



About 30 years after Jesus “crossed paths” with **Simeon** and **Anna** (from our last lesson), Matthew 3 documents a monumental moment in Jesus’ life involving a man named **John**.

In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” 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.’”

Now John wore a garment of camel’s hair and a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. Then Jerusalem and all Judea and all the region about the Jordan were going out to him, and they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins.

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? Bear fruit in keeping with repentance. 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. 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.

“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. 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.”

Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John, to be baptized by him. John would have prevented him, saying, “I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?” But Jesus answered him, “Let it be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.” Then he consented. And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; and behold, a voice from heaven said, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.”

So what can we learn that will help us in our own walk with Jesus? Let’s dig in...



For Class & Family Discussion:

1. We heard a lot in our last lesson about the miraculous birth of Jesus, but Luke 1 documents some pretty incredible things about John's birth as well. What do we need to know and appreciate about John's backstory?
2. In 3:3, Matthew connects the life and work of John to a 700-year-old prophecy of Isaiah (40:3). Why is that significant?
3. Why would John call some of the Pharisees and Sadducees a "brood of vipers" (Matt 3:7)? What did he mean by, "Bear fruit in keeping with repentance"?
4. John's words in Matthew 3:11-12 are challenging. What do they mean?
5. The ultimate point of this "crossing paths" scene in Matthew 3 is Jesus' baptism and what happened after he "went up from the water." What do we need to see and understand from this monumental moment in Jesus' (and John's) life?
6. In Matthew 11, we hear of John in prison, sending word by his disciples with a question for Jesus: "Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?" Why was John in prison? (the beginning of Matthew 14 helps us here). What do you make of John's question in Matthew 11 and Jesus' response?
7. So what about us? We want not only to "cross paths" with Jesus, but to walk with him as his disciples. So what should we carry away with us from the story of John?