

SHARING THE GOSPEL LIKE JOHN THE BAPTIST

You can help prepare people for the Savior's Second Coming, just as John the Baptist did for the Savior's first coming.



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Unlike John the Baptist, you won't serve a mission in the "wilderness of Judea" (Matthew 3:1). Your clothes won't be made of "camel's hair" (Matthew 3:4). You won't be eating "locusts and wild honey" (Matthew 3:4). But your purpose in sharing the gospel is the same as John the Baptist's: you prepare people for Jesus's coming by declaring, "Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matthew 3:2).

John the Baptist's mission was clear: to "come before the Messiah, to prepare the way of the Lord" (1 Nephi 10:7). But his mission was not easy. The last prophet before him was Malachi, over 400 years earlier. "Without a prophet, people in the land began to divide into parties and

groups, each claiming the right to interpret the scriptures and lead the people. The true understanding of Jehovah diminished among these groups."¹

Despite the challenges in John's day, multitudes came out into the wilderness to hear him preach, and he baptized many. Two of the future Apostles, John the Beloved and Andrew, became acquainted with Jesus through John (see John 1:40).

Sharing the gospel today is just as challenging. Modern life has provided many distractions. Worldly philosophies lead people astray. More and more people are failing to live up to high moral standards. Some see no need for religion.

In these circumstances, how can you succeed in sharing the gospel, as John the Baptist did? Here are a few lessons from his life that can help.

John knew what his mission was. He knew he had been called to help people come unto Christ (see Luke 1:16). When he saw the Savior, John testified, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). Instead of encouraging people to follow himself, John helped them become disciples of Jesus Christ. Speaking of the Savior, John said, "He must increase, but I must decrease" (John 3:30).

John taught the basic principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ. He taught the people about justice, mercy, honesty, morality, fasting, prayer, repentance and confession of sins, baptism

by immersion, resurrection, and the Judgment (see Matthew 3; Luke 3). His teaching could be described as the Savior's was: "They were astonished at his doctrine: for he taught them as one that had authority" (Mark 1:22).

John lived differently than the world. Jesus contrasted John with worldly teachers: John was not "a man clothed in soft raiment . . . gorgeously apparelled . . . in kings' courts" (Luke 7:25). He drank "neither wine nor strong drink" (Luke 1:15). John was "the voice of one

crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord" (Mark 1:3). Because he taught with the power of God, the people felt the Spirit and were converted.

John was dedicated. One scholar summarized John's qualities: "His singleness of purpose, his total dedication to his special calling, and his complete loyalty to the Son of God. These traits, coupled with his divine priesthood authority, fearless disposition, and personal righteousness, make him one of the greatest characters of the scriptures."²

As you study the life of John the Baptist, you see that he was more than just the one who had the unique blessing of being able to baptize Jesus Christ. You see that his life and mission were about preparing people for the Savior's coming, just as yours is. **NE**

NOTES

1. S. Kent Brown and Richard Neitzel Holzapfel, "The Lost 500 Years: From Malachi to John the Baptist," *Ensign*, Dec. 2014, 56.
2. Robert J. Matthews, "John the Baptist: A Burning and a Shining Light," *Ensign*, Sept. 1972, 79.



WHY ARE YOU ON THE EARTH AT THIS TIME?

"You and I will rejoice in His coming and thank the Lord that He sent us to earth at this time to fulfill our sacred duty of helping prepare the world for His return."

Elder Neil L. Andersen of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Preparing the World for the Second Coming," *Ensign*, May 2011, 52.