

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

1. Looking at Luke 1:13-17; what similarities do you see between the announcement of the birth of John, and the announcement of the birth of Jesus? (you may want to look up Luke 1:30-38)
2. List the things that will result from John's birth.
3. What does the angel say John will be? What will he do?
4. Looking at Luke 1:67-80; how does Zechariah understand the birth of John? What is the 'bigger picture'?
5. According to Zechariah's prophecy what is God doing? To what end? What is John's role in God's plan? (cf. v76 onward)
6. Looking at Luke 1:30-35; how is Jesus described? He will be named Jesus, but what else will he be 'called'? How do you understand those titles?
7. According to the angel, what will Jesus do? How do you understand verse 33?
8. What do we learn about Jesus from verse 35? What do you understand by the term 'Son of God'?
9. Looking at Mathew 1:21-24; how does this add to your understanding of what Jesus will do? What do you understand by the term 'Immanuel'?
10. Jesus' birth is unique; it is unique in manner; it is unique in event, and unique in its consequence. How does the birth of Jesus, two thousand years ago, impact your life today? How could it?

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An Advent Study in Three Parts

Part Two

“John The Baptist and Mary”

The second two Advent candles remind us of the declaration through John the Baptist, and to Mary, that God is about to bring about the fulfilment of his promises.

LUKE 1:13-17

- 13 *But the angel said to him, “Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John.*
- 14 *And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth,*
- 15 *for he will be great before the Lord. And he must not drink wine or strong drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother’s womb.*
- 16 *And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God,*
- 17 *and he will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready for the Lord a people prepared.”*

LUKE 1:67-80

- 67 *And his father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied, saying,*
- 68 *“Blessed be the Lord God of Israel,*
for he has visited and redeemed his people
- 69 *and has raised up a horn of salvation for us*
in the house of his servant David,
- 70 *as he spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets from of old,*
- 71 *that we should be saved from our enemies*
and from the hand of all who hate us;
- 72 *to show the mercy promised to our fathers*
and to remember his holy covenant,
- 73 *the oath that he swore to our father Abraham, to grant us*
- 74 *that we, being delivered from the hand of our enemies,*
might serve him without fear,

- 75 *in holiness and righteousness before him all our days.*
- 76 *And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High;*
for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways,
- 77 *to give knowledge of salvation to his people*
in the forgiveness of their sins,
- 78 *because of the tender mercy of our God,*
whereby the sunrise shall visit us from on high
- 79 *to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.”*
- 80 *And the child grew and became strong in spirit, and he was in the wilderness until the day of his public appearance to Israel.*

LUKE 1:30-35

- 30 *And the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God.*
- 31 *And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus.*
- 32 *He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David,*
- 33 *and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.”*
- 34 *And Mary said to the angel, “How will this be, since I am a virgin?”*
- 35 *And the angel answered her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God.*

MATTHEW 1:21-24

- 21 *She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.”*
- 22 *All this took place to fulfil what the Lord had spoken by the prophet:*
- 23 *“ Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel”*