

How God Prepares the World
Forerunner, Part 1
Isaiah 40:1-11

Getting to know John.

1. John was the **Forerunner** of Jesus.

Luke 1:17 NIV And he will go on before the Lord, in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the parents to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous—to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."

2. John was a **relative** of Jesus.

Luke 1:36 NIV Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be unable to conceive is in her sixth month.

3. John was the greatest man born of a woman.

Matthew 11:14 NIV And if you're willing to accept it, he is the Elijah who is to come.

Malachi 4:5 NIV "See, I will send the prophet Elijah to you before that great and dreadful day of the LORD comes.

Luke 7:26 NIV But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet.

Luke 7:28 NIV I tell you, among those born of women there is no one greater than John; yet the one who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he.

4. John was a **Rabbi**.

Smicha - ordination or rabbinic authority in Judaism.

John 3:25-26 NIV *An argument developed between some of John's disciples and a certain Jew over the matter of ceremonial washing. They came to John and said to him, "Rabbi, that man who was with you on the other side of the Jordan—the one you testified about—look, he is baptizing, and everyone is going to him."*

5. John came to **prepare** people to receive Jesus.
John 1:7 NIV *He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all might believe.*
John 1:31 NIV *I myself did not know him, but the reason I came baptizing with water was that he might be revealed to Israel."*
John 3:30 ESV *He must increase, but I must decrease.*

6. John was a **ministry partner** with Jesus.
- a. John's **birth** preceded Jesus' and encouraged Jesus' mother. Lk. 1:39-56
 - b. John's **baptism** of Jesus marked the beginning of Jesus' ministry. Mt. 3:13-4:1
 - c. John's **ministry** was a model for Jesus' early ministry. John 3:22-23
 - d. John's **imprisonment** prompted Jesus to begin choosing disciples. Mk. 1:15-16
 - e. John's **death** prompted Jesus to retreat, and perform the miracle of Moses. Mt. 14

7. John appears in **23** chapters of Scripture, over 750 years.

Isaiah 39: 5-7 NIV *Then Isaiah said to Hezekiah, "Hear the word of the LORD Almighty: The time will surely come when everything in your palace, and all that your predecessors*

have stored up until this day, will be carried off to Babylon. Nothing will be left, says the LORD. And some of your descendants, your own flesh and blood who will be born to you, will be taken away, and they will become eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon."

ISAIAH 40:1-11 CSB

"Comfort, comfort my people,"
says your God.

"Speak tenderly to Jerusalem,
and announce to her
that her time of hard service is over,
her iniquity has been pardoned,
and she has received from the LORD's hand
double for all her sins."

A voice of one crying out:
Prepare the way of the LORD in the wilderness;
make a straight highway for our God in the desert.
Every valley will be lifted up,
and every mountain and hill will be leveled;
the uneven ground will become smooth
and the rough places, a plain.
And the glory of the LORD will appear,
and all humanity together will see it,
for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.
A voice was saying, "Cry out!"
Another said, "What should I cry out?"
"All humanity is grass,
and all its goodness is like the flower of the field.
The grass withers, the flowers fade
when the breath of the LORD blows on them;
indeed, the people are grass

*The grass withers, the flowers fade,
but the word of our God remains forever."
Zion, herald of good news,
go up on a high mountain.
Jerusalem, herald of good news,
raise your voice loudly.
Raise it, do not be afraid!
Say to the cities of Judah,
"Here is your God! "
See, the Lord GOD comes with strength,
and his power establishes his rule.
His wages are with him,
and his reward accompanies him.
He protects his flock like a shepherd;
he gathers the lambs in his arms
and carries them in the fold of his garment.
He gently leads those that are nursing.*

Lessons from the Forerunner:

1. When I am discouraged, God is not **silent**.
Isaiah 42:2-3 CSB *He will not cry out or shout or make his
voice heard in the streets. He will not break a bruised reed,
and he will not put out a smoldering wick; he will faithfully
bring justice.*

2. God always has a **plan** for His people.
Isaiah 40:3-4 CSB *A voice of one crying out:
Prepare the way of the Lord in the wilderness;
make a straight highway for our God in the desert. Every
valley will be lifted up, and every mountain and hill will be*

leveled; the uneven ground will become smooth and the rough places, a plain.

3. God always has words of **hope** for His people.
Isaiah 40:5 CSB And the glory of the Lord will appear, and all humanity together will see it, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.

4. God **plans** so thoroughly, He not only planned for Jesus, He planned for Jesus' Forerunner.

Isaiah 40:9-11 CSB Say to the cities of Judah, "Here is your God!" See, the Lord God comes with strength, and his power establishes his rule. His wages are with him, and his reward accompanies him. He protects his flock like a shepherd; he gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them in the fold of his garment. He gently leads those that are nursing.

God uses people to encourage discouraged people.

Matthew 11:28-30 CSB "Come to me, all of you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. ²⁹Take up my yoke and learn from me, because I am lowly and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."