



Winter 2020–2021 Theme:
The Call of God in the New Testament
Unit I: The Beginning of a Call

Lesson Titles:

Get Ready

(Faith Pathway Bible Studies)

Called to Prepare the Way

(Townsend Press Sunday School Commentary)

LESSON 4— December 27, 2020

Devotional Reading:

John 1:19-34

Background Scriptures:

Matthew 3

Print Passages:

Matthew 3:1-12

Key Verse(s):

This is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. (Matthew 3:3, KJV)

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This is he who was spoken of through the prophet Isaiah: "A voice of one calling in the wilderness, 'Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.'" (Matthew 3:3, NIV)

► Questions to Consider:

What message did John the Baptist preach?

Why did the Pharisees and Sadducees come out to hear John the Baptist?

What did John the Baptist say to the Pharisees and Sadducees?

► Lesson Aims:

As a result of experiencing this lesson, you should be able to do these things:

- Recognize the reality of sin and the necessity of repentance.
- Identify with John the Baptist in his call to prepare the way for Christ.
- Repent of your sins and bear witness to this repentance through your deeds.

► Lesson Context:

The verses in this week's lesson present John the Baptist and his mission. John proclaimed Jesus as the Messiah. He came with a message from God. God used John the Baptist to **prepare** the people for Jesus' earthly ministry. His message was **repent** for the kingdom of heaven is near.

► Lesson Outlines/Key Points:

I. The Path (Matthew 3:1-4)

Key Point 1: John's message and ministry focused on **repentance** and reconciliation.

Key Point 2: Matthew describes John as the one **called** by God to prepare the way for the message of the Messiah.

II. The Plea (Matthew 3:5-8)

Key Point 1: The **baptism** of the people signified their acceptance of John's message and a sign of personal repentance.

Key Point 2: John boldly challenges the religious leaders' motives for being present (verse 7) but sincerely encourages them not only to repent, but also to show **fruits**, or evidence of a repentant heart (verse 8).

III. The Promise (Matthew 3:9-12)

Key Point 1: The Jewish leaders are rebuked by John and warned of the **judgement** to come if they do not repent.

Key Point 2: John acknowledged that his work would be directly followed by the ministry of the Messiah, whose future work would include the **Holy Spirit** and fire.

► Lesson Summary:

- John the Baptist came on the scene with a startling message of repentance and pointing the way to Jesus.
- John the Baptist came to prepare the people for Jesus' earthly ministry.

What Do You Think?

1. What can individual believers do to clear a path that helps others to see Jesus?

2. How can we make the holy rite of baptism more meaningful in the lives of Christians? Is it even necessary to emphasize baptism as being important?

3. What is the church doing to engage and prepare the world for God's final return and judgment? What are you doing personally?

As a result of this lesson, I will do the following:
