**Matthew 3:1-6**

**1***In those days John the Baptist came to the Judean wilderness and began preaching. His message was,* **2***“Repent of your sins and turn to God, for the Kingdom of Heaven is near.”* **3***The prophet Isaiah was speaking about John when he said,*

*“He is a voice shouting in the wilderness,
‘Prepare the way for the Lord’s coming!
    Clear the road for him!’”[*

**4***John’s clothes were woven from coarse camel hair, and he wore a leather belt around his waist. For food he ate locusts and wild honey.* **5***People from Jerusalem and from all of Judea and all over the Jordan Valley went out to see and hear John.* **6***And when they confessed their sins, he baptized them in the Jordan River.*

* John the Baptist was a , once-removed, to Jesus
	+ John’s mother, Elizabeth, and Jesus’ mother, Mary, were first cousins
	+ The word “baptism” comes from a Greek word that means, “ ” or “sink into water”
* A Jew was required to wash at various times, usually by full-body immersion, to remove ritual
	+ The Law itself requires such washings in connection with various feasts or specific situations in Jewish life

The Bible tells us John was preaching a three-part message:

* + - Matthew gives us two of those parts, while Luke gives us the third part
		- The first part of his message was a call to **action**
		- The second part of his message gave **cause** to act
		- And the third part of his message required a **promise**
* The first part of John’s message, his call to action, was a single, powerful word:
	+ - It literally means a or a turn in our thinking
		- You could say to repent is to change your mind
	+ Repenting means to change your mind about your
* Second, John declared that the Kingdom of Heaven was
	+ The prophets foretold that the arrival of the Kingdom of God would coincide with the resurrection of God’s people and a judgment to follow
	+ We see this clearly in the book of Daniel

**Daniel 12:1-2**

**1***“At that time Michael, the archangelwho stands guard over your nation, will arise. Then there will be a time of anguish greater than any since nations first came into existence. But at that time every one of your people whose name is written in the book will be rescued.*

**2***Many of those whose bodies lie dead and buried will rise up, some to everlasting life and some to shame and everlasting disgrace.*

* Third, in Luke’s Gospel, we learn the third part of this message: the promise of the

 of

**Luke 3:3** *Then John went from place to place on both sides of the Jordan River, preaching that people should be baptized to show that they had repented of their sins and turned to God to be forgiven.*

**Luke 3:16-18**

**16***John answered their questions by saying, “I baptize you withwater; but someone is coming soon who is greater than I am—so much greater that I’m not even worthy to be his slave and untie the straps of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.*

**17***He is ready to separate the chaff from the wheat with his winnowing fork. Then he will clean up the threshing area, gathering the wheat into his barn but burning the chaff with never-ending fire.”*

**18***John used many such warnings as he announced the Good News to the people.*

* The most important part of John’s message: the
	+ John was oﬀering Israel the solution to their sin, the same solution God had oﬀered through the earlier prophets
		- A Messiah, a Savior Who would come to save Israel from their sins
		- That all who place their trust in Him will not be disappointed
		- That the Lord is willing to extend mercy to us through this Messiah for any who accept Him as Lord

**Acts 19:1-5** *“While Apollos was in Corinth, Paul traveled through the interior regions until he reached Ephesus, on the coast, where he found several believers.*

**2***“Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?” he asked them.*

*“No,” they replied, “we haven’t even heard that there is a Holy Spirit.”*

**3***“Then what baptism did you experience?” he asked.*

*And they replied, “The baptism of John.”*

**4***Paul said, “John’s baptism called for repentance from sin. But John himself told the people to believe in the one who would come later, meaning Jesus.”*

**5***As soon as they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.*

**Is. 40:3-5**

**3***Listen! It’s the voice of someone shouting,
“Clear the way through the wilderness
    for the Lord! Make a straight highway through the wasteland
    for our God!***4***Fill in the valleys, and level the mountains and hills.
Straighten the curves, and smooth out the rough places.***5***Then the glory of the Lord will be revealed,
    and all people will see it together.
    The Lord has spoken!”*

* Matthew is quoting Old Testament scripture, and he’s using a method of interpretation called in Hebrew, which means “simple” or “straight”
	+ - This method views the Scripture as meaning just what it says and nothing more
		- It’s a purely interpretation of the text and most often, it’s the proper method for interpreting the Bible
* We know the voice in the wilderness refers to John’s voice, but what of the various metaphors Isaiah uses to describe his work?

1. Isaiah says John the for the Lord in the wilderness

2. Isaiah says the terrain of Israel would become to walk through

* + - In practical terms-the Lord was simply following the of the day
		- In spiritual terms, John the Baptist is a beautiful example of God’s

 and for His people

**Matt. 3:7-10**

**7***But when he saw many Pharisees and Sadducees coming to watch him baptize, he denounced them. “You brood of snakes!” he exclaimed. “Who warned you to flee the coming wrath?* **8***Prove by the way you live that you have repented of your sins and turned to God.* **9***Don’t just say to each other, ‘We’re safe, for we are descendants of Abraham.’ That means nothing, for I tell you, God can create children of Abraham from these very stones.* **10***Even now the ax of God’s judgment is poised, ready to sever the roots of the trees. Yes, every tree that does not produce good fruit will be chopped down and thrown into the fire.*

**John 3:9-10**

**9***“How are these things possible?” Nicodemus asked.*

**10***Jesus replied, “You are a respected Jewish teacher, and yet you don’t understand these things?*

**Acts 4:13-14**

**13***The members of the council were amazed when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, for they could see that they were ordinary men with no special training in the Scriptures. They also recognized them as men who had been with Jesus.*

**14***But since they could see the man who had been healed standing right there among them, there was nothing the council could say. They were amazed that such untrained men could speak for God in such powerful ways*

**Matt. 11:25-26**

**25***At that time Jesus prayed this prayer: “O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, thank you for hiding these things from those who think themselves wise and clever, and for revealing them to the childlike.*

**26***Yes, Father, it pleased you to do it this way!*

* + God chose John the Baptist to announce the Messiah to the self- importance of Israel’s religious leaders, who were leading His people astray