

Chapter 1 : Luke - The Birth of John the Baptist Foretold - Bible Gateway

The Birth of John the Baptist Foretold - In the time of Herod king of Judea there was a priest named Zechariah, who belonged to the priestly division of Abijah; his wife Elizabeth was also a descendant.

The Preaching of St. John the Baptist by Pieter Bruegel the Elder The Gospel of Mark introduces John as a fulfilment of a prophecy from the Book of Isaiah in fact, a conflation of texts from Isaiah, Malachi and Exodus [34] about a messenger being sent ahead, and a voice crying out in the wilderness. John proclaims baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sin, and says another will come after him who will not baptize with water, but with the Holy Spirit. Jesus comes to John, and is baptized by him in the river Jordan. A voice from heaven then says, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased. It is introduced by an incident where the Tetrarch Herod Antipas, hearing stories about Jesus, imagines that this is John the Baptist raised from the dead. It then explains that John had rebuked Herod for marrying Herodias, the ex-wife of his brother named here as Philip. When the girl asks her mother what she should request, she is told to demand the head of John the Baptist. Reluctantly, Herod orders the beheading of John, and his head is delivered to her, at her request, on a plate. Scholars have speculated about the origins of the story. Since it shows signs of having been composed in Aramaic, which Mark apparently did not speak, he is likely to have got it from a Palestinian source. And all the country of Judea and all Jerusalem were going out to him and were being baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. And he preached, saying, "After me comes he who is mightier than I, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. I have baptized you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit. And when he came up out of the water, immediately he saw the heavens being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, "You are my beloved Son, with you I am well pleased. Some said, "John the Baptist has been raised from the dead. That is why these miraculous powers are at work in him. But she could not, for Herod feared John, knowing that he was a righteous and holy man, and he kept him safe. When he heard him, he was greatly perplexed, and yet he heard him gladly. But an opportunity came when Herod on his birthday gave a banquet for his nobles and military commanders and the leading men of Galilee. And the king said to the girl, "Ask me for whatever you wish, and I will give it to you. He went and beheaded him in the prison and brought his head on a platter and gave it to the girl, and the girl gave it to her mother. When his disciples heard of it, they came and took his body and laid it in a tomb. In Matthew[edit] St. John the Baptist Preaching, c. Matthew shortens the account of the beheading of John, and adds two elements: Then Jerusalem and all Judea and all the region about the Jordan were going out to him, and they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bear fruit in keeping with repentance. Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and gather his wheat into the barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire. John would have prevented him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me? And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; and behold, a voice from heaven said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased. And blessed is the one who is not offended by me. A reed shaken by the wind? What then did you go out to see? A man dressed in soft clothing? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven has suffered violence, and the violent take it by force. For all the Prophets and the Law prophesied until John, and if you are willing to accept it, he is Elijah who is to come. He who has ears to hear, let him hear. A glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners! He has been raised from the dead; that is why these miraculous powers are at work in him. Prompted by her mother, she said, "Give me the head of John the Baptist here on a platter. He sent and had John beheaded in the prison, and his head was brought on a platter and given to the girl, and she brought it to her

mother. And his disciples came and took the body and buried it, and they went and told Jesus. English Standard Version Main article: There is no mention of a family relationship between John and Jesus in the other Gospels, and Raymond E. Brown has described it as "of dubious historicity". His wife, whose name was Elizabeth, was also a descendant of Aaron. They were both righteous people, who lived blameless lives, guiding their steps by all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord. But they had no child, Elizabeth being barren; and both of them were advanced in years. One day, when Zechariah was officiating as priest before God, during the turn of his division, it fell to him by lot, in accordance with the practice among the priests, to go into the Temple of the Lord and burn incense; and, as it was the Hour of Incense, the people were all praying outside. And an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing on the right of the Altar of Incense. Zechariah was startled at the sight and was awe-struck. But the angel said to him: He will be to you a joy and a delight; and many will rejoice over his birth. For he will be great in the sight of the Lord; he will not drink any wine or strong drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit from the very hour of his birth, and will reconcile many of the Israelites to the Lord their God. And now you will be silent and unable to speak until the day when this takes place, because you did not believe what I said, though my words will be fulfilled in due course. When he came out, he was unable to speak to them, and they perceived that he had seen a vision there. But Zechariah kept making signs to them, and remained dumb. And, as soon as his term of service was finished, he returned home. After this his wife, Elizabeth, became pregnant and lived in seclusion for five months. Her name was Mary. Gabriel came into her presence and greeted her, saying: And now, you will conceive and give birth to a son, and you will give him the name Jesus. But how have I this honor, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For, as soon as your greeting reached my ears, the child moved within me with delight! Happy indeed is she who believed that the promise which she received from the Lord would be fulfilled. Great things has the Almighty done for me; And holy is his name. From age to age his mercy rests On those who honor him. Mighty are the deeds of his arm; He scatters the proud with their own devices, he casts down princes from their thrones, and the humble he uplifts, the hungry he loads with gifts, and the rich he sends empty away. He has stretched out his hand to his servant Israel, Ever mindful of his mercy As he promised to our forefathers For Abraham and his race for ever. All their neighbors were awe-struck at this; and throughout the hill-country of Judea the whole story was much talked about; and all who heard it kept it in mind, asking one another "What can this child be destined to become? Then his father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit, and, speaking under inspiration, said: This was the oath which he swore to our forefather Abraham That we should be rescued from the hands of our enemies, and should serve him without fear in holiness and righteousness, In his presence all our days. And you, child, will be called prophet of the Most High, For you will go before the Lord to make ready his way, to give his people the knowledge of salvation In the forgiveness of their sins, through the tender mercy of our God, Whereby the Dawn will break on us from heaven, to give light to those who live in darkness and the shadow of death, And guide our feet into the way of peace. And John went through the whole district of the Jordan, proclaiming baptism on repentance, for the forgiveness of sins. Every chasm will be filled, Every mountain and hill will be leveled, The winding ways will be straightened, The rough roads made smooth, and everyone will see the salvation of God. Who has prompted you to seek refuge from the coming judgment? Already, indeed, the axe is lying at the root of the trees. Therefore, every tree that fails to bear good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire. And when some soldiers on active service asked "And we what are we to do? He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. His winnowing-fan is in his hand so that he may clear his threshing-floor, and store the grain in his barn, but the chaff he will burn with a fire that cannot be put out. Now after the baptism of all the people, and when Jesus had been baptized and was still praying, the heavens opened, and the Holy Spirit came down on him in the form of a dove, and from the heavens came a voice "You are my dearly loved son; you bring me great joy. So his answer to the question was: And blessed is the person who finds no hindrance in me. A reed waving in the wind? If not, what did you go out to see? A man dressed in rich clothing? Why, those who are accustomed to fine clothes and luxury live in royal palaces. What then did you go to see? Yes, I tell you, and far more than a prophet.

Chapter 2 : The Birth of John the Baptist Foretold | hereadstruth

The Nativity of John the Baptist (or Birth of John the Baptist, or Nativity of the Forerunner, or colloquially Johnmas or (in German) Johannistag) is a Christian feast day celebrating the birth of John the Baptist, a prophet who foretold the coming of the Messiah in the person of Jesus, whom he later baptised.

Announcing the advent of the Messianic time, he was the last prophet of the Old Testament. He was the first to acknowledge Jesus as the Messiah. He was the first to offer his life in the new time. He was the first martyr of the New Testament. Each morning and evening, when the priests and brothers gather in the church for the recitation of the Divine Office, we invoke our patrons: Anne, whose shrine has been in this church since , and St. This Church of St. Because John the Baptist is the patron saint of Canada, it was appropriate to put this Church under his patronage. The central interior door of the church displays a stained glass window depicting the moment in the Gospel of John when John the Baptist sees Jesus for the first time. He points to him and announces to his disciples: The pastor responsible for the construction of this church building, Rev. The monstrance, shaped like a burning sun, holds the consecrated host. The design is traditional. It presents the Eucharistic Jesus, as the center of the universe, the lifegiving sun. Letellier added an interesting component to the traditional design. The sun rests on a golden representation of John the Baptist. His right arm is extended over his head, and his index finger is pointing up to the host. At his feet lays the lamb that will take away the sins of the world. John is telling us that Jesus is the Eucharist the Lamb of God. John calls people of faith come to St. By consecrating the central door of this edifice to John the Baptist, Father Letellier was inviting everyone who enters to follow in the footsteps of John the Baptist, to point to the Lamb of God, to witness to his presence among us. For years the fathers and brothers of the Blessed Sacrament have served in this temple dedicated to the Eucharist. The feast of the birth of John the Baptist is an opportunity to invite you to share our mission. You can do so as a vowed religious, as a lay associate, or, as a person of faith, who, through your prayer before the Blessed Sacrament, gives powerful witness to the presence of the Eucharistic Jesus. Open your heart to the Spirit. Our vocation is a beautiful one. It rests in the heart of the Church. We joyfully point to the Lamb of God among us. How can I thank you enough for the gift of yourself in the Eucharist? I offer you my heart, my all. I lift my hand. I point to you.

Chapter 3 : What can we learn from the life of John the Baptist?

Exposition. Mary may have been present for the birth of John the Baptist before returning to her home in Bethlehem -- we don't know for sure. But had she been present at John's circumcision and naming ceremony, what a blessing she would have received.

Listen, O distant peoples. He made of me a sharp-edged sword and concealed me in the shadow of his arm. He made me a polished arrow, in his quiver he hid me. You are my servant, he said to me, Israel, through whom I show my glory. Though I thought I had toiled in vain, and for nothing, uselessly, spent my strength, yet my reward is with the Lord, my recompense is with my God. For now the Lord has spoken who formed me as his servant from the womb, that Jacob may be brought back to him and Israel gathered to him; and I am made glorious in the sight of the Lord, and my God is now my strength! It is too little, he says, for you to be my servant, to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and restore the survivors of Israel; I will make you a light to the nations, that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth. I am not he. Behold, one is coming after me; I am not worthy to unfasten the sandals of his feet. Her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had shown his great mercy toward her, and they rejoiced with her. He will be called John. Immediately his mouth was opened, his tongue freed, and he spoke blessing God. Then fear came upon all their neighbors, and all these matters were discussed throughout the hill country of Judea. The child grew and became strong in spirit, and he was in the desert until the day of his manifestation to Israel. John the Baptist has a huge role in the life of Jesus and prepares others to know of the coming of salvation and of Jesus. John the Baptist was recognized as a strong religious presence before Jesus was recognized—and John always points to Jesus. In the same way, you and I must learn always to point to Jesus by the way we live our lives and in our speaking, writing and thinking. The first reading today is from the Prophet Isaiah. This reading reflects an awareness that many of the prophets had that God wants us all to reflect the mysteries of God and to point to God by everything in our lives. You and I are invited today to know that God is also calling us in the same way, with the same intensity. God wants us to proclaim His presence and His works to everyone. The second reading is from the Acts of the Apostles. It reflects another human trait: The challenge is that God wants us all to be saints. God wants us all to be saints, not to look better than others, but to reflect His goodness and love to all. It is always the challenge of doing only what God wants. This is the challenge of spiritual combat and we are all invited to such spiritual combat. The Gospel today, from Saint Luke, tells the things that happened before the birth of John the Baptist. The neighbors all knew that there was something special about this child. We can all claim that there was nothing special about our birth, but it is not so. Today as there are fewer and fewer births in the western world, we begin to see how special each one is. Only as we begin to pay attention to God do we begin to understand how special each human being is and how each human being can draw others to God and to the mysteries of faith. May we come to know how special each life is, our own included, and how each of us can point to the Lord Jesus and draw others to Him. Your brother in the Lord, Abbot Philip.

Chapter 4 : Birth of John the Baptist (Luke) -- JesusWalk

As we turn together to the Word of God, I invite you to open your Bible to Luke's gospel. We are approaching the end of this great first chapter of Luke. Luke is unfolding for us the story of Jesus.

And what was his relationship to Jesus? His name was divinely given. The Jewish historian Josephus even refers to John by this designation Antiquities The importance of John in the divine scheme of things probably is summed up best in the testimony of Jesus himself. Luke has a wonderful summary statement of the character of this Hebrew couple. One must necessarily infer that Zecharias had prayed for a son in earlier times, though Elizabeth was barren, and both of them now were advanced in age Lk. Incidentally, he was about six months older than Jesus Lk. Luke does say of John: John the Baptist in Prophecy Any Hebrew familiar with his Old Testament could have expected the ministry of John as a preliminary measure in the divine plan, paving the way for the appearance of the Messiah. The former is a reference to John, the latter is an allusion to Christ. In the New Testament we have the testimony of the angel Gabriel Lk. The text is ambiguous. It was, however, quite reminiscent of the adornment of certain Old Testament prophets Zech. His dietary fare was that generally consumed by the poorer elements of society. He stood in bold relief to the wealthy, indulgent Jews of his day. He was a veritable walking sermon! Too, John was somewhat reclusive. The prophet was not a party-goer. His ascetic life-style appeared almost demonic, like those possessed of evil spirits who apparently frequented the desolate areas cf. He did not seek out the multitudes. Rather, somehow, he attracted them. The citizenry of Jerusalem and all Judea went out unto him as he moved about in the Jordan Valley Mt. His influence was phenomenal. Hundreds, if not thousands, were immersed by him. And his success was solely in the message he proclaimed. This passage appears to indicate that John did not perform demonstrative miracles, as Jesus and the apostles did cf. It must be observed at this point that the common modern allegation that John was identified with the Essene community e. The angel Gabriel had informed Zecharias that his son would be instrumental in turning many unto the Lord, going before his face, making ready a people prepared for him Lk. The fact that the birth of Christianity was such a resounding phenomenon, impacting the ancient world tremendously, and echoing marvelously across the centuries, is, in some measure, a commentary on how well John accomplished his mission. As the prophet began to generate attention, certain Jews in Jerusalem dispatched to him a delegation of priests and Levites in order to ascertain his identity. John emphatically stated that he was not the promised Messiah, nor was he a literally reincarnated Elijah. In these remarks, the Baptizer: The imperfect tense form stresses the eternality of the preincarnate Word Jn. The inference is clear. Jesus was sinless, or to say it in another way, a lamb without spot or blemish 1 Pet. By implication, therefore, John acknowledged the perfection of Christ. I do not think either of these views is correct. Surely John must have known his mission relative to his kinsman since the earliest days of their lives. Moreover, the fact that he resisted immersing Jesus is a strong clue that he was aware of the uniqueness of the Savior. There was now a certainty, documented from a higher Source! Edersheim graphically describes the conditions of the time. Absolute right did not exist. The social relations exhibited, if possible, even deeper corruption. The sanctity of marriage had ceased. Female dissipation and the general dissoluteness led at last to an almost entire cessation of marriage. Moral corruption had made deep inroads into Judaism as well. Read carefully the second chapter of the book of Romans. It was into this world that John came with his piercing message: When he saw superficial Hebrews submitting to his immersion, void of any radical change of conduct, he rebuked them: Without fruit there is no real repentance. This will be discussed as a separate item below. It would be a regime of a different composition than that of the old theocracy a combined religious and political system. The kingdom of Christ was not to be a this-world oriented system see Jn. The Greek term is engus. It can be used figuratively in prophecy to denote the certainty of an event, from the perspective of time as God views things cf. The subsequent context of the Gospel records reveals that literal proximity is indicated here. Jesus would later indicate that some of those in his audience would not die until they observed the kingdom arrive, accompanied by power Mk. Eventually it becomes apparent that this was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost cf. As mentioned earlier, the Old Testament closed with a prophecy concerning the coming of

him who would be in the spirit and power of Elijah, namely John Mal. There are several figures of speech employed by the prophet to provide thrust to his message. First, the more immediate application probably was to the impending destruction of the Jewish nation. Secondly, the fan was the winnowing shovel with which the harvested grain was tossed into the wind so as to separate the kernel from the chaff. It thus signified the great separation between the righteous and the wicked in the ultimate ordering of God. The Baptism Administered by John It is imperative in this study that attention be given to the baptism administered by John. Here are some points for consideration: What elements accompanied it? What was the purpose of the ordinance? Did those baptized by John have to be rebaptized after the church was established on Pentecost? Baptizo is found some eighty times, and it is almost always anglicized i. It becomes an English term with only slight letter modification. Such hybridization obscures the meaning of the original word, but is maintained today for commercial reasons. Unquestionably, the Greek terms denote the action of dipping, immersing, or submerging an object. Such a reference would hardly have been necessary if baptism can be administered with but a few drops of water. Marcus Dods, a Presbyterian scholar, says of this location: William Hendriksen rendered the phrase in Matthew 3: The preposition eis has its usual prospective thrust. From heaven or from men? The Lord clearly implied that it was from God, not from the Qumran cult. Two words in this text are key. One cannot but ask: This question has generated much discussion: Were those baptized by John, during those days when his ministry was operative, required to be rebaptized in order to enter the church following the day of Pentecost? Before looking at this matter more carefully, let us make a couple of preliminary observations. First, there is no clear, definitive statement regarding this theme in the New Testament record. One must, therefore, assemble all the evidence available, and then attempt to draw what he perceives to be a reasonable conclusion. It is not a make-or-break issue. Consider the following points. Where is the evidence that anyone who had been baptized by John was required to be immersed following Pentecost. Acts 19 surely does not demand that. Their baptism had been predicated upon an insufficient faith regarding Jesus, and therefore, on that basis, was not valid. Is there evidence that any of the original apostles were baptized on Pentecost or thereafter? One of these lads represented the chief priests and elders, the upper stratum of Jewish society, while the other boy signified the publicans and harlots, the offscouring of that culture. The Jewish leaders mostly rejected it Mt. It was within this context that Christ rebuked the chief priests and elders, saying: Why require baptism in view of the coming kingdom if that baptism had nothing to do with entering the kingdom? If it be argued that the same, in principle, might also apply to those Jews who had offered animal sacrifices, we respond that the two cases are not equal. Again we stress the point: Biblical typology is not always a clearly defined field of study. A type prefigures the antitype cf.

Chapter 5 : Who Was John the Baptist? : Christian Courier

John's Birth, Israel and the Word, The Forerunner, Zacharias and Elizabeth, The Angel Gabriel, John is Born. The Birth of John the Baptist. John the Baptist had a miraculous birth, and everything about his birth was predicted before he was born.

There is also a Jesus Fact Sheet to write notes from the lesson on and review cards. There is also a get-to-know-you paper. We are going to be learning about the life of Jesus for the next couple of months. They were both faithful to God. Zacharias was a priest and his job was to burn incense in the temple. An angel of the Lord appeared to him on the right side of the altar of incense. When Zacharias saw him, he was worried and afraid. But the angel said "Do not be afraid. Your prayer was heard and Elizabeth would have a son and you will call him John. You will be glad and many people will celebrate his birth. He will prepare the way for Jesus. The angel told him that he is Gabriel and was sent to tell him about John. The people waited for Zacharias and they were amazed that it took him so long in the temple. She found out that she was going to have a baby and hid herself for 5 months. Elizabeth was very happy to have a baby! Her neighbors and relatives were so happy for her and celebrated with Elizabeth! When they were going to name the baby, normally they would have named him Zacharias like his father, but Elizabeth said they were naming him John. Her friends said, "But no one in your family is named John! Immediately Zacharias could talk and he spoke praising God. People all over the country heard about this and talked about it. John grew up and became strong in his faith. Depending on your students, you can make these before class and use them during the lesson like I do, or you can let them put the slider together. But, in either case, I would use the craft knife before class to cut the sides open.

Chapter 6 : Nativity of Saint John the Baptist - Wikipedia

Birth of John the Baptist The Birth of John begins a 22 week study on the Life of Jesus. There are several items that we will use each week, including the worksheets & Bible verses.

PDF to print for family reading John the Baptist was a fascinating man. He ate locusts and honey in the desert. Crowds came to him, but he constantly told them that he was nothingâ€”that the coming Messiah was everything. In the end, his life was cut short because he criticized a king for sinning. John the Baptist was an unusual character for sure. But incredibly, Jesus Christ called him the greatest of men Matthew They were both descended from the priestly family of Aaron Luke 1: The Bible says Elizabeth had not been able to have children. Then came the day when Zacharias, while burning incense at the temple, saw an angel verse Zacharias was startled by the appearance of the angel. But perhaps he was even more surprised by what the angel told him. Elizabeth would bear a child in her old age! They would name him John, and he would be set apart for a special purpose verses Of course, the angel proved to be correct, and after nine months the priest and his wife had a son verse God had performed a miracle and brought John into the world for a special purpose! The work of John the Baptist God had set John apart for a special mission. He was to preach about repentance and to baptize people in water. That is exactly what John did. He ate locusts and wild honey Matthew 3: He told the crowds that came to see him that they needed to repent and that the Kingdom of God was at hand verses He preached the same message as Jesus Christ the Messiah Mark 1: John the Baptist knew that he had been called by God to fulfill the prophecy of Isaiah: When the religious leaders of his time came to see him, John showed courage. John pointed the people to Christ regularly John 1: When the time came for Christ to start His ministry, John pointed his disciples to Christ and encouraged them to follow Him verses John even baptized His Lord and Savior. When Jesus was ready to start His public ministry, He came to John to provide an example for all mankind by being baptized. This confirmed to John that this was indeed the Son of God verses He called sin, sin. After spending some time in his prison cell, John sent some of his disciples to Christ. He wanted to receive confirmation about the work and mission of Christ Matthew He also believed He was the Christâ€”the coming Messiah who will conqueror and rule. But perhaps he was expecting Christ to start conquering then instead of letting him remain in jail. That was not to be, however. While John was in prison, Herod threw a party. Herod was sorry, but because of his oaths he felt trapped into ordering John to be killed. Purposes behind the story of John There are many reasons the story of John the Baptist was recorded in the Bible. It still speaks to us 2, years later. Throughout his life and ministry, John always directed people to Jesus Christ. The job of carrying sandals was the job of the lowliest slave. To John, everything was about the Messiah whom he had been commissioned to prepare for. John saw his own needs and status in life as unimportant. He was not jealous about the crowds going to see Jesus. The work of John the Baptist also reminds us that God has a detailed plan that He is carrying out. Though we, like John the Baptist, may not understand everything about that plan or our assigned part in it, we can know that God has a plan for us. Herod might have killed John the Baptist physically, but John will be a king and priest reigning on the earth in the Kingdom of God Revelation 5:

Chapter 7 : June The Birth of John the Baptist - - Benedictine Abbey of Christ in the Desert

Our principal sources of information about John the Baptist are (1) references to his birth in the first chapter of Luke, (2) references to his preaching and his martyrdom in the Gospels, with a few references in Acts, and.

What can we learn from the life of John the Baptist? He was the precursor for the modern-day evangelist as he unashamedly shared the good news of Jesus Christ. He was a man filled with faith and a role model to those of us who wish to share our faith with others. Most everyone, believer and non-believer alike, has heard of John the Baptist. He is one of the most significant and well-known figures in the Bible. While John was known as "the Baptist," he was in fact the first prophet called by God since Malachi some years earlier. Every valley shall be raised up, every mountain and hill made low; the rough ground shall become level, the rugged places a plain. And the glory of the LORD will be revealed, and all mankind together will see it. He was born of elderly parents who had never been able to have children Luke 1: The angel Gabriel announced to Zechariah, a Levitical priest, that he would have a son—news that Zechariah received with incredulity verses 8— Gabriel said this about John: He will bring back many of the people of Israel to the Lord their God. And he will go on before the Lord, in the spirit and power of Elijah,. John was related to Jesus, as their mothers were relatives Luke 1: In fact, when the angel Gabriel told Mary that she would give birth to Jesus, he also told her about John. As an adult John lived a rugged life in the mountainous area of Judea, between the city of Jerusalem and the Dead Sea. His diet was a simple one—locusts and wild honey Matthew 3: John lived a simple life as he focused on the kingdom work set before him. Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River. For the self-righteous, John had stern words, calling them a "brood of vipers" and warning them not to rely on their Jewish lineage for salvation, but to repent and "bear fruit in keeping with repentance" Matthew 3: People of that day simply did not address leaders, religious or otherwise, in this manner for fear of punishment. The general opinion of John the Baptist was that he was a prophet of God Matthew This was not his intent, as he had a clear vision for what he was called to do. John was merely a messenger sent by God to proclaim the truth. His message was simple and direct: He willingly gave up the spotlight to Jesus, saying, "He must become greater; I must become less" John 3: Perhaps there is no greater example of humility than what is seen in both Jesus and John in Matthew 3: Jesus came from Galilee to be baptized by John in the River Jordan. John rightly recognized that the sinless Son of God needed no baptism of repentance and that he was certainly not worthy to baptize his own Savior. In humility, John obeyed and consented to baptize Jesus Matthew 3: Later, King Herod put John the Baptist in prison. Herod had married the former wife of his brother, Philip. While John was in prison, he heard of all the things Jesus was doing. In what seems to be a moment of doubt, John sent his disciples to Jesus to ask if He truly was the Messiah. Jesus responded by telling the men to tell John what they saw and heard—prophecies were being fulfilled. Jesus then spoke to the crowd about John, saying he was the prophesied messenger who would come before Messiah Matthew Jesus also said, "Truly I tell you, among those born of women there has not risen anyone greater than John the Baptist; yet whoever is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he" Matthew In an act of unspeakable vengeance, Herodias plotted with her daughter to have John killed. The girl consulted with her mother before she answered that she wanted the head of John the Baptist on a platter verse Since John was already in prison, it was a simple thing to send the executioner to behead John, which is exactly what happened Mark 6: It was a sad and ignoble end to the life of such a faithful man. There are several lessons we can learn from the life of John the Baptist. One lesson is that whole-heartedly believing in Jesus Christ is possible. John knew that the Messiah was coming. But the road was not an easy one to prepare. Daily he faced doubters who did not share his enthusiasm for the coming Messiah. Under hard questioning from the Pharisees, John shared his belief: He is the one who comes after me, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie" John 1: John believed in the Christ, and his great faith kept him steadfast on his course until the time when he could say as he saw Jesus approach, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! As believers, we can all have this steadfast faith. While it is hard to know for sure what John was feeling as he sat in prison, he did certainly seem to have doubts. But John sent a message out to Jesus in an effort to find the truth. As Christians we all will have our

faith put to the test, and we will either falter in our faith or, like John, cling to Christ, seek truth, and stand firm in our faith to the end. John lived his life to introduce others to Jesus Christ; he was focused on the mission God had given him. And as a servant of God, he also was unafraid of speaking truth, even when it meant calling out people such as Herod and the Pharisees for their sinful behavior. John was entrusted with a unique ministry, yet we, too, are called upon to share the truth of Jesus with others Matthew

Chapter 8 : Chapter 3: John the Baptist Is Born

Zechariah is the husband of Elizabeth and the father of John the Baptist. He is a priest of the sons of Aaron. His wife, Elizabeth, was also of the priestly family of Aaron, and she was the cousin of Mary the mother of Jesus.

Our principal sources of information about John the Baptist are 1 references to his birth in the first chapter of Luke, 2 references to his preaching and his martyrdom in the Gospels, with a few references in Acts, and 3 references in Josephus to his preaching and martyrdom, references which are consistent with the New Testament ones, but sufficiently different in the details to make direct borrowing unlikely. He called the people to repentance and to a renewal of their covenant relation with God. We also find accounts see Acts Luke begins his Gospel by describing an aged, devout, childless couple, the priest Zechariah and his wife Elizabeth. As Zechariah is serving in the Temple, he sees the angel Gabriel, who tells him that he and his wife will have a son who will be a great prophet, and will go before the Lord "like Elijah. Zechariah went home, and his wife conceived. About six months later, Gabriel appeared to the Virgin Mary, a kinswoman of Elizabeth, and told her that she was about to bear a son who would be called Son of the Most High, a king whose kingdom would never end. Thus Elizabeth gave birth to John, and Mary gave birth six months later to Jesus. After describing the birth of John, Luke says that he grew, and "was in the wilderness until the day of his showing to Israel. Accordingly, it has been suggested that John spent some of his early years being educated at Qumran. All of the gospels tell us that John preached and baptized beside the Jordan river, in the wilderness of Judea. He called on his hearers to repent of their sins, be baptized, amend their lives, and prepare for the coming of the Kingship of God. He spoke of one greater than himself who was to come after. Jesus came to be baptized, and John told some of his disciples, "This is the man I spoke of. In fact, many who had been followers of John left him to follow Jesus. My mission is to proclaim the Christ. No more am I of Jesus. He must increase, and I must decrease. King Herod Antipas had divorced his wife and taken Herodias, the wife of his still living brother Philip. John rebuked him for this, and Herod, under pressure from Herodias, had John arrested, and eventually beheaded. He is remembered on some calendars on the supposed anniversary of his beheading, 29 August. When John had been in prison for a while, he sent some of his followers to Jesus to ask, "Are you he that is to come, or is there another? I expected you to drive out Herod and the Romans, and rebuild the kingdom of David. But here I sit in prison, and there is no deliverance in sight? Perhaps I am ahead of schedule, and you are going to throw out the Romans next year. Perhaps I have misunderstood, and you have a different mission, and the Romans bit will be done by someone else. Please let me know what is happening. He is the one spoken of in Malachi 3: No man born of woman is greater than John, but the least in the Kingdom of God is greater than John. John is the climax of the Law. He lives in the wilderness, a life with no frills where food and clothing are concerned. He has renounced the joys of family life, and dedicated himself completely to his mission of preaching, of calling people to an observance of the law, to ordinary standards of virtue. In terms of natural goodness, no one is better than John. But he represents Law, not Grace. Among men born of woman, among the once-born, he has no superior. But anyone who has been born anew in the kingdom of God has something better than what John symbolizes. Note that to say that John symbolizes something short of the Kingdom is not to say that John is himself excluded from the Kingdom. Traditionally, the Birth of Jesus is celebrated on 25 December. That means that the Birth of John is celebrated six months earlier on 24 June. The appearance of Gabriel to Mary, being assumed to be nine months before the birth of Jesus, is celebrated on 25 March and called the Annunciation, and the appearance of Gabriel to Zechariah in the Temple is celebrated by the East Orthodox on 23 September. At least for Christians in the Northern Hemisphere, these dates embody a rich symbolism. John is the last voice of the Old Covenant, the close of the Age of Law. Jesus is the first voice of the New Covenant, the beginning of the Age of Grace. Accordingly, John is born to an elderly, barren woman, born when it is really too late for her to be having a child, while Jesus is born to a young virgin, born when it is really too early for her to be having a child. John is announced and conceived at the autumnal equinox, when the leaves are dying and falling from the trees. Jesus is announced and conceived at the vernal equinox, when the green buds are bursting forth on the trees and there

are signs of new life everywhere. John is born when the days are longest, and from his birth on they grow steadily shorter. Jesus is born when the days are shortest, and from his birth on they grow steadily longer. John speaks truly when he says of Jesus, "He must increase, but I must decrease. The symbolism of the dates is used by Christians, not as evidence, but as material for the devout imagination. Psalm 85 or Kiefer and any comments about its content should be directed to him. The Biographical Sketches home page has more information.

Chapter 9 : The Birth of John the Baptist

June The Birth of John the Baptist - First Reading "Isaiah Hear me, O coastlands! Listen, O distant peoples. The Lord called me from birth, from my mother's womb he gave me my name.

He is to be called John. This passage is important to us Christians because it lays a foundation of understanding of what God is doing in sending John the Baptist and then Jesus the Messiah within six months of each other. As we study the prophecies, we begin to get a glimmer of what God has in mind. Her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had shown her great mercy, and they shared her joy. Naming the Child 1: In some ways, as a naming ceremony, it corresponds to christening practiced by many Christian groups. They go to Zechariah, who requests a "little wooden writing tablet, especially of a writing-tablet for notes " Greek pinakidion. After bestowing the name the Angel had given to him -- John, "beloved" 1: The neighbors were all filled with awe, and throughout the hill country of Judea people were talking about all these things. He has raised up a horn of salvation soteria for us in the house of his servant David as he said through his holy prophets of long ago , salvation soteria from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us -- to show mercy to our fathers and to remember his holy covenant, the oath he swore to our father Abraham: The prophecy begins with praise, and then begins to detail reasons for the praise. Now he comes to set them free from their captivity and liberate them. The phrase "horn of salvation" in our passage refers to a mighty act of salvation or deliverance. The root idea of the Greek noun soteria is "deliverance, preservation" from impending death, and then "salvation" or deliverance from any threat, enemy, or captor. In the New Testament, however, salvation almost always refers to a spiritual concept -- salvation from the power of sin. In verse 74 we see a word similar to "salvation, save" -- the verb "rescue" rhuomai , "to rescue from danger, save, rescue, deliver, preserve someone. In secular Greek literature it means "work for pay, be in servitude, render cultic service," but in the New Testament it is used exclusively in a religious sense, "to carry out religious duties," such as "to serve God. We live in an age that laughs at the concept of holiness and taunts anyone who seeks to live a holy life. Even some church people mock the idea. A Ministry of Preparation 1: Every valley shall be raised up, every mountain and hill made low; the rough ground shall become level, the rugged places a plain. And the glory of the Lord will be revealed, and all mankind together will see it. For the mouth of the Lord has spoken. Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come," says the Lord Almighty. Later, when John the Baptist enters his ministry, he is asked who he is. We usually want to get credit for the good we do and our sins forgotten. But, if the truth be told, few get the credit they deserve. Many, like John, carry on ministries of tremendous importance to prepare for the future, but are seldom recognized for that role. But it does matter that you are faithful to God who called you to this ministry of preparation so that his work might go forward unimpeded. That is how they saw the Messiah. But godly Zechariah prophesies of a spiritual deliverance -- "to give his people the knowledge of salvation soteria through the forgiveness of their sins" 1: Sin kept them in captivity as debtors; forgiveness would set them free. Indeed, John came "preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins" 3: But he is also merciful -- granting us forgiveness that we do not deserve and have no right to expect. Literally, it means "the inward parts of the body, including especially the viscera, entrails. The word is often used to express emotions such as love and affection. It refers to the rising of stars and the sun, and here refers to "the dawn" as figurative of the coming of the Messiah. This shaft of early morning sun will suddenly illuminate those "living in darkness and in the shadow of death" 1: In the future he will honor Galilee of the Gentiles, by the way of the sea, along the Jordan -- The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned. How his neighbors must have talked for weeks and weeks. John Lives in the Desert 1: Zechariah and Elizabeth lived in a village in the hill country of Judea, along the ridge of coastal mountains south of Jerusalem. The western slope receives most of the rain, but the eastern slope is dry, receiving less than 12 inches of rain per year. Much of it is barren, trackless wilderness described as "desert," Greek eremos, "an uninhabited region or locality, desert, grassland, wilderness. Prayer Father, thank you that you call many to be preparers for you. Sometimes this kind of work

is difficult and thankless and I feel unappreciated. Help me to be content to be a preparer of your ways where you place me. Key Verse "And you, my child, will be called a prophet of the Most High; for you will go on before the Lord to prepare the way for him, to give his people the knowledge of salvation through the forgiveness of their sins. Why are they so surprised when Zechariah writes "John" on a wooden tablet? How does the filling of the Holy Spirit relate to prophecy? Zechariah and his son John were from the house or tribe of Levi. What does it mean when the prophecy refers to "the house of his servant David"? What tribe was he from? How is his lineage significant? Do they speak of military or spiritual salvation? When does the Messiah bring spiritual salvation? When do we believe Messiah brings about military deliverance to his people? What kind of lives does he expect us to live? What kinds of ministries of preparation do we see in the church today? Why is preparation so important for the future? What does the history of revivals teach us about the importance of preparation? Why do we sometimes get disillusioned with ministries of preparation? References Common Abbreviations *www. Eliezer 48 27c* , in *Strack and Billerback II*, f.