

I. Introduction: It was a dark day in Israel; the people had not had a prophetic word from God in 400 years. They were waiting for a word, a sign, a display of power.

A. The sun was about to rise on the horizon of Israel's future; God's herald was about to be born and he would begin turning people's hearts to Messiah.

II. Prepare the Way for Christmas (Luke 1:5-25; 39-45; 57-80).

A. John's Birth would be Miraculous (**Luke 1:5-14**).

1. His birth was almost as shockingly improbable as Jesus' birth, proving that God had sent him to be the herald of the coming Messiah.

B. John's Filling would be Supernatural (**Luke 1:15; 39-45**).

1. Gabriel told them that he would be great, and that he would be filled with the Holy Spirit, like the great leaders and heroes of Israel's past.

C. John's Mission would be Powerful (**Luke 1:16-17**).

1. John would be used as a great catalyst to turn people back to God, just like Elijah did in his own time. He would call people to repent of their sin.

D. John's Life would be a Light (**Luke 1:76-79**)

1. Zachariah's prophecy said that John would be a prophet of the Most High God, and he would shine the light into the darkness of this world.

III. Conclusion: How do we prepare the way for Christmas? John the Baptist gives us some principles on how we can be a herald of Jesus at this time of year.

Questions About: Prepare the Way for Christmas

1. Have you ever been waiting expectantly for someone? Who had Israel been waiting on for 400 years? (**Mal 4:5-6**) Are you prepared for the coming of Jesus this year?
2. How is our day similar to the time of Jesus? How long has it been since we have heard from God? How are we looking for the Messiah like they were? (**Rev 22:20**)
3. What happened to Zacharias in the temple? (**Luke 1:5-17**) What biblical story is this similar to in the Old Testament? (**Gen 21**) How had God heard their prayers? (**v. 13**)
4. How did John's birth signal the coming of Messiah? (**Luke 1:13-17; 65-66**) What was the name that God gave His forerunner? What is its meaning and significance?
5. Who did Gabriel say would empower John? (**Luke 1:15**) How did John demonstrate this even in the womb? (**Luke 1:39-45**) What does a Spirit-filled life look like?
6. What was John's mission, according to Gabriel? (**Luke 1:16-17**) What was the purpose of a king's forerunner? (**Isa 40:1-5**) How is this a metaphor for repentance?
7. What did Zacharias say after being unable to talk for 9 months? (**Luke 1:67-79**) How did he say that John would be a light? (**vv. 76-79**) How are we to be a light to others?
8. How do we prepare the way for Christmas like John? How are we called to be miraculously reborn? (**John 3:6**) How can we be filled with the Spirit? (**Gal 5:18**)

Prayer

1. Will you ask God to help you be a herald of the Good News like John?
2. Will you ask God to give you opportunities to talk boldly about Jesus with others?