



Lesson 7 – The Voice in the Wilderness

Based on Luke 1:5-23, 57-80, 3:1-18; Matthew 3:1-12; Mark 1:1-8

1) How were John the Baptist's parents described in the Bible?

Luke 1:5-6 There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judaea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the course of Abia: and his wife was of the daughters of _____, and her name was Elisabeth. And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord _____.

2) What promise was given to them?

Luke 1:76 And thou, child, shalt be called the _____ of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways;

From among the faithful in Israel, who had long waited for the coming of the Messiah, the forerunner of Christ arose. This was after hundreds of years of prophetic silence from the Lord.

In the Bible, a forerunner is someone who goes before others to announce their arrival or to scout out a place.

3) How did God reveal His plan to Zechariah?

Luke 1:8-9 And it came to pass, that while he executed the _____ office before God in the order of his course, According to the custom of the priest's office, his lot was to burn _____ when he went into the temple of the Lord.

4) What happened next?

Luke 1:11-12 And there appeared unto him an _____ of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense. And when Zacharias saw him, he was troubled, and _____ fell upon him.

He was standing before the golden altar in the holy place of the sanctuary. The cloud of incense with the prayers of Israel was ascending before God. Suddenly he became conscious of a divine presence.

For many years he had prayed for the coming of the Redeemer; now heaven had sent its messenger to announce that these prayers were about to be answered; but the mercy of God seemed too great for him to credit. He was filled with fear and self-condemnation.

5) How did the angel respond?

Luke 1:13 But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias: for thy _____ is heard; and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John.

Verse 14 And thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his _____.

Verse 15 For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be _____ with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb.

Verse 16 And many of the children of Israel shall he _____ to the Lord their God.

Verse 17 And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of _____, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.



6) How did Zechariah respond?

Luke 1:18 And Zacharias said unto the angel, Whereby shall I know this? for I am an _____ man, and my wife well stricken in years.

7) What sign did God give him to help him to trust the promises?

Luke 1:19-20 And the angel answering said unto him, I am _____, that stand in the presence of God; and am sent to speak unto thee, and to shew thee these glad tidings. And, behold, thou shalt be _____, and not able to speak, until the day that these things shall be performed, because thou believest not my words, which shall be fulfilled in their season.

For a moment the aged priest turns his thought to the weakness of humanity. He forgets that what God has promised, He is able to perform.

8) The worshippers at the Temple were waiting for him to come out and pronounce a blessing, what did they see instead?

Luke 1:22 And when he came out, he could not speak unto them: and they perceived that he had seen a _____ in the temple: for he beckoned unto them, and remained speechless.

9) What happened when he named his son John according to the command?

Luke 1:64-65 And his mouth was opened immediately, and his tongue _____, and he spake, and praised God. And _____ came on all that dwelt round about them: and all these sayings were noised abroad throughout all the hill country of Judaea.

10) What was God's calling for the child of promise?

Luke 1:17 And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make _____ a people prepared for the Lord.

11) What prophecies did John learn by heart in preparation for his life's work?

Isaiah 11:1-2 And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a _____ shall grow out of his roots: And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon _____, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD;

Isaiah 32:1-2 Behold, a king shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgment. And a man shall be as an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.

He was ready to go forth as Heaven's messenger, unawed by the human, because he had looked upon the Divine. He could stand erect and fearless in the presence of earthly monarchs, because he had bowed low before the King of kings.

He saw his people deceived, self-satisfied, and asleep in their sins. He longed to rouse them to a holier life. The message that God had given him to bear was designed to startle them from their lethargy, and cause them to tremble because of their great wickedness. Before the seed of the gospel could find lodgment, the soil of the heart must be broken up. Before they would seek healing from Jesus, they must be awakened to their danger from the wounds of sin.



12) What was John preaching in wilderness?

Matthew 3:1-2 In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the _____ of Judaea, And saying _____ ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

With a new, strange power it moved the people. Prophets had foretold the coming of Christ as an event far in the future; but here was an announcement that it was at hand.

With the spirit and power of Elijah he denounced the national corruption, and rebuked the prevailing sins. His words were plain, pointed, and convincing.

13) How did the people respond?

Matthew 3:5-6 Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judaea, and all the region round about _____, And were baptized of him in Jordan, _____ their sins.

As a symbol of cleansing from sin, he baptized them in the waters of the Jordan. Thus by a significant object lesson he declared that those who claimed to be the chosen people of God were defiled by sin, and that without purification of heart and life they could have no part in the Messiah's kingdom.

14) What did John say to some of the church leaders that came out to hear him?

Matthew 3:7-8 But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his _____, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits meet for _____:

John was impressed by the Holy Spirit that many of these men had no real conviction of sin. They were timeservers. As friends of the prophet, they hoped to find favor with the coming Prince. And by receiving baptism at the hands of this popular young teacher, they thought to strengthen their influence with the people.

15) How will God change us for good?

Jeremiah 31:33 But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their _____; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.

To a people in whose hearts His law is written, the favor of God is assured. They are one with Him.

16) What warning was given to those churchmen?

Matthew 3:10 And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which _____ not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

John declared to the Jews that their standing before God was to be decided by their character and life. Profession was worthless. If their life and character were not in harmony with God's law, they were not His people.

17) What seminal moment marked a huge change for both Jesus and John?

Mathew 3:13-15 Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. But John forbid him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to _____ all righteousness. Then he suffered him.



18) What words of wisdom did John give concerning their ministries?

John 3:30 He must increase, but I must _____.

In the time of John the Baptist, Christ was about to appear as the revealer of the character of God. His very presence would make manifest to men their sin. Only as they were willing to be purged from sin could they enter into fellowship with Him. Only the pure in heart could abide in His presence.

Prepare ye the way of the Lord!

Can you see that God has BIG plans for everyone?

Are you interested in going to Heaven?

When is the time to ask God to reveal His plan for you?

