

## JOHN THE BAPTIST: A VOICE OF ONE CRYING IN THE WILDERNESS

John the Baptist caused quite a stir when he preached. Why? Because he told people to repent. He made it very clear that you cannot live however you want to and be saved. You need to “make straight the way of the Lord” (John 1:23) in order to prepare your heart to receive the Messiah. As the Apostle John begins his Gospel, he introduces us to this fascinating character by telling us about “4 Things that John the Baptist Would Do as the Forerunner of the Messiah.”

### **1. He would be the Voice of One Crying in the Wilderness (verses 19-23).**

John preached in the middle of nowhere where the poor and broke and destitute lived in order to remind us that this is who Jesus was going to save. He did not come to redeem those who were proud. He came to forgive those who are humble.

(Discussion Question: How did this impact the priests and Levites who came to interview John in verses 19-23? Did they see themselves as poor and broke and destitute? Why / why not?)

### **2. He Baptized (verses 24-28).**

Because he was John the “Baptizer.” He was the one who immersed people in water in order to convey the idea of a total surrender to Christ because that is what it looks like to repent. You need to die to the old man and be born again to a new one.

(Discussion Question: Did the Jews baptize people back then? For what purpose? How is that different from what John was doing?)

### **3. He Pointed Jesus Out to Everyone (verses 29-30).**

Because he called Jesus “the lamb of God” (verse 29). Jesus was similar to a lamb because He was innocent and gentle. He was also similar to one because He was the perfect sacrifice for our sins. In fact, not only did Jesus die for our sins but “the sins of the world.” This was an interesting thing for John the Baptist to say because he did not look like your typical preacher.

(Discussion Question: The sermon talked a lot about John’s appearance but what did he look like? How did this make him an unusual preacher? Why should that be an encouragement for us today when we preach the Gospel to others?)

### **4. He Told People that Jesus Would Baptize them in the Holy Spirit (verses 31-34).**

Because just like John immersed people in water, Jesus would immerse them into the third member of the Trinity. Not in order to help them speak in tongues (that would come later) but to help them repent. When Jesus appeared, He would reach inside their heart and do a miracle there by giving them the power to turn away from their wicked way of life just like John was calling them to.

(Discussion Question: Can we repent on our own? Why do we need the help of the Holy Spirit to do that?)