

John The Baptist

No. 103

Introduction.

- I. This Lord's day I would like to invite your attention to the reading of a large segment of the first chapter of the gospel of Luke.
- II. Luke, the inspired historian, states. (Lk. 1:5-25, 57-66).

LUK 1:5 In the days of Herod, king of Judea, there was a certain priest named Zacharias, of the division of Abijah; and he had a wife from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. 6 And they were both righteous in the sight of God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and requirements of the Lord. 7 And they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and they were both advanced in years.8 Now it came about, while he was performing his priestly service before God in the appointed order of his division, 9according to the custom of the priestly office, he was chosen by lot to enter the temple of the Lord and burn incense. 10 And the whole multitude of the people were in prayer outside at the hour of the incense offering. 11 And an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing to the right of the altar of incense. 12 And Zacharias was troubled when he saw him, and fear gripped him. 13 But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your petition has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will give him the name John. 14 "And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth. 15 "For he will be great in the sight of the Lord, and he will drink no wine or liquor; and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit, while yet in his mother's womb.16 "And he will turn back many of the sons of Israel to the Lord their God. 17 "And it is he who will go as a forerunner before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers back to the children, and the disobedient to the attitude of the righteous; so as to make ready a people prepared for the Lord." 18 And Zacharias said to the angel, "How shall I know this for certain? For I am an old man, and my wife is advanced in years." 19 And the angel answered and said to him, "I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God; and I have been sent to speak to you, and to bring you this good news. 20 "And behold, you shall be silent and unable to speak until the day when these things

take place, because you did not believe my words, which shall be fulfilled in their proper time." 21 And the people were waiting for Zacharias, and were wondering at his delay in the temple.22 But when he came out, he was unable to speak to them; and they realized that he had seen a vision in the temple; and he kept making signs to them, and remained mute. 23 And it came about, when the days of his priestly service were ended, that he went back home. 24 And after these days Elizabeth his wife became pregnant; and she kept herself in seclusion for five months, saying, 25 "This is the way the Lord has dealt with me in the days when He looked with favor upon me, to take away my disgrace among men." 57 Now the time had come for Elizabeth to give birth, and she brought forth a son. 58 And her neighbors and her relatives heard that the Lord had displayed His great mercy toward her; and they were rejoicing with her. 59 And it came about that on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child, and they were going to call him Zacharias, after his father.60 And his mother answered and said, "No indeed; but he shall be called John." 61 And they said to her, "There is no one among your relatives who is called by that name." 62 And they made signs to his father, as to what he wanted him called. 63 And he asked for a tablet, and wrote as follows, "His name is John." And they were all astonished. 64 And at once his mouth was opened and his tongue loosed, and he began to speak in praise of God. 65 And fear came on all those living around them; and all these matters were being talked about in all the hill country of Judea. 66 And all who heard them kept them in mind, saying, "What then will this child turn out to be?" For the hand of the Lord was certainly with him.

I. In this passage we read of the birth of John the Baptist who was one of the most important and outstanding men who has ever lived.

A. **John was born about 6 months before Jesus** and was the son of Zacharias and Elisabeth who were both of the family of Aaron. Since John the Baptist was of the family of Aaron, he would have normally become a priest of Israel, but God had a greater purpose for him to accomplish in life. He was going to be the messenger that Malachi and Isaiah prophesied would prepare the way for Jesus.

MAL 3:1 "Behold, I am going to send My messenger, and he will clear the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple; and the messenger of the covenant, in whom you delight, behold, He is coming," says the Lord of hosts.

ISA 40:3 A voice is calling, "Clear the way for the Lord in the wilderness; Make smooth in the desert a highway for our God.

B. The Bible states that John grew and was strong in spirit and was in the deserts till the day of his showing unto Israel. (Lk. 1:80).

C. **About 25 or 26 A.D.** John launched his great ministry in the wilderness of Judea at the age of 30. John was dressed in raiment of camel's hair and did not have a number of degrees attached to his name, but the multitudes flocked into the wilderness to hear this great preacher proclaim the message of God powerfully and sincerely from the heart.

II. There are **five things** I would like to emphasize about John the Baptist.

I. **His Parents** - The first thing was his parents.

A. The fact John grew up to be a godly man was not an accident.

1. The Bible states his parents were both righteous before God. They walked in His commandments and ordinances blameless. (Lk. 1:6). John grew up to be a godly man because he had seen a godly example in his house.

2. **What have our children seen in our homes?** Have our children seen prayer? Have they seen Bible reading? Have they seen love and respect for authority? Have they seen a Christlike influence? Parents should prayerfully ask each of these questions for our children are going to become what they have seen in the home.

B. **Once I read of a father who took his 3 year old son fishing.** When they checked out the father displayed to the game warden a good size walleye perch. The youngster spoke up saying, "Yea, and we got a little one, too." The warden searched the boat and found an undersized 10 inch perch. The father was fined ten dollars.

1. The little child was perfectly sincere in telling the game officer about the fish hid in the boat. He didn't know anything about deceit. He didn't want to get his father in trouble. He more than likely, however, received his first lesson in deceit when he got home or when they got out of the sight of the game warden.

2. Isn't it a **tragedy that many parents** teach their children to lie, curse, cheat and do other sinful things by their own inconsistent behavior? We need to not fool ourselves by thinking our children are not observing our conduct, for they are. They will walk in our steps.

C. **A little girl of five once asked grace at the table.** She prayed, "Come, Lord Jesus, be our guest," when, suddenly turning to her mother, she said, "But mother, I do not want Jesus to be our guest." "Why dear?" demanded her shocked mother. The child answered, "Well, a guest is one who comes only sometimes. I want Jesus to be here all the time." This little girl expressed the great need of every home. Let's not make Christ an occasional guest in our homes, but Jesus should be in them all the time. Every home should be filled with the spirit and teaching of Christ.

II. **Elijah To Come** - A second thing I would like to emphasize is John was the Elijah to come. God said. (Mal. 4:5).

A. Elijah was one of the greatest prophets of the Old Testament. He did not die, but was taken up in to the visible heavens in a chariot of fire. The Jews believed that Elijah would one day literally return before the coming of the Messiah and he would prepare the people for the Messiah by turning them to God.

B. Jesus informs us, however, in **Matthew 11:14** that John was the Elijah to come. He was not the literal Elijah, but he came in "the spirit and power of Elijah." (Lk. 1:17).

1. John cried out in the wilderness saying. (Matt. 3:2).

2. John prepared the way for Jesus by calling the people to repentance and by baptizing them in the

river Jordan for the remission of sins. John also prepared the way for Jesus by identifying Christ and affirming the long awaited kingdom was nigh.

- a. When John saw Christ coming to the Jordan to be baptized, he cried out. (Jn. 1:29).
- b. After Christ's baptism he said. (Jn. 1:34).

III. **Man Of Courage** - A third thing I would like to emphasize is John was a man of great courage.

- A. He manifested courage **at the Jordan River**. A large number of those who lived in Jerusalem and Judea were coming to John to be baptized by him, but when he saw the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to be baptized he called them "offspring of vipers" and demanded that they bring forth fruit showing their repentance before he would baptize them.
- B. John also manifested courage when he **rebuked Herod for his unlawful marriage** with Herodias. He had married his brother Phillip's wife. (Matt. 14:3).
 1. The Mosaical law forbade this incest. It was wrong for a man to marry his brother's wife unless the brother was dead and had no children.

LEV 18:16 'You shall not uncover the nakedness of your brother's wife; it is your brother's nakedness.

LEV 20:21 'If there is a man who takes his brother's wife, it is abhorrent; he has uncovered his brother's nakedness. They shall be childless.

2. Herod was living in open defiance of the law.
3. John was cast into prison and was beheaded because he would not compromise the truth.
4. **We need more preachers like John**. Some preachers are heard to say, "If I preach on adultery and other such sins, I'll be fired." This is often true, but it is better to lose a job and even your head, than your soul. (Matt. 10:28).
5. **We more godly men and women like John**. We need men and women who stand up for truth in their own lives. We need more men and women who insist that the truth and nothing but the truth be preached from the pulpit and taught in the classes. It is only when the preachers, elders, deacons, and all members stand for the truth that truth will prevail and the church will glorify God.

IV. **Humility** - A fourth fact I would like to emphasize about John was his humility.

- A. **John was a great preacher and had many disciples**, but he was humble and did not seek to exalt himself, but Christ. (Jn. 1:26, 27; 3:30).
- B. When Jesus came to be baptized by John, John expressed his unworthiness to baptize Christ and said Christ should baptize him. It was only when Jesus insisted that it was necessary "to fulfill all righteousness" that John was willing to baptize Christ. (Matt. 3:13-17).
- C. **We should have the spirit of John the Baptist**. We should not exalt ourselves, but should stand behind the cross of Christ and point people King of kings and Lord of lords. (Gal. 6:14; Lk. 14:11).

V. **None Greater Has Ever Been Born** - A fifth fact I would like to emphasize about John is none greater has ever been born of woman. (Matt. 11:11).

- A. Jesus complimented John here by saying that **none greater has ever been born of woman**, but He added the least in the kingdom of God is greater than John. John died before the church was established and

did not enjoy the blessings enjoyed by the least in the kingdom.

B. Those in the kingdom enjoy great blessing and privileges.

1. As Christians we have a Savior who died for our sins. As Christians we have One who intercedes for them at the right hand of God.
2. As Christians we enjoy the fellowship of other Christians and most of all fellowshi with God now and forever.
3. The greatest person in the world does not have these privileges and blessings unless he is born of the water and Spirit into the kingdom of God.

Conclusion.

- I. John was indeed a giant of a man and one whom we should emulate in many respects.
- II. The greatest thing John did was to prepare the way for the Savior of the world be pointing men to Christ.
- III. **The greatest thing we can do is to point men and lead men to Christ and to accept Christ and make him our Savior.** Christ can become your Savior by turning from your sins and by being baptized for the remission of sins. Will you give your life to Jesus as we sing the hymn of invitation?

