



# REFLECTIONS

December 2, 2012 Refreshed from December 4, 2005

**There came a man who was sent from God; his name was John. He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all men might believe.**

*John 1:6-7*

## Planting Seeds and Growing Trees

Part one in the series *Preparing for Christmas*

The fragrance of apple trees abloom in the wilderness sweetened the promise of a fruitful harvest. Birds sang from treetops and fruit, freshly picked, drew smiles for its distinctive flavor. It all painted a picture that enlivened John's imagination. It brought joy to his work each day. It was his calling, a purpose that gave meaning to his life.

John Chapman lived alone in the wilderness of the Northwest Territory. With no companion alongside him, loneliness might have dampened his spirits; but Johnny Appleseed, as we know him best, didn't feel alone. During the day, he went about his work; but evenings often found him telling stories and reading God's word to families and children who lived around there. He lived his dream—God's calling for his life.

Each day took him through the wilderness planting seeds and growing trees that reshaped the landscape with beauty and fruitfulness that wasn't there before. Johnny didn't harvest the fruit; he only planted the seeds and grew the trees. His purpose was to pave the way for the harvest. The harvest was for someone else to do.

Two thousand years earlier, another man named John was called to pave the way. We know him as John the Baptist, and much like Johnny Appleseed, he spent much of his life alone in the wilderness. "*He lived on locusts and wild honey and his clothes were made of camel's hair, and he had a leather belt around his waist.*" (Matthew 3:4) His purpose was to "*make straight in the wilderness a highway for our God. Every valley shall be raised up, every mountain and hill made low; the rough ground shall become level, the rugged places a plain. And the glory of the LORD will be revealed, and all mankind together will see it.*" (Isaiah 40:3-5) The seeds John planted and the trees he grew paved a pathway for Christ to be born into the lives of others.

Maybe our purpose in life is not as clear to us as it was to Johnny Appleseed or John the Baptist; but God has a purpose for each of us. For some it will be reaping a fruitful harvest from trees someone else planted. For others it will be clearing land, planting seeds, and growing trees by telling stories and reading God's word to families and children around us. Our work can pave the way for Christ to be born in someone else.

And on the day of that birth, Christmas will come into their life.

*You are the light of the world,*

*Richard +*

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