

What was the Relationship between Jesus in His Humanity and John the Baptist?

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“Now indeed, Elizabeth your relative has also conceived a son in her old age; and this is now the sixth month for her who was called barren.”

(Luke 1:36, NKJV)

The NKJV translates this verse “relative” while the KJV translates it “cousin.” The Greek word is “suggenes” (Strong’s 4773b), and it could be translated as cousin, relative, or kinswoman. If Jesus’ mother Mary, and John the Baptist’s mother, Elizabeth, were 1st cousins, Mary’s mother and Elizabeth’s mother, were sisters, Levites. Jesus’ mother married Mary’s father, Heli (Luke 3:23), who was of the tribe of Judah. Elizabeth’s mother married within the tribe of Levi. Therefore, Jesus and John the Baptist cannot be first cousins. They could have been second cousins, meaning that they did not share grandparents but did share great-grandparents. I see this as a reasonable interpretation, but we cannot be totally dogmatic about that. They also could have been second cousins once removed, if Elizabeth was in fact an aunt of Mary.