

Second Wednesday in Advent, December 10, 2014 at 11 AM & 7 PM

## God With Us

A Chronology of the Four Gospels Regarding Our Savior's Birth!

### Part 3

**Mark 1:1-3** – God Spoke through Isaiah to Tell *in Advance* About John!

**Luke 1:5-25** – The Birth of John Is Told *in Advance* through an Angel!



Wednesdays in Advent: 11 AM Service, Noon Meal; 6 PM Meal, 7 PM Service

**Introduction:** Dear friends in Christ: This is part 3 of God With Us! Before the Son of God *put on human flesh in the Person of Jesus*, He was ♦with the Father before creation, ♦promised right after the fall into sin, and ♦promised to be a future descendant of Abraham. Today we focus on two prophecies about John the Baptizer, *who was sent by God to prepare the way for Jesus!* In our series brochure, we are focusing on the numbers **3**'s – one is on the upper timeline, two are on the lower timeline.

1. **God Spoke through Isaiah to Tell *in Advance* About John:**

This is our only reference to Mark in this series; even here the majority of the information is a quote from Isaiah.

<sup>NIV</sup> **Mark 1:1** The beginning of the gospel [the good news] about Jesus Christ, the Son of God [parts 1 & 4 of this series help us to marvel at that reality]. <sup>2</sup> **It is written in Isaiah the prophet** [about 700 years before the birth of Jesus]: **“I [God the Father] will send my messenger [John] ahead of you [My Son], [he] will prepare your way”**-- <sup>3</sup> **“a voice of one calling in the desert** [the place where John preached and baptized], **‘Prepare the way for the Lord** [whose name is Jesus], **make straight paths for him** [by being sorry and turning from your sins].” // Now, as believers, we are called to live in continual repentance!

2. **The Birth of John Is Told *in Advance* through an Angel:**

- a. <sup>NIV</sup> **Luke 1:5** In the time of Herod [the Great] king of Judea [who ruled from 37 to 1 BC] **there was a priest named Zechariah, who belonged to the priestly**

**division of Abijah** [1 Chronicles 24:1-19, esp. 10]; **his wife Elizabeth was also a descendant of Aaron.**

<sup>6</sup> **Both of them were upright** [δικαιοι] **in the sight of God, observing all the Lord's commandments and regulations blamelessly** [only Jesus is without sin, Heb. 4:15, yet they lived by faith]. <sup>7</sup> **But they had no children, because Elizabeth was barren** [unable to have children]; **and they were both well along in years.** // So they desired children, but Elizabeth was unable and both were past the child-bearing years!

- b. <sup>8</sup> **Once when Zechariah's division** [one of 24 such divisions] **was on duty**<sup>1</sup> **and he was serving as priest before God,** <sup>9</sup> **he was chosen by lot, according to the custom of the priesthood, to go into the temple of the Lord and burn incense** [when choosing by lot, the decision is completely in God's hands]. <sup>10</sup> **And when the time for the burning of incense came, all the assembled worshipers were praying outside.** <sup>11</sup> **Then an angel of the Lord appeared to him** [Zechariah], **standing at the right side of the altar of incense.** <sup>12</sup> **When Zechariah saw him, he was startled and was gripped with fear.** <sup>13</sup> **But the angel said to him: “Do not be afraid, Zechariah; your prayer** [for a child] **has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth** [though she is barren and old] **will bear you a son, and you are to give him the name John.** <sup>14</sup> **He will be a joy and delight to you, and many will rejoice because of his birth,** <sup>15</sup> **for he will be great in the sight of the Lord. He is never to take wine or other fermented drink** [“Like Samson (Jgs 13:4-7) and Samuel (1Sa 1:11) before him, John lived as a

<sup>1</sup> “Starting with the month of Nisan (first month of the Hebrew calendar), we can figure that Zacharias was serving the tenth week of the [Hebrew] year... That would mean that John the Baptist probably was conceived about the third week of Sivan [thus in June or July].” Michael Norten, *Unlocking the Secrets of the Feasts* (WestBow Press, 2012), 90.

Nazarite.” (TLSB, 1704)], and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit even from birth.<sup>16</sup> Many of the people of Israel will he bring back to the Lord their God.<sup>17</sup> And he will go on before the Lord, in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous--to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.” // Since many had wandered away from the Lord, John was sent by God to be an Elijah-type prophet who would prepare the people for the Messiah by calling them to repent!

- c. <sup>18</sup> Zechariah asked the angel, “How can I be sure of this? I am an old man and my wife is well along in years.”<sup>19</sup> The angel answered, “I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to tell you this good news.<sup>20</sup> And now you will be silent and not able to speak until the day this happens, because you did not believe my words, which will come true at their proper time.” // If you were Zechariah – *an old man with an old and barren wife*, would you have doubted the angel’s message? It is hard to believe, **yet WITH GOD all things are possible!** Then, did you notice the angel’s amazing answer? “I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God...” The message I have brought is *from Him to you!* **But** because you have doubted, you will not be able to speak until the day *the child is circumcised and you name him John!*
- d. <sup>21</sup> **Meanwhile, the people were waiting for Zechariah and wondering why he stayed so long in the temple** [there must have been a usual amount of time taken by most, but Zechariah was on overtime].<sup>22</sup> **When he came out, he could not speak to them. They realized he had seen a vision in the temple,**

**for he kept making signs to them but remained unable to speak.** [Try to imagine right now that you cannot speak, yet you have something of great importance to communicate; if you had no pen and paper available, you would attempt to make various signs to communicate the message.]<sup>23</sup> **When his time of service was completed** [probably finishing out the week (1Ch 9:25; gatekeepers and priests may have had the same schedule)], **he returned home.**<sup>24</sup> **After this his wife Elizabeth became pregnant and for five months remained in seclusion.**<sup>25</sup> “The Lord has done this for me,” she said. “In these days he has shown his favor and taken away my disgrace among the people.” // The LORD made this promise through Moses: “Worship the LORD your God, and his blessing will be on your food and water. I will take away sickness from among you, and none will miscarry or be barren in your land.” (Exodus 23:25-26 NIV) Therefore, Elizabeth may have been viewed like Job: You seem to be godly, *yet you must have done something wrong!* Therefore, *when she conceived*, she did credit the Lord but she did not let anyone see her *until her pregnancy was obvious!*

**Conclusion:** Now, *thinking about our timelines*, we have moved ♦from before creation, ♦to creation itself, ♦to the fall, ♦to the general promise of the Savior, ♦to a specific promise to Abraham, ♦to Isaiah’s prophecy, ♦to the angel’s message to Zechariah, and, *finally*, ♦to Elizabeth becoming pregnant with John the Baptist! *Let us marvel at God’s awesome plan to save us from our sins!*

Please join us this Sunday for → *an angelic message about Jesus* and → *another connection between Jesus and God!* And all God’s people said: **Amen!**

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