



**Lesson Title:** John the Baptist

**Scripture Focus:** Malachi 4:5-6; Matthew 3:8

### The Lesson in Context

John preached what God had called him to preach: repentance and preparedness to follow the Christ, the Lamb of God. This is what Luke meant when he wrote that John would turn the hearts of the people (Luke 1:17). John was specific too; he taught the greedy tax collectors and oppressive Roman soldiers who sought his guidance to turn from their evil ways. He commanded the religious leaders to produce the “fruit” of repentance. John was after a repentance that affected the heart and the hands—belief and practice. This type of holistic repentance was the only appropriate way to be “prepared for the Lord.” The truth of repentance rings in our lives today. We too must prepare our hearts to wholeheartedly follow Jesus Christ.

John served a temporal, transitional role, but his example still serves us well today. John’s entire life revolved around pointing to the one who would ultimately save and make the difference the world so desperately needed. We are called to live out a similar role. The apostle Peter declared we are brought to Jesus Christ so we can proclaim His praises to others (I Peter 2:9-11). The apostle Paul called us “ambassadors” for Christ (II Corinthians 5:20). In Acts 1 Jesus Himself called those who would receive His Spirit witnesses. All this adds up to a special purpose for the life of every Christian. We are to be signposts that lead others to Jesus. Like John, we must decrease so Jesus Christ may increase. We must point to the one who is greater than we are.

### Group Discussion

1. How does God’s final warning and call to repentance paint our view of Him?
2. How do Paul’s words in Romans 8:28 equip us to remain faithful in times of difficulty?
3. What does repentance look like for someone first coming to God?
4. What makes John’s humility so impressive? In what ways is this type of humility difficult?
5. How can we make our lives about pointing to Jesus: where we decrease so Jesus Christ may increase?

### My Prayer for the Upcoming Week

How do you want to be different because of what you have experienced today?

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