



# Metropolis

metrocalvary@children'sministry

## JOHN THE BAPTIST

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**Series:** New Testament Beginnings

**References:** Matthew 3; Mark 1:1-11; Luke 3:1-22

**Today's Theme Verse:** <sup>1</sup>In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, <sup>2</sup>“Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” (*Matthew 3:1-2*)

**Last Week's Theme Verse:** <sup>52</sup> And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man. (*Luke 2:52*)

**Theme:** Pointing People to Jesus and Calling Them to Repentance.

**Objectives:**

1. The children will see that God wants us to be His messengers.
2. The children will know that our message must call sinners to repentance.
3. The children will know that our message must point sinners to Jesus.
4. The children will understand that our message will offend unbelievers.

## INTRODUCTION & SUMMARY:

**Introduction:** We are setting aside some time to think about some of the heroes of the faith we read about in the Bible. As we look at these heroes we want to see that what makes them heroes is that they trusted in the Lord and they pointed us to Jesus; the greatest of all heroes. Today we are thinking about John the Baptist. John is a hero because he literally pointed people to Jesus.

**Summary:** The ministry of John the Baptist bridged the Old and New Testaments. He was the last Old Testament prophet (though his story is contained in the pages of the New Testament) and he was the one God used to publicly identify Jesus as the Messiah. John the Baptist was God's messenger at a very unique place in history. God wants us to be His messengers at our unique place in history. John's mission was to prepare the way for the Messiah. He did this by calling people to repent and baptizing them as a sign of their repentance. And like John, our message must call sinners to repentance. John never promoted himself or allowed people to put their hopes in him. Instead he pointed men and women to Jesus as their only hope. And our message must point sinners to Jesus. As with all the prophets of God, John's ministry and message was unappreciated by many. In fact, John's commitment to proclaiming the truth got him thrown in prison and eventually killed. We need to be prepared for the fact that our message will offend unbelievers.

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### Lesson:

#### I. An Overview of John the Baptist's Ministry

John the Baptist's ministry was to prepare the people of Israel for the coming of the Messiah. It was marked by two things: 1. John called people to repentance (*Matthew 3:2-3*). Repentance is a change of direction. It is a turning away from sin and turning to God (*First Thessalonians 1:9*). Repentance is required of all (*Acts 17:30; 20:21*). John the Baptist was God's messenger at a very unique place in history. God wants us to be His messengers at our unique place in history. And like John, our message must call sinners to repentance. 2. John baptized in water those who repented (*Mark 1:4*). Baptism was an outward sign of repentance. As the water washed over the body, it symbolized sin being washed away. Christian baptism is a picture of the believer dying and being buried with Christ and rising again to eternal life (*Romans 6:3-4*).

#### II. John the Baptist's Ministry was Prophesied in the Old Testament (*Mark 1:2*)

Hundreds of years before John was born, God spoke about him through the prophets. In Malachi, God called John "my messenger" (*Malachi 3:1*). God wants us to be His messengers also. Isaiah refers to John as "A voice" crying (*Isaiah 40:3-4*). This was John's self description (*John 1:23*). In Malachi, the Lord said He would send "Elijah the prophet" (*Malachi 4:5-6*). Jesus said that John the Baptist fulfilled (at least partially) this prophecy (*Matthew 11:13-15; Mark 9:11-13*).

#### IV. John the Baptist's Description (*Mark 1:6*)

John wore camel's hair and a leather belt. This sounds like Elijah (*Second Kings 1:8*). . . And John ate grasshoppers and wild honey. This would have been a common food among the poorest of poor desert dwellers. John had separated himself from all the comforts of this world and devoted himself to the mission God had sent him on. God may not call us to be like John the Baptist, but God wants us to be His messengers.

#### V. John Baptized Those Who Came to Him (*Matthew 3:5-6*)

John's ministry of baptizing is what earned him the name 'the Baptist.' By and large, those he baptized were truly repentant as evidenced by their "confessing their sins."

## **VI. John the Baptist Denounced Religious Hypocrisy (*Matthew 3:7-10*)**

Along with the truly repentant, Pharisees and Sadducees came to be baptized by John. These were religious people who did not truly love God. John refused to baptize them until they could show by their actions that they were truly repentant. Our message must call sinners to repentance. John told them not to trust in their religious heritage. Having Christian parents or grandparents does not make you a Christian. You must put your faith in Jesus and repent of your sins. Many people today are depending on something other than the blood of Jesus to make them right with God. Sometimes people will not like the message that God requires repentance of sin and faith in Jesus alone. Our message will offend unbelievers.

## **VII. John the Baptist Described Repentance (*Luke 3:10-14*)**

John describe what repentance would look like in the lives of those who were coming to him to be baptized. His descriptions were specific to the sins of the individual people.

## **VIII. John the Baptist Pointed People to Jesus (*Matthew 3:11-12*)**

John wanted people to know that he and his ministry were not as important as the one who was coming after him. We never want our service to God to become about us; every thing we do should be about, for, and in service to Jesus. God wants us to be His messengers. Later John said of Jesus, “He must increase, I must decrease” (*John 3:30*). John’s mission was to point to Jesus and to identify Him as the Messiah. Our message must point sinners to Jesus. Later John saw Jesus and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! Again, Our message must point sinners to Jesus.”

## **IX. [John the Baptist was Imprisoned] (*Luke 3:19-20*)**

As Luke narrates the events of John’s ministry he includes a parenthetical statement about Herod the tetrarch locking John up in prison. This happened sometime later. Herod did this because John confronted him with his sin. Ultimately Herod’s ‘wife’ had him kill John. The message that God requires repentance of sin and faith in Jesus alone will not always be appreciated by those who hear it. Our message will offend unbelievers.

## **X. John the Baptist Debated Jesus (*Matthew 1:13-15*)**

One day Jesus came to be baptized by John, but John knew there was something special about Jesus. John thought that Jesus should be baptizing him. John’s baptism was “a baptism of repentance,” but Jesus was not a sinner and needed no repentance. Why did Jesus want to be baptized? Jesus said, “it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.” Jesus, as the one who would die on the cross in the place of sinners, came to identify Himself with those for whom He would die. Jesus lived a perfect life in the place of those who trust in Him. His perfect life is credited to them. Even our good works as Christians, like our baptism, are stained by our sin. Jesus’ perfect baptism is credited to Christians in the place of their flawed baptism.

## **XI. John the Baptist Baptized Jesus (*Matthew 3:16-17*)**

Jesus was baptized by John. Then the heavens opened and the Holy Spirit descended in the form of a dove and landed on Jesus and stayed there. And God the Father spoke from heaven; “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.” God had given John a sign (*John 1:31-34*). God told John that whoever the Spirit descends on is the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit. This was the reason John was baptizing – that he might identify the Messiah and tell the people who He is. God the Father spoke from heaven. Here we see a clear expression of the Holy Trinity. Jesus, God the Son, is in the water with John. God the Holy Spirit takes the form of a dove and descends on Jesus. God the Father speaks audibly from heaven. There is only one God. The One God eternally

exists in three distinct persons; Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The Father said, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.” The Father was pleased with His perfectly obedient Son. The Father is pleased with all who are united by faith to His perfectly obedient Son. Because Jesus was perfectly obedient to God the Father, He was qualified to be our Savior. If Jesus had sinned He would have had to die to pay for His own sin. But because He is the sinless Son of God, He was able to die for the sins of others. When Jesus died on the cross, the Father punished Jesus in the place of sinners. God is perfectly just and He must punish sin. But because He punished Jesus as a substitute He can forgive all those who put their trust in Jesus alone and repent of their sin. God raised Jesus from the dead to show that His payment for sin was accepted. And because Jesus lives we have the free gift of eternal life through faith in Him.

### **Discussion Questions:**

- 1:** What two things marked the ministry of John the Baptist? *1. John called people to repentance. 2. John baptized in water those who repented.*
- 2:** Why did John object to baptizing Jesus? *John’s baptism was “a baptism of repentance,” but Jesus was not a sinner and needed no repentance.*
- 3:** Why was it necessary for Jesus to be baptized? *Jesus said, “it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.” Jesus lived a perfect life in the place of those who trust in Him. His perfect life is credited to them. Even our good works as Christians, like our baptism, are stained by our sin. Jesus’ perfect baptism is credited to Christians in the place of their flawed baptism.*
- 4:** What is the biblical doctrine of the trinity? *There is only one God. The One God eternally exists in three distinct persons; Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.*
- 5:** Why is it important that Jesus was perfectly obedient to God the Father? *He had to be sinless to be qualified to be our Savior. If Jesus had sinned He would have had to die to pay for His own sin. But because He is the sinless Son of God, He was able to die for the sins of others*

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C i t y

5th / 4th

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Listen to the Lesson! Make a Mark For each time you hear:

BIBLE	GOD	JESUS	LOVE
Christian	Faith	Heaven	Pray

Lesson Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Scripture: \_\_\_\_\_

MEMORY VERSE

QUESTIONS I HAVE?

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PRAYER REQUESTS

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POINTS OF THE MESSAGE

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