

FORERUNNER MESSENGERS IN THE END-TIMES

UHOPE AWAKEN SERVICE: JEFF MOOTZ 5/8/15

I. OVERVIEW OF THE FORERUNNER MINISTRY

- a. The Lord uses human messengers to prepare others for what He is about to do on the earth. He is faithful to raise up prophetic messengers who declare His plans and the heart behind His plans so that people can come into agreement with Him. These messengers declare the word of the Lord for years or even decades before the events of their prophecies come to pass. It is primarily a proclamation ministry. The forerunner ministry is critical, in the heart of the Lord, in bringing people into agreement with Him before He moves in powerful ways.
- b. The Lord desires to prepare people before He does something new and unique. He awakens forerunners to live out and preach what God is going to do years ahead of time. The Lord is strategic in preparing His messengers for years before they become His voices.
- c. The greatest hour of human history is coming in the end-times; therefore the greatest need for forerunners is coming. The most powerful and unique generation ever in history will need forerunners preparing the way so that people can come into agreement with God.
- d. God is going to raise up forerunners all over the earth through wilderness lifestyles of prayer and fasting like He did with John the Baptist. He is looking for people who will consecrate themselves to Him for decades in order to be used as powerful voices. God will have messengers all over the earth who proclaim who He is and what He is doing for years before the 2nd coming of Jesus

II. JOHN THE BAPTIST: OUR PROTOTYPE

***“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, even the Messenger of the covenant, in whom you delight. Behold, He is coming,” says the LORD of hosts.*” (Malachi 3:1)**

The voice of one crying in the wilderness: “Prepare the way of the LORD; make straight in the desert a highway for our God. ⁴ Every valley shall be exalted and every mountain and hill brought low; the crooked places shall be made straight and the rough places smooth; ⁵ 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)

- a. John was the only prophet who was ever prophesied of before his time. No prophet was ever mentioned before their actual ministry started except John. Malachi 3:1 and Isaiah 40:3 are direct references to John the Baptist and his forerunner ministry for the Lord’s first coming. The angel Gabriel announced his birth and prophesied about his life. Supernatural events surrounded John’s birth:
 1. His parents were old in age and barren parents.
 2. Zecharias became mute until the day of John’s circumcision.
 3. John was filled with the Holy Spirit before birth.
 4. Elizabeth was filled with the Spirit when Mary visited.

5. Elizabeth prophesied about Mary and Jesus.
 6. John leapt for joy when Mary visited.
 7. Gabriel told Jesus' mother about John's birth and it was confirmed when Mary visited.
 8. Zecharias spoke once he wrote John's name at the time of circumcision and the fear of God fell on those around as they wondered who this child was.
 9. The spirit of prophecy fell on Zecharias as his tongue was loosed and he declared the future of his son.
- b. Jesus called John the greatest man ever born of a woman. Jesus had great love for his friend John. John ministered to the nation of Israel before Jesus' appearing in order to turn the hearts of people back to God. He called people back to the 1st commandment and he proclaimed the coming of the Lord. John had insight into Jesus' role as a sacrifice.

"So the child grew and became strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his manifestation to Israel." (Luke 1:80)

- c. John's heart was prepared through years of prayer and fasting in the wilderness. It was there in the wilderness that the word of the Lord came to John and he was commissioned to preach to Israel.
- d. John is the prototype for the end-time forerunners. Malachi 3:1-2 was partially fulfilled by John but it will have its full expression in the end-times. Just like Jesus' first coming was a partial fulfillment of the Messianic promises and the outpouring of the Spirit was a partial fulfillment of the power that is coming, so John was a partial fulfillment of an end-time forerunner ministry that is to come.
- e. John walked in the spirit and power of Elijah to turn the hearts of people back to God. Jesus said John was Elijah but that Elijah would come again. John said he was not Elijah when asked by the religious leaders of the day. Jesus also said that Elijah would come and restore all things, which John did not do in any significant way. John was the partial fulfillment of the spirit and power of Elijah.

"¹⁶ And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God. ¹⁷ He will also go before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, 'to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children,' and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."

- f. John came with the same confrontive preaching power as Elijah had. John had a power on him to turn hearts. John was bold in his stand for righteousness and did not back down in the face of unbelievers, religious leaders or national leaders.

III. ISAIAH 40

- a. John was the partial fulfillment of the voice in Isaiah 40:3 that gives us a picture of where the forerunner voice is going in the end times. This chapter is primarily about the events proceeding to the 2nd coming of Jesus and the forerunners that prepare the way of the Lord.

- b. Forerunners will be raised up to prepare the Church, unbelievers, and unbelieving Jews. This chapter is primarily speaking about the forerunner ministry to the nation of Israel during the Great Tribulation. Nations will surround Israel to the point of complete desolation but there will be messengers declaring truth to Israel about the heart and plans of the Lord for them as a nation.
- c. ***Speak comfort to Jerusalem*** – This is a call for believers to preach the gospel and prophesy to Jews and those in Jerusalem about the coming deliverance of the Lord and their restoration as a nation. It literally means “keep speaking tenderly to the heart of Jerusalem.”
- d. ***Cry out to her that her warfare is ended*** – The call to cry out is a call to Israel with desperation. There will be great war over Jerusalem but Jesus will end her warfare and bring eternal peace to the city.
- e. ***Her iniquity is pardoned for she has received double for all her sins*** – Israel will receive the full punishment of her sins through the hands of the Antichrist. The judgment of God will be complete and afterwards Israel will receive Jesus as King and have their sins forgiven.
- f. ***The voice of one crying in the wilderness*** – This voice was John the Baptist and it will be many voices in the end times. John was described as being a voice that would prepare the way of the Lord. God is going to anoint messengers that know Him and proclaim Him with power in such a way that it prepares the hearts of nations to receive Him.
- g. The message of the forerunner is more prominent than the identity of the messenger himself. He is the message. He is formed in the wilderness land. A voice has the power to actually turn hearts to God. This reality is radically different than preaching a sermon filled with information. God wants consecrated and devoted vessels that He can speak through with supernatural power to turn hearts to Himself. There is a famous saying in the Church that isn't the entire truth, “Love people and when necessary preach the gospel.” There is a proclamation ministry that turns hearts, but many have never heard that kind of proclamation let alone released it through their own mouths.
- h. ***Prepare the way of the LORD*** – The way of the Lord is prepared in the hearts of humanity through the powerful preaching of voices in the earth. More people repent at deeper levels when the voice of the Lord speaks through human vessels. The way of the Lord is prepared at the heart level as people receive salvation and come into deeper agreement with who God is and what He does. There will be forerunners declaring the nature of God and the plans of God to a generation that is in confusion. These messengers will prepare people for what God is about to do in the earth so that people can come into agreement with Him instead of being deceived and offended at Him.
- i. Bridegroom, King and Judge – John had a revelation of Jesus as Bridegroom and it filled him with joy. He also had a revelation of Jesus as the King of the coming kingdom and the judge who would bring judgment to purify His people
- j. ***Make straight in the desert a highway for our God*** – Cities used to build highways for kings to have an easier entrance into their land. A highway must be prepared for God to come to Israel as their king. John's ministry helped prepare many for the first coming of the Israel's King and end-time forerunners will help prepare the nations for the second coming of the King. This highway is not a literal highway for God. John's ministry helped prepare a highway for God into the hearts of Israel as individuals and as a nation.

- k. This verse also highlights the fact that Jesus is coming back as the King of Israel who will rule all the nations.
- l. ***The glory of the LORD shall be revealed and all flesh shall see it together*** – All flesh shall see the manifest glory of Jesus at His 2nd coming procession through the sky and on the earth. Jesus is going to come in all His glory to humble the nations. The events of the end times are the most unique and the most powerful events in all of human history and every eye shall see them.

IV. CONSECRATED FOR A FUTURE MINISTRY

- a. John lived consecrated to the Lord by remaining in a posture of waiting on the Lord for decades in order to be a voice in the future. John labored for a future ministry.
- b. We must have a vision for the full power of God on our ministries while we labor in ministry today. We do not forsake nor despise the ministries the Lord has given us now, yet we remain faithful and contend for another realm of power and clarity in our lives. This high vision guards us from being content with where we are at in the Lord. Here is our challenge from the Lord; can we be filled with faith and faithful to your current ministries while contending for the fullness that is promised over your life?
- c. Waiting on the Lord for clarity and power is done through prayer, fasting, and much time in the word. John was in deep study and meditation in the wilderness and that is where the Lord encountered him. John knew he was the voice of Isaiah 40 because he was living in the prophecies of the scriptures. The vast majority of revelation from the Lord comes in small increments during our times of study and meditation in the Word. Dreams, visions, and angelic visitations highlight what the Bible already says. All encounters must be in line with the Bible.

“¹⁵ For he will be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink. He will also be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother’s womb.” (Luke 1:15)

- d. Forerunners are formed and filled with power in the context to a fasted lifestyle. Fasting food and living a fasted lifestyle is critical to walking in clarity and power. Fasting is where we trade our natural strength for God’s supernatural strength. Fasting brings us into the greater pleasures of the kingdom. This happens because we come into contact with the barrenness of our souls in the midst of fasting, which causes us to pursue Him for more of His life inside of us. John was primarily known for his fasted lifestyle. The fruit of John’s lifestyle was clarity, power, humility, joy and profound understanding of the love of God.
- e. Every verse reference to John the Baptist.

“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, even the Messenger of the covenant.” (Malachi 3:1)

“In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, and saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!” For this is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah, saying: “The voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the LORD, make His paths straight.” Now John Himself was clothed in camel’s hair, with a leather belt around his waist; and his food was locusts and wild honey. Then Jerusalem, all Judea, and all the region around the Jordan went out to him and were baptized by him in the Jordan, confessing their sins. But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, “Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance, and do not think to say to yourselves, “We have Abraham as our

Father.” For I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones. And even now the ax is laid to the root of the trees. Therefore every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. I indeed baptize you with water unto 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. His winnowing is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor, and gather His wheat into the barn; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.” Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him. And John tried to prevent Him, saying, “I need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me? But Jesus answered and said to him, “Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.” Then he allowed Him.” (Matthew 3:1-15)

“As they departed, Jesus began to say to the multitudes concerning John: “What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? But what did you go out to see? A man clothed in soft garments? Indeed, those who wear soft clothing are in kings’ houses. But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I say to you, and more than a prophet. For this is he of whom it was written: “Behold, I send My messenger before Your face, who will prepare Your way before You.” Assuredly, I say to you, among those born of women there has not risen one greater than John the Baptist; but he who is least in the kingdom is greater than he. And from the days of John the Baptist now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force. For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. And if you are willing to receive it, he is Elijah who is to come.” He who has ears to hear let him hear! But to what shall I liken this generation? It is like children sitting in the marketplace and calling to their companions, and saying, ‘We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we mourned to you, and you did not lament.’ For John came neither eating or drinking, and they say, ‘He has a demon.’” (Matthew 11:7-17)

“At that time Herod the tetrarch heard the report about Jesus and said to his servants, “This is John the Baptist; he is risen from the dead, and therefore these powers are at work in him.” For Herod had laid hold of John and bound him, and put him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip’s wife. Because John had said to him, “It is not lawful for you to have her.” And although he wanted to put him to death, he feared the multitude, “because they counted him as a prophet. But when Herod’s birthday was celebrated, the daughter of Herodias danced before them and pleased Herod. Therefore he promised with an oath to give her whatever she might ask. So she, having been prompted by her mother, said, “Give me John the Baptist’s head here on a platter.” And the king was sorry; nevertheless, because of the oaths and because of those who sat with him, he commanded it to be given to her. So he sent and had John beheaded in prison.” Matthew 14:1-10)

“When Jesus came into the region of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, saying, “Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?” So they said, “Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” (Matthew 16:13-14)

“And His disciples asked Him, saying, “Why then do the scribes say that Elijah must come first? Jesus answered and said to them, “Indeed, Elijah is coming first and will restore all things, but I say to you that Elijah has come already, and they did not know him but did to him whatever they wished. Likewise, the Son of Man is also about to suffer at their hands.” Then the disciples understood that He spoke to them of John the Baptist.” (Matthew 17:11-13)

The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. ² As it is written in the Prophets: “Behold, I send My messenger before Your face, Who will prepare Your way before You.” ³ “The voice of one crying in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the LORD; Make His paths straight.’” ⁴ John came baptizing in the

wilderness and preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. ⁵ Then all the land of Judea, and those from Jerusalem, went out to him and were all baptized by him in the Jordan River, confessing their sins. ⁶ Now John was clothed with camel's hair and with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. ⁷ And he preached, saying, "There comes One after me who is mightier than I, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to stoop down and loose. ⁸ I indeed baptized you with water, but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit." (Mark 1:1-8)

¹⁴ Now King Herod heard of Him, for His name had become well known. And he said, "John the Baptist is risen from the dead, and therefore these powers are at work in him." ¹⁵ Others said, "It is Elijah." And others said, "It is the Prophet, or ^[c] like one of the prophets." ¹⁶ But when Herod heard, he said, "This is John, whom I beheaded; he has been raised from the dead!" ¹⁷ For Herod himself had sent and laid hold of John, and bound him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife; for he had married her. ¹⁸ Because John had said to Herod, "It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife." ¹⁹ Therefore Herodias held it against him and wanted to kill him, but she could not; ²⁰ for Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just and holy man, and he protected him. And when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly. ²¹ Then an opportune day came when Herod on his birthday gave a feast for his nobles, the high officers, and the chief men of Galilee. ²² And when Herodias' daughter herself came in and danced, and pleased Herod and those who sat with him, the king said to the girl, "Ask me whatever you want, and I will give it to you." ²³ He also swore to her, "Whatever you ask me, I will give you, up to half my kingdom." ²⁴ So she went out and said to her mother, "What shall I ask?" And she said, "The head of John the Baptist!" ²⁵ Immediately she came in with haste to the king and asked, saying, "I want you to give me at once the head of John the Baptist on a platter." ²⁶ And the king was exceedingly sorry; yet, because of the oaths and because of those who sat with him, he did not want to refuse her. ²⁷ Immediately the king sent an executioner and commanded his head to be brought. And he went and beheaded him in prison, ²⁸ brought his head on a platter, and gave it to the girl; and the girl gave it to her mother. ²⁹ When his disciples heard of it, they came and took away his corpse and laid it in a tomb." (Mark 6:14-29)

²⁷ Now Jesus and His disciples went out to the towns of Caesarea Philippi; and on the road He asked His disciples, saying to them, "Who do men say that I am?" ²⁸ So they answered, "John the Baptist; but some say, Elijah; and others, one of the prophets." ²⁹ He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter answered and said to Him, "You are the Christ." (Mark 8:27-29)

⁶ And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. ⁷ But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and they were both well advanced in years. ⁸ So it was, that while he was serving as priest before God in the order of his division, ⁹ according to the custom of the priesthood, his lot fell to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord. ¹⁰ And the whole multitude of the people was praying outside at the hour of incense. ¹¹ Then an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing on the right side of the altar of incense. ¹² And when Zacharias saw him, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him. ¹³ But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your prayer is heard; and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John. ¹⁴ And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth. ¹⁵ For he will be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink. He will also be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb. ¹⁶ And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God. ¹⁷ He will also go before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, 'to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children,' ^[b] and the disobedient to the

wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.”¹⁸ And Zacharias said to the angel, “How shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife is well advanced in years.”¹⁹ And the angel answered and said to him, “I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God, and was sent to speak to you and bring you these glad tidings.²⁰ But behold, you will be mute and not able to speak until the day these things take place, because you did not believe my words which will be fulfilled in their own time.”²¹ And the people waited for Zacharias, and marveled that he lingered so long in the temple.²² But when he came out, he could not speak to them; and they perceived that he had seen a vision in the temple, for he beckoned to them and remained speechless.²³ So it was, as soon as the days of his service were completed, that he departed to his own house.²⁴ Now after those days his wife Elizabeth conceived; and she hid herself five months.” (Luke 1:6-24)

³⁵ And the angel answered and said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God.³⁶ Now indeed, Elizabeth your relative has also conceived a son in her old age; and this is now the sixth month for her who was called barren.³⁷ For with God nothing will be impossible.”³⁸ Then Mary said, “Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word.” And the angel departed from her.³⁹ Now Mary arose in those days and went into the hill country with haste, to a city of Judah,⁴⁰ and entered the house of Zacharias and greeted Elizabeth.⁴¹ And it happened, when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, that the babe leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.⁴² Then she spoke out with a loud voice and said, “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb!⁴³ But why is this granted to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?⁴⁴ For indeed, as soon as the voice of your greeting sounded in my ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy.⁴⁵ Blessed is she who believed, for there will be a fulfillment of those things which were told her from the Lord.” (Luke 1:35-45)

⁵⁷ Now Elizabeth’s full time came for her to be delivered, and she brought forth a son.⁵⁸ When her neighbors and relatives heard how the Lord had shown great mercy to her, they rejoiced with her.⁵⁹ So it was, on the eighth day, that they came to circumcise the child; and they would have called him by the name of his father, Zacharias.⁶⁰ His mother answered and said, “No; he shall be called John.”⁶¹ But they said to her, “There is no one among your relatives who is called by this name.”⁶² So they made signs to his father—what he would have him called.⁶³ And he asked for a writing tablet, and wrote, saying, “His name is John.” So they all marveled.⁶⁴ Immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue loosed, and he spoke, praising God.⁶⁵ Then fear came on all who dwelt around them; and all these sayings were discussed throughout all the hill country of Judea.⁶⁶ And all those who heard them kept them in their hearts, saying, “What kind of child will this be?” And the hand of the Lord was with him.” (Luke 1:57-66)

⁶⁷ Now his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Spirit, and prophesied, saying:⁶⁸ “Blessed is the Lord God of Israel, For He has visited and redeemed His people,⁶⁹ And has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of His servant David,⁷⁰ As He spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets, Who have been since the world began,⁷¹ That we should be saved from our enemies And from the hand of all who hate us,⁷² To perform the mercy promised to our fathers And to remember His holy covenant,⁷³ The oath which He swore to our father Abraham:⁷⁴ To grant us that we, Being delivered from the hand of our enemies, Might serve Him without fear,⁷⁵ In holiness and righteousness before Him all the days of our life.⁷⁶ “And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Highest; For you will go before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways,⁷⁷ To give knowledge of salvation to His people By the remission of their sins,⁷⁸ Through the tender mercy of our God, With which the Dayspring from on high has visited^[e] us;⁷⁹ To give light to those who sit in

darkness and the shadow of death, To guide our feet into the way of peace.”⁸⁰ So the child grew and became strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his manifestation to Israel.

Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea and the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene,² while Annas and Caiaphas were high priests,^[a] the word of God came to John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness.³ And he went into all the region around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins,⁴ as it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet, saying: “The voice of one crying in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the LORD; Make His paths straight.⁵ Every valley shall be filled And every mountain and hill brought low; The crooked places shall be made straight And the rough ways smooth;⁶ And all flesh shall see the salvation of God.’”⁷ Then he said to the multitudes that came out to be baptized by him, “Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?⁸ Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance, and do not begin to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ For I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones.⁹ And even now the ax is laid to the root of the trees. Therefore every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.”¹⁰ So the people asked him, saying, “What shall we do then?”¹¹ He answered and said to them, “He who has two tunics, let him give to him who has none; and he who has food, let him do likewise.”¹² Then tax collectors also came to be baptized, and said to him, “Teacher, what shall we do?”¹³ And he said to them, “Collect no more than what is appointed for you.”¹⁴ Likewise the soldiers asked him, saying, “And what shall we do?” So he said to them, “Do not intimidate anyone or accuse falsely, and be content with your wages.”¹⁵ Now as the people were in expectation, and all reasoned in their hearts about John, whether he was the Christ or not,¹⁶ John answered, saying to all, “I indeed baptize you with water; but One mightier than I is coming, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to loose. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.¹⁷ His winnowing fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor, and gather the wheat into His barn; but the chaff He will burn with unquenchable fire.”¹⁸ And with many other exhortations he preached to the people.¹⁹ But Herod the tetrarch, being rebuked by him concerning Herodias, his brother Philip’s wife, and for all the evils which Herod had done,²⁰ also added this, above all, that he shut John up in prison.” (Luke 3:1-20)

¹⁸ Then the disciples of John reported to him concerning all these things.¹⁹ And John, calling two of his disciples to him, sent them to Jesus,^[b] saying, “Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?”²⁰ When the men had come to Him, they said, “John the Baptist has sent us to You, saying, ‘Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?’”²¹ And that very hour He cured many of infirmities, afflictions, and evil spirits; and to many blind He gave sight.²² Jesus answered and said to them, “Go and tell John the things you have seen and heard: that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, the poor have the gospel preached to them.²³ And blessed is he who is not offended because of Me.”²⁴ When the messengers of John had departed, He began to speak to the multitudes concerning John: “What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind?²⁵ But what did you go out to see? A man clothed in soft garments? Indeed those who are gorgeously appareled and live in luxury are in kings’ courts.²⁶ But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I say to you, and more than a prophet.²⁷ This is he of whom it is written: ‘Behold, I send My messenger before Your face, Who will prepare Your way before You.’²⁸ For I say to you, among those born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist; but he who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he.”²⁹ And when all the people heard Him, even the tax collectors justified God, having been baptized with the baptism of John.³⁰ But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the will of God for themselves, not having been baptized by him.³¹ And the Lord said,^[c] “To what then shall I liken the men of this generation, and what are they like?³² They are like children sitting in the marketplace and calling to one another, saying: ‘We played the flute for you, And you did not dance; We mourned to you, And you did not weep.’³³ For John the Baptist came neither

eating bread nor drinking wine, and you say, 'He has a demon.'³⁴ The Son of Man has come eating and drinking, and you say, 'Look, a glutton and a winebibber, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!'³⁵ But wisdom is justified by all her children." (Luke 7:18-35)

¹⁸ And it happened, as He was alone praying, that His disciples joined Him, and He asked them, saying, "Who do the crowds say that I am?"¹⁹ So they answered and said, "John the Baptist, but some say Elijah; and others say that one of the old prophets has risen again."²⁰ He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter answered and said, "The Christ of God." (Luke 9:18-20)

²² After these things Jesus and His disciples came into the land of Judea, and there He remained with them and baptized.²³ Now John also was baptizing in Aenon near Salim, because there was much water there. And they came and were baptized.²⁴ For John had not yet been thrown into prison.²⁵ Then there arose a dispute between some of John's disciples and the Jews about purification.²⁶ And they came to John and said to him, "Rabbi, He who was with you beyond the Jordan, to whom you have testified—behold, He is baptizing, and all are coming to Him!"²⁷ John answered and said, "A man can receive nothing unless it has been given to him from heaven.²⁸ You yourselves bear me witness, that I said, 'I am not the Christ,' but, 'I have been sent before Him.'²⁹ He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's voice. Therefore this joy of mine is fulfilled.³⁰ He must increase, but I must decrease.³¹ He who comes from above is above all; he who is of the earth is earthly and speaks of the earth. He who comes from heaven is above all.³² And what He has seen and heard, that He testifies; and no one receives His testimony.³³ He who has received His testimony has certified that God is true.³⁴ For He whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God does not give the Spirit by measure.³⁵ The Father loves the Son, and has given all things into His hand.³⁶ He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him." (John 3:22-36)

"⁶ There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.⁷ This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all through him might believe.⁸ He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light.⁹ That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world." (John 1:6-8)

³¹ "If I bear witness of Myself, My witness is not true.³² There is another who bears witness of Me, and I know that the witness which He witnesses of Me is true.³³ You have sent to John, and he has borne witness to the truth.³⁴ Yet I do not receive testimony from man, but I say these things that you may be saved.³⁵ He was the burning and shining lamp, and you were willing for a time to rejoice in his light.³⁶ But I have a greater witness than John's; for the works which the Father has given Me to finish—the very works that I do—bear witness of Me, that the Father has sent Me.³⁷ And the Father Himself, who sent Me, has testified of Me." (John 5:31-37)

