Profile: John the Baptist December 2

His Birth

The time came, Elizabeth delivered a fine baby boy, all their friends and relatives rejoiced with her and realize the Lord had truly blessed her.

At a week old the baby was taken to be circumcised and named, everyone just automatically figured he'd be named Zechariah – But his mother said, "No! His name is to be John." Luke 1:60. Zachariah confirmed her choice on a paper because he could not speak but – At that moment Zechariah was able to speak again and he started praising God. Luke 1:64.

Zechariah went on to prophesy of John's future –

"You, my child, will be called a prophet of the Most High God. You will go ahead of the Lord to prepare his road for him, to tell his people that they will be saved by having their sins forgiven…" Luke 1:76, 77.

Indeed John did go before the Lord and prepared a path for him. At exactly what age John went into the wilderness the Bible doesn't say but he did live in the wilderness preaching forgiveness.

We need time an in the “wilderness" quiet time away from our busy lives to meditate upon the Lord. What better way to start each day than with the devotions.

VERSE FOR TODAY: The child grew and developed in body and spirit. He lived in the desert until the day when he appeared publicly to the people of Israel. Luke 1:80.

PRAYER THOUGHT: Help me, O Lord, to find and make use of the quiet time I find for you. Help me to be a pathfinder for the Lord also.

Profile: John the Baptist December 3

Preaching Repentance

John preached along the River Jordan, he was quite a curiosity; he dressed in camel skin and ate insects and wild honey. The curiosity may be attracted the people but his message kept them coming back!

John was not noted for his tact, especially when he was speaking to his own people – "You snakes!" He said to them. "Who told you that you would escape from the punishment God is about to send..?" Luke 3:7b. He went on to tell them that being an ancestor of Abraham wouldn't save them to the Lord's judgment was on them and ready to cast them into the fire!

The people wondered what they should do, first of all John told them to – "Turn away from your sins and be baptized, and God will forgive your sins." Luke 3:3b. He also told them to give to the needy, and the tax collectors not to collect more than required by law and the soldiers not to use force in collecting money or accuse anyone falsely. Some very good advice for us to! John last statement to the soldiers – "…Be content with your pay." Luke 3:14c. That can go for all of us if we were content with our pay and in our place in life, at least until that place can be improved upon.

John baptized many people, even his cousin, Jesus the Messiah; although he was perfect his baptism is our example today.

VERSE FOR TODAY: In many different ways John preached the Good News to the people and urged them to change their ways. Luke 3:18.

PRAYER THOUGHT: Help me, O Lord, to follow your example in baptism and John's advice in my life.

Profile: John the Baptist December 4

His End

John spoke out against King Herod reprimanding him for marrying his brother’s wife, Herod put John in prison. Herodias wanted John killed because he kept at them about their marriage but she couldn't because Herod was afraid of John, he knew John was a person of God. Herod even enjoyed listening to John talk although he became afraid about what John said.

Herodias waited for her chance to get John at Herod's birthday party the opportunity came. The daughter of Herodias did a very pleasing dance for Herod and company. Herod was so impressed he offered the girl anything she wanted; she asked her mother what she should ask for – "The head of John the Baptist," she answered. Mark 6:24b.

Herod was saddened by this request but there was nothing he could do after all he vowed in front of company to give her anything she wanted. John the Baptist was beheaded by the guard and John's head was brought to the girl on a platter and then she took it to her mother. Herodias had to be a very hard hearted person, it's almost impossible to imagine asking for man's head and much less to actually seeing the man's head on a platter!

Herodias may have had John the Baptist killed but she certainly did not stop John's message or baptism, it still lives on today centuries later, with a few changes brought about by Jesus.

VERSE FOR TODAY: When Jesus heard the news about John, he left there in a boat and went to a lonely place by himself. Matthew 14:13a.

PRAYER THOUGHT: Be with those, O Lord, who can be ruthless as Herodias, in torture and killing innocent people. Help them to see the error of their ways.

Profile: Joseph December 5

Often Overlooked

Joseph is often played down, but he was a very important part of Jesus life. Joseph was Jesus earthly father rearing him in earthly things, food, clothing, shelter and other religious upbringing requirements of the day.

Mary was the vehicle for Jesus virgin, heavenly birth but the human lineage that entitles Jesus to bear to the throne of Israel was Joseph, fulfilling the requirements of lineage.

Joseph had quite a few unusual experiences connected with the birth of Jesus, the dreams he had before he and Mary were wed, the long trip to Bethlehem, the search for room and ending up in the stable, then the actual birth of Jesus, the Shepherd's visit, the Wiseman, the dream and on the flight to Egypt.

The last mention of Joseph is at the Temple when Jesus was 12 when he had to return to Jerusalem to get Jesus from the Passover.

Joseph was very important not only in lending his lineage but also lending himself in the rearing of Jesus, at least in the early years, the ones now called the formative years.

Joseph's obedience to God saved Jesus’ life when he was young, we must obey God and rear our children to the best of our ability and rely on the Lord for guidance.

VERSE FOR TODAY: So when Joseph woke up, he married Mary, as the angel of the Lord had told him to do. Matthew 1:24.

PRAYER THOUGHT: Help me, O Lord, to be obedient to you and to teach my children and those near me, obedience to you.

Profile: Andrew December 6

Fisherman Made Apostle

Life as the fisherman was not an easy life, it wasn't a buzz out in the bay in a boat, with an outboard motor to catch fish with a fancy rod and reel. Their days were long and hard sometimes even fished all night and still returned empty-handed.

Andrew was a disciple of John the Baptist, when Jesus came by, John announced Jesus and Andrew left and followed Jesus.

Andrew that very day became a Fisher of men when he went and found Peter, his brother telling him – "We have found the Messiah." (This means “Christ”.) John 1:41b.

Andrew was at the feeding of the five thousand, in fact he was the one who found the food – Another of his disciples, Andrew, who was Simon Peter's brother, said, "There is a boy here who has five loaves of barley and two fish. But they are certainly not enough for all these people." John 6:8, 9. But we know with a little help from the Lord there were twelve baskets of leftovers!

Andrew was in the shadow of his brother Peter, but still one of the central apostles.

VERSE FOR TODAY: Jesus said to them, "Come with me, and I will teach you to catch people." Matthew 4:19.

PRAYER THOUGHT: Help me to be a fisher of men like Andrew, and if the need is there help me to bring those close to me to your throne of grace, as Andrew brought Peter, his brother.

Profile: Peter December 7

With Jesus

Peter was brought to Jesus by his brother, Andrew. Peter was probably the most active apostle.

Peter walked on water to Jesus and he was successful as long as he kept his eyes upon Jesus.

Peter was one who answered Jesus question about who the apostles thought he was – Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." Matthew 16:16.

Peter along with James and John were with Jesus on the mountain at the Transfiguration, Peter wanted to build tents for each of those transfigured

The saddest event in Peter's life was perhaps the night he denied Jesus; he denied any knowledge of Jesus when questioned. We know that Peter was very disturbed by his behavior – Peter went out and wept bitterly. Luke 22:62.

Peter was probably the most impulsive apostle. He cut off Malchus’ ear when Jesus was arrested in the garden.

Jesus left Peter with a great responsibility – Jesus said to him – "Take care of my sheep..." John 21:17c.

Peter was a very responsible person, although he did error in the denial, but we can do well to take Peter's example, to know the Messiah and to keep our hearts tuned to his will.

VERSE FOUR TODAY: "Come!" answered Jesus. So Peter got out of the boat and started walking on the water to Jesus. Matthew 14:29.

PRAYER THOUGHT: Help me, O Lord, to get out of this boat of life and sin and walked to you in faith and courage.

Profile: Peter December 8

After the Resurrection

Peter was at the tomb of Jesus on the Sunday morning after the crucifixion.

Peter took the responsibility of the flock very seriously; he headed up the meeting to find a replacement for Judas.

Peter made his famous speech on Pentecost, when he told them and us what we must do to be saved – Peter said to them, “Each one of you must turn away from your sins and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, so that your sins will be forgiven; and you will receive God's gift, the Holy Spirit..." Acts 2:38.

Peter faced many imprisonments and trips before the Council in his ministry; he was not frightened by these encounters, because he was filled with the Holy Spirit.

Peter lead the Jerusalem meeting with the decision was made not to burden Gentiles with circumcision.

Peter performed many miracles of healing the sick and the lame to raising the dead. Paul also came to Peter for advice and information

Peter was a truly dynamic apostle, he was close to Jesus then he was filled with the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. Peter received a vision that all people were acceptable to God and to receive the Good News.

VERSE FOR TODAY: "…I, who am an elder myself, appealed of the church elders among you. I am a witness of Christ's sufferings and I will share the glory that will be revealed…" 1 Peter 5:1a,b.

PRAYER THOUGHT: O Lord, thank you for Peter, help me to have Peter strength and wit. Fill me, O Lord with the Holy Spirit.

Profile: John December 9

Beloved Disciple

One of John's earliest encounters with Jesus was when Jesus allowed Peter the large catch a fish, James and John bring in their partners help them to shore. It was there that Jesus called the four of them to discipleship as recalled by Luke.

John was very close to Jesus, John was at the Transfiguration, Peter and John went ahead to prepare the last Passover meal, John was with Peter and James at Gethsemane, when they were to watch and pray but fell asleep. John was extra special to Jesus. John is the only disciple mentioned to be at the cross – Jesus saw his mother and the disciple he loved standing there; so he said to his mother, "He is your son." Then he said to the disciple, "She is your mother." From that time the disciple took her to live in his home. John 19:26, 27. John was made responsible for Mary, the mother of Jesus.

John was the author of the books of John, First, Second, Third John and Revelation. John was very strong about false teachers, in doctrine and then the Revelation from God was probably the most moving experience for John, seeing the future in heaven revealed. What an experience!

VERSE FOR TODAY: Announcing Christ's divinity – In the beginning the Word already existed; the Word was with God, and the Word was God. John 1:1

PRAYER THOUGHT: Thank you, O Lord, for John and his recording of your life, teaching and revelations, help me to use these writings to change my life and grow in you.