

# JOHN THE BAPTIST

Luke 1:5-22; Matthew 3:1-17



BEFORE Jesus was born, an angel came from Heaven and told Jesus' mother she was to have a special little baby boy from God and to name Him Jesus. He was God's Son and she was to take care of Him for a while.

In another city lived a preacher and his wife Elizabeth. One day an angel came to them to tell them that they were to have a little boy, too. His name was to be John. He was not God's Son, but he was going to grow up to tell boys and girls about God's Son. He would tell men and women how to pray and love Jesus. John was Jesus' cousin. He was going to tell all the people to be sure and listen to Jesus.

After John had grown to be a man, he lived way, way far out in a lonely place where he talked to God and God talked to him.

John did not have clothes like other people. His clothes were made of rough camel hair. His belt was made of skin. He did not have all the things to eat that other people had. He ate honey that the bees made in the trees. He ate locusts, too. These locusts were a little bit like a grasshopper but they were real big and the people in that country liked them.

One day the people saw this man, dressed in camel's hair, preaching down by the river Jordan. Yes, it was John. God had told John it was time to go and tell all the boys and girls and big people about Jesus.

John had something wonderful to tell the people. He said that God was sending His very own Son, Jesus, to talk to them very soon. Jesus would teach them the things they must do, so that they might go to Heaven and see God. He said: "Jesus is my friend. You make Him your friend and listen to what He tells you."

"You will have to be good," John would say. "You must be kind to each other and share with your friends. If you know someone who is hungry, and you have something to eat, you must give him some of yours. If you have two coats and you see

someone that is cold who does not have any coat at all you must not be selfish; you must give him one of your coats so he can be warm, too.”

“You must never, never, never take something that belongs to someone else and keep it.” John meant not even a little old toy, or doll, or toy car. Not anything at all. You must never take it and keep it for yourself unless your friend gives it to you.

“Wait and watch for Jesus,” said John. “He will be coming this way soon to teach you. He will be walking down here. You listen to Jesus. He can teach you better than I can.”

John would baptize people in the river Jordan. He baptized only the ones who prayed and told God they wanted to work for Him and do what God told them to do. To be baptized in water was a way of showing that all sin-spots had been taken out of their heart. God had made their heart clean.

One day John looked up and there he saw Jesus coming down to the river. Jesus wanted John to baptize Him, too.

Oh my, John did not think he was good enough to baptize Jesus! He thought it would be better for Jesus to baptize him.

Jesus knew that God wanted all the people who loved Him to be baptized so Jesus wanted to do it, too, even if He was God’s Son. Jesus wanted to teach the people to mind God; and God said people were to be baptized.

Into the river went Jesus and John. Then John put Jesus under the water real quick and up again.

A wonderful thing happened! When Jesus was baptized something sweet and pure and beautiful like a dove came right down from Heaven and sat on Jesus. A Voice came out of Heaven, too. God was talking. He said, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”

Someday, when you grow up, you will want to be baptized, too, just like Jesus. But you must first be sure that your heart is clean and free from sin before you are baptized.