



REFLECTIONS

December 2, 2018 Refreshed from the Archives of 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*

His picture clear, John set about his life's mission. He envisioned a beautified wilderness filled with fragrant apple blossoms promising a fruitful harvest from trees yet to be planted. True to his cause, John Chapman lived in the wilderness and went about the Northwest Territory clearing the land, planting seeds, and growing trees. Even though he lived and worked alone, he loved people and especially children. Often after a simple meal, he would capture their attention by telling stories or reading from the Bible.

John didn't harvest the apples; he only planted the seeds and grew the trees. His purpose in life was to pave the way for an abundant harvest. That's why everyone called him Johnny Appleseed. The harvest was for someone else to do, but without his work there would not be one.

The story is similar to that of another man named John. We know this one as John the Baptist. Much like Johnny Appleseed, John the Baptist spent most 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) And he too had a picture of the countryside. His vision 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 introduced a pathway for the Christ to be born into the lives of others. The birth of Christ into our lives is the day we celebrate as Christmas.

Maybe to us our mission is not as clear as it was to Johnny Appleseed or to John the Baptist; but God has a purpose for each of our lives too. 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. Through simple things like telling stories or reading from the Bible to someone, or something else we know how to do, we plant seeds for Christ to be born into their lives. On that day they will celebrate Christmas.

And the glory of the LORD will be revealed, and all mankind together will see it.

You are the light of the world,

Richard +

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