

# John the Baptist Prepares the Way for Jesus

## Luke 3:1-20

by David Servant

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*David Servant emphasizes the need for true repentance and evangelism as demonstrated by John the Baptist in preparation for Jesus' coming.*

**Scripture:** Matthew 3:11

**Topics:** "Repentance", "Evangelism"

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### Description

David Servant emphasizes the importance of being true evangelists like John the Baptist, who preached the gospel fearlessly and called people to repentance. John's message focused on the need for genuine repentance, warning about the consequences of sin and the reality of hell for those who do not turn to God. He highlighted the distinction between true believers and nonbelievers, illustrating it with the analogy of separating grain from chaff, emphasizing the necessity of a transformed life as evidence of genuine faith.

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### Transcript

John the Baptist was the greatest evangelist who has ever lived, and today the world needs more evangelists who will imitate him. An evangelist's job is to preach the gospel, and that is what John did. He told people that the Messiah whom they had been waiting for was about to appear. They should get ready for Him by repenting, which means to stop doing what they knew was wrong and start doing what they knew was right.

John was called by God to do his job, and he was specially anointed by the Holy Spirit to preach powerfully. John told the people the truth, and he didn't water it down. First, he told them not to trust that they were saved just because they were descendants of Abraham. Sometimes people think that they are saved because their parents are saved, but God has no grandchildren, just children!

Second, John warned the people that they were sinners who were in danger of suffering God's judgment. If they didn't repent, they would perish in hell. That is the truth, and truthful evangelists will warn people about hell.

Third, John told them that if they truly believed and repented, their lives would show it. People who didn't change weren't really saved. People who keep on sinning just as they did before their so-called

conversion won't get into heaven.

John used examples that the people he was preaching to could understand. Most of the people were farmers, so John compared Jesus to a farmer separating the chaff from the grain. The farmers in John's day used a tool that looked like a big fork, which they would shove into a pile of wheat cuttings and then throw them up into the air. The wind would blow the chaff away (the part that couldn't be eaten), and the heavier grain would fall into one pile below. John said that Jesus would be doing the same thing, only with people instead of grain. He would separate believers from nonbelievers, and just like the farmer who burns up the chaff, Jesus would cast the unbelievers into hell. The believers, however, Jesus would gather into His "barn," bringing them into heaven. Everybody is in one of only two categories: grain or chaff, believers or nonbelievers, hell-bound or heaven-bound.

John didn't preach using only general terms that people could interpret any way they liked. He told people specifically what they should do. If they were sincere about repenting, they would quit acting selfishly and start considering others, treating them just like they wanted to be treated. John told the people to share their belongings and food with the poor, to do their work honestly and to be content with their wages.

John was also a very humble man. Although God used him in a mighty way, and Jesus later stated that he was the greatest man who ever lived, John considered himself unworthy to be even a slave of Jesus. He knew that Jesus was a million times more important than he, and it was his job to point people to Jesus. If only every evangelist today was like John!

Many people who heard John preach were convicted of their sins, and John told them that they should be baptized in the Jordan River as a public testimony of their repentance. When someone believes in Jesus, he should be baptized as soon as possible, and he should do it in front of other people. Jesus commanded those who believe in Him to be baptized (see Matthew 28:19), and so when someone who claims to be a believer in Jesus refuses to be baptized in obedience to what Jesus commanded, we know he really doesn't believe that Jesus is the Son of God. When new Christians are baptized, they are making a public declaration that they have become followers of Jesus and that they are turning away from sin. Have you been baptized yet? If you are a believer in Jesus, you should be baptized as soon as you can.

Q. We read today that Herod had John the Baptist put in prison. Could that Herod have been the same Herod who ordered the killing of the baby boys in Bethlehem?

A. No, he died when Jesus was very young. This Herod was one of his sons, and he was evil like his father.

Q. Have you become a follower of Jesus yet? Becoming a follower of Jesus begins with repentance, and if you have never yet repented of sin, you haven't begun following Jesus. If you have already become a follower of Jesus, what changes were evident in your life after you repented?

Application: As followers of Jesus, we should be living lives that are different than those who are not saved. The things we say and do should make us stand out from people who are not followers of Jesus.

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