

## CLEARING THE WAY

Matthew 3:1 (NIV) *In those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea<sup>2</sup> and saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.”*

Matthew 3:3 (NIV) *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.’ ”*

### **What did John clear away**

- 1). Religion.
- 2). Politics.
- 3). Corruption.

Matthew 3:4 (NIV) *John’s clothes were made of camel’s hair, and he had a leather belt around his waist. His food was locusts and wild honey.*

Matthew 3:5 (NIV) *People went out to him from Jerusalem and all Judea and the whole region of the Jordan.<sup>6</sup> Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River.*

Matthew 3:7 (NIV) *But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to where he was baptizing, he said to them: “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath?<sup>8</sup> Produce fruit in keeping with repentance.<sup>9</sup> And do not think you can say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham.<sup>10</sup> The ax is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.*

Luke 3:10 (NIV) *“What should we do then?” the crowd asked.<sup>11</sup> John answered, “Anyone who has two shirts should share with the one who has none, and anyone who has food should do the same.”<sup>12</sup> Even tax collectors came to be baptized. “Teacher,” they asked, “what should we do?”<sup>13</sup> “Don’t collect any more than you are required to,” he told them.<sup>14</sup> Then some soldiers asked him, “And what should we do?” He replied, “Don’t extort money and don’t accuse people falsely—be content with your pay.”*

Matthew 3:11 (NIV) *“I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me comes one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.*

John:

- was the witness of the Messiah (John 1:6–8)
- understood his place in relation to the Messiah (John 1:19–23)
- announced the Christ as the Lamb of God (John 1:29–30)
- was a voice of transition from the old covenant to the new (Matt. 1:11–14)
- accepted his role with humility, stating, “He must increase, but I must decrease” (John 3:30)
- was a fearless preacher (Mark 6:20)

### **5 Ways Baptism is Used in NT**

- 1). Baptism with Water.
- 2). Baptism with the Holy Spirit
- 3). Baptism with Suffering.
- 4). Baptism with Fire.
- 5). Baptism into the Body of Christ

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Matthew 3:12 (NIV) *His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor, gathering his wheat into the barn and burning up the chaff with unquenchable fire.”*

My Next Step:

- Am I stalled out and ready to change?
- Am I stepping into my place in God’s plan?
- Am I demonstrating courage in telling others?

Romans 10:9 (ESV) *If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. <sup>10</sup> For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.*