MAKES YOU WONDER RESOURCES

Hairy Scary John

**Childrens Talk about John the Baptist**

John was the kind of boy who scared his mother and father. From early on his life, in fact when he was still in his mother’s tummy, he knew what God wanted him to do. He would help people to know God.

When they talked about church or bible at home, he would understand and he would say what he would do in his life - He would help people to know God. That didn’t scare, but pleased his mum and dad.

Sometimes the family would go to visit relatives in Nazareth – Jesus and his mother Mary and his little brothers and sisters. John and Jesus were the oldest and close in age and maybe they talked about God after church. John said He would help people to know God. What do you think Jesus said to that? I don’t know either.

Well John grew up and instead of getting a job he lived on no money, and he wasn’t even an actor or musician. That was the bit that scared his parents. Because he had no money (why?) he couldn’t go to the shops. What he ate was bush tucker (wild fruits) also called *locusts*, and bush potatoes called *melagria* also called wild honey *meli agrion*, and he seemed to do all right even if it was a bit , you know, different. He lived in the desert, away from the towns and farms. That was a bit different too. And he couldn’t buy his clothes (no money), so he *made* them. He and his mates wove cloth for their clothes out of camel’s wool (which is as cheap as hessian, maybe scavenged from the stock yards). So he was hairy scary but he was really happy because He was helping people to know God.

But there was something more to his happiness. He used to preach ‘I am the One preparing the way for the Lord’ he said, and he read it in the ancient writings how it talked about him doing that. His parents knew all along that was true, they could tell you stories about that. He was very special, and it felt so special when the bible talks about you like that. You feel like a bright star in the sky, and that too is a nice kind of scary.

People walked way out from their towns and cities to where he lived. John taught them and challenged them and he made them think about their behaviour and the way their thoughts could be straightened out. Lots of people went to hear what he said. Lots and lots, actually - you would be surprised how many - and from all over the place. The word got around that John was good news. The word got around because the people had left feeling closer to God and knowing what to do to live for God more. John was pretty happy about that. Why? That was what he had always wanted.

Before the people left where John was, they did a ceremony to show they had decided to live their whole life with a clean heart. Do you know what it is? – baptism, they had water poured all over them. Can I have a volunteer? It was done like that because water is a clean thing, and it is absolutely essential to give life to thirsty lips. It showed that they wanted to **live** **clean** **in God’s sight** - in their minds and eyes and bodies and hearts and hands and wallets.

Before long he was called ‘John the Baptiser’ or ‘John the Baptist’ which makes it sound like he was always talking about water, or that he belonged to a Baptist church, but really he was focused on **clean hearts** in all the people.

But he was even more scary for certain people in powerful positions. They liked themselves way too much. And they did not like each other either. So, they did **not** like what John was saying because it made them look bad. When people did that to them they had the soldiers and had in fact quite often in the past killed them, given the chop, put them away, blocked them out, terminated, hunted, smashed, promoted to higher duties.

One day, one scary day, if you had been out playing near the River Jordan, you would have seen an official delegation who had been sent out to see him and they asked him lots of twicky questions. Shooing everyone else out of the way, they said: We are fwom Jewusalem and we have some questions for you. No pwesha, just wanting you to help us with our enqwiwies. Are you the Messiah? And he said ‘no’. Are you another Elijah the pwophet? Nup. Are you the gweat new Moses who is to come? Not really.

‘Well if you are not as good as any of them, how come you do all this pweaching? Who told you you could do that?’

‘Well, I can’t answer your question.’ said John, ‘I do know though that the Messiah is coming soon and he will respond to your enquiries, if you like. Would you like that? Do you want to be Baptised too then before you go?’ and they hurried off before they got very wet.

There are many more wonderful things that happened to hairy scary John the Baptiser who was not a baptist. One of them happened the very next day. You will have to read about it yourself, or listen in on the church’s website, because that is enough of his story for this week.