

EPISODE NO. 213

Luke 1:5-25,57-66

How John the Baptizer Was Born

5 During the time when Herod the Great ruled Judea, there was a Jewish priest named Zechariah. He belonged to Abijah's section. His wife came from the family of Aaron. Her name was Elizabeth. 6 They were both truly righteous before God, doing everything which was right and everything the Lord God commanded. They were spiritually spotless. 7 However, they had no children. Elizabeth could not have a baby. And, both of them were very old. 8 Zechariah was serving as a priest before God for his section. 9 The other priests chose him to offer the incense. So, he went into the holy place of the temple sanctuary of the Lord God. 10 There was a large group of people outside. They were praying at the time the incense was being offered. 11 Then, standing on the right side of the incense table, an angel of the Lord God appeared to him. 12 When Zechariah saw the angel, he was disturbed and overcome with fear. 13 But the angel said to him, "Zechariah, don't be afraid. Your prayer has been heard. Your wife, Elizabeth, will give birth to a son for you. You will name him John. 14 He will make you very, very happy. Many people will rejoice because of his birth. 15 John will be a great man in the presence of the Lord God. He will never drink wine or liquor. Even at the time when he is being born, he will be filled with the Holy Spirit. 16 He will help many Jewish people turn back to the Lord their God. 17 John himself will go ahead of the Lord in a powerful way, like Elijah. He will have the same forceful spirit that Elijah had. He will make peace between fathers and their children. He will bring those people who are not obeying God back to the right way that people should think. He will prepare a people for the coming of the Lord."

18 Zechariah said to the angel, "How can I be sure of this!? I am an old man, and my wife is old, too."

19 The angel answered him, "I am Gabriel. I stand before God. God sent me to talk to you and to tell you this good news. 20 Now, listen! You won't be able to talk until the day when these things occur. You will lose your speech, because you didn't believe what I told you. Nevertheless, these things will come true in their proper time."

21 Outside, the people were still waiting for Zechariah. They were surprised that he was taking so long inside the temple sanctuary. 22 Then he came outside, but he could not speak to them. Then the people realized that he had seen a vision inside the holy place.

Zechariah couldn't speak; he could only make signs to the people. 23 When his time of service was over, he went home.

24 Later, Elizabeth, Zechariah's wife, became pregnant. So, she didn't go out of her house for five months. She said, 25 "Look what the Lord God has done for me! My people were ashamed of me, but now the Lord God has taken that shame away."

The Birth of John the Baptizer

57 When it was time for Elizabeth to give birth, she had a son. 58 Her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord God had been very good to her. They rejoiced with her. 59 Eight days later, they came to circumcise the child. They wanted to name him Zechariah, because this was his father's name. 60 But his mother said, "No! He will be called John, instead."

61 The people said to Elizabeth, "But no one in your family is named John!" 62 Then they began to make signs to his father, asking: "What would you like to name him?"

Zechariah Praised God

63 Zechariah motioned for something to write on. Then he wrote, "His name is John!" All of the people were surprised. 64 Instantly, Zechariah could talk again. He began to praise God. 65 All of their neighbors became afraid. Throughout the hill country of Judea, people continued to talk about all these events. 66 All of the people who heard about these things wondered about them. They thought, "What will this little child become when he grows up!?" The people could see that the Lord God's hand was with this child.