

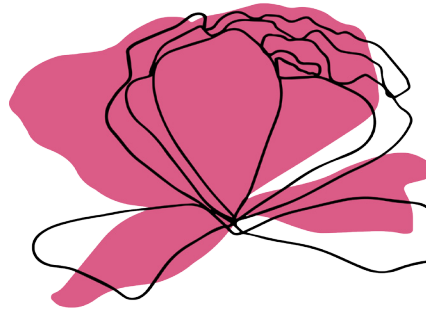
GOOD NEWS

NO 3

WINTER/SPRING 2022

BOLD AND ON MESSAGE

“He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.”
Matthew 3:11



“And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth.”
Luke 1:14

LUKE 1:13-17/MATTHEW 3:1-17

“In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, and saying, ‘Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!’”

Matthew 3:1-2

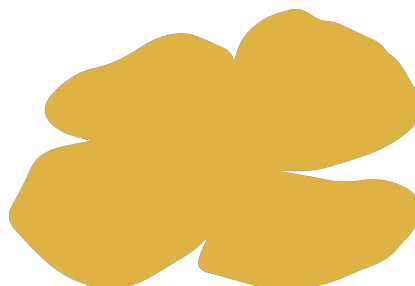
John the Baptist

IN OTHER NEWS

TODAY'S WEATHER



PARTLY CLOUDY
Chance of rain with afternoon clearing.



DUST UP AT THE RIVER

Local man calls out Pharisees and Sadducees as “brood of vipers,” as he baptizes many in the Jordan River.

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BOLD AND ON MESSAGE

LUKE 1:13-17

MATTHEW 3:1-17

The beginning of anyone's story begins at their birth—true or false? After all, what can be done before a day in their life has even passed? Does the back story matter? Is there information before the birth that makes this life even more spectacular?

Are you kidding? It's ALL about the backstory for me! I love remembering and reminiscing the full story of becoming a mother. Or honestly, I love the God stories of how He brought so many blessings into my life, and how I KNOW it was His loving hand guiding me! That's why I love to journal—so that I can chronicle ALL of the amazing ways that God comes through for me and my loved ones time and time again. So, yes, I love the FULL story of John the Baptist, because there was so much purpose even before he was conceived! The providence and plans of God are thrilling.

THE BIRTH OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

When an angel unexpectedly pops in on the priest, Zacharias, in the inner room of the temple...even John's own father has trouble believing what's going to happen.

Luke 1:8-17

So it was, that while he was serving as priest before God in the order of his division, according to the custom of the priesthood, his lot fell to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord. And the whole multitude of the people was praying outside at the hour of incense. Then the angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing on the right side of the altar of incense. And when Zacharias saw him, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him.

But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your prayer is heard; and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall

call his name John. And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth. For he will be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink. He will also be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb. And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God. He will also go before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, 'to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children,' and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."

1. How did Zacharias respond to the angel in verse 12 and verse 18?
2. What happened to Zacharias as a result of his unbelief? (Luke 1:19-20)

Only six months later, the same angel, Gabriel, was sent by God to a virgin named Mary.

Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name JESUS. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end" (Luke 1:30-33).

The angel goes on to tell Mary more about Jesus. And then he says, "Now indeed, Elizabeth your relative has also conceived a son in her old age; and this is now the sixth month for her who was called barren. For with God nothing will be impossible" (Luke 1:36-37).

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LUKE 1:13-17
MATTHEW 3:1-17

Read Luke 1:39-45

3. What happened when Mary greeted Elizabeth?

Fill in Luke 1:80 NKJV

4. "So the child _____ and became _____ in _____, and was in the _____ till the day of his manifestation to Israel."

5. Do you believe that your birth was planned by God? Why or why not?

Psalm 139:13-16 NIV

For You created my inmost being; You knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise You because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from You when I was made in the secret place, when I was woven together in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in Your book before one of them came to be.

6. What does it mean to you that "all the days ordained for [your life] were written before one of them came to be?"

Our lives, entrusted to the hands of God, are filled with purpose and blessing!

With all of these prophecies and excitement surrounding his birth, we are expecting great things from John. For generations, the people of Israel

had heard prophecy of this forerunner who would prepare the way of the Messiah. Now if he is going to do this right, he needs to be suave and a smooth talker...a real crowd-pleaser. And he'd better look the part, too. His clothes need to be fashionable... only the best for John. And if he's really gonna make an impact, a real impact, he'd better go straight to the heart of Jerusalem, to the crowds, and get cracking.

Matthew 3:1-12 NKJV

In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, and saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!" For this is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah, saying: "The voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the LORD; make His paths straight."

Now John himself was clothed in camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist; and his food was locusts and wild honey. Then Jerusalem, all Judea, and all the region around the Jordan went out to him and were baptized by him in the Jordan, confessing their sins. But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, "Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance, and do not think to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones. And even now the ax is laid to the root of the trees. Therefore every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

"I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fan is in His hand, and He will

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BOLD AND ON MESSAGE

LUKE 1:13-17

MATTHEW 3:1-17

thoroughly clean out His threshing floor, and gather His wheat into the barn; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.”

John was not doing what was “practical.” He was working in the power of the Holy Spirit. John was following the calling of God—he wasn’t in the big city, he was out in the wilderness. He certainly wasn’t tickling everyone’s ears with his “REPENT!” message. John wasn’t trying to fit in or please people, or sweet-talk. He did not concern himself with how he appeared to men. He was bold and on message!

Fill in:

7. “For the Lord _____ see as man sees; for man looks at the _____ appearance, but the LORD looks at the _____” (1 Samuel 16:7b NKJV).

It was said of John: “...*he will be great in the sight of the Lord...*” (Luke 1:15 NKJV)

BAPTISM OF JESUS

The people were coming to John to confess their sins and be baptized. Interestingly, baptism was not a new concept for the people of Israel. If a Gentile wanted to convert to Judaism, they would be baptized. In doing so, they could be ceremonially cleansed and join the faith. But these were Jews, the children of Abraham.

It was a strongly held belief that Abraham’s children could NOT go to hell. For a Jewish person to be baptized, they were identifying with the pagan Gentiles. This was a huge act of humility.

John was telling them that they could no longer hide behind their ancestral heritage. If they were coming to truly be repentant, there needed to be fruit, or they too would be cut down and thrown into the

fire.

Matthew 3:13-17

Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him. And John tried to prevent Him, saying, “I need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me?” But Jesus answered and said to him, “Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.” Then he allowed Him. When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”

Jesus was not baptized to wash any sins away. He was baptized to “fulfill all righteousness.” He was willing to humble himself, though he needed no cleansing, to be baptized.

8. Is there something that God has asked you to do, yet you have not humbled yourself to?

MAKING HIM GREATER

As John was beginning his ministry, preaching repentance and baptizing those who came to him, many wondered if he was Christ. John said clearly, “*I am not the Christ.*” He was always making Jesus greater.

Read John 1:19-27

9. The Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask John who he was. Who did they think John may be?

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LUKE 1:13-17
MATTHEW 3:1-17

10. But who did John say he was? (vs 23)

11. What did John say about the One coming after him? (vs 27)

“In saying this, John put himself lower in relation to Jesus than a normal disciple of a normal rabbi. A Rabbi’s disciple was expected to act virtually as his master’s slave, but to remove his shoes was too low a task for even a disciple (Ketuboth 96a).”
(www.enduringword.com)

JOHN’S DEATH

We have learned of John the Baptist’s bold, brave, faithful life. He walked faithfully before the Lord all of his days, and fulfilled his calling. His death also deserves credit due to his faithfulness.

12. Ecclesiastes 3:1-2: Fill in the blanks.
“To everything there is a _____,
A time for every _____ under heaven:
A time to be _____,
And a time to _____;”

Read Matthew 14:1-12.

13. Why had Herod put John in prison? (verse 4)

14. At Herod’s birthday party, the daughter of Herodias, Herod’s wife, danced and pleased the king. He offered her whatever she asked for. Prompted by her mother, what did she request from the king? (Matthew 14:8)

Herod was afraid of the multitudes, so he had not killed John to this point. Here in the midst of his party guests and his rash oath, he was “sorry”, yet commanded it be done.

15. What did the disciples do upon learning of John the Baptist’s death? (Matthew 14:12)

The scriptures record the account of John the Baptist from the announcement of his birth to his burial. And actually, with all of the prophecies written long before he was ever born, Israel was hearing of John the Baptist before he ever came.

Isaiah 40:3 NKJV

The voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the LORD; make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

John 1:6-9 NKJV

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all through him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world.

16. How will you bear witness to the Light of Christ?

Death is not the end of John’s story because he was faithful to fulfill his calling. He ushered in the Messiah. He testified that Jesus was the Lamb of God.

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LUKE 1:13-17

MATTHEW 3:1-17

Death is not the end of our story because the story of our lives then stands forever as a testimony.

And they overcame him [the devil] by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.
(Revelation 12:11).

17. How do we overcome?

Prayer:

Thank you, God, for the testimony of John the Baptist. The story of his life and faithfulness is so amazing that it needs no embellishment, it only needs to be shared. God, be magnified in me. God, be magnified in my testimony. God, this season is Yours. God, all of history is Yours. God, all of my story is Yours. Forever. Amen.

“For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen” (Romans 11:36).

Death is not the end of the story—because of JESUS! We are not just a collection of stories of victories and failures. We are beloved of God. Rescued by Jesus Christ through the triumphant victory of the cross! We are purchased, redeemed, forgiven, richly loved, forever held!

John the Baptist believed the Word of God.

John the Baptist believed that Jesus was the Son of God who was there to rescue the world.

John was bold and stayed on the message he was appointed to: Jesus is the Son of God.

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MY EVANGELISM JOURNAL

“Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works. And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of His return is drawing near.”

Hebrews 10:24-25
NLT

THE RETURN OF THE LORD IS DRAWING NEAR!

We spent our Fall semester writing letters to answer a “Dear Abigail” column, to help us understand how to share the GOOD NEWS! Now we are putting into action what we have practiced.

Answer the following questions each week and share in your group time that you may encourage one another!

1. Pray and ask the Lord to put someone on your heart that needs to know about the GOOD NEWS! (It may be a stranger that will cross your path.) Write their name here.

2. *Each* morning, pray that God will open your eyes to opportunities. Write any opportunities you had this week.

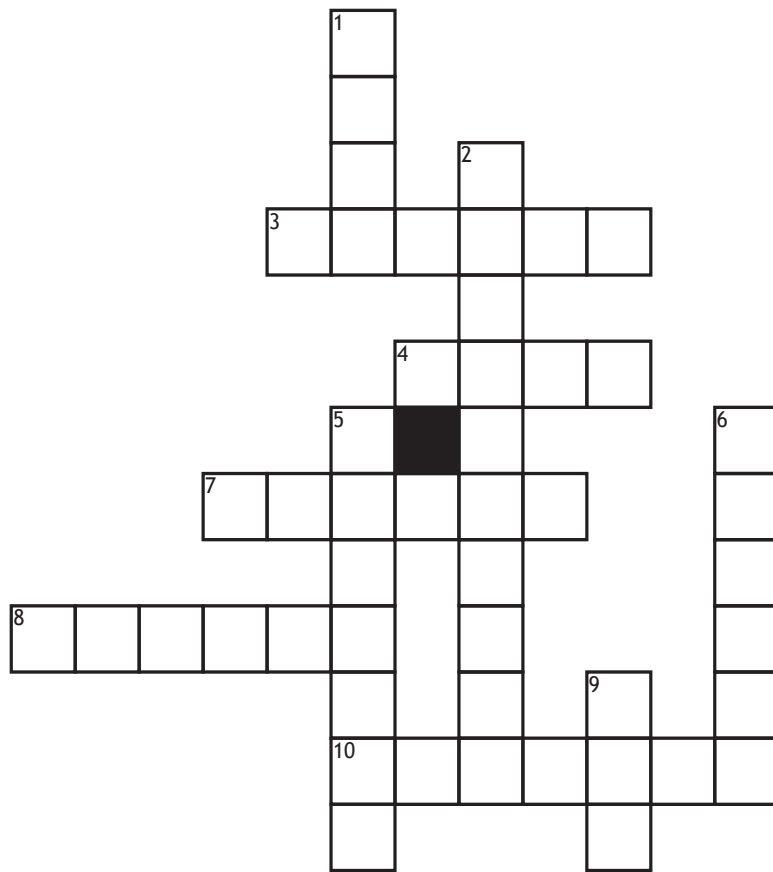
3. What have you learned about yourself this week as you shared the GOOD NEWS? Was it easier than you thought? More difficult? Did you miss an opportunity?

4. *Praise* the Lord for what He taught you about evangelism this week. Would you have changed your approach? *Continue* to pray for those you shared with, and *trust* the Holy Spirit to continue the work. *Confess* if you felt afraid or weak or if you avoided sharing altogether and then *start afresh* next week. He is FAITHFUL!

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

Hint: All of the answers to the clues are found in this week's Scriptures

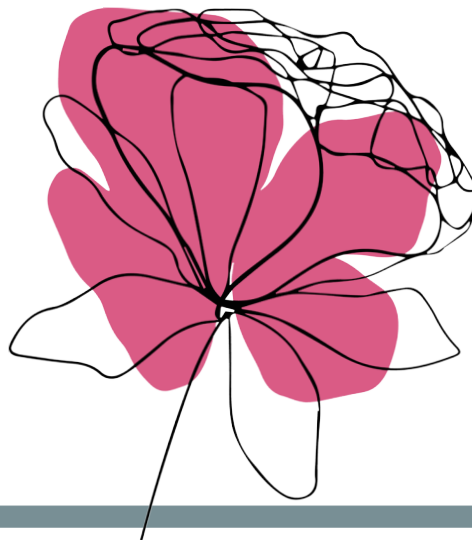
JOHN THE BAPTIST



ACROSS

DOWN

- 3. Remorse; express regret
- 4. Who was clothed in camel's hair?
- 7. Our eternal home
- 8. Biblical name for grasshopper
- 10. Biblical shoes



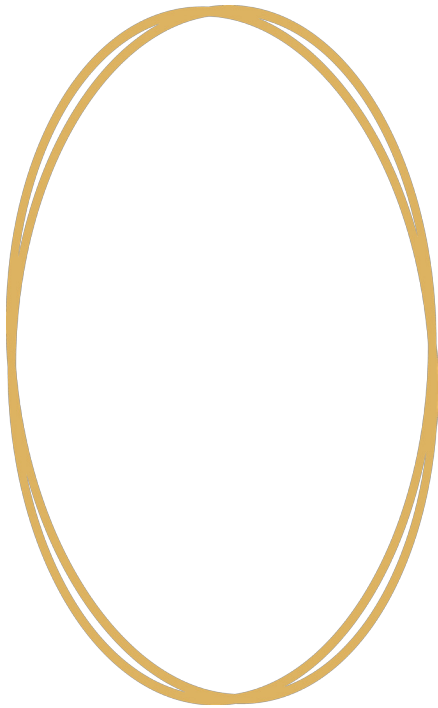
- 1. Bird symbol of the Holy Spirit
- 2. Jesus was called (2 words)
- 5. John the _____
- 6. Name John called the Pharisees and Saducees
- 9. Prepare the _____ of the Lord!

Answers are on page 107

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LESSON 3 NOTES



WRITE YOUR BIGGEST
TAKEAWAY HERE

Handwriting practice area consisting of 18 horizontal lines.

Handwriting practice area consisting of 18 horizontal lines.