



Group Guide

The Call & Preparation of the Ministry of Jesus

September 14, 2025

Main Passage: Matthew 3:1-17

Theological Theme

As Isaiah foretold, John the Baptist prepared the way for Jesus's ministry, then baptized Him in the Jordan River, kicking off a ministry that would lead to our eternal salvation.

Introduction

- ❓ What does it look like to point to Jesus in your daily life?
- ❓ How are you pointing to Jesus today? How can you make Jesus the main character of your life?

1. John the Baptist (Matthew 3:1-6)

In this passage, Matthew described the role of John the Baptist as the forerunner and herald for Jesus's earthly ministry. John the Baptist's birth to Zechariah and Elizabeth (Mary's cousin) was foretold by an angel in Luke 1:13-17. The angel told Zechariah that John would be "filled with the Holy Spirit" (Luke 1:15) and walk in the spirit of the prophet Elijah "to make ready for the Lord a prepared people" (Luke 1:17). God set John the Baptist apart for a special purpose before his birth, and in these verses in Matthew, we see that special purpose in action.

- ❓ What stands out to you about John from these verses?
- ❓ How would you describe John's ministry from these verses?
- ❓ Application: Why is repentance an ongoing part of the Christian life and not only something we do to first receive Jesus?

2. Pointing to Jesus (Matthew 3:7-12)

The Jewish religious leaders (the Pharisees and Sadducees are named here) are often painted as hypocrites in the Gospels. By all appearances, they lived a holy life, and yet many did not have the humble heart posture God requires, desiring wealth, power, and reputation more than actual righteousness. Jesus would later call them out as John did here.

- ❓ What strikes you about John's proclamation to the people in these verses?
- ❓ What warning did John give? What promise?
- ❓ Application: What warning is there for us in John's message to the religious leaders? What might this type of hypocritical religious thinking look like in our lives today?

3. Jesus's Baptism (Matthew 3:13-17)

At last, the moment John had been heralding had arrived! Jesus was on the scene. He came from Galilee and His baptism would officially begin His public ministry.

- ❓ Why would John view it as inappropriate for him to baptize Jesus?
- ❓ How was Jesus's identifying with those He came to save in being baptized?
- ❓ Application: What can we learn from John's response to Jesus in this passage? What does it look like to respond similarly to Jesus in our daily lives?

Conclusion

Jesus arrived from Galilee to be baptized by John in the Jordan River. While John hesitated because he knew Jesus did not need to repent of any sins, Jesus knew His baptism was the will of the Father, so John was obedient in following God's plan. God used this imperfect human with a humble heart to bring Him glory in the waters of the Jordan.

- ❓ What can we learn from John the Baptist about how to live a life for Jesus?
- ❓ How can we seek a bolder life for Jesus today? What can we do to point to Him more clearly in all we do?
- ❓ Why should our role in God's story continually lead to sharing Jesus with others?