December 1

Profile: John the Baptist

Foretold

We think of John the Baptist as a strange person who preached in the desert but he had much more going for him that – Read: Isaiah 40:3

Zachariah, a priest and Elizabeth, his wife, were both godly people and childless, one day at the altar while Zachariah was doing his priestly duties, an angel appeared to him, he became frightened – Read: Luke 1:13. Zechariah questioned the angel, the angel made him unable to speak until after the baby’s birth.

To be childless in this time was socially unacceptable, after Elizabeth became pregnant – Read: Luke 1:25.

Elizabeth felt life when Mary, Jesus’ mother to-be came to see her; they both were carrying children of the Lord. Read: Luke 1:44.

Our children are blessings of the Lord we must be aware of that and treat them as blessings not as inconveniences.

VERSE FOR TODAY: Luke 1: 45

PRAYER THOUGHT: A special prayer for children today, may they always be treated as a blessing, may we help them, pray for them, teach them and most of all love them.

December 2

Profile: John the Baptist

His Birth

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

At a week old the baby was taken to be circumcised and named, everyone just automatically figured he would be named Zechariah – Read: Luke 1:63.

Zechariah went on to prophesy of John’s future – Read: 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 in the “wilderness” quiet time away from our busy lives to meditate upon the Lord. What better way to start each day than with devotions?

VERSE FOR TODAY: 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 you too.

December 3

Profile: John the Baptist

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 have 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. – Read: Luke 3:7. He went on to tell them that being an ancestor of Abraham wouldn’t save them and that 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 – Read: Luke 3:3.

He went on to tell:

* The people to share with the needy (vs.11)
* The tax collectors to be fair (vs.13)
* The soldiers he talked about justice and being content (vs14)

This is all good advice for us as well.

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

VERSE FOR TODAY: Luke 3:18

PRAYER THOUGHT: Thank-you, O Lord, for John the Baptist, for his advice and example in speaking to the people and for your example of baptism.

December 4

Profile: John the Baptist

His End

John spoke out against King Herod, reprimanding him for his marriage to 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’d become afraid about what John said.

Herodias waited for her chance to get John and the opportunity came at Herod’s birthday party – Read: Mark 6:22-25. The king was very upset by this request because of the vow John the Baptist was beheaded and his head brought to the girl on a platter and she in turn presented it to her mother.

This act did not stop John’s message of repentance and baptism, it still lives on today, centuries later, with a few changes brought about by Jesus’ death, resurrection and the receiving of the Holy Spirit.

VERSE FOR TODAY: Matthew 14:13

PRAYER THOUGHT: Be with those, O Lord, as ruthless as Herodias to show them the error of their way. Thank-you for John and his message of repentance and forgiveness.

December 5

Profile: Joseph Mary’s husband

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 the earthly things, food, clothing, shelter and the religious upbringing.

Mary was the vehicle for Jesus’ virgin, heavenly birth but the human lineage that entitled Jesus to be heir 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 a room and ending up in a stable, not to mention the actual birth of Jesus, the shepherd’s visit, the wise men, another dream and the flight to Egypt.

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

Joseph was very important not only 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, we must obey God and rear our children to the best of our ability and rely on the Lord for guidance.

VERSE FOR TODAY: Matthew 1:24.

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

December 6

Profile: Andrew

Fisherman made Apostle

Life as a fisherman was not an easy life; it wasn’t a buzz out in the bay with the boat, outboard motor and a fancy rod and reel! Their days were long and hard sometimes they 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 – Read: John 1:41b.

Andrew was at the feeding of the five thousand, in fact he was the one who found the food – Read: John 6:8, 9. 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: 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 closest to me to your throne of grace as Andrew brought Peter, his brother.

December 7

Profile: Peter

With Jesus

Peter was brought to Jesus by his brother, Andrew in John’s account of the choosing of the apostles. Peter was probably the most active apostle.

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

Peter was the one who answered Jesus’ question about who the apostles thought he was – Read: 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 – Read: Luke 22:60-62.

Peter was probably the most impulsive apostle. He cut off the ear of Malchus’ ear the night Jesus was arrested in the Garden.

Jesus left Peter with a great responsibility – Read John 21:17.

Peter was a very responsible person, although he did error in 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 FOR TODAY: Matthew 14:29

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

December 8

Profile: Peter

After the Resurrection

Peter was at the tomb of Jesus on Sunday morning witnessing the empty tomb.

Peter took the responsibility of the flock seriously:

* He headed up the meeting to replace Judas
* He made the speech on Pentecost – Acts 2:38
* Trips before the Sanhedrin and faced imprisonment several times
* He lead the Jerusalem meeting that decided not to burden Gentiles with circumcision and the vision at Joppa to accept Gentiles and others.
* He performed miracles, healing the sick and the lame
* Paul came to Peter for advice and information

Peter was close to Jesus, was also filled with the Holy Spirit and was truly a dynamic disciple.

VERSE FOR TODAY: I Peter 5:1, 2

PRAYER THOUGHT: O Lord, thank-you for Peter, help me to have Peter’s wit and strength. Fill me, O Lord, with the Holy Spirit to do your will.