

THE GOSPEL OF LUKE: ADVENT PROPHECIES THE BIRTH OF JOHN FORETOLD

TALK IT OVER

Key Scripture

"A voice cries] "In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God. ⁴ Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. ⁵ And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken." Isaiah 40:3-5 (ESV)

"Behold, I send my messenger, and he will prepare the way before me. And the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple; and the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight, behold, he is coming, says the Lord of hosts. ² But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears?" Malachi 3:1-2 (ESV)

"In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, ² "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." ³ For this is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah when he said, "The voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord; make his paths straight.'" ⁴ Now John wore a garment of camel's hair and a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. ⁵ Then Jerusalem and all Judea and all the region about the Jordan were going out to him, ⁶ and they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. ⁷ But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? ⁸ Bear fruit in keeping with repentance. ⁹ And do not presume to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father,' for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children for Abraham. ¹⁰ Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. ¹¹ "I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. ¹² His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and gather his wheat into the barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire." Matthew 3:1-12 (ESV)

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Start Talking. Find a conversation starter for your group.

- Share a high and a low.
- What's the longest camping trip you ever took?

Head: Start Thinking. Ask a question to get your group thinking.

- Read Luke 1:5-25. Scripture is filled with stories of remarkable and improbable births. What are some other ones you can think of?
- Compare Luke 1:5-25 and Genesis 18:1-15. What is similar?

Heart: Start Sharing. Choose a question to create openness.

- Use a question from N.T. Wright's "Luke: For Everyone" (pg. 13-15).
- People in scripture always seem to be frightened when angels appear. Why do you suppose that is?
- Why do you think God likes to use miraculous births?
- If you were John's parents, what would you think of the angel's prophecy?
- John's major ministry was preparing people for Jesus. Do you feel prepared for His return?

Hands: Start Doing. Commit to a step and live it out this week.

- If you had to pick one thing that was said of John or his parents, and have it be true of you, what would it be? Pray for that thing in your life this week.
- In John 9:3, Jesus uses a man's blindness to display God's works in him. Is there a hurt in your life that you wish God would turn into an opportunity for praise. Sooner than later? Pray for that this week and recognize that you may not be able to see how God is working in the midst of it – but He is!

Start Praying. Be bold and pray with power.

- "God, Kings have messengers that announce their coming. Thank you for sending the angel, John the Baptist, and others to point us to your son. Thank you for the way in which your word proclaims your presence in my life through faith. Help me to believe it when I heart it and treasure it! Amen."

Trios: Split into same-gender groups of three for 15 minutes:

1. How did you see God at work in your life this week?
2. What's something you'd like someone else to check in with you about this week?
3. What kind of conversations are you having with non-Christians?
4. Pray for one another.