

Dec 14. John the Baptist

The angel said, 'Don't be afraid, Zechariah! God has heard your prayer. Your wife, Elizabeth, will give you a son, and you are to name him John.' Luke 1:13

Running in parallel to the birth of Jesus was that of his cousin, John the Baptist. He was born to Elizabeth, a relative of Mary, and her husband Zechariah, a priest in the temple, after a long period of barrenness. God blesses us all in different ways but teaches us to wait patiently for His promises.

Even in the womb, John recognised that Jesus was special, as he leapt with excitement at the news of Mary's pregnancy. We too can accept that message, believing in Jesus as the Son of God and our Lord and Saviour. Like John, we can get excited about the Word of God.

Later, John preached the Good News that the Messiah was here. Isaiah described him as calling out from the wilderness, preparing the way for the Lord. Sometimes it may feel like a wilderness as we seek to share Jesus in our daily lives, but we should not give up the conviction that one day many more will come to know the Lord.

I hope that I will not be called upon to share in the death of John, executed by Herod on the request of his step-daughter Salome. But God calls us daily to die to ourselves and take up his cross and follow Him.

In this way we can know the glorious hope that he has set for us.