

**JOHN THE BAPTIST PREACHES GOD'S MESSAGE**

New Testament Lesson #225

John was the son of Zechariah and Elizabeth. The angel Gabriel announced his birth to Zechariah while he was serving in the Temple. John was going to have a special job to perform. He was born about six months prior to Jesus' birth, and John was going to preach prior to Jesus' own ministry in order to prepare the people for the coming of Jesus. Specifically, Gabriel said John will "go on before the Lord, in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous – to make ready a people prepared for the Lord" (Luke 1:17).

When John was about 30 years of age, he was in the wilderness of Judea. It was here the "word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the desert. He went into all the country around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins" (Luke 3:2-3). John was very dedicated to the job that he was appointed at the time of his birth. A lot of people responded to his message and came out into the desert to hear him.

John's message was foretold by the prophet Isaiah. The words of Isaiah are quoted in reference to John's message. In particular the verses say, "A voice of one calling in the desert (in reference to John), 'Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him. Every valley shall be filled in, every mountain and hill made low. The crooked roads shall become straight, and the rough ways smooth. And all mankind will see God's salvation'" (Luke 3:4-6).

That was John's job. He was to announce God's message. He was to prepare people for Jesus' appearing, because through Jesus they would see God's salvation.

As the crowds came out to hear John preach, he challenges them. He called them a "brood of vipers! He said "Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath" (Luke 3:7)? If they were to be baptized by John for the forgiveness of sins, they would need to produce fruit (meaning ... perform actions) that demonstrated that they were indeed repentant.

The people responded to John's preaching. "What should we do then?" the crowd asked" (Luke 3:10). John then responds by giving them practical advice as to how they ought to be living their lives. Each example is drawn from different ways of life. John tells the people, "The man with two tunics should share with him who has none, and the one who has food should do the same" (Luke 3:11).

For those who were tax collectors that desired to be baptized, John tells them, "don't collect any more than you are required to" (Luke 3:13). To the soldiers, John says, "Don't extort money and don't accuse people falsely – be content with your pay" (Luke 3:14). John's preaching made the people excited. They began to wonder if John was the Messiah, "the Christ" (Luke 3:15). They were all looking forward to the coming of their Messiah, so it was natural to wonder this. John responds to the inquiries regarding this by saying, "I baptize you with water. But one more powerful than I will come, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie" (Luke 3:16). He is referring to Jesus, who was indeed the Christ who was to come.

That was John's whole purpose of preaching. He was preaching "good news to them" (Luke 3:18), preparing them for the one greater that was to come, the Lord Jesus Christ.

**POINTS TO CONSIDER:**

- Because John spent his time preaching and baptizing people who responded to his message, he came to be known as John the Baptist.
- When Gabriel appeared to Zechariah in the Temple to announce the birth of John, his wife Elizabeth had been barren. They had no children. John's birth was very much a result of God's working in the lives of Zechariah and Elizabeth.
- Matthew 3:1-12 is a passage that parallels the story in Luke 3 regarding John the Baptist. It can be read to get further insights into what was taking place and the message John was preaching.

**ANSWER KEY:**

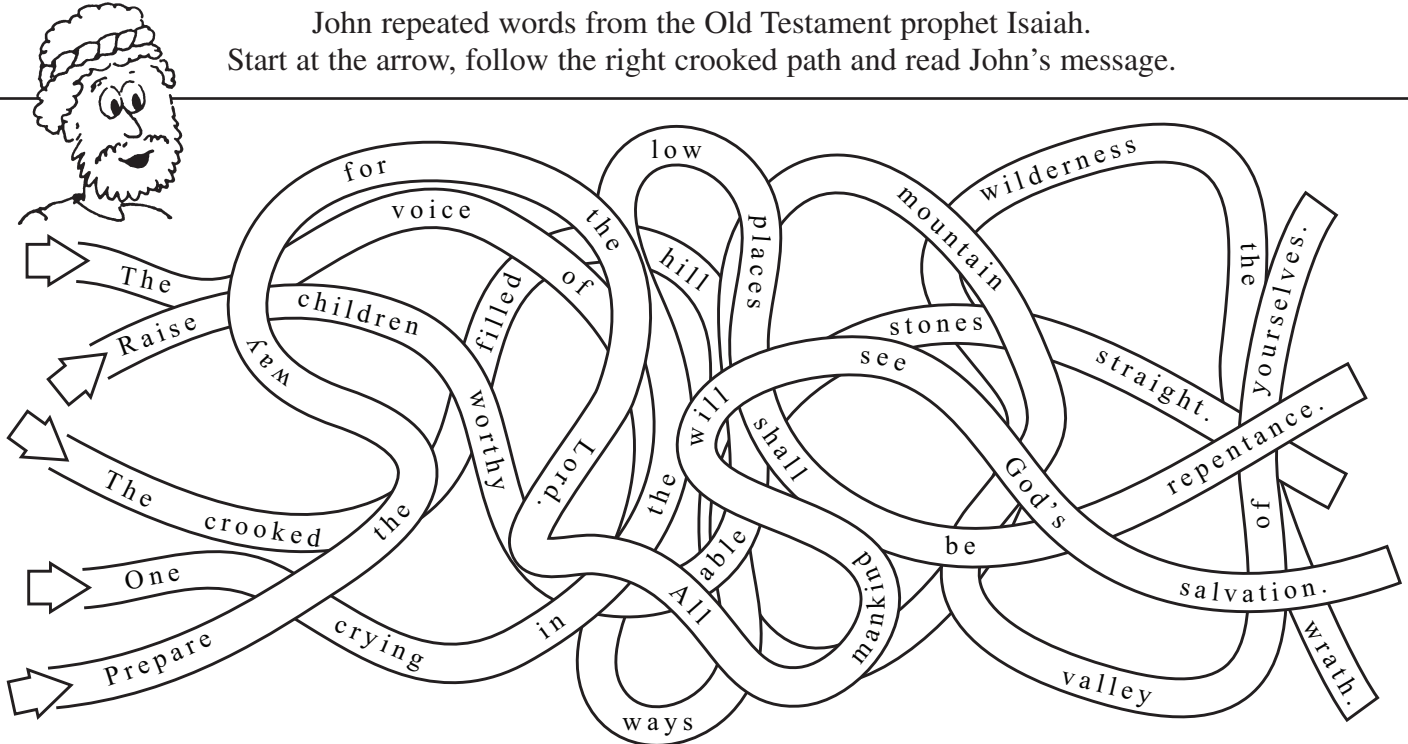
Prepare the way for the Lord. All mankind will see God's salvation.

wooden shoes, moccasins, gym shoes, loafers, pumps, boots

One more powerful than I will come, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie.

**J**ohn preached about a "baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins".

John repeated words from the Old Testament prophet Isaiah. Start at the arrow, follow the right crooked path and read John's message.



John's mission was to prepare people's hearts for Jesus the Messiah. Fill in letters to complete the names of different types of footwear. Use the letters to find what John said about Jesus.



1 \_ O O \_ 2 \_ E \_ 3 \_ S H O \_ 4 \_ S

9 \_ M S \_ 10 \_ O E \_ 11 \_ 12

P \_ 16 M \_ 17 S



5 \_ O \_ 6 \_ C \_ 7 \_ S \_ 8 \_ N S

13 \_ O A \_ 14 \_ E \_ 15 \_ S

B \_ 18 O \_ 19 S



18 3 4

5 18 15 4

17 18 1 4 15 14 16 13

19 11 7 3

8 1 8 13 13

6 18 5 4

19 11 4

19 11 18 3 9 12 18 14

1 11 18 12 4

12 7 3 2 7 13 12

8

7 5

2 18 19

1 18 15 19 11 10

19 18

16 3 19 8 4

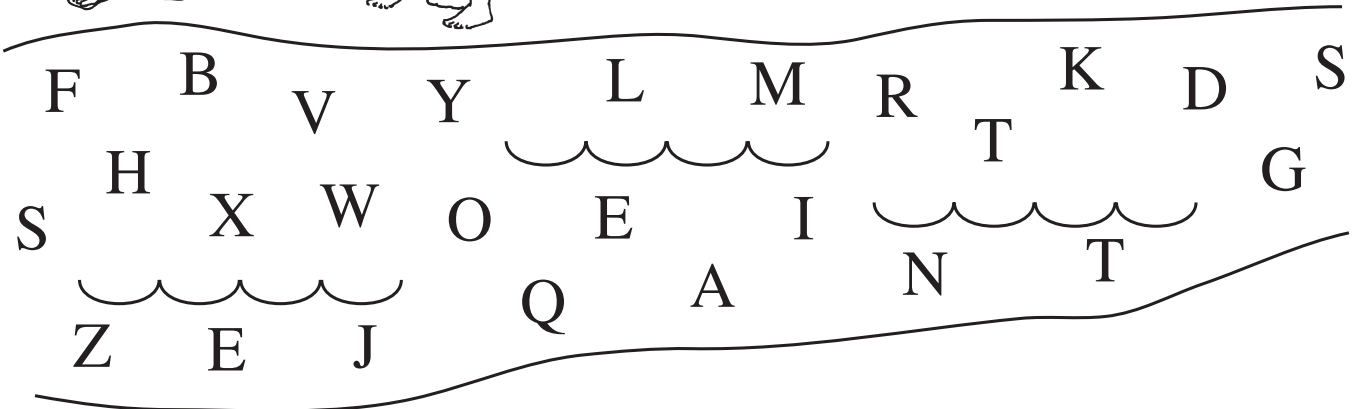
Name \_\_\_\_\_

**J**ohn preached about a “baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins”.



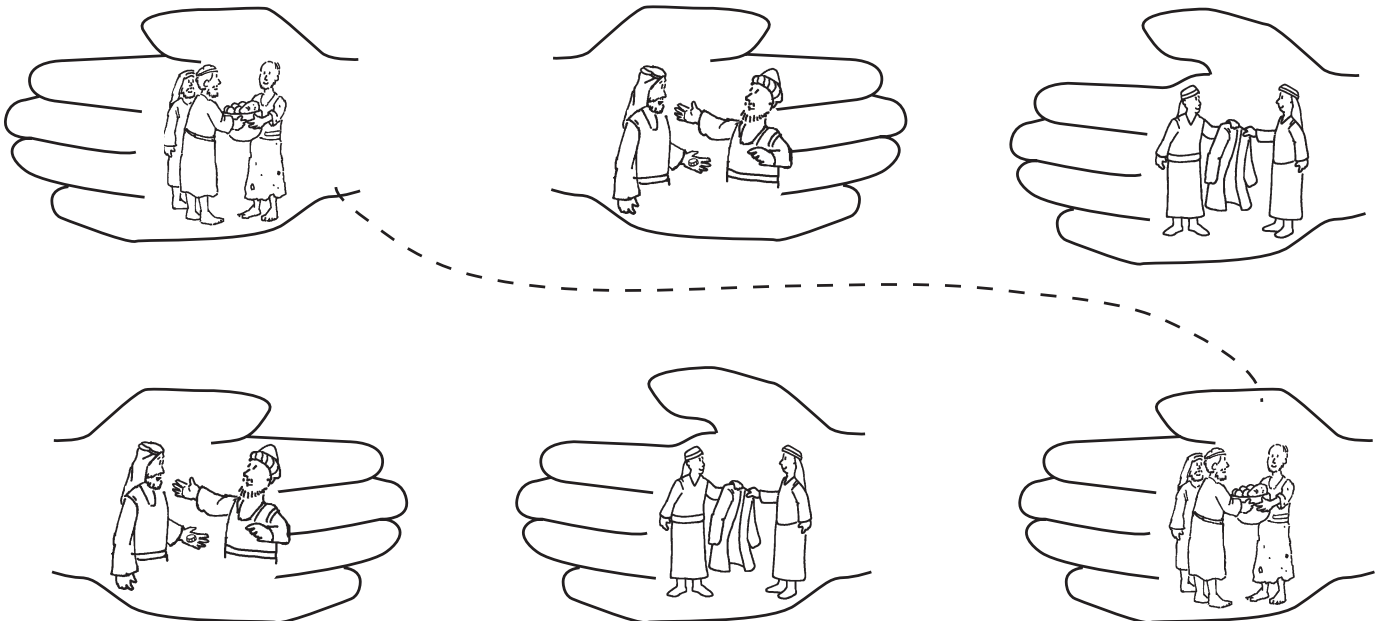
Find and circle the letters in the Jordan River.

**F O R G I V E N E S S**



F B V Y L M R K D S  
S H X W O E I T G  
Z E J Q A N T

John also warned the people to be “fruitful” by helping those in need.  
Match the hands showing what people could give.



The illustrations are: 1. A woman giving a basket of food to another woman. 2. A man in a turban giving a small object to a man in a head covering. 3. A man in a turban giving a long robe to a man in a head covering. 4. A man in a head covering giving a small object to a man in a turban. 5. A man in a head covering giving a long robe to a man in a turban. 6. A woman giving a basket of food to another woman.

Name \_\_\_\_\_