

“John Prepares the Way”

John 1:19-34

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All four Gospels begin with the ministry of John the Baptist, who would introduce the Messiah. The OT predicted that the forerunner would pave the way of the Messiah and announce His coming. John faithfully discharged that duty. Following is an overview of his ministry that prepared the world for Messiah's first coming:

1. As a man of courage, John stood up to the Messiah's enemies—the Jewish leaders.

¹⁹“This is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent to him priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, “Who are you?” ²⁰And he confessed and did not deny, but confessed, “I am not the Christ.” ²¹They asked him, “What then? Are you Elijah?” And he said, “I am not.” “Are you the Prophet?” And he answered, “No.” ²²Then they said to him, “Who are you, so that we may give an answer to those who sent us? What do you say about yourself?”

2. As a man of integrity, John maintained his proper identity—the Messiah's forerunner.

²³He said, “I am A VOICE OF ONE CRYING IN THE WILDERNESS, ‘MAKE STRAIGHT THE WAY OF THE LORD,’ as Isaiah the prophet said.” ²⁴Now they had been sent from the Pharisees”

3. As a man of focus, John stayed faithful to his ministry—a baptism of repentance.

²⁵And they asked him, and said to him, “Why then are you baptizing, if you are not the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?” ²⁶John answered them saying, “I baptize in water, but among you stands One whom you do not know.”

4. As a man of humility, John kept a proper evaluation of himself—a slave of Christ.

²⁷*“It is He who comes after me, the thong of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie”* ²⁸*These things took place in Bethany beyond the Jordan, where John was baptizing...* ³⁰*“This is He on behalf of whom I said, ‘After me comes a man who has a higher rank than I, for He existed before me’ ”*

5. As a man of obedience, John preached a divine message—Jesus is the Messiah!

²⁹*The next day he saw Jesus coming to him, and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!...”* ³¹*And I did not recognize Him, but in order that He might be manifested to Israel, I came baptizing in water.”* ³²*And John bore witness saying, “I have beheld the Spirit descending as a dove out of heaven, and He remained upon Him.”* ³³*And I did not recognize Him, but He who sent me to baptize in water said to me, ‘He upon whom you see the Spirit descending and remaining upon Him, this is the One who baptizes in the Holy Spirit.’* ³⁴*And I have seen, and have borne witness that this is the Son of God”*

“And His disciples asked Him, ‘Why then do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?’ And He answered and said, ‘Elijah is coming and will restore all things; but I say to you that Elijah already came, and they did not recognize him, but did to him whatever they wished. So also the Son of Man is going to suffer at their hands.’ Then the disciples understood that He had spoken to them about John the Baptist” (Matthew 17:10-13)

“And it is he who will go as a forerunner before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, TO TURN THE HEARTS OF THE FATHERS BACK TO THE CHILDREN, and the disobedient to the attitude of the righteous; so as to make ready people prepared for the Lord” (Luke 1:17)