

12-07-2025, COTR Texarkana

Title: John the Baptist

Purpose: Provoke people to embrace 4 life lessons from the forerunner of Jesus, John the Baptist.

Truth for Today: John the Baptist shows us (1) God is in control, (2) waiting is part of God's plan, (3) God uses those who live a 'set apart' life, and (4) Our life mission, is to turn many to the Lord.

Text: Matthew 11:11

Topic: John the Baptist, Sovereignty of God, Waiting, Holiness, Life Mission

John the Baptist

I. Honor Larry Myers (Honor and summarize his accomplishments)

- A. How did you know God was calling you to go to Mexico?
- B. Most of us aren't called to be a missionary but what would you tell someone trying to find God's plan for their life?
- C. What kept you going when you faced difficulties, e.g. Rolling 2 flat tires
- D. Why do still go to Mexico with your physical limitations?
- E. Give personal Christmas offering: App. Guest Speaker

II. Introduction

- A. Before Jesus was born on the 1st Christmas, God had already prepared a man to introduce Him to the world, John the Baptist. He was born about 6 months before Jesus. Today we'll learn several life lessons from John the Baptist, one of the greatest men who ever lived. [Matthew 11:11 (NLT)] "I tell you the truth, **of all who have ever lived, none is greater than John the Baptist...**]
- B. Title: John the Baptist
- C. Truth for Today: John the Baptist shows us (1) God is in control, (2) Waiting is part of God's plan, (3) God uses those who live a 'set apart' life, and (4) Our life mission is to turn many to the Lord.

III. 4 'Life Lessons' from John the Baptist, one of the greatest men who ever lived

- A. Lesson #1: God is in control of world affairs and our lives
 - 1. Last verse of OT written about 450 years before JB was born. [Malachi 4:5-6 (NLT)] "Look, I am sending you the prophet **Elijah** before the **great and dreadful day of the Lord** arrives. (*salvation and judgment*) ⁶ His preaching will **turn the hearts of fathers to their children**, and the hearts of children to their fathers...]
 - 2. Angel to JB's dad. [Luke 1:17 (NLT)] He will be a man with the **spirit and power of Elijah**. He will prepare the people for the coming of the Lord. **He will turn the hearts of the fathers (NIV parents) to their children...**] This is no coincidence but evidence of the sovereign hand of God guiding humanity.
 - 3. Life App #1: God has a plan and timing to orchestrate world affairs and our lives. [Ps. 139:16 (NLT)] You (*God*) saw me before I was born. **Every day of my life** was recorded in your book. Every moment was laid out before a single day had passed.] App
- B. Lesson #2: Waiting is often a part of God's plan.

1. [Luke 1:5–7 (NLT)]...there was a Jewish priest named Zechariah...and his wife, Elizabeth...⁶ Zechariah and Elizabeth were **righteous in God's eyes, careful to obey all of the Lord's commandments...**⁷ **They had no children** because Elizabeth was unable to conceive, and **they were both very old**] They had prayed and waited all their life for children, but God was silent. The OT associated children with God's blessing, so they had to live with disappointment and the stigma from people wondering why. Waiting was a faith test
 2. Life App #2: When our faith is tested, enduring faith in God and patience are necessary while we wait on God to act. We trust God while we wait.
 3. Life App #3: While we're waiting on God don't let disappointment give us an excuse to stop living a righteous life and obeying God. **JB's parents**
- C. Lesson #3: To be used greatly by God requires us to live a lifestyle 'set apart' to God.
1. Angel to Zechariah, [Luke 1:14–15 (NLT)]...He must **never touch wine or other alcoholic drinks**. He will be **filled with the Holy Spirit**, even before his birth.] Luke 1:80 (NIV) And the child grew and became **strong in spirit**; and **he lived in the wilderness until he appeared publicly** to Israel.] In the OT, Nazarites were individuals who took a vow of consecration or dedication to God and His purpose for their life.¹ For JB (1) Abstaining from alcohol was a requirement to be a Nazarite, (2) He didn't grieve or quench the HS by sin or disobedience, (3) He adopted the spiritual disciplines to grow spiritually mature. (4) The wilderness was the opposite of worldliness. **E.g.** Christian music, not secular rock-n-roll/ rap
 2. Life App #4: There are 2 obstacles to consecration in our lives, (1) Our fleshly or selfish desires, **e.g.** too lazy to get out of bed or distracted by Tv or social media to pray and read the Bible, and (2) worldliness, i.e. following the ways of the sinful world instead of the ways of God. **E.g.** sexual immorality
- D. Lesson #4: We, like John the Baptist, have a life mission, to "turn many to the Lord"
1. Angel to Zech, [Luke 1:16 (NLT) **And he will turn many Israelites to the Lord.**]
 2. Jesus to the church, [Acts 1:8 (NLT)]...you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you..you will be my witnesses, **telling people about me everywhere**—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."
 3. Life App #5: As Christians, our #1 mission in life is to win as many possible at home and around the world to Christ, using every means available. [1 Cor. 9:22–23 (NLT)]...I try to find common ground with everyone, doing everything I can to save some. ²³ I do everything to spread the Good News and share in its blessings.]

IV. Conclusion:

- A. JB's dad, Zechariah prophesied about JB's purpose in life, [Luke 1:76–77 (NLT)] "And you, my little son, will be called the prophet of the Most High (*Jesus*), because you will prepare the way for the Lord. ⁷⁷ **You will tell his people how to find salvation through forgiveness of their sins.**]
1. Life App #6: There is nothing more important than salvation and the forgiveness of sins because it determines where we will spend eternity, heaven or hell. Only Jesus can forgive our sins because He died on the cross for you and me.

B. Souls: Jesus died so our sins could be forgiven but we've got to repent of our sins, turn to God and believe and follow Jesus. You can make that decision now. God's love-Problem-Solution-Decision

V. Bibliography/ Resources: Logos Bible Software and Library, Platinum Edition, was used to prepare this message.

1. Harpers Bible Dictionary

VI. Supplemental Material

A. John's message was simple. [Matthew 3:1–11 (NLT) In those days John the Baptist came to the Judean wilderness and began preaching...² **“Repent of your sins and turn to God, for the Kingdom of Heaven is near.”**³ The prophet Isaiah was speaking about John when he said, “He is a voice shouting in the wilderness, **‘Prepare the way for the Lord’s coming!...**⁵ People from Jerusalem and from all of Judea and all over the Jordan Valley went out to see and hear John. ⁶ And **when they confessed their sins, he baptized them in the Jordan River...**]