



Mustard Seed Children's Summary for December 16, 2007
Released on Wednesday, December 12, 2007

"Called to Prepare"

MEMORY VERSE:

"Thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways" (Luke 1:76)

SCRIPTURE LESSON TEXT: Luke 1:67-80

67 And his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Ghost, and prophesied, saying,
68 Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people,
69 And hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David;
70 As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began:
71 That we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us;
72 To perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant;
73 The oath which he swore to our father Abraham,
74 That he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear,
75 In holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life.
76 And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways;
77 To give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins,
78 Through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us,
79 To give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.
80 And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his shewing unto Israel.

THE OBJECT IN VIEW:

Teach that God wants to use the lives and words of His people to prepare others to trust in Jesus.

TRUTHS TO STRESS:

1. God intended to use the words of His prophet John to get people ready for Jesus.
2. God wants to use the words of those who believe in Jesus today to help others recognize Him as the Lord and their God-sent Saviour.
3. Like John, boys and girls can grow strong and be ready for God to use them.

PLANNING LESSON AIDS:

For Helping to Remember, each student will need several sheets of copy paper or construction paper (folded to make a booklet), pencils, crayons and a copy of the word search activity.

LESSON BACKGROUND:

Remember from our first lesson this quarter that the man we know as John the Baptist was the son of a priest named Zacharias (alternate spellings are Zachariah or Zechariah) who served in the temple during the reign of King Herod. Zacharias and his wife, Elizabeth, were followers of God and were sad in their old age because they did not have any children. One day while serving in the temple, Zacharias was visited by the angel Gabriel who was sent by God to deliver the news that the couple would have a son who would prepare the way for the coming of the Messiah.

Zacharias could not believe that he and his wife would have a son in their old age. Because of his doubt, Gabriel instructed him that he would not be able to speak until the day that the child was born and given the name John. Elizabeth became pregnant and gave birth to a son just as Gabriel promised.

In Jewish culture, when a male child was eight days old he would be given a ceremony, and a name. Relatives and neighbors who came to help celebrate assumed the baby would be named after his father, and were astonished when Elizabeth said that he would be called John. The neighbors and relatives then turned to Zacharias to see what he wanted the baby called. Zacharias was still unable to speak at this time and wrote, "His name is John." After this, Zacharias was able to speak again, and this week's lesson records the prophecy that he spoke concerning his son, John.

TEACHER'S NOTES / TELLING THE LESSON:

Consider the following as you prepare your lesson for your students:

1. List the key people and events in the story of the birth of John the Baptist.

The key people in the story of John's birth are his parents, Zacharias (who was a priest) and Elizabeth (who was the cousin of Mary, the mother of Jesus) and Gabriel, the angel who brought the news of his birth. A brief summary of the events surrounding his birth would be: (1) his father Zacharias received a visit from an angel while he was performing his duties in the temple; (2) Gabriel brought news that Elizabeth would give birth to a son; (3) Zacharias doubted the message from the angel and, because of this, would not be able to speak until after the baby was born; (4) Zacharias and Elizabeth had a son just as Gabriel had said and took him to the temple on the 8th day to be circumcised and to be named; (5) The baby was named John, and Zacharias was once again able to speak and began to prophesy concerning John and his purpose.

2. Why did Zacharias and Elizabeth name their son "John"?

When Zacharias was first given the news that he and Elizabeth would have a son, Gabriel had told him that the child should be named John. Many assumed that the baby since he was a male child would be named after his father, but in obedience to the message delivered by Gabriel from God, the couple named their son John. The name "John" means "the Lord is gracious."

3. What was Zacharias response when he was able to speak again?

After confirming that his son would be named John, Zacharias, after many months of not being able to speak, was able to speak again. Zacharias immediately began praising God. However, he was not thanking God that he could talk again. His first response was to praise God and give thanks that God was about to send the promised Saviour into the world. Zacharias was thankful that God had remembered His promise to redeem His people.

4. What did Zacharias prophesy concerning John?

Zacharias prophesied saying, "And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways; to give knowledge of

salvation unto His people by the remission of their sins, through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us, To give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace" (Luke 1:76-79).

Zacharias' prophesy declared that John would be a prophet and deliver messages from God. John would speak words from God and let the people know that the Messiah was coming and that they should prepare and be ready.

5. What would be John's special mission?

That mission was to prepare the hearts of the people for the coming Messiah. John's father had declared that he would prepare the way for the One who was bringing forgiveness of sins. John would grow up and do just that! The prophet Isaiah spoke of John as "the voice of one crying in the wilderness" – he delivered his message in a time of darkness and confusion - telling the people to get ready for the coming of Jesus!!

TELLING HOW TO LIVE:

As you review the lesson with your students, remind them that John the Baptist was born for a special reason and grew up to tell people about Jesus. Emphasize that John is no longer here, but there are still those who need to know who Jesus is, where Jesus came from and what Jesus came to do. That is where we come in! God can use those of us who believe in Jesus to get others ready to trust Him too.

The way we live shows others that somebody is helping us to do what is right. We can let them know that it is Jesus. Let others know about Sunday school and church and that these are good places to hear about Jesus and what He came to do. God can use us, just like He used John the Baptist, to get others ready to trust Jesus.

HELPING TO REMEMBER:

Find creative ways to help your students remember this week's lesson. A couple of ideas are given below:

Place several sheets of paper together and fold in half to make a booklet. Have the children draw a grown-up John on the outside cover and print "The Story of John the Baptist." Have each child complete his/her book by illustrating the key points that they have learned from the lesson. For example, they may dedicate one page to each of the key characters in the story (draw a picture of each and tell what they did), or retell the story in their own words, or any other creative way they can think of to complete the booklet.

A word search for this week's lesson is included at the end of this summary with key words from the lesson.

EXPLAINING THE MEMORY VERSE:

"Thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways" (Luke 1:76)
Zacharias said these words to his baby boy, John. God had shown Zacharias that when John grew up he would get people ready for Jesus' coming. John indeed grew up and fulfilled this very special mission. John told the people about Jesus. John also said that Jesus was coming as God had promised as the Saviour of the world, and that they should get ready for His coming.

ANTICIPATING NEXT WEEK'S LESSON:

Next week's lesson is "Called to Rejoice" (Christmas narrative) and focuses on the birth of the Savior from Luke 2:1-14.

Lesson Summarized By:

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WORD SEARCH
Called to Prepare
(Luke 1:67-80)

Find each of the following words.

PROMISED	CALLED	REMISSION	LIGHT
COVENANT	DAYSPRING	VISITED	JESUS
REDEEMED	JOHN THE BAPTIST	PROPHET	DARKNESS
DESERT	PREPARE	SALVATION	LUKE

I K E S G J V I S I T E D L E J J P T E A A D
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**Solution to Word Search
Called to Prepare
(Luke 1:67-80)**

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