

When the people heard all the things that were being said, they wondered “What will this child be?”

You see, although Jesus is our savior, his cousin John was a very special person as well.

One thing that makes him special was that John was filled with the Holy Spirit while inside his mother's stomach.

When Mary went to visit Elizabeth, baby John; even though he was inside Elizabeth's stomach; recognized that he was in the presence of the savior. Both baby John and baby Jesus were still inside their mother's stomachs, but John knew when he was in the presence of the savior.

So much so that he was filled with the Holy Spirit while inside his mother's stomach. He leapt inside of Elizabeth's stomach which also told her that Mary was carrying the savior inside of her stomach.

I can't recall any other place in the Bible where it says that someone was filled with the Holy Spirit while still inside their mother's stomach.

John's purpose in life was to announce the coming of Jesus. He was to go before Jesus and to tell the people that a savior was coming and

that they should make their path's straight. They should put away all the bad things in their lives and repent of their sins.

The savior that was coming would be able to forgive them of their sins and make a way for them to enter heaven to live with God throughout all eternity.

Now John knew what his purpose was in life. It was to prepare the people for the coming savior.

God has a purpose for each of our lives too. Now I doubt that any of us are like John, we don't KNOW what our purpose is before we are born. But God has a purpose for each of our lives.

I can't tell you what that purpose is; your parents can't tell you what that purpose is....

You will have to seek your purpose and when you seek, God will help you to find your purpose.

And the best way that I can think of to find your purpose is to be ready to serve whenever you see a need.

If you see something that needs done and you, do it... God may put a special interest in your heart for that position.

For example, if you see that there is no one at a door to greet people when they arrive, and you decide to stand at that door and greet people, you may realize that you are good at greeting people and making them feel welcome.

That one act of serving may lead you to your life purpose. You started by greeting people at the door and then that act or serving may lead you to go out on visitation or out to visit people in nursing homes, or hospitals, or it may lead you into counseling children or teens in trouble.

That one little act of serving may lead to your life's purpose or it may just be filling a need for the day. But if you don't seek and if you're not

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John the Baptist  
(I wrote this story)

Today, we are going to learn about a man  
named John the Baptist.

First, I will tell you who John was, and then  
I am going to tell you why he was called  
“John the Baptist”.

Does anyone know who John the Baptist is?

Remember when I told you the story from  
the Bible about Mary and her cousin  
Elizabeth? Mary and Elizabeth were both  
going to have babies. Mary was told by  
Gabriel, the angel of the Lord that her baby  
was to be named Jesus. He told her that  
Jesus would be Christ the Savior.

Now Gabriel also told Zechariah that he and  
his wife Elizabeth were going to have a  
baby.

This baby was to be named John. Gabriel told Zechariah that John would go before the Lord Jesus to prepare people for His coming.

Jesus and John were cousins. And yes, you guessed it. John was later referred to as John the Baptist.

John was a rugged looking man. His clothes were made of camel's hair, and he wore a leather belt around his waist.

For food, he ate locusts and wild honey. A locust is like a grasshopper. How many of you would like to eat a grasshopper?

John would go into a certain area and preach to the people about the coming Savior. He would say to them "Repent, for Kingdom of God is drawing near."

Many people came from Jerusalem and Judea and all the area around the Jordan River to hear John preach. They confessed their sins, and he baptized them right there in the Jordan River.

Many people thought that John was the Messiah himself. But John always told them “I am not the Christ.”

John stressed the importance of repenting of their sins over and over again. He told them that they should repent and be baptized.

Many of the people asked him, “What shall we do?”

He answered, “He who has two coats, freely give one of them to someone who has none. “He who has food, give some to someone who has none.”

Even the tax collectors, whom most people did not like, asked John what they should do. John told them, “Don’t take any more than you are supposed to.”

Believe it or not, there were even Roman soldiers who came to John to be baptized, and they asked John what they should do. “Don’t intimidate people or do violence to anyone. Don’t falsely accuse anyone and be content with your wages.

Again, and again the people asked John if he were the Christ. And again and again, he said “No”.

“Well then, who are you? Are you Elijah?” they asked. John replied, “no I am not”.

Well, are you one of the prophets?” they asked again. “No, I am not John replied again.”

“Then WHO are you”? they asked once more.

And John replied, “I am a voice crying in the wilderness, making straight the way of the Lord!”

“If you are not the Christ or Elijah, why are you baptizing” they asked.

John replied, “There is one coming after me who is greater than I, I am not good enough even to kneel down and untie his sandals. I baptize you with water, but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”

“He will come ready to clean the grain, separating the good grain from the chaff. He will put the good part of the grain into his barn, but he will burn the chaff with a fire that cannot be put out.”

What do you think John meant when he said this?

He meant that Jesus would be coming, and He would separate all the believers from the nonbelievers. The believers would go to “His barn” which means “heaven”. He will burn the chaff with a fire that cannot be put out means that all nonbelievers will be thrown into Hell and will burn.

John continued to preach the Good News, saying many other things to encourage the people.

One day, Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan River. One of the first things He did was to ask John to baptize Him.

John was puzzled when Jesus came to him for baptism. He knew that Jesus, the Messiah was without sin and that he had no need to be baptized

John spoke to Jesus and said, “I have a great need to be baptized by YOU, yet you come to me to be baptized?”

Jesus said to John, “Permit it, for it is fitting and proper for me to fulfill all righteousness and set an example for those who do need to be baptized.”

Jesus wanted to be an example to all the people, He wanted to show them how important it was to confess their sins, ask God for forgiveness, and be baptized.

So, John did as Jesus requested, He baptized Jesus.

As soon as Jesus was baptized, He came up out of the water. Then heaven opened, and he saw God’s Spirit coming down on him like a dove. And a voice from heaven said, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I love, and am very well pleased.”

Can anyone guess why John was called  
“John the Baptist”.

That’s right, because he went before Jesus  
telling everyone to repent of their sins and  
be baptized. He baptized many, many people  
in Jesus’ name.

He even baptized Jesus Himself. Can you  
imagine how awesome it must have been the  
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# Honey spread

We used this with Moses when God brings the people to the land of milk and honey. We also used this with John the Baptist.

We spread on bagels and added raisins as locust!

- 3/4 cup crunchy peanut butter
- 2 Tbsp honey
- 1/2 cup chopped raisins or apples

mix together and spread on toast or bagel or whatever