



## CURRENT THEME:

**Characters at the Cradle**

## MEMORY VERSE

"...Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord." **Luke 2:10,11 NIV**

**DECEMBER 14 | LIFE APPLICATION**

**Joy = Finding Ways to Serve Jesus Every Day!**

Today's Scripture: **Luke 1:57-66**

## Characters at the Cradle: "The Birth of John the Baptist"



### Review

- Gabriel appears to Zechariah (the promise of a son named John)
  - Gabriel appears to Mary (the promise of a son supernaturally conceived in her by the Holy Spirit)
  - Gabriel appears to Joseph and assures him Mary's child is conceived by the Holy Spirit
  - Mary's response to this amazing news: a song of praise, often called the Magnificat
  - **This week:** John the Baptist is born, the son of Zechariah and Elizabeth
1. **In verses 13-17, what was the good news that Zechariah received from the angel Gabriel?** *(That he and Elizabeth would have a son after many years of waiting. The son would be named John. And, John would be great in the eyes of the Lord because he would turn many people to faith in the Lord.)*  
**Why were these people chosen by God to have this special child?** Go back to **verse 6** in your Bible. *("And they were both righteous before God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and statutes of the Lord.")*
  2. **What happened to Zechariah after he heard this news?** *(He showed unbelief that this could happen, and he was caused to be mute by the Lord until the birth of his child.)*
  3. **Who visited Elizabeth and what was special about the visit?** *(After being visited by the angel Gabriel and knowing she would be the mother of the Messiah, Mary visited her cousin Elizabeth because the angel also told her that Elizabeth, her much older cousin, was also with child.)*

### Read and Discuss **Luke 1:57-66**

57 "Now the time came for Elizabeth to give birth, and she bore a son. 58 And

her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had shown great mercy to her, and they rejoiced with her. 59 And on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child. And they would have called him Zechariah after his father, 60 but his mother answered, "No; he shall be called John." 61 And they said to her, "None of your relatives is called by this name." 62 And they made signs to his father, inquiring what he wanted him to be called. 63 And he asked for a writing tablet and wrote, "His name is John." And they all wondered. 64 And immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue loosed, and he spoke, blessing God. 65 And fear came on all their neighbors. And all these things were talked about through all the hill country of Judea, 66 and all who heard them laid them up in their hearts, saying, "What then will this child be?" For the hand of the Lord was with him.:

1. After the birth of their child, the neighbors came to celebrate with Zechariah and Elizabeth. **Why was the birth of John a cause to celebrate?** (Because Zechariah and Elizabeth had prayed many years for a child and they were past childbearing age. This was amazing to everyone!)
2. As was the custom with the Jews, the baby was circumcised and this was also celebrated. The neighbors assumed that the child would be named after Zechariah, but that was not God's plan. Because Zechariah was not able to speak, Elizabeth surprised everyone by speaking for Zechariah. **What did she say?** See **verse 60**. ("No, he shall be called John.")
3. The neighbors wondered about this. No one in Zechariah's family was named John. They turned to Zechariah and made signs, asking him for the child's name. **What did John do?** Read **verse 63**. (He wrote on a tablet, "His name is John.")
4. **What happened immediately after this?** Read **verse 64**. (Zechariah could talk!) **Why do you think this happened?** (He had obeyed God.) **What did Zechariah say now that he could talk?** (He began blessing God.) **Do you bless God when something wonderful happens to you?**
5. Read **verse 65**. **How did the neighbors react to all of this?** (With fear and wonder - these things were talked about in all of Judea!) **What were people wondering?** Read **verse 66**. (They wondered, "What then will this child be?") **Why did they say this?** (Because they knew the hand of the Lord was on this child.)

#### **A note from our pastor, David Chadwick:**

The story of John the Baptist is amazing! Born to an older, childless couple, John grew up to be an important part of the story of Jesus, walking before Him and telling people to repent because Jesus was coming soon. **But what about you? You are greater than John...how?** You have the whole story of Jesus! You know

John's part as the forerunner of Jesus. But you know things John didn't know: The cross...the Resurrection... and you have **the Holy Spirit who raised Jesus from the dead living in you!**

Now you must find your call. Your work. Your part of the story.

As a Jesus follower, you are to be unleashed in mission, your reason for being on this planet. Knowing we are getting closer to Jesus's coming, your mission field is between your feet. Every day. Serving Jesus, as John did, but with a greater power in you. Bringing heaven to earth. His will in heaven brought to earth through you!

### Family Challenge

1. John's name means, "God is gracious." **Do you think names are important? Why or why not?** John's name was important to God. He had big plans for John! Parents, talk with your kids about how you chose their names. Then, look up the meanings of your names and discuss together. Many parents use family names. Some just like the names they give their children. And some want their child's name to have a certain meaning.
2. Read and discuss this verse together: *"Truly, I say to you, among those born of women there has arisen no one greater than John the Baptist. Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he."* **Matthew 11:11**

**What do you think this means? Who is Matthew speaking to in this verse? To believers in his time or to all who follow Jesus? (Discuss)**

Now let's look at this week's Life Application: **"Joy= finding ways to serve Jesus every day."**

If the verse and the **Life Application** are speaking to us, how can we find ways to serve Jesus every day? How does Jesus want us to live our lives serving Him? How can we do this:

- At school
- At work
- At church
- In our neighborhood
- In our city
- With people surrounding us

**Why does it bring us joy when we serve the Lord?**

**Prayer:** *Dear Jesus, We know that You have a purpose for us every day, and we want to know what that is each day. Help us to serve You in all these areas, letting people know about Your love for them and how they can find joy in*