



The Birth and Life of John the Baptist

Zechariah and Elizabeth were very old and had no children. One day an angel appeared to Zechariah and said, "You and your wife will have a son. You will name him John. He will do great things in God's name."

"How can I be sure you are telling the truth?" asked Zechariah. The angel replied, "I am the angel Gabriel. God has sent me to tell you this good news. And now because you have not believed me, you will be unable to speak until all that I have told you comes true."

After many months, the baby was born. Elizabeth and other relatives asked Zechariah what the baby should be named. He wrote "John" on a tablet. As he wrote the name, Zechariah's speech returned. Everyone was amazed.

When John grew up he preached God's message. "Repent for the kingdom of Heaven is near," he said. John baptized people in the Jordan River so that God could forgive their sins. This is why he is called "The Baptist." He also announced that Christ was coming. He said to the people, "I baptize you with water, but someone greater is coming who will baptize you with the Holy Spirit." John also taught people to share things and to be kind to one another.

One day, Jesus came to John and asked to be baptized. John said to Jesus, "You should baptize me." Jesus told Him that this was what God wanted, so John baptized Jesus.

(Luke 1:5-23, 57-66 and Matthew 3: 1-15)

- How was the name for the baby chosen?
- Why is John called "The Baptist"?