

# PREPARE THE WAY OF THE LORD

## SMALL GROUP STUDY GUIDE

Week 4 December 22, 2024

“Witnesses, Testifying to the Light”

### OPENING PRAYER

Heavenly Father, as we gather today and step away from a very busy Christmas season, quiet our hearts and minds so that we may more fully experience your power and presence. Help us marvel once more at how you came to earth as a baby and lived among us. Let us receive the angel’s message anew and join in their song. May the Holy Spirit guide this study to your glory and honor. Amen.

### SCRIPTURE PASSAGES

#### John 1:6-8 (NIV)

*<sup>6</sup> There was a man sent from God whose name was John. <sup>7</sup> He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all might believe. <sup>8</sup> He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light.”*

#### Luke 3:15-18 (NIV)

*<sup>15</sup> The people were waiting expectantly and were all wondering in their hearts if John might possibly be the Messiah. <sup>16</sup> John answered them all, “I baptize you with water. But one who is more powerful than I will come, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. <sup>17</sup> His winnowing fork is in his hand to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his barn, but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.” <sup>18</sup> And with many other words John exhorted the people and proclaimed the good news to them.”*

#### John 1:15-18

*<sup>15</sup> (John testified concerning him. He cried out, saying, “This is the one I spoke about when I said, ‘He who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.’”) <sup>16</sup> Out of his fullness we have all received grace in place of grace already given. <sup>17</sup> For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. <sup>18</sup> No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known.”*

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## INTRODUCTION

Advent is season of preparation for the annual celebration of Christ’s First Coming. Throughout this season, we have looked to the message of John the Baptist. In his life he prepared the people for Jesus’ coming and his message continues to guide us even 2,000 years later. In addition to being an Elizabeth and John the Baptist to people in our lives, we are also called to be Christ’s witnesses in the world. We do so by what we do and say as well as by what we refrain from doing and what we refrain from saying. May the light of Christ shine through us this Christmas and always. Amen.

## QUESTIONS

1. What struck you the most about of John the Baptist’s birth, young life, adult ministry, and death?
2. While John’s message was direct and Jesus often abided with people amid his teaching, do you employ both methods in your witness or do you favor one approach? Why do you think that is?
3. Recall a time God changed your life. Have you spoken to family and friends about this event?
4. It can be tempting to “be the light” and receive people’s attention, praise, and admiration. How do you struggle with “not being the light” but the one who witnesses to the light?
5. This week, what is one way you will testify to the baby born in the manger whose birth changed your life and the world?

## FINAL APPLICATION

Christmas is coming. As we make final preparations for our celebrations, may we not to neglect our final spiritual preparations. In doing so, we may receive the gift of Christ at Christmas more completely and, in so doing, increase our witness the world. What do you need to do so you can more completely experience Christ this Christmas?