

JOHN THE BAPTIST & JESUS' BAPTISM

Matthew 3:1-17; Mark 1:1-11; Luke 3:1-37; John 3:22-36



BIBLE VERSE

COMMITTING TO MEMORY

Matthew 3:17

And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son,
whom I love; with him I am well pleased."

Ms

main street

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STORY LESSON

BIBLE STORY

Jesus had a cousin named John. The evangelists (or writers of the Gospels) refer to him as "John the Baptist", probably because he began baptizing people out in the wilderness. In the desert of Judea beside the Jordan River, one could hear:

REPENT!

FOR THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS AT HAND!

BE BAPTIZED!

WASH THOSE SINS AWAY!

"He went into all the country around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins" (Luke 3:3).

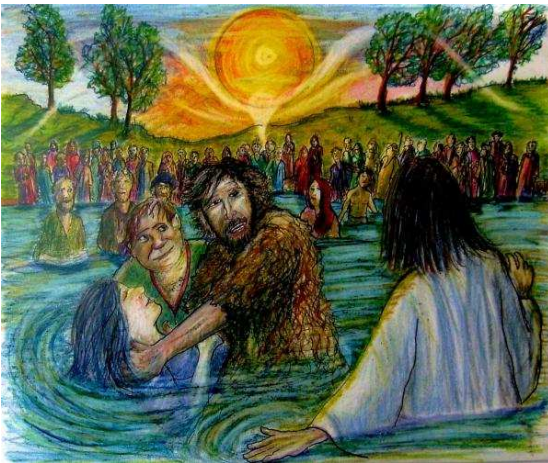
John was a wild man! He wore clothes made of camel's hair and had a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey (Matthew 3:4). He was a crazy man who single-handedly challenged the religious elite to repent. John was a prophet:



"A voice of one calling in the desert,
'Prepare the way for the Lord,
make straight paths for him.
Every valley shall be filled in,
every mountain and hill made low.
The crooked roads shall become straight,
the rough ways smooth.
And all mankind will see God's salvation'"
(Isaiah 40:3-5).

"People went out to him from Jerusalem and all Judea and the whole region of the Jordan. Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River" (Matthew 3:5-6). He was a huge attraction. People liked his subversive, wild message.

John the Baptist was a prophet whose mission was to prepare the way for the Messiah, the Christ. "I baptize you with water. But one more powerful than I will come, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire" (Luke 3:16). He preached good news to the people while blazing a trail that pointed to the Messiah.



One day, Jesus showed up. It was revealed to John the Baptist that he would know it was the Messiah when the Spirit in the form of a dove was going to rest upon the Christ and a voice from heaven that spoke. John tried to tell Jesus: "I need to be baptized by you..." (Matthew 3:14). Jesus asked John to baptize him and he consented. When Jesus was baptized: "At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descend like a dove and lighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, 'This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased'" (Matthew 3:16-17).

To fulfill all righteousness, Jesus was baptized by John along with the divine approval and affirmation of God the Father (the voice) and God the Spirit (the dove). Jesus was thus declared to be the Messiah. But there still was a lot of work to do in order for people to follow a messiah. However, Jesus began his messianic calling by doing something very OT-like—he went through the water (baptism). Like the Israelites as they left slavery and exile in Egypt through the parting of the Red Sea as they headed to the land of Promise, Jesus was "re-enacting" Israel's story. Basically, Jesus was taking on Israel's identity and would live out God's intended calling as He had intended Israel to accomplish but could not. Jesus would be the true fulfillment of blessing and salvation for the entire world.





LIFE APPLICATION

MAKING IT REAL

Being Different

John the Baptist was different! I mean, living in the wilderness and eating bugs for dinner is definitely being different! But do you think John was trying to be different? Absolutely! John was being a different kind of God-like leader for the people of Israel (the people of God). All the current God-like leaders were not very God-like. All they cared about was how well people followed rules and looked like them. The difference in John was that he lived SO differently that people took notice of him and how God-like he REALLY was! Can we be that kind of different as Jesus people? Or do we just look like everybody else and no one can tell that we follow God?



QUESTIONS

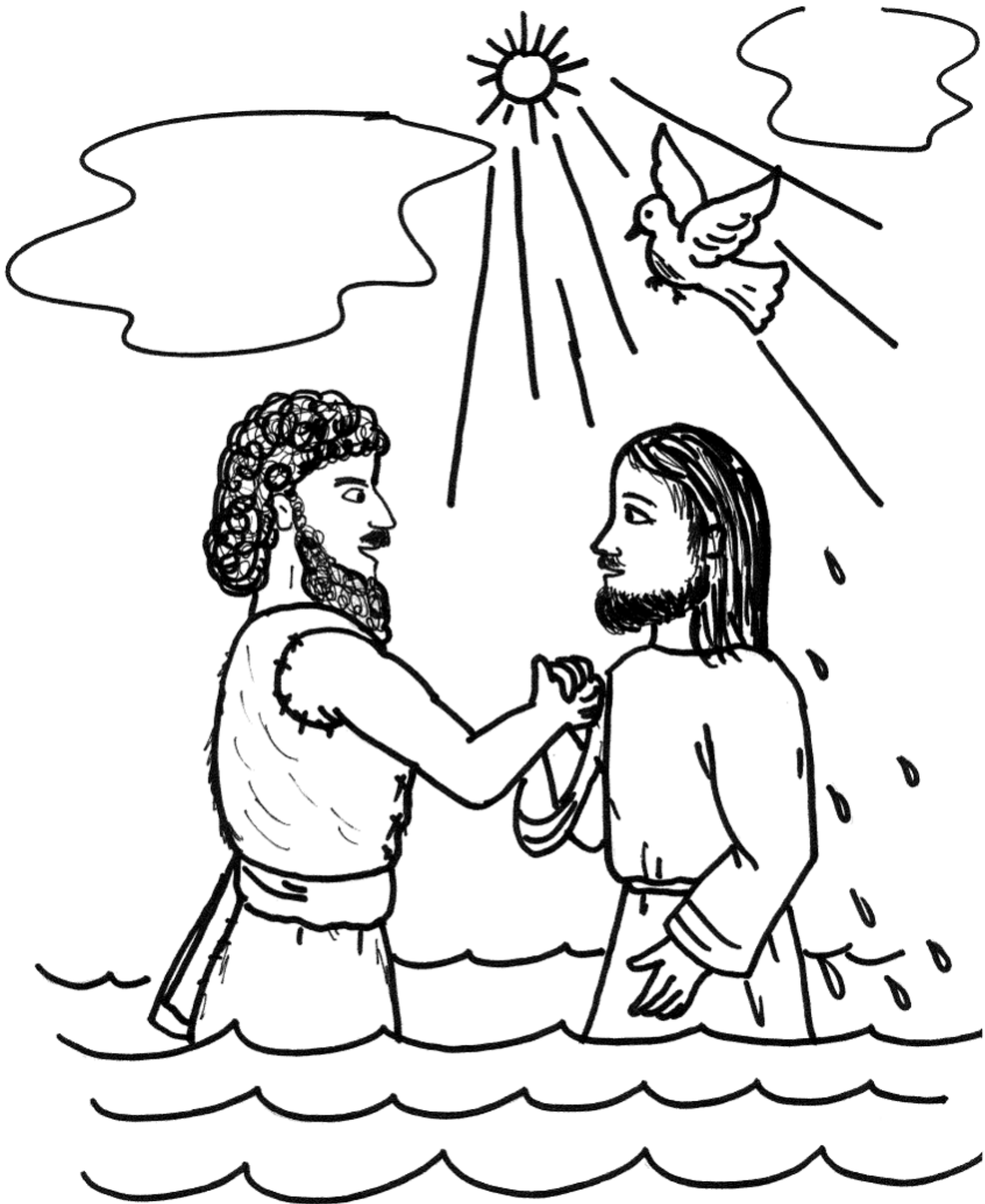
REMEMBERING

- 1. What was the name of Jesus' cousin?** John
- 2. What was John well-known for?** Baptizing people in the wilderness
- 3. Who did not like that John the Baptist was baptizing in the wilderness?** The Pharisees and teachers of the law
- 4. Who ended up being the Messiah that John baptized?** Jesus
- 5. What happened after Jesus came out of the water?** "At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descend like a dove and lighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, 'This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased'" (Matthew 3:16-17)
- 6. What is so special about baptism? Why should we get baptized?**



COLORING SHEET

ON THE NEXT PAGE



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