

# The Way Prepared - Elijah Comes

## Matthew 3:1-12

### Q: "Preaching in the wilderness" - Why is John's entrance incredibly significant?

1. He breaks 400 years of silence. He is the first direct word from God in 4 centuries.
2. He is Elijah (Mt 17:12, Mal 4:5-6). No prophet had spoken since Malachi. He was an amazing figure, shocking to the people.
3. He has broken a tremendous famine. Amos had prophesied (Amos 8:11) there would be a famine in the land, not of food but of the Word of God. The people were starved for it!

### Q: Is this man trained?

1. He has had the Holy Spirit since birth (Luke 1:15).
2. He has "walked with God" all his life, lived and tested in the desert. (Luke 1:80)

### Q: What does John's ministry tell us about ministry for God? God's priorities?

1. What is most important is to be filled with the Holy Spirit
2. Your message is from God
3. The ministry is affirmed by God. Jesus says he was the greatest man ever born from a woman. (Matt 11:11)

### Q: Was his message complicated? No.

### Q: What do the words of his message actually mean?

1. Repent -
  - a. What does this mean? To change one's mind, to turn around
  - b. Repent from what? Your whole life. John & Jesus called for a change of life (Ezek 36:25-27, Jn 3:3, 2 Cor 5:17, Rom 6:1-11)
  - c. What are fruits worthy of repentance? You're born again and you turn against your old life. You humble yourself and turn from all sin. You begin to bear the fruits of the Spirit. You begin to demonstrate your love for God and others wanting to and by the power of the Holy Spirit being to fulfill the greatest commandments. Obedience and progress in that is now the general path of your life, increasing as time goes on.
2. The kingdom of heaven is at hand?
  - a. the revealing of the Messiah was imminent (Malachi 4:5-6)
  - b. the finished work of the Cross and the object of faith through all time to that point was nearing its fulfillment

### Q: How does John's ministry make the way straight?

1. He preached a baptism of repentance is the primary call because sin is the primary barrier
2. He preached Christ as the solution and source of salvation and our unworthiness (Matt 3:11, Jn 1:29)
3. He preached the baptism of the Holy Spirit who is necessary for salvation, a changed life (Rom 8:9, 15-16)
4. He preached Christ as the end of religion
5. He preached Jesus as judge, Lord and Master

### Q: What does is the statement God can raise up children from these stones meant to mean?

It is by the power of God that people are sons and daughters, not by heritage, nor religious history but by the power of God, freely available to all peoples, even those thought unreachable.

### Side note: Camel's hair, honey and locusts

1. Importance of clothing in relation to service and honorable worship? none
2. Eating honey - what does that mean? Where did it come from? What did it take to get it? Is John tough? Oh Yes!
3. Locusts - have a horrible reputation in God's economy. They were destroyers in prophecy and miracles - John's eating them for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Ironic? Oh yeah. Fitting? Yes.