

Birth of John the Baptist – B

ISAIAH – prophet for Israel during Babylonian exile – earlier chapters were for Israel

This reading starts “Hear O Coastlands and listen” – a call to other nations to listen THEN

It describes *the servant Israel* as having a commission beyond Israel for welfare of nations.

NB the use of “I” and “me” throughout as it's read

READ IT

Israel is precious to God and the object of God's compassion – God is calling them beyond themselves

Israel's responsibilities extend beyond its borders to reach out to the nations of the world

- **by being a faithful partner, in covenant with God, Israel equips itself to be an instrument of God's saving acts on behalf of the world!**
- Here in NSJ we worry about MY case, MY trial, MY lawyer
- Israel in captivity worried about ISRAEL's bondage, ISRAEL's slavery & wanted freedom too
- God is in covenant with Israel, BOTH for Israel's sake AND the salvation of the world
 - Through Israel the WORLD will be redeemed
 - Is God using NSJ for us, in the same way He uses Israel for the world?
 - Israel will be a source of Global salvation through Jesus
 - Can our time in NSJ be the same for our wife, girlfriend, kids, parents, grandchildren
 - WE can be “a light to the nations, that my salvation may reach the ends of the earth”
 - Imagine God using us the way He uses Israel – Why not?
 - God called Moses from the womb – he led them from slavery to freedom
 - God called Sampson from the womb – he defeated Philistines – freedom
 - God called JtheB from the womb – prepared the way for J
 - God calls us, from the womb – the be the Christian men we are intended to be

Thus PS 139 “I praise You, for I am wonderfully made”

READ IT

Everything, every line in this PS – it true about YOU (from the womb God calls us)

Acts Again its God's Call – Paul talks about God's call of David & from David's descendants J via JtheB

This gospel is 2nd part of the story of the birth of J the B.

J's father was Zachariah – one of the priests in the temple in Jerusalem – chosen to serve in the Holy/Holies

Big deal – Holies place in the temple – many priests had visions doing it & they'd faint, or die – tied a cord

Zachariah has a vision – Gabriel – “You will have a son, & name him John”

Zachariah was an old man and asked how this will be

Gabriel – “Anything possible for God, but since you doubted, you will be mute”.

Zach comes out mute and all know he'd seen a vision – Elizabeth has a son then THIS happens

When the baby is born everyone wants to name him Zachariah - Elizabeth says JOHN

They go to Zachariah, the father – he writes on a tablet JOHN – and he voice comes back

All rejoice, but marvel at what this child will be

Jesus said that there had never been a greater prophet than John the Baptist

So what did J the B do?

1. A Voice Crying in the wilderness – Prepare the way of the Lord
 - John prepares the people for the coming of Jesus
2. J the B called people to repentance – & baptizes people who do
 - “Repent – Be Washed Clean – Sin no more”
 - It all starts here REPENTANCE and FORGIVENESS OF SIN
 - J the B baptized with water
 - JC washes us with His blood & we're redeemed, made clean, forgiven
3. J the B points out JC
 - It made me wonder – who has been J the B for you? Take a minute
 - Who is your J the B – who has brought you closer to JC? (I'll wait)
 - Now here's another question:
 - Who have you been J the B for? Who have you brought to JC?
 - Who needs you to be their J the B? (I'll wait)
 - What are you going to do about it?